

OVER 100 NEW ALBUMS REVIEWED AND RATED

ED REVIEW'S GUIDE TO

# New Country Music

April 1994

Nashville  
On Stage

Country's  
New Duos

Radney Foster

Kennedy Rose

Bob Woodruff

Matraca Berg

Confederate Railroad

Martina McBride

Willie Nelson

Harlan Howard

Steve Earle

Valerie Carter

Del McCoury

Stacy Dean Campbell

NRBQ

Richard Thompson

Michael James

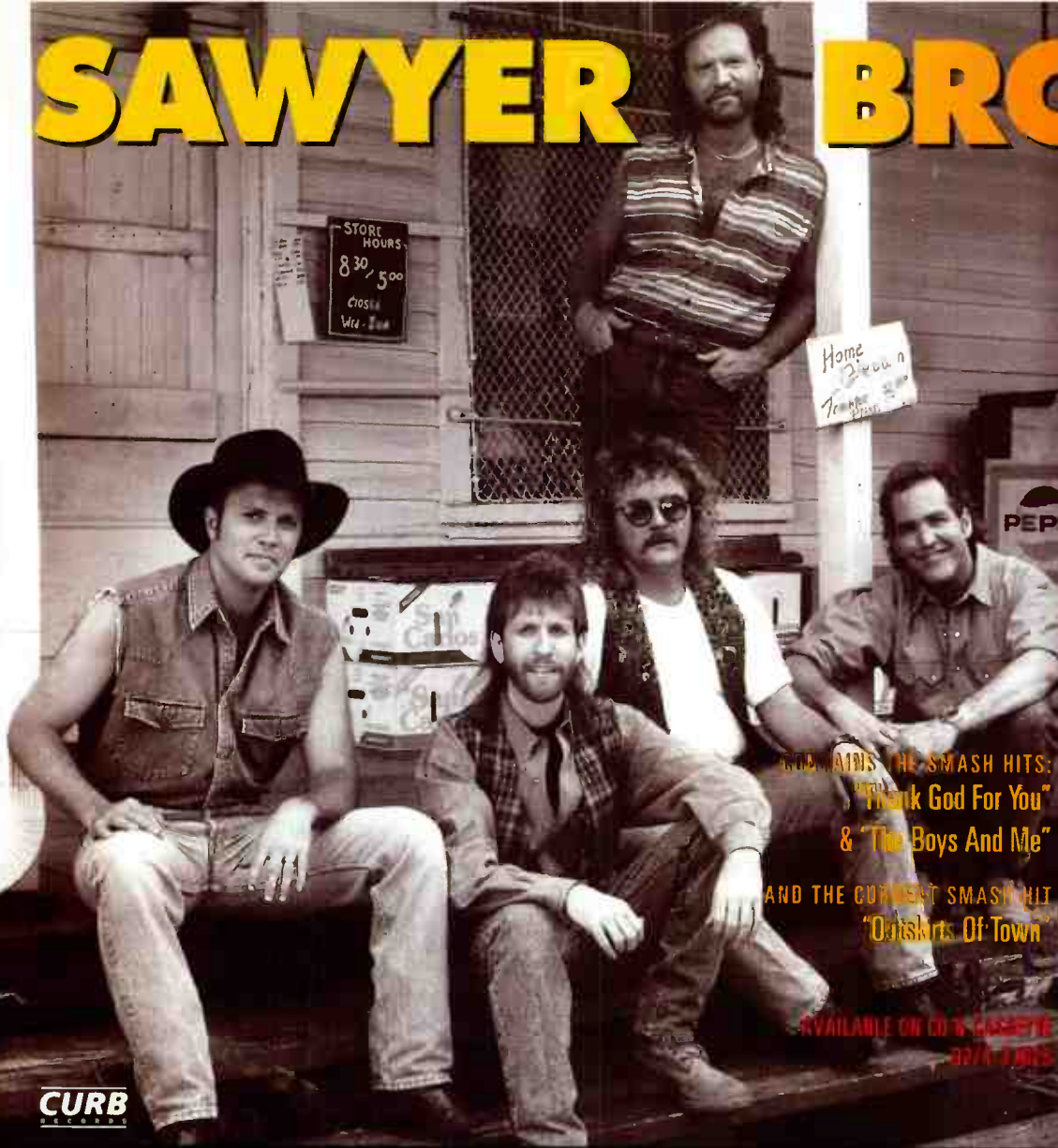
And much more ...

# MARTY STUART

**Walks The Line**



# SAWYER BROWN



INCLUDES THE SMASH HITS:  
"Thank God For You"  
& "The Boys And Me"  
AND THE CURRENT SMASH HIT  
"Outskirts Of Town"

AVAILABLE ON CD & CASSETTE  
02/4-77622



CURB RECORDS

# JUNIOR BROWN

GOIT WITH IT



INCLUDES:  
"Highway Patrol"  
"My Wife Thinks You're Dead"  
& "Still Life With Rose"

AVAILABLE ON CD & CASSETTE  
02/4-77622



World Radio History

CURB RECORDS



# New Country Music

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
David Sokol

**NASHVILLE EDITOR**  
Brian Mansfield

**EDITORIAL ASSISTANT**  
Suzanne Morrissey

**EDITOR AT LARGE**  
Jimmy Guterman

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Robert Baird, Ken Beck, Ramiro Burr, Rick Clark, Daniel Cooper, Travis Corder, Peter Cronin, Gordon Ely, Chris Flisher, Doug Fulmer, Holly Gleason, Beth Gwinn, Kath Hansen, Michael Hight, Bill Hobbs, James Hunter, Beverly Keel, Michael McCall, Paul Natkin, Robert K. Oermann, Jay Orr, Clark Parsons, Claudia Perry, Jim Ridley, David Simons, Rob Weir

**ART DIRECTOR**  
Peter Leonardo

**ART ASSISTANT**  
Debra Davies

**GRAPHICS MANAGER**  
Marilyn Fletcher

**PUBLISHER**  
Ellen A. Holmes

**NATIONAL ADVERTISING MANAGER**  
Brian Vaillancourt  
603-924-7271

**NAT'L ADVERTISING ACCOUNT MANAGERS**  
Lisa Shemet  
Daren Smith  
Paul C. Smith  
603-924-7271

**ADVERTISING COORDINATORS**  
Janet Calhoun  
Mary Pat Farr-Szep

**EDITORIAL OFFICES**  
86 Elm Street, Peterborough, NH 03458  
603-924-7271  
FAX 603-924-7013

**EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER**  
T. James Connell

© 1994 Connell Communications, Inc.  
Printed in U.S.A.

## From The Editor

**F**irst of all, a big thank you for all the kind words on our premiere issue. Month after month, it will be our goal to bring you the best written, most complete look at what's hot and happening in the ever expanding world of country music.

Speaking of expanding, with this issue, *New Country Music* magazine (and the exclusive compact disc or cassette that accompanies it) is now read and offered in the United Kingdom and Germany as well as in the U.S. and Canada. Welcome to our world of features, in-depth interviews and reviews with ratings of over 100 albums each issue.

Leading the charge in April is our up-close look at musical compendium Marty Stuart who recently met with Holly Gleason at his favorite Music City Waffle House. After reading the story the first time, I felt as if I'd just spent an intimate, eye-opening hour with a guy who gives as good an overview of the past, present *and* future of country music as anyone in the business. Love and luck, heart and soul... it's all here.

In another big story this month, Nashville Editor Brian Mansfield files a heck of a piece on platinum-plus country band Confederate Railroad. The six-man band seems to be doing everything right as it rides the road to greater commercial success and navigates some quirky music biz terrain in the process. Other features this month take you one-on-one with Kansas-bred charttopper Martina McBride and critically acclaimed newcomer Bob Woodruff. Another looks at the new crop of

duos and some unusual fallout from recent awards shows.

Our songwriter column features a story on Nashville songwriting treasure Harlan Howard, a man who's penned hits for nearly everyone from Patsy Cline to Patty Loveless. Then there's a most unlikely Radney Foster interview as well as Steve Earle and Willie Nelson retrospectives, "Nashville on Stage" and Stacy Dean Campbell on Bruce Springsteen. Our bulging review section begins with the convergence of *Rhythm, Country and Blues* and then covers a wide swath of hot new releases while traveling all over the new country map. Let's break down the borders.

This month, the CD or cassette that accompanies the magazine you're holding is again filled with a rich assortment of new and recent hits as well as choice album tracks. From a Tracy Lawrence chartbuster to listener friendly movers by Lee Roy Parnell, Sawyer Brown and Suzy Bogguss, the stars are well represented. Then, there are sharp current singles by up and comers Dude Mowrey, Neal McCoy and Rick Trevino, who's climbing the charts with a song written by Marty Stuart. And that's only the beginning.

By the way, the compact disc itself comes in an FLP (or *flip*), a sturdy package designed to reduce breakage so that it arrives in your mailbox safe and sound. The plastic foam packaging that helps hold everything together is made from recycled materials and is itself 100 percent recyclable.

Starting soon, we'll be running a Letters page each month, so keep that correspondence coming. Our mailing address appears in the staff box, just to the left. We're listening.—David Sokol

### NEW COUNTRY MUSIC

For customer service call:  
**(800)41-MUSIC (800-416-8742)**

### April's Contributors

**Robert Baird** edits the music section of Phoenix's *New Times* and has contributed to *Rolling Stone*, *Option*, *Living Blues* and *The Austin Chronicle*.

**Ken Beck**, from the ages of 5 to 8, was a cowboy in Abilene, Texas. More recently, he co-authored *Mary Ann's Gilligan's Island Cookbook*.

**Ramiro Burr** is a music reporter for the *San Antonio Express-News* and a *Billboard* correspondent.

**Rick Clark**, a Memphis musician and journalist, has performed with Alex Chilton and Gene Cotton and written for *Billboard* and *Rolling Stone*.

**Daniel Cooper's** work has appeared in the *Journal of Country Music* and *Nashville Scene*. He is writing a biography of Lefty Frizzell.

**Travis Corder** is a writer in Nashville.

**Peter Cronin** is associate country music editor for *Billboard* and a contributing editor to *Musician*.

**Gordon Ely** is a Virginia-based writer whose work has appeared in *Billboard* and *Christian Research Report*.

**Chris Flisher** is a concert producer and writes for numerous publications.

**Doug Fulmer** is a Baltimore-based writer and contributor to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Bluegrass Now*, *Bluegrass Unlimited* and *Acoustic Musician*.

**Holly Gleason**, contributing editor to *Pulse!* and *Bone*, has written for publications including *The New York Times*, *Spin*, *People* and *Harper's Bazaar*.

**Kath Hansen** regularly contributes to a number of Nashville publications.

**Michael Hight** is associate editor of *Music Row*, a Nashville-based trade publication.

**Bill Hobbs**, a Nashville freelancer, has written for newspapers in Tennessee and Texas.

**James Hunter** writes about popular music for a number of publications.

**Beverly Keel** is a Nashville-based freelance writer.

**Michael McCall** is a Nashville-based freelance writer and author of *Garth Brooks*, *Superstars of Country Music* and *Country Music Legends*.

**Robert K. Oermann**, co-author of four books on country music, writes and produces *The Country Music Video Album Hour* on TNN.

**Jay Orr** covers country and pop music for the *Nashville Banner*.

**Clark Parsons** is a staff writer for *The Tennessean* and has contributed to the *Nashville Banner*, *Daily Variety* and *The Journal of Country Music*.

**Claudia Perry** is the pop music critic for the *Houston Post*.

**Jim Ridley** reviews movies for the *Nashville Scene* and is collaborating on a video movie guide.

**David Simons** fronts the rock band The Raymies.

**Rob Weir** is an Assistant Professor of History and associate writer for *Sing Out! Magazine*.



Page 48



Page 54



Page 15



Page 65



Page 24

# New Country Music

April 1994

## This Month's Recording

**Music to Our Ears**.....Page 4  
Rick Trevino, Suzy Bogguss, Tracy Lawrence, Dude Mowrey, Kenny Chesney, Junior Brown, C.C. Adcock, Lee Roy Parnell, Neal McCoy, Sawyer Brown and Courtney & Western are the featured artists on this month's exclusive collection of hot new country music.

## Cover Story

**Marty Stuart**.....Page 30  
It's taken more than love and luck to get this ubiquitous country star where he is today. In this month's cover story, set at his favorite Waffle House, Marty Stuart reveals a big heart, a mighty soul and a whole lot more. **BY HOLLY GLEASON**

## Features

**Martina McBride**.....Page 24  
One of country music's hottest new female artists declares her independence. **BY ROBERT K. OERMANN**

**Confederate Railroad**.....Page 36  
Riding the rail between country and Southern rock, these guys have a lot to smile about, including a 1.5 million selling debut album. **BY BRIAN MANSFIELD**

**The Numbers Game**.....Page 42  
There's more to the new crop of musical duos than meets the eye. **BY MICHAEL McCALL**

**Bob Woodruff**.....Page 47  
Former Big Apple truck driver turns real life into art and makes one of the year's most acclaimed recording debuts. **BY HOLLY GLEASON**



## Departments

### City Lights .....Page 10

The Hall of Fame's Evening of Greats, Sam Bush takes a tumble, the band with no name, Exile packs it in, master Blaster Dave Alvin, George Jones, Arista/Texas' "smile" music and more.

### New Traditions .....Page 14

Shining the spotlight on Kennedy Rose, Douglas, Barenberg & Meyer, Bruce Carroll, Jimmy LaFave, Dale Daniel, Mary Karlzen.

### For the Sake of the Song .....Page 20

Master songwriter Harlan Howard knows a thing or two about love.

### Back in the Saddle .....Page 22

Steve Earle has left a greater impression on Nashville than most people realize.

### Lost Highways .....Page 40

If you think there's not enough live music in Music City, think again. There shouldn't be any complaining about that this year.

### Celebrity Spotlight .....Page 71

Stacy Dean Campbell gets all Bruced up.

### Too Far Gone .....Page 72

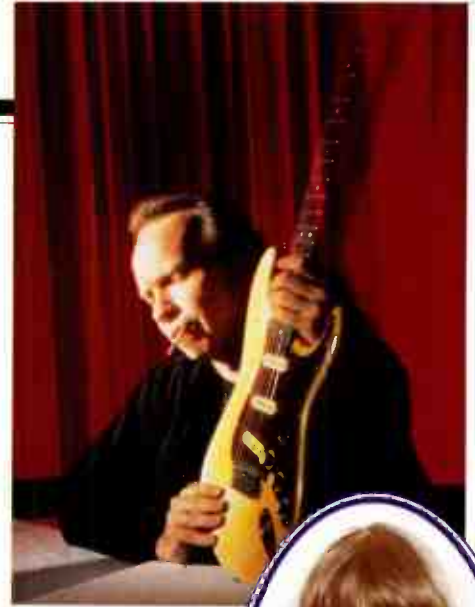
An unlikely conversation with Radney Foster

Cover photo by Paul Natkin/Photo Reserve

## Reviews

Rhythm, Country & Blues kicks off this month's bursting review section. Also featured are hot new releases from Jamie O'Hara, Hank Flamingo, Willie Nelson, BlackHawk, Matraca Berg, the Mavericks, Mike Henderson, Faith Hill, Boy Howdy and more. Plus: Bill Lloyd, Del McCoury, Michael James, Bad Livers, John Reischman, the Meat Puppets, Richard Thompson, NRBQ, Vance Gilbert, Four Men and a Dog, Juan Reynoso, An Austin Celebration of Woody Guthrie, The Cowboy Poetry Gathering and much more. *Review Index* .....Page 49

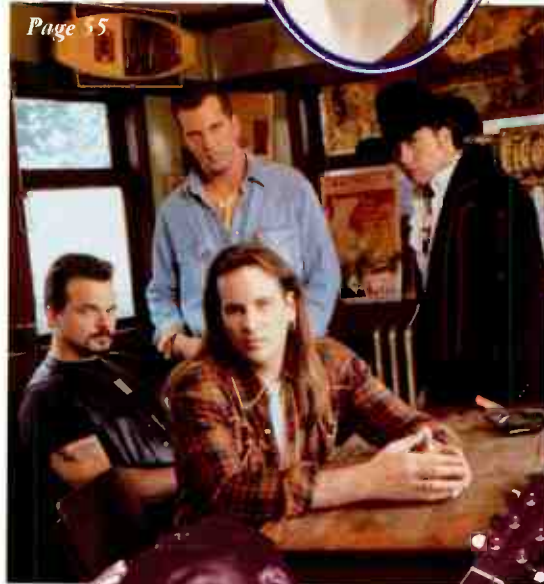
CD Review's Guide to New Country Music (ISSN 1074-536X) is published monthly by Connell Communications, Inc., 86 Elm Street, Peterborough, NH 03458. Entire contents ©1994 by Connell Communications, Inc. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission by the publisher. Printed in the U.S.A. by Continental Web Press, 1430 Industrial Drive, Itasca, IL 60143.



Page 11



Page 62



Page 55



Page 69



# THIS MONTH'S MUSIC

On Your Exclusive April CD/Cassette From New Country Music

1

## RICK TREVINO

*"Honky Tonk Crowd"*

**R**ick Trevino's newest single, the Marty Stuart-penned "Honky Tonk Crowd," perfectly fits the young Texan's sense of musical style.

"'Honky Tonk Crowd' shows exactly who I am and what traditional music I like to perform," says Trevino, who first made his reputation playing clubs in Austin with members of George Strait's Ace in the Hole Band. "That style of music is my favorite style of music—the Western shuffle rather than the kind of rockabilly style."

Trevino made a big splash last year when his record label released versions of his first single, "Just Enough Rope," in

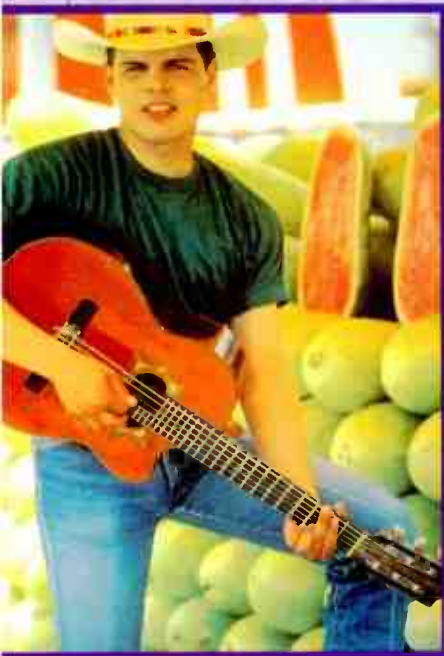
English and Spanish. His new album, *Rick Trevino*, which includes "Honky Tonk Crowd," also contains both the English version and a bilingual dance mix of "Just Enough Rope."

Columbia Records' Nashville division signed Trevino as a country singer, but Sony Discos released a Spanish-language album, *Dos Mundos*, in September. *Rick Trevino* came out earlier this year and contained English versions of many of the songs from *Dos Mundos*. The Nashville label even included one song sung in Spanish, "Un Momento Alla (For a Moment

There)" on the English album. But after releasing *Dos Mundos*, Trevino re-entered the studio to record new songs, among them "Honky Tonk Crowd."

"'Just Enough Rope' brought out the bilingual thing, first and foremost," says Trevino. "Last year was the first year I had attempted to sing bilingual songs. I didn't even know I could do it until last year."

Even though "Honky Tonk Crowd" appears only on *Rick Trevino*, the singer adds: "There might be another ballad or two we might try in Spanish. I can sing in Spanish and even the Anglos will go nuts. If I do anything in Spanish, there's a response from everybody, especially on the ballads." ❧



2

## SUZY BOGGUSS

*"Souvenirs"*

**W**hen Suzy Bogguss won the Country Music Association's Horizon Award in 1991, fans knew she was one of the best female singers in country music.

What they might not have known, however, is how dedicated Bogguss is to finding

songs by the best female songwriters in country music. In the past, Bogguss has recorded material by such well-known artist-writers as Nanci Griffith ("Outbound Plane"), Wendy Waldman ("Friend of Mine") and Cheryl Wheeler ("Aces"). On her latest album, *Something Up My Sleeve*, she continues to show her excellent taste in material.

The hit single "Hey Cinderella" was co-written by Bogguss, Gary Harrison and Matraca Berg, who penned Trisha Yearwood's "Wrong Side of Memphis" and has recorded two impressive albums of her own. (Berg also co-wrote the album's lead track, "Diamonds and Tears.") Beth Nielsen Chapman wrote "I Keep Comin' Back to You" with Bill Lloyd. Bogguss also recorded songs by Pat Bunch and Suzanne Ragsdale, two familiar names in Nashville's songwriting community, and she co-wrote five of the album's tunes.

"Souvenirs," Bogguss' latest single, was written by Gretchen Peters, who wrote Martina McBride's recent breakthrough single, "My Baby Loves Me" and has had songs recorded by Randy Travis and many other artists. On one hand, "Souvenirs" is a tale of wanderlust and a search for true love; on the other, it's a commentary on the tendency of Americans to settle for trinkets and cheap imitations when they're looking for the real thing. Fans of country music need look no farther than Suzy Bogguss: When it comes to well-written, well-sung songs, she is the real thing. ❧





## ON THE RECORD

### RICK TREVINO

"Honky Tonk Crowd"  
(Marty Stuart)

© Tubbs' Music/Songs of PolyGram International, Inc. (BMI). From the Columbia Records album *Rick Trevino* (Selection 04064)

### SUZY BOGGUSS

"Souvenirs"  
(Gretchen Peters)

©1991 Cross Keys Publishing Co., Purple Crayon Music. From the Liberty Records album *Something Up My Sleeve* (Selection 04065)

### TRACY LAWRENCE

"My Second Home"  
(Lawrence/Beard/Nelson)

© Mike Dunn Music/Golden Reed Music, Inc., c/o New Clarion Music Group (ASCAP)/Sony Tree Publishing Co., Inc. (BMI). From the Atlantic Records album *Alibis* (Selection 04056)

### DUDE MOWREY

"Somewhere in Between"  
(Allen Shamblin/Jon Vezner)

© 1992 Almo Music Corp., Hayes Street Music, Inc., Allen Shamblin Music (ASCAP)/Warner-Tamerlane Publishing corp., Minnesota Man Music (BMI). From the Arista Records album *Dude Mowrey* (Selection 04146)

### KENNY CHESNEY

"The Tin Man"  
(Chesney/Lowe/Slate)

© Acuff-Rose Music Inc., Songwriters Ink (BMI), Texas Wedge Music (ASCAP). From the Capricorn Records album *In My Wildest Dreams* (Selection 04057)

### JUNIOR BROWN

"My Wife Thinks You're Dead"  
(Jamieson Brown)

© 1993 Mike Curb Music/Jamieson Brown Music (BMI). From the Curb Records album *Guit With It* (Selection 04061)

### C.C. ADCOCK

"Couchemal"  
(C.C. Adcock)

© 1992 Marsh Island Music/Island Music Ltd., admin. by Songs of PolyGram International, Inc. (BMI). From the Island Records album *C.C. Adcock* (Selection 04062)

### LEE ROY PARNELL

"I'm Holding My Own"  
(Tony Arata)

© 1993 Pookie Bear Music, adm. by Bug Music (ASCAP). From the Arista Records album *On the Road* (Selection 04066)

### NEAL MCCOY

"Wink"

(Bob DiPiero, Tom Shapiro)

© Little Big Town Music/American Made Music/Great Cumberland Music/Diamond Struck Music (BMI). From the Atlantic Records album *No Doubt About It* (Selection 04055)

### SAWYER BROWN

"Outskirts of Town"  
(Gregg Hubbard/Duncan Cameron)

© 1993 Myrr & Chuck's Boy Music/Flying Fingers Music (ASCAP). From the Curb Records album *Outskirts of Town* (Selection 04059)

### COURTNEY & WESTERN

"Lovin' You Is Killin' Me"  
(Pascal Tiger)

© Rick Rock Songs/Bigville Music, admin. by Bug (BMI). From the Fruit of the Tune album *Rig Rock Truck Stop* (Selection 04052)

4

## DUDE MOWREY

"Somewhere in Between"

At 22, Dude Mowrey is one of the youngest country singers with a major recording contract. But *Dude Mowrey*, his Arista Records debut, isn't even his first album. Mowrey initially signed with Capitol Records (now Liberty) when he was 18.

"I came up right out of high school," says Mowrey, whose picked up his nickname from his older brother (his given name is Daniel). "I made an album, had a couple of singles out. It was real good experience. It didn't do great or anything, but it was definitely a stepping stone to better things." Mowrey left Capitol shortly after that first album and signed with Arista, who teamed him with producers Tim DuBois (the head of the label) and Michael Clute to record the new album.

Many of Nashville's top songwriters contributed cuts to *Dude Mowrey*, including Allen Shamblin and Jon Vezner, who co-wrote Mowrey's latest single, "Somewhere in Between." But Mowrey is a budding tunesmith in his own right—he penned "View From the Bottom" with Ralph Murphy and has started working with other writers who have given him songs.

"I write with a lot of the writers who wrote songs for my album," Mowrey says. "Ralph Murphy and I write together; Jon Vezner and I are fixing to do some stuff. I've written with Hunter Moore, who wrote 'Maybe You Were the One.'"

"I'm real fortunate to be making records at this time in my life," he says. "I think my songwriting and performing gets a little better each year. As long as I'm growing and heading in the right direction, I'm happy." ☛



3

## TRACY LAWRENCE

"My Second Home"

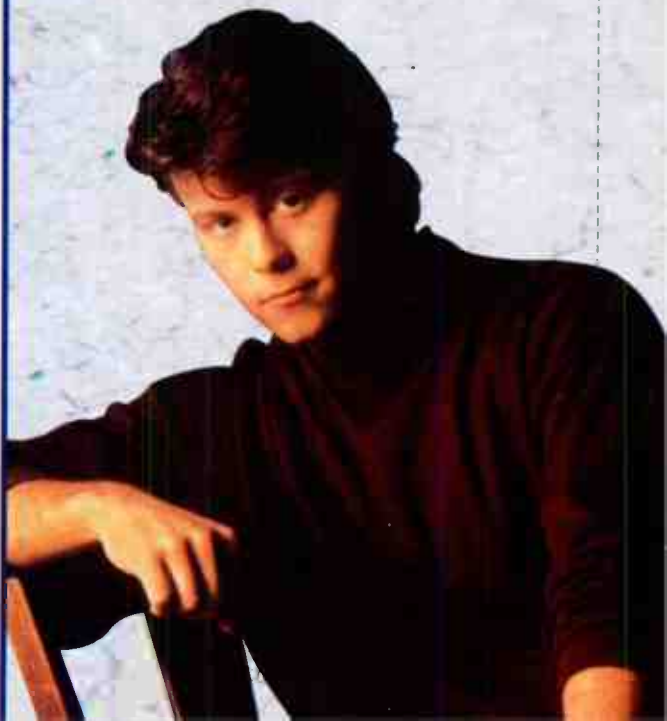
"My Second Home," the second single from Tracy Lawrence's second album, *Alibis*, followed the trail set by such hits as "Sticks and Stones" and "Today's Lonely Fool"—all the way to the upper reaches of the country charts.

Certified gold just 17 days after its release, *Alibis* was one of the fastest-selling country albums of 1993. It has now sold more than a million copies, outpacing Lawrence's debut, *Sticks and Stones*.

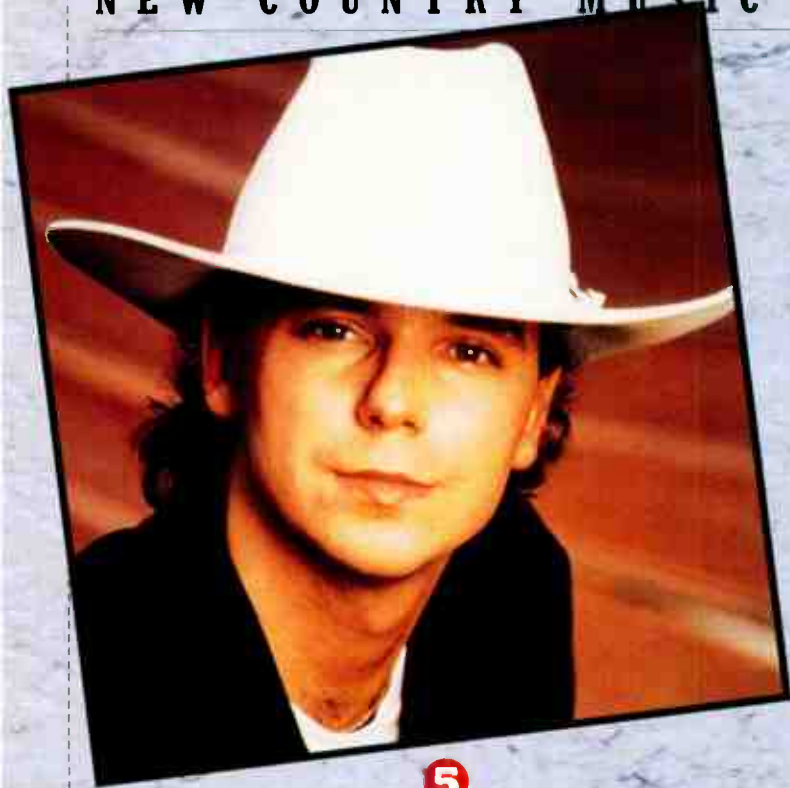
Lawrence received his first burst of publicity in 1991 when a robber pumped four bullets into him outside a Nashville hotel. Since then, the young country star has shown that the depth of his talent keeps him in the limelight. *Alibis* has generated four hit singles—"My Second Home," the title track, "Can't Break It to My Heart" and "We Don't Love Here Anymore."

The 26-year-old Arkansas native co-wrote "My Second Home" and three other songs from *Alibis*: "Can't Break It to My Heart," "It Only Takes One Bar (To Make a Prison)" and "Back to Back." He won the Academy of Country Music's Best New Artist award in 1993, and he has a third album due later this year.

Winning fans as a singer, writer and performer, Lawrence has the kind of wide-ranging talents that prompted *The Dallas Morning News* to say: "Nobody at his age could put it all together like Lawrence. For the past two years, he's almost single-handedly kept country radio from drowning in a sea of sap." ☛







**5**  
**KENNY CHESNEY**  
*"The Tin Man"*

**K**enny Chesney found Music Row quite accidentally. "I'd been to Nashville," the 25-year-old singer says, "but I'd never been to Music Row—didn't have a clue where it was. I drove to Nashville, and said, 'Okay, I'll get off at this exit. I went to the red light, took a left and there I was—right there on Music Row."

"I'd never been there, and I went right to Music Row. It was pretty cool."

Chesney spent three years in Nashville working odd jobs before recording his first album, *In My Wildest Dreams* for Capricorn Records. He'd earlier signed a publishing contract with Acuff-Rose Music, home to the songs of Hank Williams, Don Gibson and Roy Orbison. Chesney wrote or co-wrote six of his album's songs, and the video for his first single, "Whatever It Takes," reached the Top 10 on VH-1's *Country Countdown*. His latest single, a self-penned ballad called "The Tin Man," dates back to the days when he was a regular performer at a small downtown Nashville club called the Turf.

Chesney's East Tennessee voice recalls the hard country styles of Aaron Tippin and Keith Whitley, and Chesney pays tribute to both on *In My Wildest Dreams*. Tippin wrote and recorded "In My Wildest Dreams" for his debut, and Chesney recorded "I Want My Rib Back," which appeared on Whitley's posthumously released *Kentucky Bluebird*.

"I saw Keith Whitley for the first time in Knoxville, Tennessee, at this listener appreciation day," recalls Chesney. "He died in late May; I saw him in early May. I saw him up there on stage, and this little silent voice in my heart thought, 'I'd like to do that.' I really took to Keith because I loved the honesty in his singing. People have compared my singing a little bit to Keith's—I'm glad to hear that." ❁

**6**

**JUNIOR BROWN**

*"My Wife Thinks You're Dead"*

**O**n his new single, "My Wife Thinks You're Dead," Texas singer/guitarist Junior Brown runs into a renegade ex-girlfriend, the reports of whose death have been greatly exaggerated. With Brown's deep-twang picking and bottomless deadpan drawl, it's a stone-country song that's also genuinely funny.

"I don't want to call it comedy writing," says Brown, for years one of Austin's most popular live draws, "because it's not Ray Stevens. It's just a humorous song; you don't see very many of those any more. You don't really see them in rock, either. So I just hark back to that style of old country writing.

"I don't want to be typecast as that, because a lot of stuff I do is very serious as well."

*Guit With It* combines hard-core country, humor and a cover of Hank Garland's instrumental "Sugarfoot Rag" that makes nimble-fingered use of Brown's "guit-steel," a custom-made double-necked instrument that allows him to switch from guitar to steel guitar.



"I always played both instruments—steel guitar and standard guitar—at the same time," Brown says, "but I'd have to unplug one and plug into the other, and it was awkward. One night, I had a dream that I was playing the two together. When I woke up, I arranged my blankets around the steel guitar and the regular guitar and tried to make the shape it would look like. I went to a guitar maker named Michael Stevens with the idea, and a couple of years later, he built it." ❁





7

**C.C. ADCOCK**

*"Couchemal"*

One time I asked Bo Diddley what kind of music he played," says C.C. Adcock, a 23-year-old guitarist from Lafayette, Louisiana, who has performed with Diddley and Louisiana legend Buckwheat Zydeco. "He said, 'Well, Charles, I play country music. From a different country.'"

Adcock's first solo album, *C.C. Adcock*, could do for Louisiana what Stevie Ray Vaughan did for Texas blues. With houserocking tunes coming from Diddley, the Neville Brothers' Art Neville and Adcock himself, the album is steeped in the region's tradition of country, rock and blues.

"Couchemal," the album's lead track, tells a dark tale of a Creole demon who haunts sinners for evil deeds. "It's never happened to me," Adcock says, "but a lot of cats tell the exact same story. It's meant to be going on."

Though there's not a fiddle or pedal steel found on *C.C. Adcock* (Adcock favors accordion and rubboard), the young singer says he's felt the ties between country, zydeco and Cajun music all his life.

"The few times it's crossed over into the mainstream or been molded together with other types of American music, it's been most successful in the country format," he says, citing examples of Jo-El Sonnier and Jimmy C. Newman as well as a duet Buckwheat Zydeco recorded with Dwight Yoakam. "I think country fans really enjoy heartfelt music. They're not into the hype as much as they're into the music, a good beat and the words. I think if you give people a good down-home soulful beat, it's hard to pass it up." ❧

8

**LEE ROY PARNELL**

*"I'm Holding My Own"*

"I'm Holding My Own," Lee Roy Parnell's latest single, holds a special place in the making of the singer's third album, *On the Road*.

"It was the very first song I had for the album," says Parnell. "I fell in love with it the minute I heard it. It sounded just like something I ought to be doing. I had it in my front pocket and carried it around for a year."

Parnell works for the second time with producer Scott Hendricks on this album, which features more of Parnell's Texas-bred vocals and trademark slide guitar, as well as a duet with Brooks & Dunn's Ronnie Dunn on the Hank Williams classic "Take These Chains From My Heart."

With its slow soul groove and poignant slide lines, "I'm Holding My Own" offers a change of pace from the rollicking country-rock of such earlier Parnell hits as "Tender Moment" and "On the Road."

"It's what Barry Beckett would call a 'beat ballad,'" Parnell says of "I'm Holding My Own," which was written by Tony Arata. "There's a groove there, but in essence the song's really more of a ballad. It has such an unusual melody line against the chord progression; it's real different from anything else that's out there. The lyric, of course, has the components I look for in a lyric, which are signs of a struggle and hope at the end. I feel real good about singing songs like that." ❧





9

## NEAL MCCOY

"Wink"

For years, Neal McCoy has built a reputation for his unpredictable and energetic concerts. On *No Doubt About It*, his third album, he's finally translated that energy to a recording. Give partial credit to producer Barry Beckett, a veteran of Southern music who has also worked with Lorrie Morgan and Lynyrd Skynyrd.

"Barry didn't try to change my singing style at all," McCoy says. "He just let me sing. What he did was recognize my style and looked for material that would fit me, instead of making me fit the material."

The mixed musical heritage of the part Irish, part Filipino singer who grew up in Jacksonville, Texas, gave Beckett a lot with which to work. McCoy's father listened to country music, his mother to big band, and McCoy received his initial inspiration from a pre-adolescent Michael Jackson performance of "ABC" on *American Bandstand*.



That kind of background translates into a show that veers quickly into rock before returning to stone country, one that often includes a rap version of *The Beverly Hillbillies* theme. McCoy believes he's captured that same dynamic on his new single, "Wink."

"I think this whole album sounds like a show of ours," McCoy says about *No Doubt About It*. "It's got the fun stuff—the sad song every once in a while. It's just some good ol' soulful music, and it feels to me kind of like what you'd see from me if you went to one of our shows." ✨

10

## SAWYER BROWN

"Outskirts of Town"

When Sawyer Brown first hit the radio airwaves in 1985, the band received a mixed response. The group's concerts drew thousands of enthusiastic fans, but conservative radio programmers were cautious about the rock-influenced group with a hyperactive lead singer.

Lately, even people who never forgave them for winning *Star Search* have started to give Sawyer Brown a second listen. The group's resurgence started with "The Walk" and has continued through *Cafe on the Corner* and *Outskirts of Town*, the strongest albums of the group's career.

"I wrote 'Step That Step' [the group's first Number One single] when I was 23 years old," says lead singer Mark Miller. "It's been more than 10 years now, and I think we look at life differently. There's a much broader world view we bring to our writing now. I don't think that means you rock any less. I think we rock as hard as we ever did."

Sawyer Brown's continuing maturation shows in "Outskirts of Town," co-written by keyboardist Gregg Hubbard and guitarist Duncan Cameron, in which the promises of city life and the pull of the land make their peace in a young man's soul.

"On *The Dirt Road* and *Cafe on the Corner*, we really had something to say," Miller says, "and I think *Outskirts of Town* is a continuation of that. We take very seriously our roles as artists rather than as a group that comes in with a producer who brings in outside songs for us. We have things we want to say, and we want them expressed in a certain way. We try to stay very focused on that." ✨





PHOTO BY NABIL NAJJAR



11

**COURTNEY & WESTERN**

*"Lovin' You Is Killin' Me"*

I think that what we do is a little left field in the country vein," says Courtney & Western singer Courtney Lee Adams with a low chuckle. "I don't think Nashville's ready for us. I've got relatives in Nashville, so I know what it's like down there."

Adams' four-piece group plays gear-grinding, guitar-based country music mixed with a heavy dose of bar-band rock. The group is one of 15 acts on *Rig Rock Truck Stop*, the second compilation from Diesel Only Records, a label that specializes in vinyl singles for jukeboxes.

Adams, whose mother grew up in Nashville, started playing country covers while in college in Connecticut. Her group, which also features bassist Elissa Moser, guitarist Pascal Tiger and drummer Beau Bradley, released its first single in 1990. Courtney & Western has a pair of tracks, "Lovin' You Is Killin' Me" and "Am I in Love" on *Rig Rock Truck Stop*; the group also contributed two songs to the first Diesel Only album, *Rig Rock Jukebox*.

Though the latest release from the Brooklyn-based label sports acts from Austin (Jean Caffeine's All-Nite Truckstop), Nashville (Gwil Owen), Dallas (Killbilly) and Boston (Wheelers & Dealers), most Diesel Only acts come from New York City's club-level country-rock scene. Courtney & Western and compadres like the Five Chinese Brothers and the Surreal McCoys frequently play the city's rock clubs and make occasional forays to nearby towns like Washington, D.C., and Boston.

"Our live shows are a little zanier than our records," says Adams. "We're silly. Plus, we make more mistakes live." ❧

*Which Gift Will They Remember Month After Month?*

Looking for a unique gift for a friend or family member? Do they like country music? With a gift subscription to *New Country Music* magazine, your country music fan will receive all the excitement and news from Nashville and the country music scene, plus an exclusive CD or cassette with songs from today's hot country stars each month. It's all included in the subscription price.

*New Country Music* magazine is a great present and a one-of-a-kind treat for anyone who enjoys country music. Simply fill out the gift subscription form below. We will send out the latest issue of *New Country Music* magazine.



To Send A Gift Call:  
**1-800-71-MUSIC**

*Special Gift Offer*

- 6 month subscription—\$39.95 (includes shipping and handling)
- Check here to send your monthly recording on Cassette
- 12 month subscription—\$69.95 (includes shipping and handling)
- Check here to send your monthly recording on Cassette

SEND GIFT TO:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS APT. NO.

CITY STATE ZIP

GIFT FROM:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS APT. NO. CITY STATE ZIP

ACCOUNT NUMBER (IF YOU ARE A SUBSCRIBER)

PAYMENT METHODS:

- Check enclosed (payable to New Country Music)
- Charge my credit card:  Visa  Mastercard  American Express

CARD NO. EXP. DATE MO/YR

CARD-HOLDER'S SIGNATURE

MAIL TO: **New Country Music Service**  
**PO Box 60040/Tampa, FL 33660-0040**

New gifts begin with the next available issue after payment is received.  
\* Residents of NY, CA and PA please add applicable sales tax. Canadian residents, \$55.95 for 6 months, \$109.95 for 12 months. GST and import duty extra

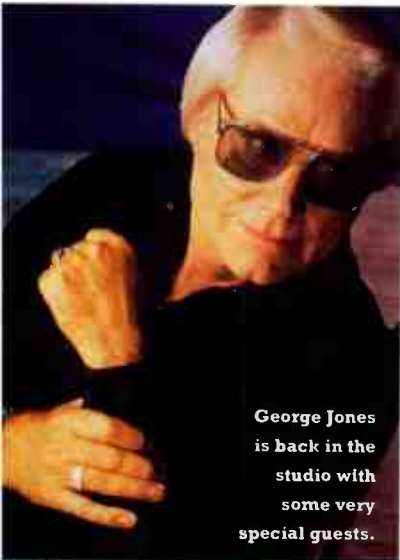


# City Lights

## George Jones Shines On

**R**olling Stone Keith Richards is among the artists who will sing with George Jones on his next album. Recording began in February on a collection, due for October release, pairing Jones with various duet partners on new versions of songs from his past.

Brian Ahern, whose credits include production work for ex-wife Emmylou Harris, Rodney Crowell, Johnny Cash and Billy Joe Shaver, is overseeing the project.



George Jones is back in the studio with some very special guests.

Among the artists slated to join Jones in the studio are Dire Straits frontman Mark Knopfler, Jones protege Mark Chesnutt, Vince Gill and Travis Tritt. Longtime Jones singing partner and ex-wife Tammy Wynette—who has a duet album of her own due soon—will team with Jones on a track. Also expected to harmonize are Alan Jackson, Marty Stuart, Trisha Yearwood, Ricky Skaggs and Dolly Parton.

Stuart, Gill and Skaggs will join other top-line session pickers in the all-star band set to back Jones on his album. —Jay Orr



Trisha Yearwood and Mary-Chapin Carpenter bridge the past and present.

## An Evening of Greatness

Mary-Chapin Carpenter and Trisha Yearwood re-created the Everly Brothers' sibling harmonies and others paid tribute to country's legends during "An Evening of Greats." The \$125-per-person event celebrated the members of the Country Music Hall of Fame by having current artists perform songs by some of their influences. Yearwood and Carpenter sang a duet of "Nashville Blues," an obscure tune by Felice and Boudleaux Bryant, who penned the Everly's "All I Have To Do Is Dream," "Bye, Bye Love" and some 1,500 other songs. Joe Diffie covered the George Jones classic "He Stopped Loving Her Today" and Shelby Lynne invited Patsy Cline comparisons with "She's Got You" in two of the evening's gutsiest moments. Tanya Tucker, Lorrie Morgan, Marty Stuart, Emmylou Harris and Carlene Carter also performed during the mid-February concert, which was taped for a TNN special to air Wednesday, April 13 at 7:30 p.m.

COMPILED BY BRIAN MANSFIELD

## Giving Up Guns For Tickets

**L**et me have my gun." Reba McEntire, who spoke these words as a gun-lugging survivalist in the movie *Tremors*, is now asking fans for their firearms. If they give them to her, she'll give them tickets to her concerts.

McEntire began the exchange program at selected cities in February. In Jackson, Mississippi, where McEntire's concert sold out in two hours, local authorities received more than 70 guns.

"Reba never even sees the guns," says McEntire spokesperson Jenny Bohler. "Local authorities are getting the guns, and they dispose of them however they see fit."

Asked if such videos as "Does He Love You," in which McEntire firebombs rival Linda Davis, and "The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia," where she blows away an adulterous sister-in-law and her lover, might contribute to the nation's rising fear of weapons, McEntire responded succinctly.

"I don't know the answer to that."





## Exile Leaves The Spotlight

**A**fter performing for three decades and reaching the heights of the country and pop charts, members of Exile called it quits following a benefit performance in Nashville February 13.

Exile had survived the 1978 death of lead singer Jimmy Stokley and the later departure of members Les Taylor and J.P. Pennington, but ultimately could not weather the changing climate of country music. The group had not had a record deal since Arista released *Justice* in 1991.

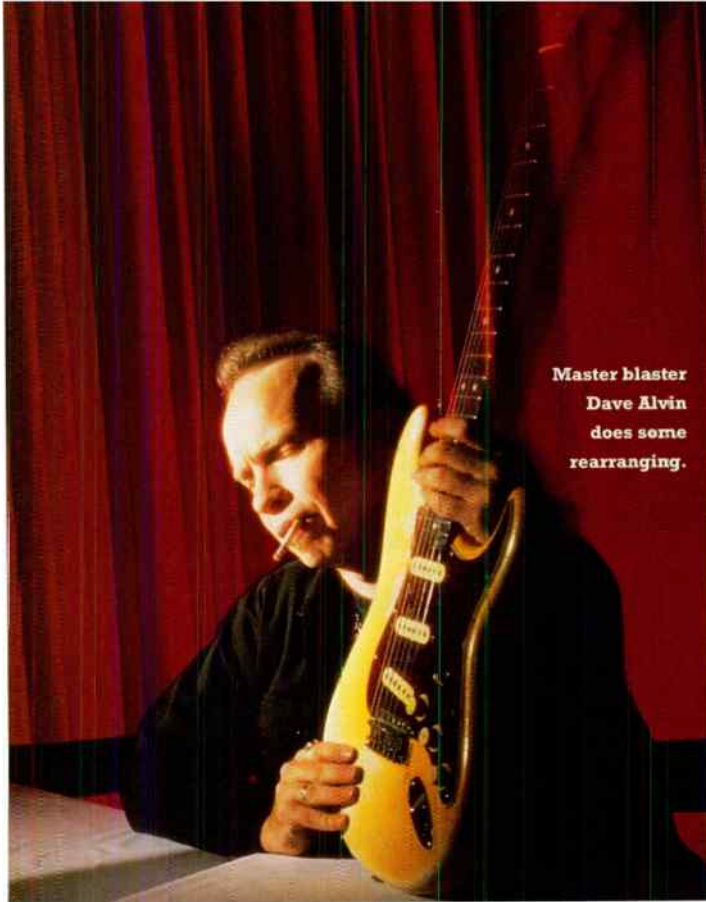
After opening the concert with co-host Joe Diffie, group members Sonny Lemaire and Paul Martin backed Bobbie Cryner for two songs. They later returned with drummer Steve Goetzman, keyboardist Lee Carroll and guitarist Mark Jones for a set that included such hits as "Woke Up in Love," "Nobody's Talking," "Keep It in the Middle of the Road" and the 1978 pop hit "Kiss You All Over."

"On behalf of the band after all these years," Lemaire said to the audience, "we want to tell you how much you meant to us, how much you have given us."

Restless Heart singer John Dittich made a surprise appearance along with songwriter Marc Beeson and harmonica player Terry McMillan and performed "When She Cries," which Lemaire and Beeson wrote.

The concert, a benefit for a local program for disabled children, also featured the Gibson/Miller Band, Tim McGraw, Toby Keith, Lorrie Morgan and Tammy Wynette.

Goetzman now manages Steve Wariner. Lemaire plans to continue writing songs, while Martin has joined Kathy Mattea's band.



Master blaster  
Dave Alvin  
does some  
rearranging.

## Dave Alvin's Quieter Side

Dave Alvin, who has played acoustic sets opening for Dwight Yoakam and Richard Thompson, has finished an album that includes rearranged material from his days with the Blasters and X.

"It's mainly acoustic, stripped-down, folkish style," Alvin says. "A lot of the touring I've done since going solo has been in that format.

Most people expect me to play rock and roll, real loud and sweaty, but there's this whole other audience that's more a songwriter's audience." The album, set for release later this spring, features new versions of Blasters tunes "Border Radio" and "Bus Station," as well as a new duet with Rosie Flores.



Joe Diffie joins  
Exile at the band's  
farewell concert.

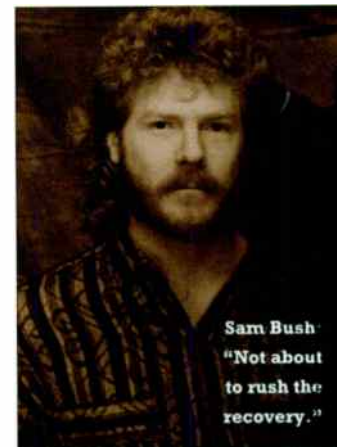
World Radio History

## Thank Heavens It's Springtime

**T**ake it away, Sam! Sam? Sam! On January 22, Music City's favorite mandolinist/fiddler/all-around acoustic handyman took a nasty fall on the Nashville ice, fracturing his right elbow. Sam Bush had just finished negotiating the steepest driveway in town, leaving a birthday party for Olivia Douglas, 3-year-old daughter of dobro wizard Jerry "Flux" Douglas.

"I hit a spot of black ice that had thawed and re-frozen," Bush sighs. "It didn't look like ice, but boy, it sure was, and blam."

Bush was expected to start flexing the arm around the beginning of March. Meanwhile, he kept his callouses in shape by



doing left-hand pull-offs on the neck of his mandolin. He missed some gigs though, including his usual dates with Emmylou Harris, sessions for the upcoming *Trio* album with Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Harris (he recommended David Grisman for that one), and work on Mark Knopfler's upcoming record.

"We're not about to rush the recovery," Bush says. "We just want to do it right one time. The first thing David Grisman said was, 'So, you gonna sue Flux or what?'" —Peter Cronin

PHOTO BY ALAN MAYOR



## The Band With No Name

Is the world ready for a country supergroup? This one, with Bill Lloyd (Foster & Lloyd), Rusty Young (Poco), Pat Simmons (Doobie Brothers) and John Cowan (New Grass Revival), promises to be much more than a country fashion show with hot licks. Previously signed to RCA, the as-yet-unnamed group recorded an entire album that the label declined to release.

"It was one of those 'change of management' things," says Lloyd. "We recorded the album, then our a&r guy got fired, then the president of RCA changed. Ours wasn't the only project that got shelved." Another stroke of bad luck for the band: Someone else had already copyrighted its original moniker, Four Wheel Drive. Now signed to Warner Bros., the group's fate is looking up, with plans for an album in early 1995.

A name for the group continues to pose problems. Says Lloyd: "I don't know, we've got to come up with something before the record comes out." —*Kath Hansen*

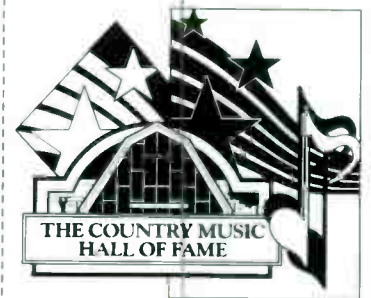


## A Tough Break

The Judds' split with longtime manager Ken Stilts does not appear to be amicable. Both sides have gotten attorneys and refused to speak publicly on the matter. Stilts had managed Wynonna and Naomi Judd since 1982 and was instrumental in landing them a deal with RCA Records the following year. Stilts has hired powerhouse attorney Jim Neal. The Judds' attorney, John Unger is serving as their interim manager. "Wynonna and Naomi have had a real long and incredibly successful business and personal relationship with Ken," says Liz Thiels, Wynonna's spokeswoman, "so there is a lot of pain involved here for everybody." —*Beverly Keel*

## Country Music Hall of Fame To Move

The Country Music Hall of Fame plans to move to downtown Nashville to coincide with the opening of the town's 20,000-seat arena in 1996. Country Music Foundation Director Bill Ivey says the museum will "start now with a major collecting program" to fill the location's 100,000 square feet, twice as much as the present museum. CMF executives plan to convert the current site, which separates the tourist and business areas of Music Row, into a visitors center.



## Arista/Texas Moves Into Tejano Territory

Arista/Texas recently jumped into the expanding Tejano music arena with an initial roster that includes familiar faces and new talent.

At a January news conference in San Antonio, Texas, officials said Tejano, a blend of Mexican cumbias and polkas with elements of rock, pop and country, still has plenty of growth potential.

"Tejano music is contagious and it's addictive," said Cameron Randle, vice president for the Austin-based label. "We came to Texas to promote regional music, and we feel Tejano is the most compelling music today."

"We want to help expand Tejano, but with a balance between the commercial integri-

ty of a major label recording while maintaining the unique and genuine quality of the art form."

Asked if Arista wouldn't fill the role of bottom-fishers in Tex-Mex considering six major labels already operate in Texas, Randle responded: "It is a grave disservice to the Tejano industry to suggest

that there isn't any more talent out there. Tejano has a future, and we want to be a part of it."

Two-time Grammy winner and accordionist Flaco Jimenez and newcomer Rick Orozco of San Antonio were named along with Freddy Fender, Joel Nava and La Diferenzia. Fender and

Jimenez were part of the now-defunct Texas Tornados.

"Tejano transcends language," says Tim DuBois, president of Arista Records' Nashville division. "It is uplifting, it is music we call 'smile' music. We are coming into this [market] from a Nashville perspective. We are very serious, thorough in what we do, and we are very responsive."

Since 1990, Tejano music has been the hottest genre in the Latin music industry. A September feature in *The New York Times* noted record revenues of Latin music in the United States were about \$150 million last year, up from approximately \$50 million in 1980. —*Ramiro Burr*



La Diferenzia is part of Arista/Texas' starting lineup.



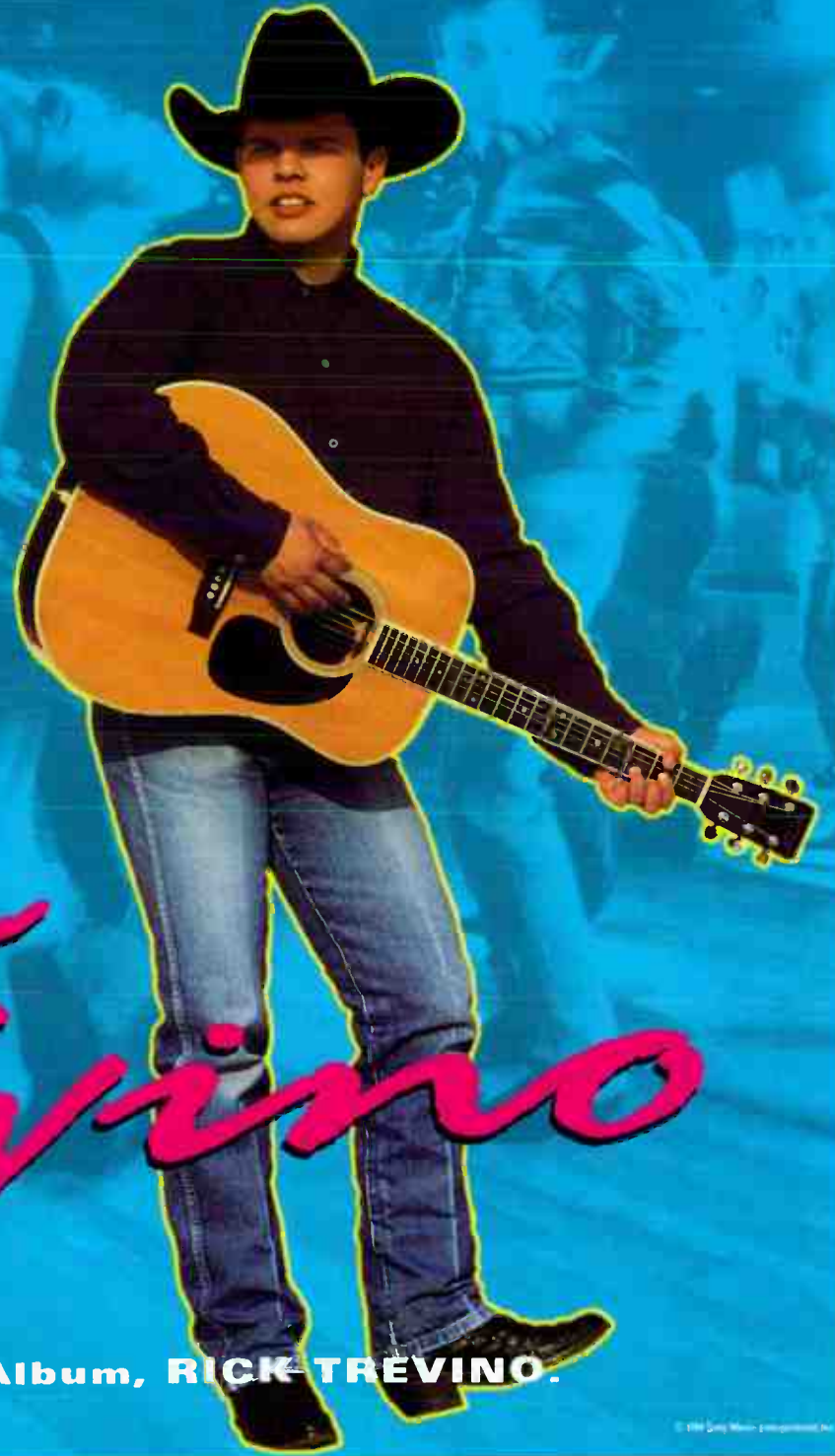
WHEREVER THERE'S  
A CROWD

RICK TREVINO  
STANDS OUT

*Rick  
Trevino*

HONKY  
TONEK  
*crowd*

From The Columbia Album, RICK TREVINO.



© 1999 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.



# New Traditions

## Kennedy Rose

**A**fter 14 years together, many duos are ready to clobber each other with the nearest blunt instrument. Sometimes, so are Mary Ann Kennedy and Pam Rose, also known as Kennedy Rose.

"When you've worked and been close for 14 years, you get used to conflict," says Kennedy, whose slightly husky voice carries a note of amusement. "We talked to Art Garfunkel about the trials and tribulations of performing as a duo, and we met with Jim Messina, too. They helped us realize that Kennedy Rose is an entity that's something other than just the two of us—it's not all of me, and it's not all of her. And we have to respect that."

Everyone else who has heard Kennedy Rose's blend of exultant harmonies, multi-instrumental dexterity and sharp-witted songcraft already does. Not only did the duo garner raves for its 1990 debut album *bai ku*—whose irresistible pop ballad "Love Like This" conquered the nation's progressive FM stations—they penned Patty Loveless' recent smash "You Will" and Restless Heart's "I'll Still Be Loving You," among other choice cuts. They're also in demand as background vocalists, having recently sung on Faith Hill's "Wild One" and Pam Tillis' forthcoming album.

Their self-produced new Pangaea/I.R.S. Records album, *Walk the Line* (Selection 04083), reflects both the Beatlesque pop sense and country sensibility that has made Kennedy and Rose such a potent combination. From achingly sweet ballads given sandpapery edges by desperation ("Without Your Love") to expansive jams that show off the duo's instrumental prowess ("Island Home" features fervent admirer and label boss Sting on bass), *Walk the Line* finds Kennedy Rose shredding every tired label in the music-marketing handbook. Especially notable is "Iron Horse," on which the two singers wail above the chanting and drumming of 16 Menominee Indian musicians.

"The music has a lot to do with the trips we made out West during the *bai ku* tour," says Kennedy. "We really felt in touch with our native heritage, and we wanted the record to have a more pure, organic sound. Feeling was the magic word—your emotional inclination is more important than any set of rules you're supposed to follow."

Their insistence on feeling over form has resulted in 12 forthright, intelligent tunes that tend to knock you upside the head when your attention wanes. When the two singer-songwriters take a break from crafting fiercely literate songs, however, do they ever feel like just banging out some dumb three-chord rock 'n' roll? Kennedy answers with an earthy laugh.

"Each of us has elements we couldn't bring to this record—Pam goes deeper into her folk roots on her own, and I guess I'm the idiot



*"We really felt in touch with our native heritage, and we wanted the record to have a more pure, organic sound."*

rock 'n' roller of the two of us. You have to keep your individual style or you get way too tunnel-visioned just working together."

Does that mean we can expect a solo album of Chuck Berry covers?

"You might, you might!" Kennedy responds with a cackle. "And you might hear a New Age record from Pam!"—*Jim Ridley*





Once he's wrestled his instrument to the ground, played it into submission and transcended its "limitations," what's a genre-hopping Music City session virtuoso to do? The answer to that musical question for dobroist Jerry Douglas, guitarist Russ Barenberg and bassist Edgar Meyer is *Skip, Hop & Wobble* (Selection 04021) an extraordinary trio record on the Sugar Hill label that establishes an oddball acoustic balance between excess ability and accessibility.

"We got tired of hearing records that are so chops-oriented that there's no melody," Douglas says. "I've got some real good friends that make records, and I can't listen to them because I can't pull a melody out of them."

Between Meyer's impossible leapfrog basslines, Barenberg's furious flatpicking and the fluid tumble of Douglas' dobro licks, there are plenty of fretboard acrobatics on *Skip, Hop & Wobble*, but a carefully knitted, slightly twisted melodic thread keeps these wide-ranging songs from veering too far out into the newgrass/fusion frontier.

"This trio gives us an outlet to play a broad range of music that's tone-defined rather than notes-per-square-inch," says bluegrass veter-

an Douglas. Executing the mostly group-composed songs on *Skip, Hop & Wobble* forces each of these pyrotechnic soloists into team-player mode. The three musicians take advantage of the space, reveling in the creative push-and-pull that the trio setting affords.

"It's coherent and it's transparent," Douglas says, "and that's largely a tone spectrum thing. When you're playing with lots of pieces, things that are in the same range can begin to cancel out and disappear. If we added another instrument in the same range as Russ and I... well, actu-

ally Edgar climbs up there a lot."

Meyer does tend to stray to the upper regions of the neck, and the live perform-

ances in support of this record have turned into instrumental free-for-alls. One song at a recent gig devolved into a three-men-on-one-neck bass solo. No doubt about it, for family men Douglas, Barenberg and Meyer, this trio is more about fun than finances, and the space they give each other is as important as the space between the notes.

"We all wear a lot of hats," Douglas says. "Each of us has things going on other than this trio, and that keeps this trio happy."—Peter Cronin

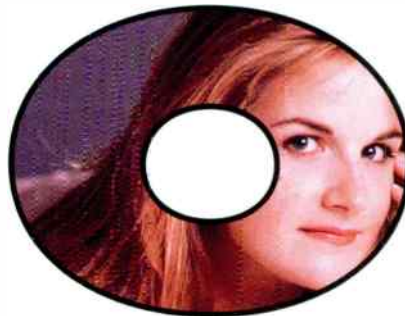
## Douglas, Barenberg & Meyer



# COLUMBIA HOUSE BRINGS YOU THE FACES OF



**Billy Ray Cyrus**—It Won't Be The Last. *In The Heart Of A Woman; Talk Some; Somebody New; When I'm Gone;* etc. (Mercury/Nashville) **463•240**



**Trisha Yearwood**—The Song Remembers When. *Title cut; I Don't Fall In Love So Easy;* many more. (MCA Nashville) **469•924**



**Alan Jackson**—A Lot About Livin' (And A Little 'Bout Love). *She's Got The Rhythm (And I Got The Blues);* plus many more. (Arista) **447•448**

**Pirates Of The Mississippi**—Dream You (Liberty) **468•868**

**Collin Raye**—All I Can Be (Epic) **431•445**

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

**Mary Chapin Carpenter**—Come On, Come On (Columbia) **440•560**

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

**Lee Roy Parnell**—On The Road (Arista) **470•450**

**Asleep At The Wheel**—Tribute To The Music Of Bob Willis (Liberty) **469•650**

**Doug Stone**—More Love (Epic) **470•013**

**Mark O'Connor**—Heroes (Wamer Bros.) **468•512**

**Steve Wariner**—Drive (Arista) **464•255**

**Kelly Willis** (MCA) **463•513**

**Suzu Bogguss**—Something Up My Sleeve (Liberty) **465•997**

## GEORGE STRAIT

**Pure Country.** *I Cross My Heart; Last In Love; When Did You Stop Loving Me;* more. (MCA) **448•753**

**Holding My Own.** *So Much Like My Dad; Gone As A Girl Can Get; You're Right, I'm Wrong; Trains Make Me...; It's Alright With Me;* many more. (MCA) **440•369**

**Ten Strait Hits.** *Baby Blue; Ace In The Hole; Famous Last Words Of A Fool; If You Ain't Loving...;* six more. (MCA) **432•617**

**Chill Of An Early Fall.** *Lovesick Blues; I've Convinced Everybody But Me;* others. (MCA) **617•634**



**Emmylou Harris**—Cowgirl's Prayer (Asylum) **468•975**

**Rodney Crowell**—Greatest Hits (Columbia) **467•720**

**Charlie Chase**—My Wife...My Life (Epic) **467•530**

**Tanya Tucker**—Soon (Liberty) **468•850**

**Matthews, Wright & King**—Dream Seekers (Columbia) **463•455**

**Ronnie Milsap**—True Believer (Liberty) **461•889**

**Randy Travis**—"Wind In The Wire" (Wamer Bros.) **465•856**

**Roy Clark**—Great Picks & New Tricks (Branson Entertainment) **461•202**

**Carlene Carter**—Little Love Letters (Giant) **461•079**

**Tanya Tucker**—Greatest Hits 1990-1992 (Liberty) **458•935**

**Ricky Lynn Gregg** (Liberty) **458•869**

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

**McBride & The Ride**—Hurry Sundown (MCA) **458•240**

**The Best Of Lacy J. Dalton** (Liberty) **458•166**

**Skip Ewing**—Home-grown Love (Liberty) **457•804**

**Hank Williams, Jr.**—Out Of Left Field (Curb Capricorn) **457•259**

**Essential Steve Earle** (MCA Nashville) **456•723**

**Charlie Daniels Band**—All-Time Greatest Hits (Epic) **456•608**

**Tracy Lawrence**—Alibis (Atlantic) **456•558**

**Kentucky Headhunters**—Rave On (Mercury/Nashville) **455•691**

**Palomino Road** (Liberty) **455•584**

**Patty Loveless**—Only What I Feel (Epic) **454•637**

**Vern Gosdin**—Nickels And Dimes And Love (Columbia) **454•603**

**Mark Chesnutt**—Almost Goodbye (MCA) **463•273**

**Sammy Kershaw**—Don't Go Near The Water (Mercury) **431•437**

**Chris Ledoux**—Under This Old Hat (Liberty) **461•871**

**Crystal Gayle**—Best Always (Branson Entertainment) **461•228**

**The Gatlin Brothers: Larry, Steve, Rudy**—Moments To Remember (Branson Entertainment) **461•210**

**"Even Cowgirls Get The Blues"**—Original Soundtrack (Sire/Wamer Bros.) **468•694**



**Honky Tonk Angels.** *Female trio sings Silver Threads And Golden Needles; I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know;* etc. (Columbia) **467•712**

**Dolly Parton**—Slow Dancing With The Moon. *Romeo; Full Circle;* more. (Columbia) **454•264**

**Loretta Lynn**—Country Music Hall Of Fame. *Coal Miner's Daughter;* etc. (MCA) **416•339**

**Tammy Wynette**—Anniversary: 20 Years Of Hits. *Stand By Your Man;* etc. (Epic) **352•427**

**Clay Walker** (Giant) **467•449**

**Kathy Mattea**—Good News (Mercury) **466•920**

**Conway Twitty**—Final Touches (MCA Nashville) **466•607**

**Highway 101**—The New Frontier (Liberty) **466•003**

**Darryl & Don Ellis**—Day In The Sun (Epic) **465•609**

# 8 CDs OR 12 CASSETTES FOR 1¢

## PLUS A CHANCE TO GET MORE MUSIC—FREE

See details

**Little Texas**—Big Time (Wamer Bros.) **460•204**

**Billy Ray Cyrus**—Some Gave All (Mercury) **441•451**

**Rosanne Cash**—The Wheel (Columbia) **453•886**

**Willie Nelson**—Across The Borderline (Columbia) **453•837**

**Texas Tornados**—Hangin' On By A Thread (Reprise) **453•449**

**George Jones**—Walls Can Fall (MCA) **450•296**

**Suzu Bogguss**—Voices In The Wind (Liberty) **449•736**

**Toby Keith**—(Mercury/Nashville) **458•315**

**Dwight Yoakam**—This Time (Reprise) **456•913**

**Tanya Tucker**—Can't Run From Yourself (Liberty) **449•728**

**Radney Foster**—Del Rio, TX 1959 (Arista) **448•852**

**The Chipmunks**—Chipmunks In Low Places (Epic/Chipmunks) **448•779**

**Randy Travis**—Greatest Hits, Volume 2 (Wamer Bros.) **448•662**

**Randy Travis**—Greatest Hits, Volume 1 (Wamer Bros.) **448•654**

**Sammy Kershaw**—Haunted Heart (Mercury) **456•541**

**Chris Ledoux**—Whatcha Gonna Do With A Cowboy (Liberty) **444•562**

**Waylon Jennings**—Too Dumb For New York City. (Epic) **444•430**

**Disney's Country Music For Kids** (Walt Disney Rec.) **444•315**

**Doug Stone**—From The Heart (Epic) **444•075**

**Ricky Van Shelton**—Greatest Hits Plus (Columbia) **444•067**

**Trisha Yearwood**—Hearts In Armor (MCA Nashville) **444•042**

**Marty Stuart**—This One's Gonna Hurt You (MCA) **442•418**

**Ricky Van Shelton**—A Bridge I Didn't Burn (Columbia) **454•611**

**Sammy Kershaw**—Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 (Epic) **432•179**

**Sons Of The Pioneers**—Country Music Hall Of Fame: (MCA) **422•477**

**Tex Ritter**—Country Music Hall Of Fame Series (MCA) **422•436**

**Roy Acuff**—The Essential Roy Acuff (Columbia/Legacy) **449•413**



**Patsy Cline**—Grt Hits (MCA) **365•924**

**The Essential Gene Autry 1933-1946** (Columbia/Legacy) **449•603**

**Lester Flatt And Earl Scruggs**—The Complete Mercury Sessions (Mercury) **445•163**

**Hank Thompson**—Country Music Hall Of Fame: (MCA) **440•388**

**Willie Nelson**—Grt. Hits (And Some That Will Be) (Columbia) **311•001**

## HALL OF FAME

**Roy Rogers**—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) **440•362**

**Bob Wills**—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) **440•354**

**Grandpa Jones Live**—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) **440•347**

**Chet Atkins & Jerry Reed**—Sneakin' Around (Columbia) **432•765**

**George Jones & Tammy Wynette**—Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 (Epic) **432•179**

**Sons Of The Pioneers**—Country Music Hall Of Fame: (MCA) **422•477**

**Tex Ritter**—Country Music Hall Of Fame Series (MCA) **422•436**

**Roy Acuff**—The Essential Roy Acuff (Columbia/Legacy) **449•413**

**Joe Diddle**—Honky Tonk Attitude (Epic) **454•629**

**Diamond Rio**—Close To The Edge (Arista) **448•290**

**Collin Raye**—In This Life (Epic) **447•258**

**Pam Tillis**—Homeward Looking Angel (Arista) **446•963**

**Tracy Byrd** (MCA) **446•648**

**Smoky Mountain Players**—Smoky Mountain Hits (Brentwood) **446•310**

**Tim Mensy**—This Old Heart (Giant) **445•817**

**Charlie Rich**—Complete Smash Sessions (Mercury) **445•155**

**The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band**—Not Fade Away (Liberty) **444•976**

**Kenny Rogers**—20 Grt. Hits (Reprise) **444•885**

**Curtis Wright** (Liberty) **444•810**

**Chris Ledoux**—Whatcha Gonna Do With A Cowboy (Liberty) **444•562**

**Waylon Jennings**—Too Dumb For New York City. (Epic) **444•430**

**Disney's Country Music For Kids** (Walt Disney Rec.) **444•315**

**Doug Stone**—From The Heart (Epic) **444•075**

**Ricky Van Shelton**—Greatest Hits Plus (Columbia) **444•067**

**Trisha Yearwood**—Hearts In Armor (MCA Nashville) **444•042**

**Marty Stuart**—This One's Gonna Hurt You (MCA) **442•418**

**Ricky Van Shelton**—A Bridge I Didn't Burn (Columbia) **454•611**

**Tennessee Ernie Ford**—Country Gospel Classics Vol. 1 (Capitol) **421•974**

**Bill Monroe**—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) **416•388**

**Kitty Wells**—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) **416•370**

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

**Red Foley**—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) **416•347**

**Lefty Frizzell**—American Originals (Columbia) **386•672**

**Johnny Cash**—Columbia Records 1958/86 (Columbia) **352•765/392•761**

**Hank Williams**—40 Grt. Hits (Polydor) **423•863**

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

**Michelle Wright**—Now & Then (Arista) **441•147**

**Mark Chesnutt**—Longnecks And Short Stories (MCA) **440•487**

**Oak Ridge Boys**—Collection (MCA) **440•412**

**Anne Murray**—Fifteen Of The Best (Liberty) **439•620**

**Best Of Barbara Mandrell** (Liberty) **439•588**

**Best Of Eddy Raven** (Liberty) **439•554**

**Rodney Crowell**—Life Is Messy (Columbia) **439•471**

**The Forester Sisters**—I Got A Date (Wamer Bros.) **436•956**

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

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

**Little Texas**—First Time For Everything (Wamer Bros.) **435•438**

**Sawyer Brown**—The Dirt Road (Capitol/Curb) **433•656**

**The Brenda Lee Story** (MCA) **432•757**



**Common Thread: Songs of The Eagles**—Various Artists (Giant) **469•999**

**Joe Diddle**—Regular Joe (Epic) **431•262**

**Freddy Fender Collection** (Reprise) **430•934**

**Kris Kristofferson**—Singer/Songwriter (SMSP) **430•165/390•161**

**Brooks & Dunn**—Brand New Man (Arista) **429•969**

**Gary Morris**—Full Moon, Empty Heart (Capitol) **429•019**

**Billy Dean** (SBK/Liberty) **428•987**

**Garth Brooks**—Ropin' The Wind (Liberty) **428•862**

**Boxcar Willie**—Best Loved Favorites (Ranwood) **428•060**

**Sweethearts Of The Rodeo**—Sisters (Columbia) **427•583**

**Steve Wariner**—Greatest Hits, Volume 2 (MCA) **426•957**

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





**George Strait**—Easy Come Easy Go; *Slay Out Of My Arms*; *Just Look At Me*; *I'd Like To Have That One Back*; *Lovebug*; plus others. (MCA) 467•308



**Garth Brooks**—The Chase. Here's his latest with *That Summer*; *Learning To Live Again*; *Dixie Chicken*; *Face To Face*; etc. (Liberty) 448•746



**Reba McEntire**—Greatest Hits; Vol. 2; *Does He Love You*; *You Lie*; *For My Broken Heart*; *Love Will Find Its Way To You*; *Fancy*; others. (MCA) 467•316



**Dwight Yoakam**—This Time, *Ain't That Lonely Yet*; *A Thousand Miles From Nowhere*; *Pocket Of A Clown*; *Wild Ride*; etc. (Reprise) 456•913



**REBA McENTIRE**

**It's Your Call.** Title hit; *Take It Back*; *The Heart Won't Lie*; plus more. (MCA) 450•361  
**For My Broken Heart.** Poetic love ballad! *Is There Life Out There*; etc. (MCA) 430•090  
**Rumor Has It.** *Fancy*; *Fallin' Out Of Love*; *You Lie*; etc. (MCA) 411•538  
**Greatest Hits.** *Little Rock*; *Whoever's In New England*; more. (MCA) 355•826

**Billy Dean**—Fire In The Dark (Liberty/SBK) 453•563

**Travis Tritt**—T-R-O-U-B-L-E (Warner Bros.) 445•767

**Ricky Skaggs**—My Father's Son (Epic) 426•932

**Holly Dunn**—Milestones—Grt. Hits (Warner Bros.) 425•785

**Jerry Lee Lewis**—Killer The Mercury Years, Vol. 1, 1963-68 (Polydor) 426•536

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

**Trisha Yearwood** (MCA) 426•148

**Diamond Rio** (Arista) 424•739

Selections with two numbers count as two—write each number in a separate box.

**Confederate Railroad** (Atlantic) 439•158

**Kathy Mattea**—A Collection Of Hits (Mercury) 424•622

**Kentucky Headhunters**—Pickin' On Nashville (Mercury) 423•533

**Travis Tritt**—It's All About To Change (Warner Bros.) 422•113

**Roger Whittaker**—The Country Collection (Capitol) 420•364

**Pam Tillis**—Put Yourself In My Place (Arista) 419•192

**Vince Gill**—Pocket Full Of Gold (MCA) 418•459

**Cristy Lane**—Country Classics, Vol. 1 (Lifesong) 418•020

**Billy Joe Royal**—Grt. Hits (Atlantic) 417•774

**Chris Hillman And The Desert Rose Band**—A Dozen Roses (MCA/Curb) 415•281

**Sawyer Brown**—Buick (Liberty/Curb) 415•166

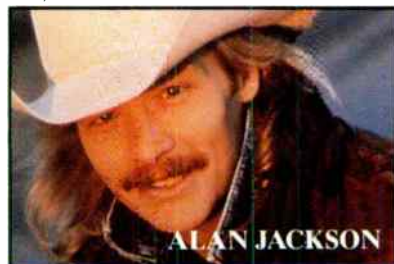
**Dwight Yoakam**—If There Was A Way (Reprise) 414•243

**The Best Of Slim Whitman** (1952-1971) (Rhino) 413•427

**Garth Brooks**—No Fences (Liberty) 411•587

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

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



**ALAN JACKSON**

**Honky Tonk Christmas.** *I Only Want You For Christmas*; *If We Make It Through December*; title cut; many more. (Arista) 467•142

**Don't Rock The Jukebox.** Smash follow-up to his debut! *Love's Got A Hold On You*; *Midnight In Montgomery*; *Dallas*; more. (Arista) 420•935

**Here In The Real World.** Title cut; *Chasin' That Neon Rainbow*; *Ace Of Hearts*; *Wanted: Home*; *Blue Blooded Woman*; etc. (Arista) 406•785

**Conway Twitty**—Greatest Hits, Vol. 3 (MCA) 406•314

**Travis Tritt**—Country Club (Warner Bros.) 405•068

**The Best Of Glen Campbell** (Capitol) 403•444

**Vince Gill**—When I Call Your Name (MCA) 402•867

**Highwayman II**—Nelson, Cash, etc. (Columbia) 401•976

**Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn**—Making Believe (MCA) 376•509

**Carl Perkins**—Orig. Sun Greatest Hits (Rhino) 374•199

**The Best Of Dan Seals** (Capitol) 364•042

**Ricky Van Shelton**—Wild-Eyed Dream (Columbia) 353•847

**Lyle Lovett** (MCA/Curb) 353•755

**D. Parton/L. Ronstadt/E. Harris**—Trio (Warner Bros.) 352•633

**Exile**—Greatest Hits (Epic) 346•635

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

**Merle Haggard**—His Best (MCA) 335•539

**George Strait**—Grt. Hits (MCA) 334•466

**Best Of Emmylou Harris** (Warner Bros.) 330•738

**The Cactus Brothers** (Liberty) 463•281

**John Berry** (Liberty) 463•265

**Tracy Lawrence**—Sticks & Stones (Atlantic) 432•211

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

**k.d. lang & The Reclines**—Absolute Torch & Twang (Sire) 381•624

**Garth Brooks** (Liberty) 381•608

**Dean Dillon**—Hot, Country And Single (Atlantic) 460•428

**Charlie Daniels Band**—America, I Believe In You (Liberty) 458•851

**Pirates Of The Mississippi**—A Street Man Named Desire (Liberty) 449•702

**Jeff Chance**—Walk Softly On The Bridges (Mercury/Nashville) 445•395

**Hank Williams, Jr.**—Maverick (Curb/Capricorn) 434•472

**Ray Stevens**—#1 With A Bullet (Capitol/Curb) 425•504

**Lee Greenwood**—A Perfect 10 (Capitol) 420•042

**Highway 101**—Grt. Hits (Warner Bros.) 413•633

**Gary Morris**—Grt. Hits, Vol. 2 (Warner Bros.) 412•346

**The Greatest Hits Of Boots Randolph** (CSP) 376•426

**Jimmy Dean's Grt. Hits** (Columbia) 335•836

**Arthur Smith & Don Reno**—Original Dueling Banjos (CMH) 432•187

**Great Plains** (Columbia) 431•502

**POPULAR HITS**

**James Taylor**—Live (Columbia) 463•687/393•686

**Jon Secada** (SBK) 438•184

**Barbra Streisand**—Back To Broadway (Columbia) 461•988

**The Allman Brothers Band**—A Decade Of Hits 1969-79 (Polydor) 430•439

**Bette Midler**—Experience The Divine: Grt. Hits (Atlantic) 460•386

**Spin Doctors**—Pocket Full Of Kryptonite (Epic/Assoc.) 428•482

**"Sleepless In Seattle"**—Orig. Sndtrk. (Epic Soundtrax) 458•430

**Bonnie Raitt**—Luck Of The Draw (Capitol) 423•186

**ABBA**—Gold—Greatest Hits (Polydor) 458•406

**Lynyrd Skynyrd**—Skynyrd's Innryds/Their Grt. Hits (MCA) 381•129

**Aerosmith**—Get A Grip (Geffen) 458•075

**Roy Orbison**—The All-Time Hits, Vols. 1 & 2 (CSP) 377•945

**Jimi Hendrix**—The Ultimate Experience (MCA) 458•034

**Fleetwood Mac**—Grt. Hits (Warner Bros.) 375•782

**Madonna**—Erotica (Maverick/Sire/Warner) 453•555

**Journey's Greatest Hits** (Columbia) 375•279

**AC/DC**—Live (ATCO) 453•217

**Best Of The Doors** (Elektra) 357•616/397•612

**Stone Temple Pilots**—Core (Atlantic) 453•043

**Creedence Clearwater Revival**—Chronicle—20 Grt. Hits (Fantasy) 308•049

**"The Bodyguard"**—Original Soundtrack (Arista) 448•159

**AC/DC**—Back In Black (Atlantic) 305•045

**Blind Melon** (Capitol) 447•995

**Eagles**—Grt. Hits, 1971-75 (Asylum) 287•003

**Eric Clapton**—Unplugged (Reprise/Duck) 446•187

**Bob Dylan**—The 30th Anniversary Concert (Columbia) 465•187/395•186

**OVER 220 SELECTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM...**

**TO GET 8 CDS FOR 1¢...**

- **Just mail the coupon** and we'll send your 8 CDs, together with a bill for a penny, plus shipping and handling.
- **You agree** to buy just six more selections in the next three years, at regular Club prices currently \$12.98 to \$16.98—and you may cancel membership at any time after doing so. (A shipping and handling charge will be added to each shipment.)
- **Free Music Magazine** sent every four weeks (up to 13 times a year), describing the Regular Selection for your listening interest, plus hundreds of alternates. And Special Selection mailings up to six times a year (total of up to 19 buying opportunities).
- **Buy only what you want!** If you want the Regular or Special Selection, do nothing—it will be sent automatically. If you'd prefer an alternate selection, or none at all, just mail the response card always provided by the date specified.
- **You always have 10 days to decide;** if not, you may return the Selection at our expense.
- **New "Buy More—Pay Less" Bonus Plan.** If you continue your membership after fulfilling your obligation, you'll be eligible for our money-saving bonus plan. It lets you get a single CD for as little as \$3.99 (or a single cassette free) for each CD you buy at regular Club price.
- **10-Day Free Trial.** We'll send details of the Club's operation with your introductory package. If not satisfied, return everything within 10 days and you will have no further obligation.
- **Extra Bonus Offer:** you may take one additional CD right now at the super-low price of only \$6.95—and you are then entitled to take an extra CD as a bonus FREE! And you'll receive your discounted CD and your bonus CD with your 8 introductory selections—10 CDs in all!

**OR 12 CASSETTES FOR 1¢...**

- **Just write in the numbers of the 12 cassettes you want** and mail the coupon, together with a check or money order for \$1.86 (that's 1¢ for your 12 cassettes, plus \$1.85 to cover shipping and handling).
- **You agree** to buy just eight more selections in the next three years, at regular Club prices (currently \$7.98 to \$10.98, plus shipping and handling)—and you may cancel membership at any time after doing so.
- **Buy one—get one free Bonus Plan.** If you continue your membership after fulfilling your obligation, you'll be eligible for our generous bonus plan. It lets you get one cassette free for every one you buy at regular Club price (shipping and handling will be added). Otherwise, the Club operates in the same manner as described above.
- **2 More Cassettes FREE.** Choose your first selection now for only \$3.98 (that's up to 60% off regular Club prices)—and your membership obligation is immediately reduced; you then need buy only 7 more (instead of 8) in three years! AND this discount purchase also entitles you to 2 extra cassettes FREE. So you can get 15 cassettes for less than the price of one!
- **If the application is missing, write to:** Columbia House, 1400 North Fruitridge Avenue, Terre Haute, Indiana 47811-1130.



Entertaining America... One Person at a Time.®

© 1994, The Columbia House Company





## Bruce Carroll

**B**ruce Carroll is not a country singer—at least, not exactly. A literate, acoustic singer/songwriter, he's far more apt to draw comparisons to Jackson Browne than Alan Jackson. He's a 40-year-old boomer who clearly heard the Eagles long before he discovered Merle Haggard. In other words, he's pretty much like many people who listen to country music today.

"I've always been a hybrid—a little folk, some pop and rock, and some bones-to-the-wall country," says Carroll. "Instead of asking how do we compartmentalize this, the questions should be: Is this good? Do people like it? Will they buy it? I think the answers are all yes."

Over the past six years, Carroll has managed to parlay his eclecticism into a steady gig at the top of the contemporary Christian charts, winning both Grammy and Dove awards along the way. While some established mainstream country acts, including Paul Overstreet, Ricky Skaggs and Ricky Van Shelton, have made successful forays into the gospel market, Carroll finds crossing in the opposite direction to be a trickier, and sometimes frustrating, proposition.

"I've had a really good run," he says. "My records have sold well and Christian radio plays the dog out of me, but I know I could be getting in front of a lot more people. I don't know why we even have to call this Christian country. Why should we carve out this little stream of our own when there's this big river of country music already flowing?" His latest, *Walk On* (Selection 04143), was released in 1993 on Word Records.

"There are a lot of strong believers in country music—Shenandoah, Diamond Rio. It's already happening. The work has already been done. We just need to plug into what's already there."—*Gordon Ely*

*Karlzen's writing addresses her feelings and existence—reflecting others struggling to get through life on minimum wage or salvaging a broken heart.*

## Mary Karlzen

**B**eing true to the songs is important," Mary Karlzen says of her music. "To make the song fit a format when it's not right isn't fair to the song... and it won't be a good country song, either."

While some songs have a wispieness that suggests folk's country roots or boast a mettle that's closer to rock, the south Florida-based singer/songwriter follows her heart. It's most notably led her to the bittersweet longing-and-knowing-better shuffle "I'd Be Lying," from her recent Y&T EP *Hide* (Selection 04085).

Avoiding compromise is the key for Miami-based Y&T Records, the label that launched the Mavericks. Since releasing *Mary Karlzen* in 1992, Y&T has watched Karlzen develop into an artist to be watched.

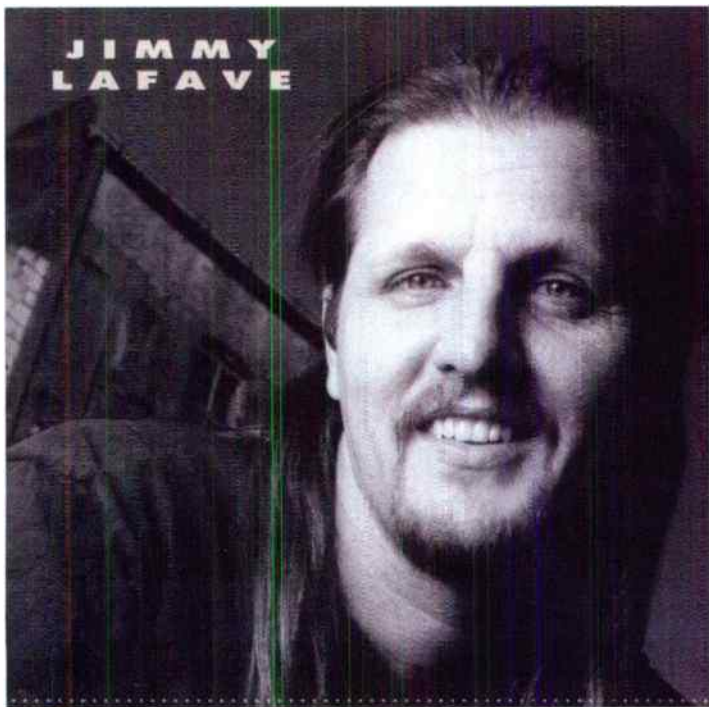
The first independent label VH-1 Country Hot Pick, Karlzen's toured the country to glowing reviews. She's just signed with Atlantic Records in New York, following the '70s trail of the then fixin'-to-breakthrough Willie Nelson.

With "A Long Time Ago" and "St. James Hotel," the longtime Nitty Gritty Dirt Band fan mirrors their patchwork approach: Make songs reflect who you are and your roots will give it a genre.

Like Mary-Chapin Carpenter, Karlzen's writing addresses her feelings and existence—reflecting others struggling to get through life on minimum wage or salvaging a broken heart. It's genuine stuff and if the edges are ragged, that's just how it is, to paraphrase Alan Jackson, here in the real world.—*Holly Gleason*







## Jimmy LaFave

**W**henever songwriter Jimmy LaFave missed his regular gig at Willie's in Stillwater, Oklahoma, a guy by the name of Garth Brooks would sometimes fill in for him.

"Garth was kind of the Wednesday night, happy-hour kind of guy," LaFave recalls. "We were doing good, playing all around Oklahoma."

Good as things were in the Sooner State, LaFave took his music, which owes much to Bob Dylan, Van Morrison and Woody Guthrie, to Austin eight years ago.

"We [LaFave and his band Night Tribe] were a little less original in Oklahoma," LaFave says. "That was one of the main reasons I moved to Austin. You could do your own thing there."

Early last year, LaFave released *Austin Skyline* (Selection 04081), a 16-track live album on Bohemia Beat that ranked among the top 10 sellers of Texas music at the deeply hip Waterloo Records in Austin, outselling some other Austin artists on major labels. Rounder Records picked up *Skyline* for national distribution in January.

LaFave had been approached by producer Pete Anderson (Dwight Yoakam, Michelle Shocked) to sign with his Little Dog label, but the two agreed the timing wasn't right.

"It was better for me artistically and financially to do my own thing, and wait to see what opportunity next arose," LaFave says. His next album, a studio affair, is due out soon.—*Claudia Perry*

*Good as things were in the Sooner State, LaFave took his music, which owes much to Bob Dylan, Van Morrison and Woody Guthrie, to Austin eight years ago.*

## Dale Daniel

**H**ow does a musically precocious teenager rebel against her mother when her mother is a Grammy-nominated Nashville songwriter?

"I used to play 'Free Bird' on the piano to drive my mother crazy," Dale Daniel says. "By the sixth minute she was yelling, 'Stop it!' When I wanted to smooth her out, I'd play Chopin."

On her first album, *Luck of Our Own* (Selection 04082), the red-headed singer shows traces of that rock rebellion as well as a passion for smartly crafted songs learned from her mother, Naomi Martin, the writer of Ronnie Milsap's "Let's Take the Long Way Around the World." The adolescent musical rifts now mended, Daniel and her mom collaborated on Daniel's single "You Gave Her Your Name" and two other songs on Daniel's BNA Records debut, "Border Line" and "One More Bend."

"We do a lot of co-writing together," Daniel says. "We get along better when we're writing than any other time. It's not that we don't get along well, but when we're writing, we have the same focus—that is to write the best song we possibly can, regardless of her feelings."

Daniel seems determined to continue the family tradition. She began recording demos for *Luck of Our Own* while pregnant with her son Lee, who is now 2.

"I did a showcase for the folks at BNA Entertainment when I was four-and-a-half months pregnant," Daniel says. "I was starting to pooch a little bit, but I wore a long dress. My fear was not showing, my fear was throwing up on them. I thought, 'If I can get off this stage without being sick, I'll be fine.'"—*Brian Mansfield*





# For the Sake of the Song

## The Master Writes On

*Harlan Howard Knows A Thing Or Two About Love*

BY CLARK PARSONS

**A**T A TIME WHEN country music is being overrun by modern rock sounds, blinding light shows, glitzy videos and Billy Joel songs, Harlan Howard is a throwback. The 67-year-old songwriter is a walking treasure, a vigorous reminder of Nashville's storied, informal past.

Howard, who arrived in Nashville in 1960 at age 32, is best known for such songs as Patsy Cline's standard "I Fall To Pieces" and Buck Owens' "I've Got A Tiger By The Tail." He has written a mind-boggling 4,000 songs, of which 1,000 have been recorded by the likes of Ernest Tubb, Ella Fitzgerald, the Judds and Ray Charles.

But as anyone familiar with Nashville's music industry knows, Howard is far from slowing down. Aside from a brief respite in the late 1970s/early 1980s, the cantankerous tunesmith has been writing steadily—he co-wrote Patty Loveless' recent Number One song, "Blame It On Your Heart."

The Howard trademark is a straightforward, honky-tonk style, and his subject matter rarely strays from the range of Cupid's bowstring.

"Most people want to hear about love and the quest for love," he says. "That's so dominant in people's lives that it's almost foolish to waste your time writing something that doesn't have to do with a man and a woman and their need for each other. That's the only thing that counts."

Songwriting has been the primary love of Howard's life as far back as he can recall. Raised in Michigan during the Depression, he was a youngster living on a farm when he first heard the voice of Ernest Tubb.

Howard escaped an unstable family situation and eventually landed in California in the mid-1950s, laboring as a truckdriver and factory worker. At night and on weekends, he wrote songs and hung out in the burgeoning Bakersfield, California, country scene. With help from friends and artists, he began to get cuts on country albums, and he had his first hit with "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down" in 1959. Soon the hits were flowing, and when Howard arrived in Nashville in 1960, he quickly befriended other young hotshots—Willie Nelson, Roger Miller, Mel Tillis and Hank Cochran.

Songwriter camaraderie is what makes life so much fun for



PHOTO BY BETH GWINN

Howard. Nowadays it means spending afternoons in any one of his favorite music industry watering holes. In his early years, it meant hanging out with the boys at Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, the famous club one dirty alley away from the Grand Ole Opry.

"I gave everything I had to music," Howard recalls of his slightly wilder younger days when he had so much trouble staying together with his first few wives. "I wasn't doing anything all that sinister; I was just hanging out with the guys. We were all young and on fire and we were singing songs, drinking beer and shooting pool and being brothers," he says. "When I look back, it was no wonder we all got divorced. I don't think back with anger or bitterness. I realize I shouldn't have married them, and they shouldn't have married me. They had no business marrying a dreamer like me."

"I think musicians and singers have the same trouble. It's hard to really be good at what you do, which means you've got to concentrate, and be married too. It's hard to find a woman that'll tolerate that weird life, when you're gone a lot. And you need to be hanging out where the enthusiasm and electricity is." Howard is now happily married to his fifth wife, Melanie, who runs his 2-year-old song publishing company.

Howard has settled into a role as unofficial mentor of the next generation of Nashville tunesmiths. Hanging out at Nashville's common writers' nights, he cultivates friendships with young, unproven writers. Every few years, one of his proteges—such as Jamie O'Hara or Kevin Welch—becomes a songwriting success. Howard says the brother and sisterhood of writers is one of the most satisfying aspects of his Nashville life.

"I think of it as kind of like the Left Bank of Paris used to be, when young authors and painters and people would go there and hang out in these coffeeshouses and chess clubs and argue over the meaning of life and abstract painting," Howard says. He regrets that Tin Pan Alley, the famed New York City songwriting community of his heroes—Irving Berlin, Sammy Kahn—is gone.

"But there's definitely a Tin Pan Alley here," he says of the booming Music City songwriting scene. "In fact, it's the biggest one by far in the world. You see those studios with parking lots full of cars, and that means somebody's in there cutting an album. They're cutting songs. Well, who's writing them? I'd say 90 percent of them are written here."

In watching Nashville and country music's changes over the years,



## Discography

# Harlan Howard Songs On Record

*A healthy sampling of Harlan Howard's best known songs can be found on the following albums*

**"Above and Beyond"**

**RODNEY CROWELL**

*Diamonds & Dirt*

COLUMBIA (1989)

SELECTION 04080

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

**"Mommy for a Day"**

**KITTY WELLS**

*The Country Music Hall of Fame Series*

MCA (1991)

SELECTION 04086

★ ★ ★

**"I've Got a Tiger by the Tail"**

**BUCK OWENS**

*The Buck Owens Collection, 1959-1990*

RHINO (1992)

SELECTION 04087

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Foolin' Around"**

**BUCK OWENS**

*All Time Greatest Hits*

CURB/CAPITOL (1990)

SELECTION 04088

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Busted"**

**RAY CHARLES**

*Ingredients in a Recipe for Soul*

DCC COMPACT CLASSICS

(1963/1990)

SELECTION 04089

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Heartaches by the Number"**

**RAY PRICE**

*The Essential Ray Price: 1951-1962*

COLUMBIA/LEGACY (1991)

SELECTION 04092

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



**"Life Turned Her That Way"**

**RICKY VAN SHELTON**

*Greatest Hits Plus*

COLUMBIA (1992)

SELECTION 04095

★ ★ ½

**"Too Many Rivers"**

**BRENDA LEE**

*Anthology, Vols. 1 & 2*

MCA (1991)

SELECTION 04094

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"She's Gone, Gone, Gone"**

**LEFTY FRIZZELL**

*The Best of Lefty Frizzell*

RHINO (1991)

SELECTION 04096

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Why Not Me"**

**THE JUDDS**

*Greatest Hits*

RCA (1988)

SELECTION 04090

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"I Fall to Pieces"**

**PATSY CLINE**

*12 Greatest Hits*

MCA (1967)

SELECTION 04093

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Somewhere Tonight"**

**HIGHWAY 101**

*Greatest Hits*

WARNER BROS. (1990)

SELECTION 04070

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Blame It On Your Heart"**

**PATTY LOVELESS**

*Only What I Feel*

EPIC (1993)

SELECTION 04098

★ ★ ★

**"The Streets of Baltimore"**

**GRAM PARSONS**

*GP/Grievous Angel*

REPRISE (1973/74)

SELECTION 04067

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"I Don't Know a Thing About Love"**

**CONWAY TWITTY**

*Silver Anniversary Collection*

MCA (1990)

SELECTION 04099

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Excuse Me (I Think I've Got a Heartache)"**

**THE MAVERICKS**

*From Hell to Paradise*

MCA (1992)

SELECTION 04069

★ ★ ★ ½

**"All Fall Down"**

**EMMYLOU HARRIS**

(WITH GEORGE JONES)

*Duets*

REPRISE (1990)

SELECTION 04068

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"Odds and Ends (Bits and Pieces)"**

**DAWN SEARS**

*What a Woman Wants to Hear*

WARNER BROS. (1991)

SELECTION 04079

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"The Chokin' Kind"—Joe Simon**

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*Back to the '60s—Soul Vol. 2*

K-TEL/DOMINION (1989)

SELECTION 04116

★ ★ ★

**"Pick Me Up on Your Way Down"—Charlie Walker**

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*Columbia Country Classics, Vol. 2: Honky Tonk Heroes*

COLUMBIA (1990)

SELECTION 04097

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Howard says he longs for the informality of the old days, when he could wander into producer Owen Bradley's office, pitch a song called "I Fall To Pieces," and have Bradley convince a reluctant Patsy Cline to cut it. "Nothing on Music Row has changed except there's a lot more money," Howard says. "The offices are bigger. They've got locked doors."

After 35 years of writing country songs about love, heartbreak, honky-tonks and teardrops, Howard wants to keep writing as long as he can.

"I've been here and watched all this stuff, and I'm still kicking a little butt," he says with a mischievous smile. "I meant to be a lifetime songwriter. Irving Berlin wrote all of his life. Why stop something that really is a lot of fun?"

"The tough part to me is finding a good title and a story and a love thing that I can talk about that might be a little refreshing. Thinking up the ideas, that's the tough part. Writing them isn't the tough part. In fact, writing them is fun." ❧



## Darkness On The Edge Of Guitar Town

*Steve Earle Will Return*

BY JIMMY GUTERMAN

**T**EXAN STEVE EARLE WAS PERHAPS THE most interesting—and frustrating—talent to emerge from the '80s neo-traditionalist pack. And, in retrospect, he's turned out to be one of the most influential. Earle is currently between trains—a demo making the rounds features the darkest, most brutal blues of a career that's been characterized by unwavering self-examination—but the legions of young country singers claiming to be rebels ought to pay more attention to Earle's genre-busting '80s records. Today's country charts are full of those who act as if growing sideburns is a defiant feat; even when he isn't at the top of his form, Earle's rebelliousness is always unquestionably real.

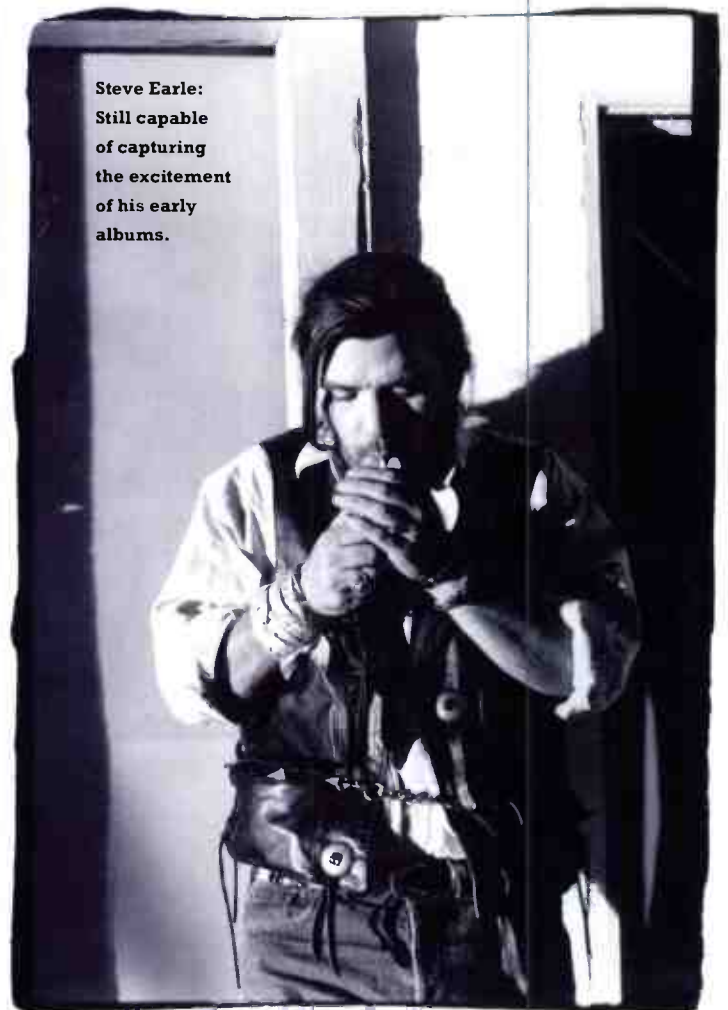
A songwriter with the ability to zero in consistently on telling details, a performer who could make even a Farm Aid stadium set seem intimate, Earle straddled two bases—hard country and hard rock—but he was so singular and fresh that he couldn't commit to just one, thus alienating narrow-casting radio formats. Along with producer Richard Bennett, he brought “twang” back to Nashville at a time when anything that wasn't an overt pop crossover was maligned by the establishment.

An album of early-'80s, rushed neo-rockabilly tunes cut for CBS remains rightfully out of print, but the 1986 record *Guitar Town* established Earle as someone who could make honky-tonk music modern, thanks to the Texas tradition of songwriting (especially the Guy Clark variety) to which he clung. The precise sound and lyrics of *Guitar Town* were at odds both with the Nashville zeitgeist and fellow new traditionalists like Randy Travis and Ricky Skaggs who got slick and sloppy within minutes of breaking through.

*Guitar Town* revealed Earle as the most eloquent newfound songwriter country had offered in a decade. He could turn somber, even (especially?) about himself, without slumping into bathos; most of the record's songs are semi-autobiographical tales of a musician's road-weary life, without the whining or cynicism such subjects usually conjure up in songwriters. “Little Rock'n'Roller,” the transcript of a traveling musician's truck-stop telephone call home to his young child, is evocative without banging you over the head; “Think It Over” turns a country cliché on its head by hedging its bets on who's walking out on whom; “Someday” is the deathless story of Johnny B. Goode before he discovers his first guitar.

On *Guitar Town*, Earle's slight, achy voice nailed down his astute observations with the support of an unfrilly band. Earle's unstudied acoustic guitar always led the group, spinning off tension and channeling it into trainlike rhythmic sequences.

Earle never again rose to the heights of *Guitar Town*, but he often came close. The arrangements on his sophomore LP, *Exit O*, were tougher and more propulsive, and that record's finest songs married



Steve Earle: Still capable of capturing the excitement of his early albums.

Tom T. Hall-style narrative power with the anthemic qualities of Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the U.S.A.* Album number three, *Copperhead Road*, began Earle's move toward full-blown rock, a decision that alienated the few establishment forces in Nashville that had been friendly.

Earle's last studio album came out in 1989. As has been well-documented in the country press, he's lived a lot since then, the sort of living that historically nurtures great songs—even if it's not such a good idea for the guy living it. By the end of this year, Earle should have a new record out. May it capture the excitement of his first three records and then move forward at full-speed. He's still capable of it. ♪



## Discography

# STEVE EARLE



### *Guitar Town*

MCA (1986)  
SELECTION 04103  
★★★★★

Definitive; one of the greatest country albums.

### *Exit 0*

MCA (1987)  
SELECTION 04091  
★★★★★

This is the closest Earle ever came to recording a mainstream country album, though it's clear already that his ambition is to squeeze new ideas into familiar areas.

### *Copperhead Road*

UNI (1988)  
SELECTION 04113  
★★★★★

Unfairly dismissed upon initial release, this stands as a canny country-rock move, ranging from the hardest rock ("Snake Oil") to hardheaded country ("Nothing But a Child"), with soaring fusions like "The Devil's Right Hand" holding the middle ground.

### *The Hard Way*

MCA (1989)  
OUT OF PRINT  
★★★

The rock this time is a bit more simple, and only a few of the songs are as distinctive as those on *Copperhead Road*.

### *Live: Shut Up and Die Like an Aviator*

MCA (1991)  
SELECTION 04114  
★★

Perhaps a contractual obligation, this wordy live set is a throwaway, built around a superfluous and obvious cover of the Rolling Stones' landmark country-rock tune "Dead Flowers." Earle's live shows with his band the Dukes were much hotter than this.

### *The Essential Steve Earle*

MCA (1993)  
SELECTION 04115  
★★★★★

This features a sensible selection of the best numbers off his first three records, with two soundtrack rarities rounding out the 13 cuts, but the truly essential Steve Earle is found on his first three records.—JG



**Guitar Town revealed Earle as the most eloquent newfound songwriter country had offered in a decade.**







# The Yellow Brick Road To Nashville

*Martina McBride's Not In Kansas Anymore*



**N**owadays a country sweetheart has to have a little attitude.

As has been much reported, it's tougher than ever for a Nashville woman to break through to commercial success. The 1990s craze for "hot hunk" cowboys has muscled many of the perennial country divas off the charts and left little room for their younger sisters.

It takes gumption, guts and some real savvy to do what Martina McBride has done.

Early last year, the Kansas-bred RCA thrush seemed destined for oblivion after her first album failed to catch fire. Despite appearing in front of a million people as the opening act on the '92 Garth Brooks tour, McBride's radio exposure was limited. Everything she released sputtered and died outside the Top 20.

"I guess that it paid to have persistence," the blue-eyed brunette calmly observes. "I've learned a lot about myself from this career, you know."

A radical image change, a shift in musical direction, some steely determination and some powerful marketing seem to have turned that career around. After nearly 20 weeks on the charts, McBride's female-message rocker "My Baby Loves Me" clawed and scratched its way into the national Top 10. As last year drew to a close, the scrappy little tune pushed its way past singles by Alan Jackson, Mark Chesnutt, Tracy Lawrence and other sales champs to Number Two on the *Billboard* hit parade.

"The thing was," recalls McBride, "there was a critical time period in there where it went to like 40, 41, 39 and I went, 'Oh no, not again!' And the thing that really made the difference was the RCA promotion team [headed by Dale Turner], 'cause they

wouldn't take no for an answer. They believed in this so much and wanted it to happen so bad that they didn't give up; they didn't back off and say, 'Okay, we'll try the next one. We don't want to offend anybody.' They just kept going."

"My Baby Loves Me" received considerable aid from a zesty video that contrasted spectacular fashion-model footage of McBride's azure eyes and slim figure with whimsical everyday-people lip synchs done man-on-the-street style.

"Those people were just tourists or something, because I've met a few of them around the country. We did a show in South Bend, Indiana, and I met one of the couples. It was so hilarious. It was this big biker-looking guy who said, 'When I came to Nashville with this lady, I didn't even know if I was in love with her. But we shot that video and everything, and I am going to ask her to marry me tonight.' I hope she said yes."

Because of country's new emphasis on videos, each debut artist is pressured to make a visual statement that's as strong as their music. In McBride's case, she started appearing in videos and on television at the same time as Ronna Reeves, Lisa Stewart and Shania Twain, all of whom were also sleekly attired, long-haired brunette newcomers.

McBride denies holding a big image-strategy session. She simply decided to make a change.

"I told them [her management company and record label], 'I'm gonna cut my hair.' And they went, 'Really?' I said, 'I'm tired of having long hair, and it is time for something different.'"

Comparisons to her competitors "factored into it. I thought, 'Well, this will make me more different, too.' But that wasn't the main reason I did it. I really just did it because I wanted to. After I finished, I was at the

*By Robert K. Oermann*



*Music City News* Awards and me and Ronna and Lisa were in the dressing room and they went, "Thank God you cut your hair!" We all kind of got confused with each other." (Stewart has since gone blonde.)

McBride also set herself apart from the pack by fine-tuning her music. *The Way That I Am*, her second release, is peppered with feisty, assertive songs. In addition to its ringing guitars and pounding rhythms, McBride's breakthrough, "My Baby Love Me," boasts a clarion-call vocal to be accepted as a full person rather than a decorative object.

"It is a good message for young women. I get letters from a lot of young girls who are insecure. They hear in the song that they can just be themselves and will find somebody.

"I think the material that I pick is very strong-woman material," McBride adds. The rest of her sophomore album finds the open-throated vocalist tackling equally potent lyrics. "Independence Day," "Goin' to Work," "Ashes" and "She Ain't Seen Nothing Yet," all of which come from female songwriters, are alternately exultant or contemplative explorations of a woman's heart. McBride's second single from the latest album is "Life #9," a pointed warning to a philanderer. Add the devastating power ballad "Strangers," and you've got a well-rounded portrait of a country gal for the '90s.

"I am really ready for 'Independence Day' to come out," McBride says. "I can't wait, although that one scares me a little." Like "My Baby Loves Me," it comes from the pen of Music Row songwriter Gretchen Peters.

"I did seek out her songs," McBride says. "Something from a woman's point of view is going to be more like what I want to say. Pam Tillis is such a great writer, too. She has a real knack for saying something in a different way. Every line in 'Goin' to Work' is great; there's not a throwaway line in there. And I just loved it 'cause I'd never heard a song that talked about that before, about women going to work." The tune was a minor hit for Judy Rodman in 1988, but McBride got to know it by listening to Trisha Yearwood's version in opening act sets for

Brooks' concerts in 1991.

McBride delivers the new songs with a self-confident vocal swagger that is startling. With her tentative conversational manner and petite physical presence, people just don't think of McBride as Miss Attitude.

"I know," she replies. "And that is weird because I think on that first album I had a lot of really strong songs," including the kiss-off number "The Time Has Come" and the gripping alcohol indictment "Cheap Whiskey."



*McBride delivers the new songs with a self-confident vocal swagger that is startling. With her tentative conversational manner and petite physical presence, people just don't think of her as Miss Attitude.*

**M**cBride is a worrier. She often weighs her words carefully. She seems anxious to please and terribly concerned about saying or doing the "wrong" thing. And she admits that this trait might have informed her first album.

"I second guess myself all the time," she says. "I think everything through, which I'm trying to learn not to do. I'm trying to learn to be more spontaneous. There was kind of a stressful thing making that first album. I don't know what or who I was trying to live up to, or

who I was trying to please. Afterwards, when I would look at it objectively, I would think, 'Yeah, it sounds like I was kind of unsure.' I was so concerned with being taken seriously. I didn't want to be a fluffy girl singer.

"I followed my heart a lot more on this album. I said to Paul [co-producer Paul Worley], 'I want to get more of a live sound. I don't want to be so polished and perfect.' Everybody that saw me sing live—the manager, the record label—had the recurring comment, 'We just don't think you captured your voice on this record [*The Time Has Come*]. We didn't capture your attitude, your energy, what your personality is really about.'

"So this was a conscious decision, in a way. My voice was stronger. I had more confidence. When you first come out, you are just real unsure of yourself. You are inhibited, and you want to make a good impression. As you get more comfortable with this new role in your life, maybe you either change or your real self starts coming out more."

Despite the breezy, uptown hairdo and wardrobe, McBride's "real self" has country grit. Born in 1966, Martina Schiff is a farmer's daughter raised near the tiny Kansas hamlet of Sharon (population 200). She has hauled hay bales, mended fences and herded cattle.

"Of course I can milk a cow," she sputtered to Ralph Emery during one of her introductory interviews in Nashville, as though every girl in America was brought up with such knowledge. Papa Daryl Schiff loved country music as much as farming.

He formed a family band that featured his daughter on vocals, son on guitar and wife working the soundboard. Martina began belting out country classics at age 8. After her high-school graduation (there were 10 in her class), she moved to Hutchinson, Kansas, to sing in a band with some family friends.

Next she moved to Wichita. With 300,000 residents, it is Kansas' biggest city. Martina took nightclub jobs in local rock bands dubbed the Penetrators and Lotus. Screaming the tunes of Pat Benatar and Heart each night damaged her voice, but during that same peri-





od she met sound technician John McBride. They married on May 15, 1988.

She took a year off so her voice could recuperate, then re-emerged in country music in an act called the Fowler Brothers. In 1990, Martina and John relocated to Music City.

"This has been a good move for both of us," she says. No kidding. John

McBride now has one of the most successful sound companies in town. He has four rigs out with major stars, not the least of whom is Garth Brooks.

Both McBrides have worked to keep the Garth machine rolling. While John manned the consoles, McBride sold T-shirts for the superstar in '91 and became his opening act the following year. In between, she landed her RCA deal by submitting a tape and auditioning.

"I was naive," she recalls, "and maybe that

*"After I cut my hair, I was at the Music City News Awards and me and Ronna Reeves and Lisa Stewart were in the dressing room and they went, 'Thank God you cut your hair!' We all kind of got confused with each other."*

kind of helped me. I get people in interviews who ask me all the time, 'So they let you pick your own songs?' I didn't really know how things were done, so I just kind of barged in and said, 'These are the songs I want to do.'"

From the beginning, McBride was given an extraordinary amount of say-so in decisions. And RCA has continued to demonstrate its faith in the 27-year-old performer. In the wake of her breakthrough, the label has distributed a nine-inch, full-

color brochure trumpeting her arrival as a star. "Nipper ... I don't think we're in Kansas anymore," it reads. "This isn't a dream ... it's the new female artist of 1994." Next to her full-length portrait is a run-down of her video's Number One success on CMT, TNN and VH-1; her single's achievement; and her album's sales (150,000

units in a scant two months).

McBride rejoined the Brooks tour in March, when the superstar staged his first assault on Europe.

"On the Garth tour the first time, I had no idea what I was doing. I had no idea what to expect. And now I am on the Garth tour again, and I have no idea what to expect.

"It'll be a whole new experience, but that is kind of what it always seems to be with me." ☺



# Marketing Martina

BY HOLLY GLEASON

**B**efore Martina McBride was a hit country act, she was a girl from Kansas with big dreams and a gig merchandising for Garth Brooks. Out on the four lane, she learned a few things about swag—things she’s putting to good use these days as she sees herself staring back from T-shirts on the chests of concert-goers and joggers.

*NCM: What is the most important thing to consider when one’s getting their merchandise together?*

**M.M.** Quality is the most important thing! If somebody buys a shirt, wears it once, washes it and it shrinks up, they’ll put it in their drawer and never wear it again. Certainly people won’t see your shirt cruising around the mall or at other shows. But even worse, it makes them feel like you didn’t care about them, that you’re selling them something that’s not top of the line.

*Are there secrets to successful T-shirt sales?*

T-shirts with your picture. It *has* to have that, not just writing. People want to buy a little piece of you—and that’s what that picture is...

*What’s the ideal breakdown of merchandise?*

For Garth, it’s a lot of everything! But when you’re starting out, it’s the basics: a black shirt and a white shirt. It’s got to be something that appeals to both men and women, because you don’t have the luxury of lots of different styles, and you don’t want to only appeal to one sex.

You also need nice color 8x10s. A lot of people want you to sign something for ’em, preferably something they can frame ... and the black and white can be very boring if they’ve got a lot of ’em.

*How does it feel to see yourself on other people’s chests?*

It’s pretty weird. You’re onstage and you’re singing to all these people who’ve come out, which is pretty unreal that they’ve come to see you—and then you look into the crowd and there you are! Your pulse races a little the first few times. Then you sorta get used to it, but it’s still really strange to see people you don’t know wearing a T-shirt with your picture on it. It makes you feel real good, too, though, because it means your music means enough to ’em that they want to make that statement.

*Is the fact that you’re a beautiful woman part of the gig?*

I think this society puts too much emphasis on how people look. I don’t see myself as

beautiful and I really wish the people who do and dwell on it could get past it. It’s flattering that people think you’re attractive, but it becomes a trap if that’s all they see.

Maybe subconsciously that’s one of the reasons why I cut my hair. I wanted people to deal with the music, with the songs—and I’m hoping this’ll let people know where my priorities, values and focus are.

*Do you think it helps at all?*

I don’t even know how to answer that. I certainly don’t look in the mirror and think about how beautiful I am ... not even close! [laughter] And I try not to think about how other people think about me, the way that I look.

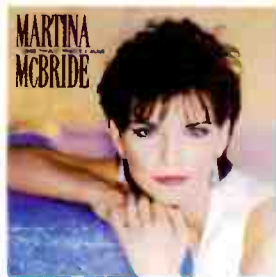
When I’m making a record, I want it to be something that people will hear and think, “Wow! This is a strong woman.” I want to give people hope, or inspire them.



If someone gets turned onto the music because they think I’m pretty, I suppose it’s okay—*as long as they like the music!* An awful lot goes into that for people to not pay it any mind. I think there are people out there who never get beyond that, who never seek out what the music’s about. And that’s what bothers me, people who write me off because they may think I’m this good-looking woman and therefore I have nothing more to offer.

In that sense, it might hurt.☹

## Discography



### MARTINA McBRIDE

*The Way That I Am*

RCA (1993)

SELECTION 04015

★ ★ ★ ★

**E**arly industry whispers pegged McBride as something of a female Merle Haggard, and while her first album scarcely warranted that kind of hype, *The Way That I Am* did. From the “Born in the U.S.A.” rhythms of “My Baby Loves Me” to the heart-stopping vocal performance on “Strangers,” McBride’s second album established her as a female singer ranking with Patty Loveless and Trisha Yearwood. It’s no wonder “My Baby Loves Me” took 20 weeks to peak, either: These songs, especially “Independence Day” and “She Ain’t Seen Nothing Yet,” play their emotions close to the chest, revealing a little more with each listen. Together, they

paint the one of the most harrowing pictures of dysfunctional relationships this side of Rosanne Cash.



### MARTINA McBRIDE

*The Time Has Come*

RCA (1992)

SELECTION 04014

★ ★ ★

**P**eople who heard Martina McBride’s first album when it came out in 1992 knew they had something worth keeping, but few people—McBride included—knew exactly what to do with it. McBride’s warm vocal style suggested what Linda Ronstadt might have sounded like had she stuck with country after *Hasten Down the Wind*, but the album’s best material—“True Blue Fool” and “Cheap Whiskey,” a duet with Garth Brooks—only hinted at McBride’s talent.—*Brian Mansfield*



# “AIDS AIN'T JUST SOME BIG CITY PROBLEM.”



Mark Chesnutt



Did you know that AIDS is increasing twice as fast in rural areas as in urban areas? Today, an estimated one out of every 250 Americans is infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. AIDS isn't somebody else's problem, it's everybody's problem.

**BREAK THE SILENCE**

We need to band together in this fight.

For more information, call your local AIDS service organization or the CDC National AIDS Hotline at

**1 - 8 0 0 - 3 4 2 - A I D S**



# Marty St

## Walks The Line With His Heart And Soul

**I**want you to know that my *personal* Waffle House did 5,024 orders over the holiday! All that in two days time,” Marty Stuart reports, beaming. Outside, the weather is rainy, unseasonably cold and gray. Yet here’s Stuart, sitting sunnily in a booth at another exit off just another highway—and he’s bragging on his local Waffle House’s volume.

For Stuart, who left home with Lester Flatt as a young teen, who cut his teeth as Johnny Cash’s musical compadre, who toured with Bob Dylan, who’s now sold gold with *This One’s Gonna Hurt You*, it’s the little things that make a difference. Like knowing that all the waitresses know his name and will line up to cluck and fuss over him.

It’s not about fame. It’s the sense that he’s made a down-home, neighborly kind of connection. These are his people—and whether he’s the king of “Hillbilly Rock” or not, Stuart understands the importance of maintaining one’s roots and one’s civility. Especially when one is in the eye of the storm.

“I’ll tell you what changed me last year. Willie Nelson’s birthday party was down in Austin and I got to work with Bob Dylan again. It’s like anytime I’m around Willie, he just makes music and doesn’t put a label on it.

“So, there I was in Austin with B.B. [King], Bonnie [Raitt], Don Was, Dylan, Travis [Tritt] and Waylon—a real reflection of the world I grew up in. But somehow, me and Dylan ended up in the back dressing room. I played mandolin and he played guitar, and we played this ol’ bluegrass song called ‘Little Maggie’ for about 10 minutes, fast and furious, over and over and over again.

“We’d just look at each other and laugh, because we were sitting there in the middle of all our roots, the real deal, and it felt *good!* Every now and then, he’d try to sing a verse.

“The thing about it was that whole thing made me realize this is where it’s at for me. Being real was what it’s about more than having hits. It also showed me that I’d done a really good job with the first chapter of my life, setting up the next 10 years.”

This morning, Stuart is scruffy. His hair is a little wild, his stubble something to behold. Yet even as he cuts into an omelet, there’s something proprietary about him.

Only Marty Stuart has those stories, about Cash, Dylan, Flatt, Willie, Emmylou, Gram, Bill Monroe. Only Marty Stuart has that old-line hillbilly style that takes over a room as soon as he enters it. And only Marty Stuart can bear witness to what country was, is now and probably—when the country hunk dust settles—will be.

Stuart, like fellow turbo-traditionalist Dwight Yoakam, knows his future lies in the past. Not that his music is archival—anyone who’s ever heard “Tempted” or “That’s Country” knows the black-haired Mississippian plugs in and plays hard. It’s just that those roots aren’t something that can be pulled, cut or burned out.

“It’s understood that we’re in the present going for the future,” Stuart begins, offering his personal philosophy about music. “But what’s been before us doesn’t have to be neglected.

“Sometimes I get so bored! I see my press and I *always* lean too far that way. I was reading some articles last night from when I was 14 years old and I was saying the very same things.”

**D**ublin, Ireland. 1988. Marty Stuart is the only one without a record deal or larger-than-life reputation at the Bloom’s Hotel, and he’s in town for a series of super-session BBC TV tapings. No one rushes to help John Prine, Don Everly, Lyle Lovett, Guy Clark or Joe Ely with their gear, but Stuart never carries his own amp or guitar.

Even then, with the smoke from his aborted Columbia deal swirling around him, Stuart was a star. He walked it like he talked it—and he talked it real good.

“I’m not born to be a brain surgeon,” Stuart says, stabbing at his hash browns. “I’m not born to be a carpenter. I was born to be a hillbilly star—and I can’t help that. If I were to paint myself black, I’d be a black hillbilly star. But no matter what, I’d be the same.”

Stuart has spent a lot of years chasing his dream. He’s worked with legends, lived the life of a marauding highwayman and always kept his heart in line with his playing. If he’s

got more stories about more people than your average Joe, it’s because Stuart gets out there and chases it—and his quarry always senses his deep respect for what they do.

Country music is what he, a young boy who’d otherwise have ended up in the Mississippi cotton fields, used to get out. But music burns him down. “The reason I play music is because of ‘High Heel Sneakers’ and Buck Owens’ ‘Tiger By The Tail,’ ‘Folsom Prison Blues,’ any Pops Staples record and bluegrass. It’s all stuff that made me cry, because it felt *so-o-o-o good!*”

“There used to be this radio station in my hometown when I was a kid that had a lot to do with how I feel about music. It’d sign on with country music early in the morning and go ‘til noon. From noon to one, they’d play Southern gospel, then it was rock ‘n’ roll ‘til five. From five to seven, they’d play r&b and soul music—and to close the day, they’d play classical.

“My Mom told me something one time when I was 9 years old. My heroes musically were Bob Dylan, Lester Flatt, Bill Monroe, Johnny Cash, Ernest Tubb—those kinds of people—and Keith Richards, who I liked a lot. My Momma said, ‘I worry about you, because all your heroes can’t really sing, or they’re in jail, or they’re on dope or dead.’”

Stuart laughs at this memory, a big hearty rolling laugh. “All those guys as I look back had an image. They all looked like their music. There’s more personality than there are notes, just feeling and heart, which is what you need. All those artists had it, and it’s what made them connect.”

Listening to him talk, it’s obvious Stuart is in love with picking and listening to music. There’s an intensity to what he does that goes far beyond the drugstore cowboy’s dream of spotlights, Silver Eagles and pretty girls. For Stuart, this is a mission.

As part of his pilgrimage, he collects artifacts from those who have come before. He owns some of Hank Williams’ suits, Jimmie Rodgers’ autograph, Bob Wills’ bus—and boxes of his own papers that document the tar-headed musician’s way in this world.

Though he’s country, there’s something more to it. There is that rock ‘n’ roll intensity. He plays hard, he hits the notes as far as he can—he *means* it.

So it’s no wonder he got a little antsy, sit-

BY HOLLY GLEASON

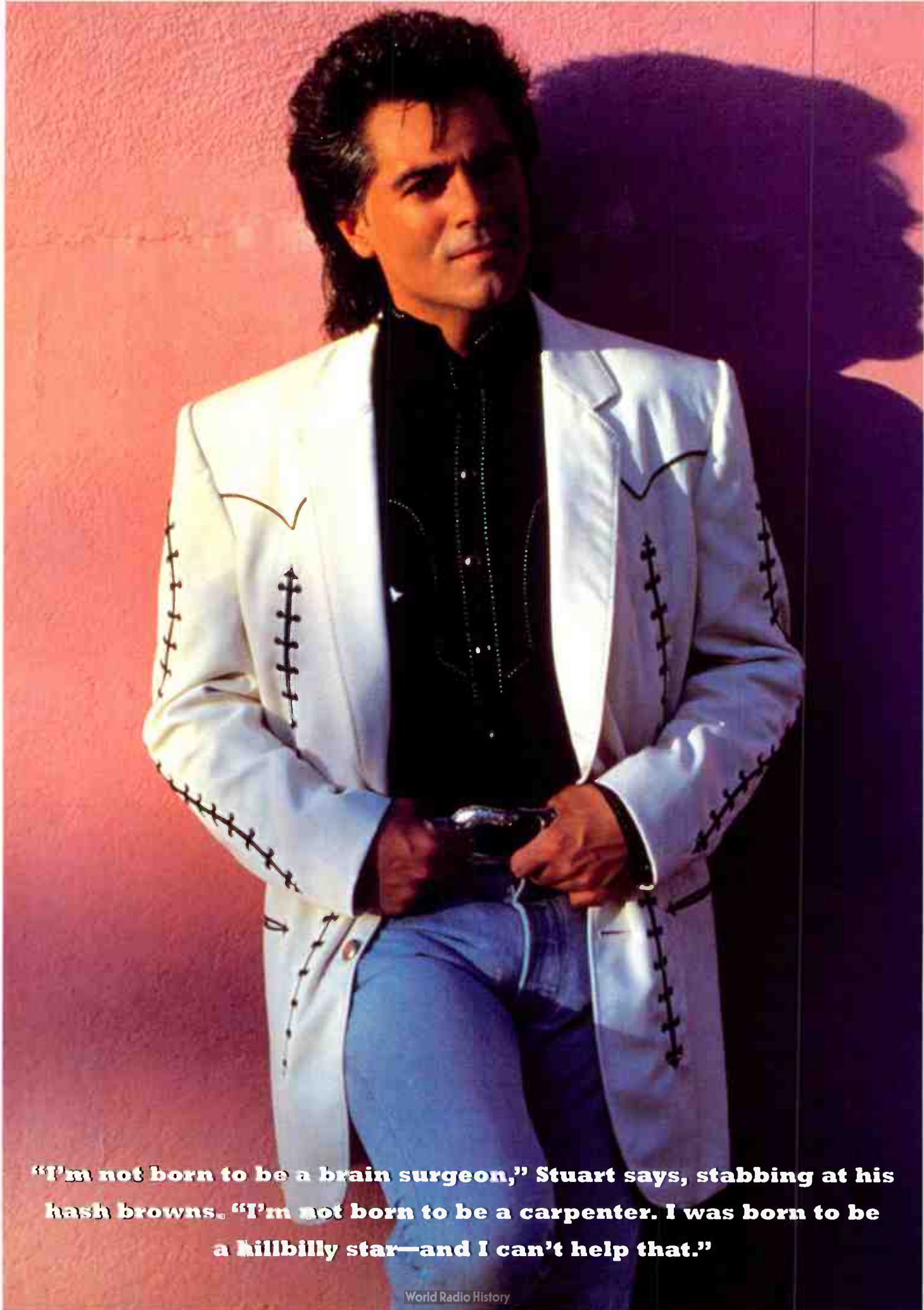


# uart



**"I know I'm one hit away from breaking—I think I probably have it on this record. But, I'm not going to do something that's not me just to break through."**





**"I'm not born to be a brain surgeon," Stuart says, stabbing at his hash browns. "I'm not born to be a carpenter. I was born to be a hillbilly star—and I can't help that."**



**“At the end of the day, when nobody’s looking and I’m just alone, my favorite thing to do is get my mandolin or acoustic guitar and sit in the corner with one light bulb hanging down in the dark and sing about sick people or dead people.”**

ting around watching the Xerox cowboys come and go. Not that Stuart wishes them any ill—“But my passions probably don’t matter a damn to John Michael Montgomery or Faith Hill”—it’s just that he’s got a bag to tote.

**W**hen Columbia Records let him go in the late ’80s, Stuart had some re-evaluating to do. He was one of the hot-shot pickers and he understood the impact of attitude and image, but what he wanted was a solid career.

Flipping through a *Billboard*, he started scanning the credits on records he liked. When he ran across Steve Earle’s breakthrough blue collar country album *Guitar Town*, he saw something he liked a lot: the name Tony Brown.

“I called Tony and said, ‘Let’s do lunch,’” Stuart recalls of the path that eventually led him to MCA. “I told him I needed help getting going. There’s a couple people in town I always want to do better for, that I want to impress, and Tony’s one of them. Ever since I was 12 years old, I’ve wanted to impress Tony Brown because he was *so cool*.”

“When I was working for Lester Flatt, he was working for Elvis. He always had a bigger car. He always had a better job. He’s like a big brother to me.”

Brown, then a vice president of a&r at MCA Nashville and now president of the label, brought in guitar-slinger Richard Bennett, known as much for his six-string bass work as his archival knowledge of classic country. The pair put together *Hillbilly Rock*, and Marty Stuart was on his way.

When the title track broke through at radio, the walls finally seemed to have crumbled. He would record two more albums, though, before cash registers started ringing up precious metal sales, and a duet with fellow redneck rocker Tritt would bring home a sense of the buzz that he’d soaked up onstage next to Cash each night for years.

“When we’d cut ‘The Whiskey Ain’t Workin’, I’d gone to see Travis somewhere and he said, ‘Why don’t you come out during the second verse and help me sing it?’ So I came out of the wings, and the place went wild! We both looked at each other—we didn’t know if it was us together, alone, the song or what, but we definitely knew something was going on.”

That momentum, “the buzz” as Stuart likes to call it, has carried him through the last year or so. Though *This One’s Gonna Hurt You* was certified gold, getting to his new album *Love and Luck* hasn’t been easy. Along the way, he’s found himself doing a lot of soul searching and asking a lot of probing questions about what he wants.

The path hasn’t been the easiest to tread, but it’s the only one Stuart could walk and look himself in the mirror. “I was very lonesome this year,” he concedes, turning reflective like a fall cold snap. “When it’s your duty to do something, well, believe me, out there at my end of the string, you don’t see a whole lot of soulmates. I see Dwight and Travis, Patty Loveless, Emmylou. I see Bill Monroe and Johnny Cash, the Rolling Stones and Willie Nelson, Muddy Waters ... but there ain’t a lot of company.

“It’s like if you’re a boy scout or a soldier. I wear country’s past simply as a purple heart on my Nudie suit. It’s like, ‘Hey, we survived!’ It’s not a burden, it’s a joy.

“But you get back to that side of me that’s lonesome, those lonesome old bluegrass songs. Last summer, I turned off the radio and listened to myself, what was inside me. At the end of the day, when nobody’s looking and I’m just alone, my favorite thing to do is get my mandolin or acoustic guitar and sit in the corner with one light bulb hanging down in the dark and sing about sick people or dead people.

“A lot of things leave me lonesome. And those ballads (‘That’s What Love’s About’ and ‘That’s When You’ll Know It’s Over’ from *Love and Luck*) have a tear on ’em. I’d never thought I could deliver a ballad. I just proved that if I looked inside and got real honest about what I was doing, I could.”

Just dropping out and tuning in didn’t bring Stuart to this point. While *Love and Luck* is surely his most mature album to date, an album that marries his historic mandate to his commercial dreams, it’s an album that took an awful lot out of him to achieve.

Stuart had recorded eight sides with Bennett when he realized it wasn’t working. He went to MCA Nashville Chairman Bruce Hinton with the news. “The good thing about a label as hot as MCA is they have the ability to get things right.” He also went to work on Brown, in an attempt to lure him back into the studio. “I told him I needed him. It was up to him to help me

figure this out, because Richard and I had gone as far as we could and we still hadn’t got where we needed to be.”

And he was trying to recover from some video foolishness that’d gone bad. “I was tired of my tight pants and hopping around onstage, which I’ll probably never really get tired of, but I felt something deeper trying to come out of me.

“I was working under the effect of a concussion, trying to shake pain pills and get that crap out of my system. The hardest thing I ever had to do was walk up to Richard and say, ‘This isn’t working.’ And then I had to figure out how to move forward.

“I’d always felt like before we had the records, it was based on that flash-in-pan, hot-dog kind of thing. I never took my image all that seriously, but I wanted more. I wanted to get out of the way of myself, step out of my path—and sometimes it takes a lot of guts to do that. You gotta use your fingernails sometimes—and you’re totally out there on faith, hoping God don’t drop you.”

**B**y digging in, Marty Stuart found himself. Moving from flash to substance, the mantle of his heroes subtly past to him. “Love and Luck,” written with Pam Tillis spouse Bob DiPiero, is a song that sums up everything Stuart took with him when he left small-town Mississippi years ago. “I wish you luck and love, love and luck/Life’s a treasure, so go dig it up/Be what you are and that’s enough/I wish you luck and love, and love and luck... .”

In many ways, *Love and Luck* closes a lot of circles. Ricky Skaggs and Vince Gill, both bluegrass festival pals of many years past, sing on the album. The camaraderie seeps through the tracks—whether it’s the back-alley chug of “Kiss Me, I’m Gone” or the Appalachian call of “Oh, What A Silent Night.”

There’s a current that runs through Stuart, a power that binds him to his mentors. He talks about meeting Gram Parsons and Emmylou Harris when they were first torching the honky-tonks, and there’s a wistfulness when he says, “You could see what they were going to do,” that carries over into his own plaintive reading of the Burritos’ “Wheels.”

That same synchronicity exists between the spiritual overtones of his remarks about the architect of the Outlaw movement, Billy Joe Shaver, and Stuart’s rendition of Shaver’s



"My Momma said,  
'I worry about you,  
because all your  
heroes can't really  
sing, or they're in  
jail, or they're on  
dope or dead.'"



gently searching "If I Give My Soul." And there's the sly boy relish with which he discusses Slim Harpo's "Shake Your Hips"—"You know, I watch the groove and it's gotta have some shank on it ..."—that bleeds over into his somewhat menacing delivery of a song that's all lust and promise.

He absorbs the song's emotions, the writers' lives and he glows with what he's seen, heard, savored. Stuart filters a life only a lucky few can live into a potent mix for his fans to enjoy—and in the process, he still manages to keep a few things for himself, things for later.

"I've always swung with everything I've got, but I don't believe the future of country music is a trendy night spot with dance music. I think it's great, but we've always had people who danced. This boom has given me a lot of work over the years, but ... it's not the future.

"I mean, I don't see me five years from now dying my hair blacker or wearing my pants tighter, re-doing Nudie coats. That's

not being true to the music or your soul.

"Truthfully, this music is often miles above its roots. So you have to stand up whether you're popular or unpopular, selling out stadiums or not selling out clubs, you've got to tell the truth about where this music came from. You should always. When it comes your time, when they come upon your index card, there should be a point of view by your name.

"This is all becoming very disposable. Look at Randy Travis, it's terrible that [the industry] snubs him like that. But it's a whole different power trip. From club owners to concert promoters to radio programmers, it's their business to understand that Willie Nelson is over, Johnny Cash, Ricky Skaggs. It's very cold—and I *know* they'll do the same thing to me in two or three years. That's why you've gotta keep your soul and not sell out to 'em.

"That's why it's about being uninhibited for me right now and making commercial music that's true to my soul. I know I'm

one hit away from breaking—I think I probably have it on this record. But I'm not going to do something that's not me just to break through.

"When it's my time, that's okay too. I'd like to start an acoustic band. There are lots of ways to play these songs, so when it's time for me to quit being a hillbilly star, I'll hit it from another angle. There's lots of ways to make music, and just because you're 45 and your hair is gray, that doesn't mean you have to fade away.

"Stephane Grappelli is 80-something and he's still incredibly valid. Bill Monroe's still out there, writing these wonderful mandolin songs every day. I think it's a question of values—and both Cash and Lester stressed that longevity is what matters, being there every January 1."

The ensuing pause is louder than a freight train. Stuart has a lot on his mind these days. Sometimes when he gets on a roll, it can't help but seep into what he says—and this has been one of those moments.

Not that Stuart wants to be some kind of serious, ponderous hillbilly star. He settles an off-shaped Western hat low on his brow, then he smiles.

"The night I joined the Opry," he says, beginning to lean close, "I got together with Richard Bennett and I said, 'Why don't we celebrate after the second show?!' He said, 'Yeah, after the first show we can celebrate joining the Opry—and after the second show, we can bitch about having to play it!'"

Stuart laughs at the story, an obvious ice-breaker. The traditions are what brung him, and he'll dance with 'em always. But he's smart enough not to be bound to the past.

Sliding the check off the table, he reaches for his wallet. Smiling at the waitress, he plunks down a tip, heads to the cash register and gets ready to disappear down the battered Tennessee two-lane.

The man who once brought the reigning Miss America to his very Waffle House pauses in the cold for a moment. Squinting, he looks into the sky, then lets out a whistle.

"It wouldn't matter if I were a mandolin player in a bluegrass band, a songwriter, a journalist or a photographer—it's all part of it. Being a bright shining star at this point means I have more access to more stuff, more avenues you don't always get to.

"It's about playing true music, and the music means more to me right now than it ever has. I'm not worried about getting noticed as much ... I've done that. What it means now is bringing the whole thing together, bringing my rock 'n' roll friends and my country friends into the same room and letting 'em play music."

With a conspiratorial wink, Marty Stuart leans closer, smiles and confides, "Stardom is good—twinkle, twinkle." ❄



## Discography

# MARTY STUART



### MARTY STUART

*Busy Bee Cafe*

SUGAR HILL (1982)

SELECTION 04137

★★★★★

Like fellow bluegrass Ricky Skaggs, Stuart opted for a pickin' intensive debut on the Durham, North Carolina-based Sugar Hill label before going to the big leagues. Here, Stuart's virtuosity on mandolin shines, even as he attracts a group of country's finest pickers to spark and race with him. Though no clear style emerges, this project lends credence to Stuart's prodigy status.

### MARTY STUART

*Marty Stuart*

COLUMBIA (1986)

SELECTION 04136

★★★

"Arlene" was the most dangerous thing rolling out of car stereo speakers in the late '80s. Smoking guitar, gruff voice and a beat that thundered down on you, it was menacing and lusty—and probably scared radio off. A shame since "Flight of the Bumble Bee," "The Weight" and "Little Honky Tonker" was the best poo-poo platter of hillbilly music going.



### MARTY STUART

*Hillbilly Rock*

MCA (1989)

SELECTION 04029

★★★★★

Joined by Tony Brown and Richard Bennett, Stuart began finding onramps to country radio, most notably with the infectious "Hillbilly Rock," by merging old country with contemporary radio values. The marriage wasn't seamless, but when it worked, it

was cool. Case in point: "Western Girls," an ode to frosted eye shadow and sky high hair that made big friends in trailer parks. Also, Joe Ely's "Me and Billy the Kid" had a weathered fierceness that was as authentic as nearly two decades on the road could make it.



### MARTY STUART

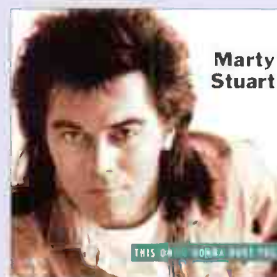
*Tempted*

MCA (1991)

SELECTION 04028

★★★★

Could be called *Marty Stuart Sells Out*. A basic suck-up-to-radio outing, the title track recalls Johnny Cash's glory days with such triumphant abandon, the airwave fodder is almost irrelevant. With a beat that's unrelenting and an attitude that's all desire, Stuart evokes Cash's staunch resolve as he stands by the woman who's not there.



### MARTY STUART

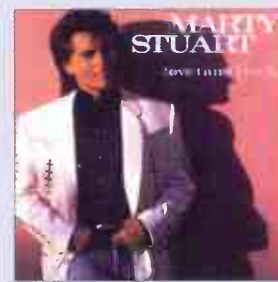
*This One's Gonna Hurt You*

MCA (1992)

SELECTION 04027

★★★★

Here the commercial and the credible join in a seamless union that provided Stuart with his first gold album. The title track, featuring vocal trade-offs with Travis Tritt, is a bona fide country classic—just the kind of thing you'd buy at the moon after drinking/drop kicking your baby good-bye. And "That's Country" swaggers with all the cocky good ole boy charm that defines the attitude and lifestyle.



### MARTY STUART

*Love and Luck*

MCA (1994)

SELECTION 04144

★★★★

He marries the commercial and historical for an album that defines the mass appeal Marty Stuart sound. Whether it's a grinding remake of Slim Harpo's "Shake Your Hips," Shaver's bluegrass spiritual "If I Give My Soul" or the hushed "That's What Love's About," Stuart makes versatility a unifying element. Rough voiced, Stuart sings with heart and proves pretty ain't everything.

*Marty Stuart also appears on albums featuring the following tracks:*

### "The Devil Comes Back To Georgia"

*With Charlie Daniels, Johnny Cash, Travis Tritt and Mark O'Connor*

### MARK O'CONNOR

*Heroes*

REPRISE (1993)

SELECTION 04138

★★★★

Retread '70s hit. The playing is fiery, the performances overwrought—everything this overblown morality play is about.

### "Misery"

*With Asleep at the Wheel*

### ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

*Tribute To the Music of Bob Wills*

LIBERTY (1993)

SELECTION 04140

★★★★

### "The Whiskey Ain't Workin'"

*With Travis Tritt*

### TRAVIS TRITT

*It's All About to Change*

WARNER BROS. (1991)

SELECTION 04139

★★★★

Pain killer that ain't working, this industrial shuffle celebrates good ole boys helping each other out. Male bonding never got so honest—and the performances laced with the kind of over-the-top angst that soap operas are steeped in. —H.G.

# WHEN GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO ROUGH PEOPLE

## Confederate Railroad Stays on the Country Side of the Tracks

**W**e've never been bad people," says Confederate Railroad's Danny Shirley, casually flicking the stub of a Marlboro Light cigarette off the deck of the 'Bama House. "I had a problem with that at the label when we first signed. It took me a while to convince them of the difference between being 'bad people' and just being 'rough people.'"

Shirley sees the difference this way: "Bad people may go start trouble. They might steal your car or break into your house." His band of rough boys, on the other hand, once encountered a thief fleeing a shopping mall robbery. "Bad people would help him get away," Shirley explains. "People who weren't bad or weren't rough would get out of the way."

"We just knocked the hell out of him. So you see, there's a big difference between bad and rough."

Bad people don't get to stay at the 'Bama House, part of a three-building compound near Music Row fenced in by brick walls and wrought-iron gates. Owned by Dale Morris, whose company manages Alabama, newcomer Kenny Chesney and Confederate Railroad, the compound houses Morris' offices and offers accommodations for visiting clients. Shirley is staying at the 'Bama House while in Nashville to cut a cover of Waylon Jennings' hit "Ladies Love Outlaws" for the soundtrack to the upcoming *Maverick* feature film.

The past year has been good to Confederate Railroad—the group's first album has sold more than one-

and-a-half million copies on the strength of such hits as "Jesus and Mama" and "Trashy Women," and the second album, *Notorious*, promises to follow a similar trail—but the group's bearded singer displays few trappings of his success. He's got a baseball cap pulled down to his sunglasses. He's barefoot, wearing faded jeans and a blue sweatshirt ripped at the collar and where sleeves once were. He has a deep winter sunburn on his neck and chest that came from tanning beds and Daytona Beach. If he were painting window trim or hauling equipment to the buses on the nearby sidewalk, he wouldn't warrant a second glance. He looks rough.

So rough that it's easy to believe the story Shirley tells about his first encounter with Morris, the man who owns the deck he's sitting on and who now manages his career.

"We were talking one time, and Dale said something about the way Alabama ended their show," Shirley says. "I said I had never seen the end of an Alabama show. I said, 'Matter of fact, I went to a concert one time in Chattanooga and got throwed out before the show was over.'"

"It wasn't anything I'd done, but one of my friends was 'undesirable.' We got talking, and it was Dale that had me throwed out. My own manager had me throwed out."

Shirley grew up in Hixson, Tennessee, a northern

**B y B r i a n M a n s f i e l d**







World Radio History

**Confederate Railroad's beefy, leather-clad members look the part of Southern rockers, even if the group has more in common with Alabama than Melly Hatchet.**



suburb of Chattanooga, home of Lookout Mountain and the Moon Pie. His father and step-mother both worked at the local DuPont plant. He attended his first concert—Steppenwolf—at Chattanooga's Memorial Auditorium. (Eventually, he would sing 'Born To Be Wild' with the group on another stage.)

Inspired by the music of Waylon Jennings and other members of country's redneck outlaw fringe of the '70s, Shirley began forming bands and playing in local clubs. Before signing with Atlantic Records, he released three independent albums under his name with song titles like "Wish I Was Somewhere Stoned Playing Pinball" and "I Wouldn't Take You Home to Mama." (An early version of "Time Off for Bad Behavior," which appeared on *Confederate Railroad*, was included on Shirley's first album in 1983.)

The group that would eventually become

Confederate Railroad formed in 1981. Drummer Mark DuFresne is the only remaining member of the group, though Shirley says most of Confederate Railroad's members have played with him for 10 years. The Danny Shirley Band became a popular attraction not only for the locals but for visiting Southern rockers as well.

"Somehow or another, all the Southern rockers caught on to it," Shirley says. "They'd play a big concert in town, then come to the bar where we were playing. They used to always get up and sit in with us—Gregg Allman, Leon Wilkeson, guys from .38 Special, Molly Hatchet, Steppenwolf. On the one hand, I was thrilled—'We must be doing something right or these guys wouldn't be coming.' On the other hand, it was like, 'I can't get a damn deal.' That wasn't what Nashville wanted at the time.

"The support of Southern rockers like that helped me keep going and keep thinking I was doing something right."

**E**ventually, though, the support of Southern rockers began to cause problems for Confederate Railroad.

Only Hank Williams Jr. and Charlie Daniels ever successfully tapped into the boisterous, hard-living attitudes that united country music's outlaw fringe and Southern rock fans displaced by the 1977 plane crash that martyred Ronnie Van Zant and Steve and Cassie Gaines. A few others—Travis Tritt, Steve Earle and the Kentucky HeadHunters—had come close, but they all either derailed their careers or resigned themselves to the conservative demands of country's jealous possessiveness.

Confederate Railroad's beefy, leather-clad members looked the part of Southern rock-



ers, even if the group had more in common with Alabama than Molly Hatchet, and Nashville session musicians supplied most of the music on its records. Though Shirley insists the group's music is "just straight-ahead outlaw country," that look and the unrepentantly prominent display of Southern rock's most precious icon—the Confederacy's Stars and Bars—suggested they were Southern rockers in disguise.

Not that Shirley minded. His band had backed two of country's most legitimate outlaws—David Allan Coe and Johnny Paycheck—and had a reciprocated respect for many Southern rock bands. He even felt honored to join a tour with Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Marshall Tucker Band last year—until his record company insisted the band pull off the tour.

"Radio was the people who got upset," Shirley says. "It just amazed me. I think a lot of what was happening was we were going into a big market and the rock stations were getting the ads."

**"The way I was looking at it, so many of our fans are fans of Southern rock 'n' roll that if I did these Southern rock shows with these legendary Southern rock artists, it might bring more people into country music," Danny Shirley says.**

Drivin' N' Cryin', a Georgia rock band with a strong college following, replaced Confederate Railroad for the rest of the tour.

"The way I was looking at it, so many of our fans are fans of Southern rock 'n' roll that if I did these Southern rock shows with these legendary Southern rock artists, it might bring more people into country music," Shirley says. "That's what I was going for. But the way it was perceived by some of the industry was that we were turning our back on country, which was never intended."

**F**allout from the tour debacle even clouded the making of Confederate Railroad's second album. "We had to be very careful on this *Notorious* album not to sound rockish, like we were trying to get in Southern rock," says Shirley.

Fearing an adverse reaction from radio, the band decided not to include a cover of Steve Earle's "Good Ol' Boy (Gettin' Tough)" that it had recorded with Earle and Charlie Daniels.

Shirley doesn't have his own copy of the song, so he decides to phone the Atlantic Records office, three blocks from the

'Bama House.

"Let me make a call, and I'll just get them to run it over here," Shirley says. As he heads for the cellular phone in his brand-new, black Ford pickup, he turns and grins: "You can do that when you sell 1.5."

On "Good Ol' Boy," by far the hardest track Confederate Railroad has ever cut, slashing guitar chords give voice to the pent-up rage of the song's character, a former veteran whose job pays him barely enough money to support his family and pay his debts. Earle shouts harmonies to Shirley's lead on the chorus, while Daniels' fiddle lines are nearly buried beneath the crushing weight of the guitars.

"Good Ol' Boy" fits perfectly with the rest of *Notorious*, where small-town dwellers discover that the world has changed more drastically, more irrevocably, than they could have conceived, and seven years of questionable economics since Earle wrote the song only add to the grim desperation in Shirley's

voice. The track could easily have overshadowed lighthearted *Notorious* songs like "Elvis and Andy" (Presley and Griffith) and "Redneck Romeo," turning the album's story into something much darker.

"I've never been one to play it safe musically," says Shirley, "but there's limits." Omitting "Good Ol' Boy" from *Notorious* may be the most obvious example of those limits, but another change probably means more to some of Confederate Railroad's fans.

"On the fair circuit last summer, I had no idea our fan base was so diverse, age-wise," says Shirley, his rough edges softening. "We'd play these fairs, and I'd have these little preschool kids standing on the front row singing every word to 'Trashy Women,' 'Queen of Memphis,' sometimes the whole album.

"There were a couple of 'hells' and 'damns' on the *Railroad* album. I'd notice they'd get to those lines and they'd have to stop singing. Their parents had told 'em, 'You can't say that.' So on the new album, I took every 'hell' and 'damn' off, because I felt guilty those kids were looking up to me but they couldn't sing those words. But I don't think we lost any of our edge." ♪

## Discography



### CONFEDERATE RAILROAD

*Confederate Railroad*

ATLANTIC (1992)  
SELECTION 04128

★ ★ ½

The last-minute transformation of solo act Danny Shirley into the group Confederate Railroad generally had positive effects on this album: A half-dozen burly guys make the leather-clad biker image better than one would, and they also diffused the target for folks put off by the tongue-in-cheek sexism of "Trashy Women." Combining novelty numbers like "Trashy Women" and "She Took It Like a Man" with outlaw country songs like "Jesus and Mama" connected with country's blue collar element: Confederate Railroad's debut sold more than 1.5 million copies.



### CONFEDERATE RAILROAD

*Notorious*

ATLANTIC (1994)  
SELECTION 04054

★ ★ ★ ½

Like Alabama, Confederate Railroad rocks hardest on its novelty numbers and reserves its serious emotions for ballads of loves and lifetimes lost. The most powerful songs on *Notorious* show men left stunned and confused by a world that changed faster than they could follow. As the world runs roughshod over them, the characters on *Notorious* turn their insular Southernness into an in-joke. "Redneck Romeo" ribs its subject but never ridicules him, while a Yankee girlfriend passes the litmus test of "Elvis and Andy." The humor serves as a wall of protection—if you're not part of the crowd, you won't get the jokes.—*BM*

## A Wealth Of Riches

*"Nashville On Stage" Offers Five Hot Months Of Live Country*

BY BILL HOBBS

**S**HOULD YOU FIND YOURSELF DRIVING toward Nashville one warm afternoon this summer, craving the sounds of veteran country superstars like George Jones, Alabama and Tammy Wynette or the "hot country" of newer acts like Martina McBride, Marty Stuart or Mark Chesnutt, have no fear.

It's all here, and more.

With "Nashville On Stage," a five-month, 730-concert marathon at the Opryland USA complex, the Gaylord Entertainment Co. has taken a huge step toward answering a principal complaint of Nashville's tourists: not enough live country music.

It's a complaint drawn into sharper focus recently by the growth of tiny Branson, Missouri, into the Las Vegas of country music, where more than two dozen music theaters with performers-in-residence

draw more than 5 million tourists annually.

Gaylord, which owns Opryland, the Grand Ole Opry and the TNN and CMT cable networks, launches the Nashville On Stage concert series May 6 with shows by Jones, Patty Loveless and Alabama and has scheduled three to five concerts daily through Oct. 2.

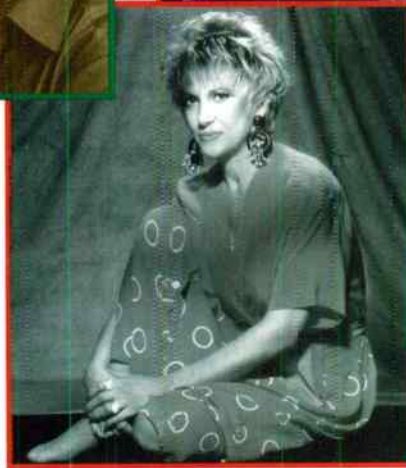
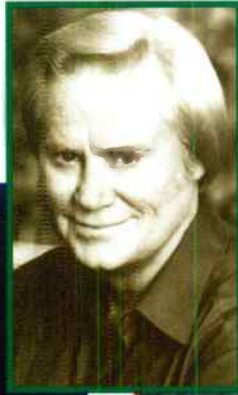
Opryland has long offered a series of summer concerts. What's new is having stars of Jones' and Wynette's caliber settle in for several months of shows.

"Nashville On Stage adds another significant overlay" to the supply of live country music performances in Nashville, says Dick Evans, the executive vice president of Gaylord.

In all, more than 30 different country performers and bands will appear as part of Nashville On Stage. Jones and Alabama will headline what is billed as the "world's largest and most ambitious concert series."







**Clockwise from top left:**  
Tanya Tucker, George Jones, the Oak Ridge Boys, Tammy Wynette and Alabama.

Nashville will be one of the few places to see Alabama in 1994. The band has scaled back touring dates in favor of multiple shows at the band's Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, theater and in Nashville, where Alabama is scheduled to play 105 dates at the outdoor Chevrolet/Geo Celebrity Theater.

Grand Ole Opry and Country Music Hall of Fame member George Jones is scheduled to prove he don't need no rocking chair in 108 concerts at the outdoor Theater by the Lake. After 40 years in the music business, the Possum shows no signs of slowing down.

The Celebrity Theater, which has covered seating for 4,000 people, also will have concerts by the Oak Ridge Boys and Tanya Tucker. The Oaks' four-part harmony is scheduled to fill the theater for 28 dates. The fiery Tucker is scheduled for 17 dates.

On the 42 days when Jones isn't performing at the Theater By The Lake, which has covered seating for 2,200 people, concert goers can see Wynette. Jones will perform nightly Thursdays through Mondays, and Wynette will take the stage on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings during the five-month concert series.

In her 25th year in country music, Wynette continues to record hit songs—from contributing vocals to the 1992 pop hit "Justified and Ancient" by the pop group KLF to the recent *Honky Tonk Angels* album featuring Wynette, Dolly Parton and Loretta Lynn.

The Nashville On Stage concert series also will present 430 concerts by a variety of today's hottest country music acts, in multiple daily performances at the Acuff Theater. In addition, the 1,500-seat indoor theater will house performances of *Hee Haw Live*, a new stage version of the long-running cornfield comedy-and-country television show, that will be presented every day of the week except Tuesdays.

Veteran *Hee Haw* cast members George "Goober" Lindsey, Gunilla Hutton, Lulu Roman and Grandpa Jones will be joined by a cast of Opryland singers and dancers to present country music and many of the television show's famous comedy bits, and to welcome unannounced guest performers.

Each night, the intimate Acuff Theater will host performances at 7 and 9 PM by one of more than two dozen country music artists. The CMT Hot Country Concerts series will feature Chesnutt, Loveless, McBride, Stuart, John Anderson, Confederate Railroad and Billy Dean.

And Joe Diffie, Radney Foster, Emmylou Harris, Toby Keith and Sammy Kershaw.

And Hal Ketchum, Little Texas, Suzy Bogguss, Kathy Mattea, Mark Collie, Lee Roy Parnell, Collin Raye, Restless Heart and Ricky Skaggs.

And Larry Stewart, Doug Stone, Tracy Byrd, Doug Supernaw and Pam Tillis.

Each is booked for anywhere from two to 13 days.

Outside of the Nashville On Stage concert series, Gaylord Entertainment Co. is planning country music-themed shows at the newly restored Ryman Auditorium, the former home of the Grand Ole Opry. Water taxis will connect the suburban Opryland theme park and hotel complex with downtown, where the Ryman will offer a stage show honoring the late Patsy Cline and other shows and concerts. Also opening downtown in June is the new Wildhorse Saloon country dance hall. ☞

## Getting On Stage

Tickets for the "Nashville On Stage" concerts at the Acuff Theater, featuring more than two dozen of today's hot country stars, cost \$12.95 each. Ticket prices for the shows at the two outdoor theaters, the Chevrolet/Geo Celebrity Theater and the Theater by the Lake, vary by act. Alabama tickets are \$19.95. George Jones, the Oak Ridge Boys, Tanya Tucker and Tammy Wynette tickets cost \$16.95.

Tickets for the *Hee Haw Live* stage show are \$11.95.

Tickets are sold independently of admission to the Opryland USA theme park, where the three theaters are located. Theme park admission is not necessary to attend a Nashville On Stage concert.

Tickets may be ordered by calling 1-615-889-6611; special rates are available for groups of 15 or more by calling 1-615-889-7070. A complete schedule and ticket information for all "Nashville On Stage" shows is available by calling 1-800-535-0200.



**D**oug Johnson has heard the taunting reprimands several times. As producer of the Gibson/Miller Band and the record executive in charge of overseeing the country-rock quintet's career, he's been informed over and over again that singer Dave Gibson and guitarist Blue Miller should have been officially listed as a duo with backing musicians instead of a full-fledged band.

Why such hair-splitting? Because as a duo, singer Dave Gibson and guitarist Blue Miller would own a greater chance at gaining a nomination on one or more of the country music awards programs that now fill the annual dance card of chart-topping stars.

"It was something we talked about," Johnson admits. "But the guys really wanted to be a band. They wanted the other musicians to feel they had a real stake in it. They wanted guys who would live and breathe it. We let our heart lead. But we did think about it."

Rick Blackburn, the outspoken president of the Nashville division of Atlantic Records, explains why such a discussion would take place. "It all goes back to awards shows," he



Sweethearts of the Rodeo: A rarity in a world of manly duos.

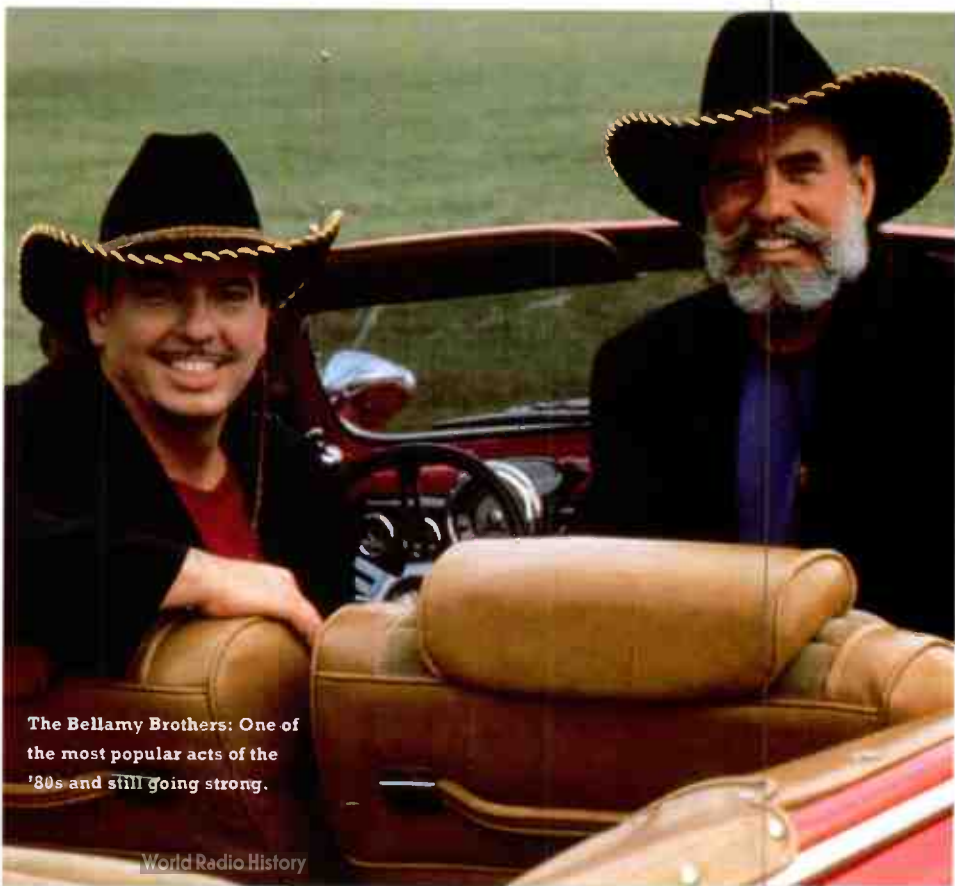
# The Numb

says bluntly. "Most awards shows have a separate category for duets, but there aren't that many duet teams out there right now. So that puts a value on duets. Record companies see it as a way of instant success."

In most cases, a new solo performer or country band with only minimal sales or radio play isn't likely to gain a high-profile nomination at the Country Music Association Awards, the Academy of Country Music Awards, the TNN/Music City News Awards or any of the other popular, star-studded television events that celebrate country music. However, because of the current dearth of country duos, a developing act still struggling to find mass acceptance has a shot at drawing a duo nomination.

For country musicians especially, awards programs have become proven career builders. The performances and the lists of nominees are seen by millions of music fans, many of whom equate awards with excellence. For new acts, just getting mentioned alongside Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson and Reba McEntire can be a big boost. For newcomers like Gibson/Miller, Brother Phelps and Turner Nichols, or such upcoming new duos as Archer/Park, Orrall and Wright or John and Audrey Wiggins, that kind of exposure could provide a welcome hike in name

*There's More To Musical Duos Than*



The Bellamy Brothers: One of the most popular acts of the '80s and still going strong.





Gibson/Miller Band:  
Leading with their heart  
and staying a band.

recognition, which could lead to improved sales, additional radio airplay, concert endorsements and so on. It can give the act a foothold that might otherwise elude them.

"When you have a new act, you look for every opportunity you can to get their name better known," Blackburn notes. "Perception is everything. If fans see that [an act] is nominated, they're going to think that these guys must be important, that this act must be good. That's where the relationship starts."

**F**or the last decade, the duo category has been dominated by two wildly different vocal partnerships. From 1984 through the end of the decade, the Judds swept every duo award available. Just as Naomi Judd's battle with chronic hepatitis sent Wynonna out on her own, two Music Row veterans, Kix Brooks and Ronnie Dunn, surfaced and immediately seized the awards' crown abdicated by the Judds.

"We're two of the luckiest guys to ever be in country music," beams Brooks, commenting on several fortuitous twists of timing that

# ers Game

*Meets the Eye* BY MICHAEL MCCALL



Asylum Records'  
fraternal duo  
Brother Phelps.

helped lift Brooks & Dunn to country stardom. "There's nothing about us that was thought out or planned. We've had a lot of things that just sort of mysteriously fell in place for us right from the get-go."

As with the Judds, Brooks & Dunn have yet to attend an awards show in which they didn't walk away with a gleaming new trophy for their shelves. "We've been running so hard we haven't really settled down and dusted off a place for all of them yet," Brooks says with a sly grin.

In a business that plays and pays by the numbers, Brooks & Dunn clearly have earned their seats at the awards shows. The duo have sold more than 5 million albums in two years, which ranks them among country's biggest sellers.

But it's their award-show competition—or lack thereof—that caught the eye of many country insiders. At the 1993 Country Music Association Awards, the Vocal Duo of the Year category could only come up with four nominees instead of the customary five. Two of the other nominees, the Bellamy Brothers and Sweethearts of the Rodeo, no longer were aligned with a major label record company; for the CMA Awards, nominations go to non-major label performers about as often as they go to

gangsta rappers or devil-worshipping metal groups. The other competitors were Darryl & Don Ellis, then a struggling new act. The brothers have since been let go by Epic Records.

Obviously, a void existed. Record companies have spent the last two years rushing to fill it. "I'd been looking for the right duet act for a year, maybe more," says Blackburn, who personally signed Archer/Park to Atlantic the same night he saw them perform at a Nashville nightclub.

For the most part, Brooks & Dunn cast the mold followed by the new duos now suddenly springing onto the country scene. "Our getting together really goes right back to Brooks & Dunn," says Randy Archer, whose partner, Johnny Park, originally suggested the two songwriters try their luck as a team. "They were the only duet really happenin'. They've had tremendous success, so they really opened that area up, I think."

**L**ike the successful boot-scootin' duo, all of the members of Turner Nichols, Archer/Park and Orrall and Wright are songwriters who each spent years pursuing solo careers with little to no success. Robert Ellis Orrall and Curtis Wright, for instance, are thirtysomething veterans who both put out country albums for different record companies within the last couple of years.

The other guys—and, with the exception of siblings John and Audrey Wiggins, the new duos are a distinctly manly bunch—all have been pushing through the Nashville professional system for some time on their own. As solo performers, they all had drawn record company interest at one time or another; they all had gained financial backing from important Nashville music publishing companies or management firms (or both); they all enjoyed recent success writing songs for other singers; and they all originally got together to co-write—a highly popular activity among Nashville tunesmiths.

Zach Turner and Tim Nichols, for example, wrote their first song together seven years ago (that tune, "You Can't Hurt Me Anymore," appears on their recent BNA Records debut). They originally joined talents because their publishers thought they might hit it off as co-writers. The two had already met while performing separately at the Bluebird Cafe, one of the most popular haunts for Nashville writers.

"It's like a blind date when writers get together for the first time," Turner says. "We found out we had an awful lot in common. We talked all day long. And we found out that what we write together is unlike anything we write solo. We liked how it came



**Brooks & Dunn: The crowned princes of duo.**

**"We've had a lot of things that just sort of mysteriously fell in place for us right from the get-go."**

out, so we kept on writing over the years."

After several years, the two accumulated a stockpile of songs, many of which had little chance of getting recorded. During a writing session one day, Turner asked Nichols if he played bass. Nichols tentatively nodded yes, unsure of what his partner had in mind. "It might be cool to get out and play some of

these songs for people who've never heard them," Turner suggested.

The two hit the Nashville club circuit as a loose, affable duo. Gary Overton, then an artists-and-repertoire executive at BNA, saw the group perform and surprised them with a contract offer. After years of unsuccessfully seeking recording deals as solo artists, the



two suddenly were presented with their dream while out on a lark.

Turner laughs about the circumstances, and he's happy with the turn of events. "Me and Tim have a rapport-thing going," he surmises. "We truly are good friends, and we can carry that onto the stage. It wasn't something that was forced. It's fun for us. I'm not doing it just to get my solo career going."

**O**rrall and Wright also characterize themselves as "the best of friends." A former Bostonian, Orrall moved to Nashville six years ago and met Wright his first day in town. They struck up a quick friendship that led to a writing partnership. Both were experienced performers and recording artists who shared an outsider's view. Orrall had previously recorded pop-rock for a major label; Wright had been a leader of a wild honky-tonk outfit known as the Super Grit Cowboy Band, a popular regional band based in North Carolina.

The two have enjoyed success as co-writers since 1988, when Shenandoah turned their "Next to You, Next to Me" into a Number

One hit. Their most recent hit as co-writers was Clay Walker's "What's It to You." The two had considered forming a duo three years ago, but before they got very far, Wright signed with Liberty Records as a solo act. Orrall soon gained a similar offer from RCA.

When their solo careers failed to flourish, producer and Giant Records executive James Stroud proposed the idea of a duo. They told him about how they'd previously contemplated the same idea, and they jumped at the second chance. "Our voices are sonically real different, but the blend together is really full," Orrall says. "Mine's a little thinner and higher, his is lower and has more oomph. We just love the way they sound together."

Orrall and Wright will split their lead vocals 50-50, as will Archer/Park. That's unusual in recent country history: Ronnie Dunn clearly has surfaced as the primary lead singer for Brooks & Dunn, for instance. With the Judds, Wynonna sang lead on almost every song. The same goes for others: With the O'Kanes, Jamie O'Hara provided the main voice, Kieran Kane the harmonies; with Foster & Lloyd, Rodney Foster took the lead vocals; with Sweethearts of the Rodeo, it is Kristine Arnold up front.

**U**nlike Orrall and Wright, however, Randy Archer says he and his new partner sound almost exactly alike on their recordings. "There's a real similar sound when we trade leads and harmonies," he says. "It's the weirdest thing."

Archer and Park met in late 1992 at the offices of Tom Collins Music, an independent Nashville music publishing company where they both write. They shared war stories about seeking record deals, and they discovered they both enjoyed the same style of rowdy traditional honky-tonk with a bit of a rock edge. Park first suggested the two officially form a duo before they ever wrote a song together; they knocked it around a while, laid it down, then picked it back up and ran with it in the fall.

The two wrote four songs together and recorded them. Rick Blackburn at Atlantic was the first record executive to hear the tape. "It's so strange how fast it happened," Park notes. "We both had been knocking our heads against the wall for four or five years. Then as soon as we give this a shot, it's wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am, and we've got a deal. We were both shocked."



**Turner Nichols: "It's like a blind date when writers get together for the first time. We found out we had an awful lot in common. We talked all day long."**

**N**ow, with a sudden rise in the number of male duos, the trick will be setting themselves apart from the pack. As Brooks & Dunn note, securing an identity can be harder for two partners than for an individual artist. In fact, it can be difficult for fans to separate the two from each other. "I went the longest time before I knew Naomi from Wynonna," Dunn concedes about the on-going confusion faced even by acts as well-known as the Judds.

Brooks & Dunn face the same problem. "We've gotten past the Garth and Holly deal," Brooks laughs. He then points out how the identity problem even hits at home. One day while working on his car, Brooks' 6-year-old came up and beamed, "Dad, I just can't believe I'm the daughter of Brooks & Dunn."

As is often the case in the record business, the trend toward duos will probably grow until it finally reaches a point of saturation. Epic's Johnson, for instance, confesses he's actively seeking a strong duo. "I'd love to find one," he says. "But what we don't need is anything pre-fabricated. Brooks & Dunn sound like they grew up together. The challenge is to put people together and let the rest happen because you can't help it. You're dealing with people's dreams and families and lives, so you have to be responsible. You have to make sure it's right and natural." 🌟

*Discography follows on page 46.*

## Discography

### DUOS



#### BROOKS & DUNN

*Brand New Man*

ARISTA (1991)  
SELECTION 04134

★ ★ ★

This, the most successful debut album ever by a country duo, yielded four Number One singles (including "Boot Scootin' Boogie" and the title track) and received plenty of nominations and awards. The duo may have been at the right place at the right time, but there's spirit, diversity and catchy tunes aplenty on this 3 million seller.



#### BROOKS & DUNN

*Hard Workin' Man*

ARISTA (1993)  
SELECTION 04058

★ ★ ½

The spirit is a little less spirited this time out as Kix and Ronnie trade in some of their edge for less distinguished country pop. Still, color this one double platinum and counting.

#### GIBSON/MILLER BAND

*Where There's Smoke*

EPIC (1992)  
SELECTION 04135

★ ★ ★

More than any group in country or rock, the Gibson/Miller Band shows just how much Southern boogie owes to the Detroit rock of people like Bob Seger and Ted Nugent. Chicago folk-rocker Dave Gibson and former Seger guitarist Blue Miller teamed up to supercharge standard country themes on songs like "Big Heart" and "Stone Cold Country." Formulaic, sure, but it can be fun.



#### TURNER NICHOLS

*Turner Nichols*

BNA (1993)  
SELECTION 04127

★ ★ ★

With easy harmonies and lyrics that cover decidedly '90s topics (a straight-laced lady gets a rose tattoo, a man reminisces about the drive-in), Zack Turner and Tim Nichols sway through most of the cuts on this pleasant debut album. Fun toe-tappers like "She Loves to Hear Me Rock" punctuate this set of easy listening country.



#### BROTHER PHELPS

*Let Go*

ASYLUM (1993)  
SELECTION 04130

★ ★ ★

Brothers Doug and Ricky Lee Phelps burst onto the scene as two of the Kentucky HeadHunters but parted company with that wild and successful band to try something a bit gentler. The result is this solid, vocally powerful effort showcasing some fine fraternal interaction and an introspection that wasn't a part of the HeadHunters' scheme.



#### SWEETHEARTS OF THE RODEO

*Rodeo Waltz*

SUGAR HILL (1993)  
SELECTION 04025

★ ★ ★ ★

When Kristine Arnold and Janis Gill traded in their major label affiliation (after four fine albums with Columbia) for the somewhat less pressured style of a smaller record company, they didn't compromise their music in the least. In fact this personal, acoustic outing finds the sisters singing their hearts out while blending folk, bluegrass and old-time country music. There's nothing quite as radio ready here as "Midnight Girl/Sunset Town," one of their big hits from 1987, but the feeling and vitality on this warm and passionate collection shows that the Sweethearts are right where they want to be.



#### THE BELLAMY BROTHERS

*Rip Off the Knob*

BELLAMY BROTHERS/INTER SOUND (1993)  
SELECTION 04129

★ ★ ★

It was only a matter of time before someone used Wayne and Garth's signature "Not" ("I think I'll help do the dishes... *not!*") in a song. Since the Bellamy Brothers gave us one of country's most enduring bar lines-turned-into-a-song lyric: "If I said you had a beautiful body would you hold it against me?" it's only logical that they would record "Not" on their latest release. Adding to the silly side are the saga of a redneck hero named Bubba and a mournful longing for *The Andy Griffith Show*. These tracks, plus the warm "I Need More of You" and very listenable "Crazy From the Heart" make *Rip Off the Knob* a fine little journey down a road the Bellamy Brothers could drive with their eyes closed.





# Emotional Rescue

**Bob Woodruff Turns Real Life Into Art**

**N**ew York truck driver finds happiness writing hillbilly songs in Guitar Town. It sounds like a sitcom synopsis, except along the way, he earns the support of neo-traditionalist godmother Emmylou Harris, torch country comer Joy White and Elvis alum Glen D. Hardin, plus production support from Steve Fishell, the man who put the roots in Rodney Foster, the Mavericks' first outing and Pam Tillis' new one.

"That's the thing about country music," Woodruff explains, on a break from his first

radio promotional tour. "It doesn't matter where you are, it's music that speaks to the soul. It gets inside you and hits those places nothing else can get to."

Having grown up in Woodstock—known for its eclectic artists like The Band and Todd Rundgren—Woodruff heard all kinds of music but was drawn to the emotional core and real life drama that marked country. Now with his new Asylum release *Dreams and Saturday Nights* (Selection 0+084), the 32-year-old '60s muscle car lover is fixing to

make his own mark on a music that's had a profound effect on him.

"When George Jones sings those sad songs, you can hear the pain of the world in his voice. He tears your heart," Woodruff says. "Sure, there were miserable situations and people in those old country songs, but they felt *real*. These things can and do happen—and that meant something to me."

Whether it's the decidedly swampy romp "Bayou Girl" that melds Creedence with Williams or the stark "You Can't Win" that details a small time felon's mental make-up, Woodruff can take his subject's pulse. Just as

**BY HOLLY GLEASON**

T H E  
MUSIC EVENT  
OF THE YEAR!

*Asleep At The Wheel*  
TRIBUTE  
to the music of

BOB WILLS

and *The Texas Playboys*



featuring

CHET ATKINS • SUZY BOGGOSS

GARTH BROOKS • BROOKS & DUNN

VINCE GILL • JOHNNY GIMBLE

MERLE HAGGARD • HUEY LEWIS

LYLE LOVETT • WILLIE NELSON

JODY NIX • LUCKY OCEANS

DOLLY PARTON • LEON RAUSCH

HERB REMINGTON • RIDERS IN THE SKY

JOHNNY RODRIGUEZ • SLDON SHAMBLIN

GEORGE STRAIT • MARTY STUART

*Sure sounds like Grammy material to me!*

Neil Pond  
Senior Entertainment Editor,  
*Country America*

*A likely candidate for Album of the Year.*  
(★★★★ out of a possible four)

Dave Zimmerman  
*USA Today*

*This album could influence a whole  
generation of younger musicians...*

Jay Orr  
*The Nashville Banner*



© 1994 LIBERTY RECORDS

*"In the end, there's a lot more  
drama and poetry in life when things aren't  
going great all the time."*



importantly, he wants to celebrate the less-thans for all the passion their lives embrace.

"I write about people I know. I write about myself, although they're not necessarily autobiographical," Woodruff explains of his inspiration. "I try to write about real events, maybe they didn't happen literally, but they could. The important thing: I want 'em to ring true.

"And I'm drawn to people who are characters, people who are engaged with life, but struggling. In the end, there's a lot more drama and poetry in life when things aren't going great all the time."

**T**hat Woodruff can find the poetry in life's downs at a time when country radio seems obsessed with the most superficial emotions is testimony to his inner voice. Whether it's the disenchanted young couple who married too young in "Poisoned at the Well" or the beautiful loser staring down a bottle and a potential one night stand in the title track, these are the kind of people Martin Scorsese makes movies about.

Fringe dwellers peeking out from the shadows might not be what the current bumper crop of young hat acts are celebrating, but Woodruff lends the people at the margins a little dignity and romance. "I didn't get into country music because it was this swell music about how life's so good and we all love each other.

"Real life's not like that. I want these songs to go to a deeper place than what's currently going over. Just because it's a hit doesn't mean it's going to last ..."

One could make a case that just because something's gritty doesn't mean it's good. In Bob Woodruff's case, however, it wouldn't be a valid argument. *Dreams and Saturday Nights* is as fine a debut as Nashville's sent into the world since Steve Earle's *Guitar Town*.

Building on the rock-country paradigm, Woodruff picks up where Gram Parsons might have left off without the drugs. His voice is smooth, slightly sad and a little

worn, and the music picks up that same retro sadness, even as it moves his stories and sentiments forward.

Part of the deal is that the self-proclaimed Yankees fan isn't the perkier kind of guy you'll ever run into. It's not that he's morose, it's just ... "I guess I am a little bit blue. I feel a sense of loneliness and I think that pervades my songs.

"That sense of loneliness is there, though, whether I'm with people or alone. I think it may be why I write songs. But it's not like I feel unhappy. There are people who seem to need to feel that to create. I'm not one of 'em. I write because I have the need to communicate feelings I might not share otherwise."

**H**aving knocked around New York City with his band Bob Woodruff and the Fields, the acoustic guitar slinger was holding court at places like Waterlands, the Rodeo Bar, the Lone Star Cafe, CBGBs and anywhere else that the flourishing New York City hillbilly scene was trying to take root. During this period, the aspiring songwriter caught the ear of an Elektra Entertainment executive. Though that label didn't have a country division, their Nashville organization was run by Kyle Lehning, the man behind Randy Travis' success. Lehning was equally enraptured, and it wasn't long until Woodruff was signed to Asylum Records, current home to Emmylou Harris, Stephanie Davis and Brother Phelps.

So a deal was done. Next thing Woodruff knew, he was moving to Music City where the music-making machinery began turning. It wasn't long before people like Harris were noticing his songs and offering to sing. From then on, everything else that has come the soft-spoken songwriter's way has been gravy.

"If I never make another record, that's okay. This is everything I could've hoped for. Getting here is enough, everything else is great, but it's extra." 🎸



*"When George Jones sings those sad songs,  
you can hear the pain of the world in his voice.  
He tears your heart."*



# NEW COUNTRY MUSIC REVIEW INDEX

## A-D

C.C. ADCOCK <i>C.C. Adcock</i> 04062	7
JOHN ANDERSON <i>Greatest Hits Vol. II</i> 04071	52
ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL <i>Tribute to Bob Wills</i> 04140	35
BAD LIVERS <i>Dust on the Bible</i> 04121	65
BELLAMY BROTHERS <i>Rip Off the Knob</i> 04129	46
MATRACA BERG <i>The Speed of Grace</i> 04006	54
BILLY PILGRIM <i>Billy Pilgrim</i> 04032	66
BLACKHAWK <i>Blackhawk</i> 04004	53
SUZY BOGGUSS <i>Something Up My Sleeve</i> 04065	4
BOY HOWDY <i>She'd Give Anything</i> 04132	57
DAVID BROMBERG <i>Midnight on the Water</i> 04034	63
BROOKS & DUNN <i>Brend New Man</i> 04134	46
BROOKS & DUNN <i>Hard Workin' Man</i> 04058	46
BROTHER PHELPS <i>Let Go</i> 04130	46
JUNIOR BROWN <i>Guit With It</i> 04061	6
SOLOMON BURKE <i>Home in Your Heart: The Best of Solomon Burke</i> 04101	51
STACY DEAN CAMPBELL <i>Lonesome Wins Again</i> 04051	71
BRUCE CARROLL <i>Walk On</i> 04143	18
VALERIE CARTER <i>Just a Stone's Throw Away</i> 04033	62
RAY CHARLES <i>Ingredients in a Recipe for Soul</i> 04089	21
RAY CHARLES <i>Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music</i> 04102	51
KENNY CHESNEY <i>In My Wildest Dreams</i> 04057	6
PATSY CLINE <i>12 Greatest Hits</i> 04093	21
CONFEDERATE RAILROAD <i>Confederate Railroad</i> 04128	39
CONFEDERATE RAILROAD <i>Notorious</i> 04054	39
COWBOY JUNKIES <i>Pave Sun Crescent Moon</i> 04119	68
ANTHONY CRAWFORD <i>Anthony Crawford</i> 04010	66
RODNEY CROWELL <i>Diamonds &amp; Dirt</i> 04080	21
DALE DANIEL <i>Luck of Our Own</i> 04082	19
JOHN DELAFOSE & THE EUNICE PLAYBOYS <i>Blue: Stay Away From Me</i> 04013	70
DOUGLAS, BARENBERG & MEYER <i>Skip, Hop &amp; Wobble</i> 04021	15
DRY BRANCH FIRE SQUAD <i>Just for the Record</i> 04020	64

## E-L

STEVE EARLE <i>Copperhead Road</i> 04113	23
STEVE EARLE <i>The Essential Steve Earle</i> 04115	23
STEVE EARLE <i>Exit 0</i> 04091	23
STEVE EARLE <i>Guitar Town</i> 04103	23
STEVE EARLE <i>Live: Saut Up and Die Like an Aviator</i> 04114	23
RADNEY FOSTER <i>Der Rio, TX 1959</i> 04100	72
FOUR MEN AND A DOG <i>Shifting Gravel</i> 04017	70
LEFTY FRIZZELL <i>The Best of Lefty Frizzell</i> 04096	21
GIBSON/MILLER BAND <i>Where There's Smoke</i> 04135	46
VANCE GILBERT <i>Edgewise</i> 04008	69
AL GREEN <i>I'm Still in Love with You</i> 04105	51
HANK FLAMINGO <i>Hank Flamingo</i> 04002	53
EMMYLOU HARRIS <i>Duets</i> 04068	21
EMMYLOU HARRIS <i>Profile II: The Best of Emmylou Harris</i> 04108	52
MIKE HENDERSON <i>Country Music Made Me Do It</i> 04036	55
HIGHWAY 101 <i>Greatest Hits</i> 04070	21
FAITH HILL <i>Take Me As I Am</i> 04003	56

ALAN JACKSON <i>A Lot About Livin' (And a Little 'Bout Love)</i> 04111	52
MICHAEL JAMES <i>Closer to the Fire</i> 04011	65
SONNY JAMES <i>Sonny James: Greatest Hits</i> 04107	52
THE JUDDS <i>Greatest Hits</i> 04090	21
MARY KARLZEN <i>Hide</i> 04085	18
KENNEDY ROSE <i>Walk the Line</i> 04083	14
KIPS BAY CEILI BAND <i>Digging In</i> 04018	70
GLADYS KNIGHT AND THE PIPS <i>Anthology</i> 04104	51
PATTI LABELLE <i>Live!</i> 04075	51
JIMMY LAFAVE <i>Austin Skyline</i> 04081	19
TRACY LAWRENCE <i>Alibis</i> 04056	5
BRENDA LEE <i>Anthology, Vol. 1</i> 04094	21
BRENDA LEE <i>Anthology, Vol. 2</i> 04053	21
BILL LLOYD <i>Set to Pop</i> 04031	67
THE LONESOME RIVER BAND <i>Old Country Town</i> 04022	64
PATTY LOVELESS <i>Only What I Feel</i> 04098	21

## M-S

THE MAVERICKS <i>From Hell to Paradise</i> 04069	21
THE MAVERICKS <i>What a Crying Shame</i> 04026	55
MARTINA MCBRIDE <i>The Time Has Come</i> 04014	28
MARTINA MCBRIDE <i>The Way That I Am</i> 04015	28
DEL MCCOURY <i>A Deeper Shade of Blue</i> 04005	64
NEAL MCCOY <i>No Doubt About It</i> 04055	8
REBA MCBENTIRE <i>Reba</i> 04109	52
PAT MCLAUGHLIN <i>Unplugged</i> 04145	57
MEAT PUPPETS <i>Too High To Die</i> 04120	66
DOROTHY MOORE <i>Misty Blue</i> 04106	51
DUDE MOWREY <i>Somewhere in Between</i> 04146	5
WILLIE NELSON <i>Across the Borderline</i> 04046	61
WILLIE NELSON <i>Greatest Hits (&amp; Some That Will Be)</i> 04044	61
WILLIE NELSON <i>Moonlight Becomes You</i> 04037	60
WILLIE NELSON <i>Nite Life</i> 04047	60
WILLIE NELSON <i>Red Headed Stranger</i> 04039	60
WILLIE NELSON <i>San Antonio Rose</i> 04043	61
WILLIE NELSON <i>Shotgun Willie/Phases and Stages</i> 04038	60
WILLIE NELSON <i>Stardust</i> 04041	60
WILLIE NELSON <i>To Lefty from Willie</i> 04040	60
WILLIE NELSON <i>Who'll Buy My Memories</i> 04045	61
WILLIE NELSON <i>Willie Sings Kristofferson</i> 04042	61
AARON NEVILLE <i>The Grand Tour</i> 04077	51
NEW GRASS REVIVAL <i>Anthology</i> 04110	52
NRBQ <i>Message for the Mess: Age</i> 04049	68
MARK O'CONNOR <i>Heroes</i> 04138	35
JAMIE O'HARA <i>Rise Above It</i> 04001	53
BUCK OWENS <i>All Time Greatest Hits</i> 04088	21

### New Country Music Rates all Recordings and Videos as Follows:

- ★ ★ ★ ★ Excellent. A classic from start to finish.
- ★ ★ ★ ★ Very Good. An important addition to your collection.
- ★ ★ ★ Respectable. Recommended with minor reservations.
- ★ ★ Fair. For loyal and forgiving fans.
- ★ Poor. Seriously flawed.

BUCK OWENS <i>The Buck Owens Collection, 1959-1990</i> 04087	21
LEE ROY PARNELL <i>On the Road</i> 04066	7
GRAM PARSONS <i>GP/Grievous Angel</i> 04067	21
RAY PRICE <i>The Essential Ray Price: 1951-1962</i> 04092	21
JOHN REISCHMAN <i>North of the Border</i> 04019	66
JUAN REYNOSO <i>Plays Sonnes and Gustos: Historic Recordings 1972-1993</i> 04016	70
MARTY ROBBINS <i>Lost and Found</i> 04007	54
SAWYER BROWN <i>Outskirts of Town</i> 04059	8
DAWN SEARS <i>What a Woman Wants to Hear</i> 04079	21
THE SELDOM SCENE <i>Like We Used To Be</i> 04024	58
RICKY VAN SHELTON <i>Greatest Hits Plus</i> 04095	21
SOUNDTRACK <i>The Bodyguard</i> 04078	51
SOUNDTRACK <i>Honeymoon in Vega</i> 04072	52
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN <i>Born in the U.S.A.</i> 04123	71
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN <i>Human Touch</i> 04125	71
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN <i>Nebraska</i> 04122	71
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN <i>Tunnel of Love</i> 04124	71
STATLER BROTHERS <i>Home</i> 04050	58
MARTY STUART <i>Busy Bee Cafe</i> 04137	35
MARTY STUART <i>Hillbilly Rock</i> 04029	35
MARTY STUART <i>Love and Luck</i> 04144	35
MARTY STUART <i>Marty Stuart</i> 04136	35
MARTY STUART <i>Tempted</i> 04028	35
MARTY STUART <i>This One's Gonna Hurt You</i> 04027	35
SWEETHEARTS OF THE RODEO <i>Rodeo Waltz</i> 04025	46

## T-Z

RICHARD THOMPSON <i>Mirror Blue</i> 04118	67
THE TRADITIONAL GRASS <i>10th Anniversary Collection</i> 04063	65
RANDY TRAVIS <i>Greatest Hits Vol. Two</i> 04074	52
RICK TREVINO <i>Rick Trevino</i> 04064	4
TRAVIS TRITT <i>It's All About to Change</i> 04139	35
TURNER NICHOLS <i>Turner Nichols</i> 04127	46
CONWAY TWITTY <i>Silver Anniversary Collection</i> 04099	52
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Back to the '60s—Soul Vol. 2</i> 04116	51
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Christine Lavin Presents: "On a Winter's Night"</i> 04009	69
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Classic Soul</i> 04076	51
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Columbia Country Classics, Vol. 2: Hanky Tonk Heroes</i> 04097	21
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Conjunto! Texas-Mexican Border Music Vol. 5 Polkas de Oro</i> 04035	70
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>The Cowboy Poetry Gathering</i> 04112	57
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Pastures of Plenty: An Austin Celebration of Woody Guthrie</i> 04030	56
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Rhythm, Country &amp; Blues</i> 04048	50
VARIOUS ARTISTS <i>Rig Rock Truck Stop</i> 04052	9
BEN VAUGHN <i>Mono U.S.A.</i> 04131	58
WEBB WILDER & THE BEATNECKS <i>It Came from Nashville</i> 04012	63
KITTY WELLS <i>The Country Music Hall of Fame Series</i> 04086	21
ROBIN & LINDA WILLIAMS <i>Turn Toward Tomorrow</i> 04023	56
BOB WOODRUFF <i>Dreams and Saturday Nights</i> 04084	47
DWIGHT YOAKAM <i>If There Was a Way</i> 04073	52
ZZ TOP <i>Antenna</i> 04117	69



# Reviews

YOUR GUIDE TO THE LATEST RELEASES/APRIL 1994



## VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Rhythm, Country & Blues*

MCA  
SELECTION 04048

\*\*\*

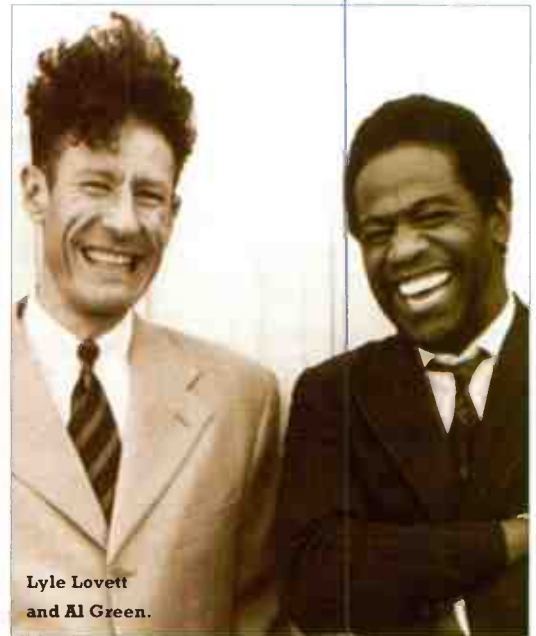
The first things you notice about *Rhythm, Country & Blues*, even before you listen, are the tantalizing pairings. Aaron Neville and Trisha Yearwood? That makes sense—they've been calling Yearwood country's Linda Ronstadt for years. George Jones and B.B. King—both artists gave voice to an entire generation of music. Al Green and Lyle Lovett—despite the idiosyncrasies of their styles, the notion of them singing Willie Nelson's "Funny How Time Slips Away" seems somehow perfect.

The notion of *Rhythm, Country & Blues*, a collection of country and r&b artists singing classic tunes together, is perfect. Singers from each genre have raided the other's material for decades, often with spectacular results: Whitney Houston's massive "I Will Always Love You," Randy Travis' cover of Brook Benton's "It's Just a Matter of Time," any number of Elvis Presley records. This album merely acknowledges publicly influences that attentive fans recognized years ago.

Producers Don Was and Tony Brown have taken great



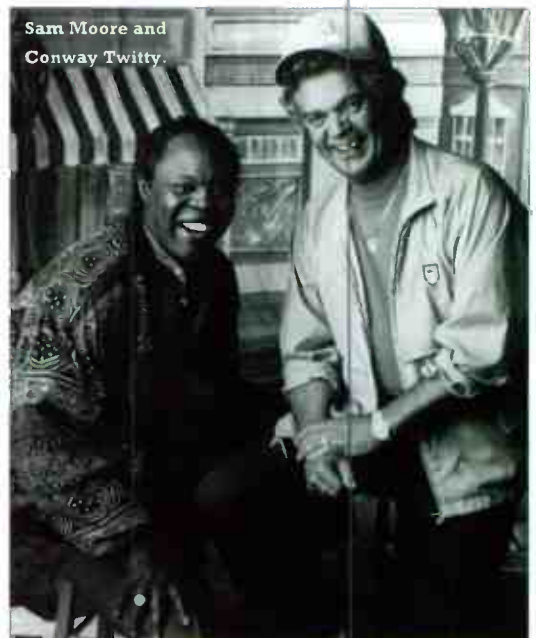
Vince Gill and Gladys Knight.



Lyle Lovett and Al Green.



Trisha Yearwood and Aaron Neville.



Sam Moore and Conway Twitty.

care in matching performers with each other and with their material. Even pairings that at first glance seem impossible, such as Little Richard and

Tanya Tucker or Clint Black and the Pointer Sisters, sound uncannily natural. If country offers a modern counterpart to Motown's smooth soul croon-

ers, it's Vince Gill, who sings "Ain't Nothin' Like the Real Thing" with Gladys Knight. "Patches," the Clarence Carter hit reprised by Jones and King,



More Classic Rhythm, Country and Blues

## Ten Country Songs Recorded By Rhythm & Blues Singers

Country and r&b have crossed paths frequently through the years. On the next two pages are some of the most notable country songs recorded by r&b singers and r&b songs recorded by country singers. We've rated the albums on which those versions are currently available.

**"I Will Always Love You"**

—Whitney Houston

**SOUNDTRACK**

*The Bodyguard*

ARISTA (1992)

SELECTION 04078

★ ★ ★

Dolly Parton hit the country charts with two recordings of this song before Whitney Houston made it one of the biggest hits ever.

**"Just Out of Reach (Of My Two Open Arms)"**  
**SOLOMON BURKE**

*Home in Your Heart:*

*The Best of Solomon Burke*

RHINO/ATLANTIC (1992)

SELECTION 04101

★ ★ ★ ★

Soul pioneer Solomon Burke had his first hit with this song in 1961.

**"I Can't Stop Loving You"**

**RAY CHARLES**

*Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music*

RHINO (1988)

SELECTION 04102

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Charles has often recorded country music, but this Don Gibson tune remains his biggest hit, spending five weeks at Number One on the pop chart in 1962.

**"Funny How Time Slips**

**Away"**—Joe Hinton

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*MCA Classic Soul*

MCA (1991)

SELECTION 04076

★ ★ ★ ½

Hinton scored a big r&b and pop hit in 1964 with this early Willie Nelson song that has been recorded by a host of artists including Narvel Felts and Al Green. This 1991 MCA collection features 16 hits from the '60s, '70s and '80s by Rufus, B.B. King, New Edition and others.

**"The Chokin' Kind"**

—Joe Simon

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*Back to the '60s—Soul, Vol. II*

K-TEL/DOMINION (1989)

SELECTION 04116

★ ★ ★

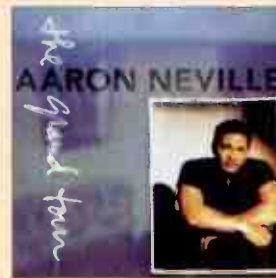
A minor soul singer from Louisiana, Simon would eventually sing the theme from *Cleopatra Jones*, but he started his career with heartbreakers like this Harlan Howard tune.

**"Help Me Make It Through the Night"**  
**GLADYS KNIGHT & THE PIPS**

*Anthology*

MOTOWN (1974)

country's continuing desire to become part of the American musical mainstream. Of the album's 11 songs, only three come from the country side: "Two (Southern Nights)" and "I Fall to Pieces") were crossover



SELECTION 04104

★ ★ ★ ★

Sammi Smith won a Grammy and topped the country and pop charts with this Kris Kristofferson song in 1971, and Knight followed her on the pop chart the next year with her own version.

**"For the Good Times"**

**AL GREEN**

*I'm Still In Love With You*

HI/THE RIGHT STUFF (1972/93)

SELECTION 04105

★ ★ ★ ★

Ray Price had a huge hit with this Kris Kristofferson song in 1970. Al Green rendered his gorgeous Memphis soul version two years later.

**"Misty Blue"**

**DOROTHY MOORE**

*Misty Blue*

MALACO (1976)

SELECTION 04106

★ ★ ★ ½

First recorded by Wilma Burgess and then Eddy Arnold,

Moore made this song a make-out classic when she took it to the pop Top Three in 1976.

**"Wind Beneath My Wings"**

**PATTI LABELLE**

*Patti LaBelle Live!*

MCA (1992)

SELECTION 04075

★ ★ ★

A 1983 hit for Gary Morris six years before Bette Midler's version from *Beaches* topped the pop chart, "Wind" has become a standard recorded by Gladys Knight, LaBelle (on this live 1992 set) and others.

**"The Grand Tour"**

**AARON NEVILLE**

*The Grand Tour*

A&M (1993)

SELECTION 04077

★ ★ ★ ★

Neville's drop-dead gorgeous rendering of this 1974 George Jones single became a moderate country hit in late 1993.

emphasizes the poverty-stricken rural roots of both country and Southern soul.

Rather than showing the interchange between country and r&b, though, *Rhythm, Country & Blues* more often shows

pop hits, and the third ("Funny How Time Slips Away") found success as an r&b single before becoming a country hit. The song choices seem aimed directly at the baby-boom generation that buys CD versions of its

favorite Motown hits and has only discovered country after being driven away from hit radio by grunge and rap.

Too often, the country artists go to such great lengths to accommodate the soul legacy

# Ten Rhythm & Blues Songs Recorded By Country Singers



**"That's All Right, Mama"**  
—Vince Gill

**SOUNDTRACK**

*Honeymoon in Vegas*

EPIC SOUNDTRAX (1992)  
SELECTION 04072

★ ★ ★

Most often associated with Elvis Presley, this song was written by Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, a Delta blues singer of the '40s and '50s.

**"It's All Over Now"**

**JOHN ANDERSON**

*Greatest Hits Volume II*

WARNER BROS. (1990)  
SELECTION 04071

★ ★ ★

Anderson may have heard this from the Rolling Stones, but the Rolling Stones got it from the Valentinos, an r&b group led by Bobby Womack.

**"Since I Met You, Baby"**

**SONNY JAMES**

*Sonny James Greatest Hits*



CAPITOL/CURB (1991)  
SELECTION 04107

★ ★ ★

James hit Number One in 1969 with this Ivory Joe Hunter song, first pitched to him by Hunter himself during a taping of *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1957.

**"It's Just a Matter of Time"**

**RANDY TRAVIS**

*Greatest Hits Volume Two*

WARNER BROS. (1992)  
SELECTION 04074

★ ★ ★ ½

Brook Benton wrote and recorded this ballad, but Travis has the better version; its melody perfectly suits the under-utilized lower regions of Travis' range.

**"Pledging My Love"**

**EMMYLOU HARRIS**

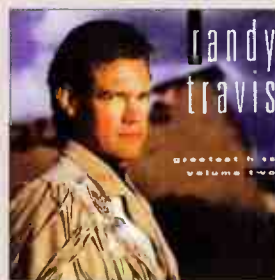
*Profile II: The Best of Emmylou Harris*

WARNER BROS. (1984)  
SELECTION 04108

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

ing records 20 years ago. Relatively new singers such as Yearwood and Tritt share the microphone with legends, and the problems of working with legends are doubled by the choice of material. As strong as Yearwood's performance of "I Fall to Pieces" is, there's simply no way she can match the expectations created by Neville and Patsy Cline.

On the other hand, when the presence of both acts overshadows that of the song, the album works wonderfully. "Patches" may be maudlin fluff, but it's the kind of maudlin fluff that Jones loves, and the way he stretches the words as he sings "My papa was a great old *maaan*" is



Harris gets her songs from many sources; this comes from Johnny Ace, an r&b singer who committed suicide in Houston, Texas, after a 1954 Christmas Eve concert.

**"Let's Work Together"**

**DWIGHT YOAKAM**

*If There Was a Way*

REPRISE (1990)  
SELECTION 04073

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This album cut was written by North Carolina singer Wilbert Harrison, who had his biggest hit in 1959 with "Kansas City." It reached Number 32 on the pop chart for Harrison in 1970.

**"Respect"**

**REBA MCENTIRE**

*Reba*

MCA (1988)  
SELECTION 04109

★ ★ ★

McEntire recorded this Otis Redding song, also a massive hit

for Aretha Franklin, as she toyed with the idea of becoming country's soul queen in 1988.

**"Ain't That Peculiar"**

**NEW GRASS REVIVAL**

*Anthology*

CAPITOL (1990)  
SELECTION 04110

★ ★ ★ ½

The offbeat rhythmic structure of this minor Marvin Gaye hit made it a perfect choice for this eclectic quartet.

**"Mercury Blues"**

**ALAN JACKSON**

*A Lot About Livin' (And a Little 'Bout Love)*

ARISTA (1992)  
SELECTION 04111

★ ★ ★ ★

This late-1993 hit for Jackson was written and recorded by K.C. Douglas, a blues singer from California's Bay Area.

**"Slow Hand"**

**CONWAY TWITTY**

*Silver Anniversary Collection*

MCA (1990)  
SELECTION 04099

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Twitty frequently recorded rock and r&b songs, including the Eagles' "Heartache Tonight" and this 1981 hit for the Pointer Sisters.

they lose their own heritage in the process. Gill sounds like the session singer he once was on his track, and Patti LaBelle buries Travis Tritt when they get into a shouting match on "When Something Is Wrong With My Baby." Reba McEntire and Natalie Cole, the only singers who didn't record their parts together, make "Since I Fell for You" little more than a vocal exercise: That it's the weakest song on the album doesn't much help.

And if r&b and country have a mutual impact, where are the young black artists? Though Neville and Cole are currently riding career peaks, not one of the black artists here wasn't mak-

inspired. On what is probably the album's least-known song, the Band's "The Weight," Marty Stuart and the Staple Singers reach the real common ground of their music—gospel. Conway Twitty and Sam & Dave's Sam Moore combine for a remarkably touching version of "Rainy Night in Georgia," the album's zenith.

Twitty's final recording should cement his stature as one of popular music's great singers. He not only gives Moore a duet partner worth singing with, he then steals the song with no apparent effort. The two eventually get into a casual, give-and-take conversation that reveals much about Twitty's humble

personality and the memories shared by two men who discover they have much in common, though they barely knew each other. At the end, Moore suddenly shouts Twitty's name, and he's answered only by silence. It's a shattering moment, turned tragic by Twitty's death shortly after the session.

On every level—musically, lyrically, personally—"Rainy Night in Georgia" speaks directly to the ties that bind country with rhythm and blues. With talents as great as those assembled for *Rhythm, Country & Blues*, those kind of revelatory moments inevitably occur. Unfortunately, they're only moments.—Brian Mansfield





## JAMIE O'HARA

*Rise Above It*

RCA  
SELECTION 04001

★ ★ ★ ★

**A**s the Yang to Kieran Kane's Yin in the late, lamented O'Kanes, Jamie O'Hara helped create some of the most pleasing country music of the past decade, entwining his delicate voice with Kane's more robust vocals to produce the kind of harmonies that make Everly Brothers fans dab at their eyes. In contrast to the slick studio sheen that graced Kane's fine solo album last year, however, O'Hara's first solo venture has a bracingly spare sound. Scarcely more than a collection of demos with skeletal but supple support from producer Garth Fundis, O'Hara's solo album uncorks one stunning song after another: the classic jukebox throb of "It Ain't Over ('Til Your Heart Says It's Over)"; the somber, sharply observed Vietnam Memorial tribute "50,000 Names"; the jaunty swing of "Miles of Heartache." On many numbers, especially fast ones like "What's A Good Ol' Boy to Do," you can't help but imagine how much better the songs would sound sung by someone with a stronger voice than O'Hara's laid-back tenor. On the other hand, O'Hara never oversells his songs the way a stronger singer might: He knows he's holding a hand full of aces, and he doesn't drop them all on the table at once. In 1994, we'll probably be hearing these songs a lot, whether in O'Hara's own renditions or the inevitable covers to follow. Either way, they'll be most welcome.—*Jim Ridley*



For every fiddle and twang-driven number, Hank Flamingo comes back with a distinctive...



## HANK FLAMINGO

*Hank Flamingo*

GIANT  
SELECTION 04002

★ ★ ★ ★

**I**t only takes 30 seconds worth of "Little Miss Fire Prevention," the opening cut of Hank Flamingo's debut disc, to know that you're in for a helluva good time listening to the rest of the record. The song is one of those hold-tight hillbilly rockers that announces, loud and clear, the band's rootsy drive and deep affection for the small town verities of Southern Americana. Like the Kentucky Headhunters' "Dumas Walker," Hank Flamingo's "Little Miss Fire Prevention" could, given the chance, easily crash the conservative gates of country radio on the strength of sheer redneck rock exuberance.

And, yes, the other 10 cuts deliver. Sounding a bit like the Cramps might sound if Aaron Tippin threw Lux Interior out of the studio, Hank Flamingo (a collective "it," not "he") skirts the void of novelty dismissability without falling in. "Redneck Martians Stole My Baby" pushes the limit of tolerable goofiness, but the boys understand that and immediately rein

themselves in with the heartland drama of "Promised Land." So goes the whole record. For every fiddle and twang-driven number about needing "a gooseneck trailer to haul your love," the band comes back with a dead serious song about looking out a window "through Queen Anne's Lace" at a foreclosed family farm.

Add a John Hiatt cover and a love ballad co-written by Al Anderson and Fred Koller, and you start to see that Hank Flamingo means business. Then again, to really appreciate this record, it doesn't hurt to bear in mind that "Miss Fire Prevention" is a crown Oprah Winfrey coveted as a teenager.—*Daniel Cooper*



## BLACKHAWK

*BlackHawk*

ARISTA  
SELECTION 04004

★ ★ 1/2

**B**lackHawk's lead off single, "Goodbye Says It All," is a wonderfully crafted country hit that works both to establish the group's fun-loving identity and to show off the trio's tightly knit harmonies, which echo the same three parts that made groups like Bread and Crosby, Stills & Nash adult mainstays. Lead singer and frequent writer Henry Paul secretly harbored these musical inclinations even as he Southern-rocked his way through the '70s as rhythm guitarist for the Outlaws. Guitarist Van Stephenson and keyboardist Dave Robbins sharpened their pencils on Restless Heart hits like "Big Dreams in a Small Town" and "Bluest Eyes in Texas."



**BlackHawk:**  
Tight harmonies but not enough dimension.

More dependent on harmonies than labelmates Diamond Rio, BlackHawk treads lightly on Rio's bluegrass-rooted turf with prominent mandolins and acoustic guitars. Save for "Stone By Stone," BlackHawk's originals aren't particularly memorable, but the enjoyable character sketch found in "I Sure Can Smell the Rain" and the pure fun of "Goodbye Says It All" de-emphasize the disc's song-related shortcomings. Even with impressive mandolin touches throughout and the occasional song highlights though, the album's radio-oriented one-dimensionality makes it a dubious debut.—*Michael Hight*



**MATRACA BERG**  
*The Speed of Grace*

RCA  
SELECTION 04006  
★ ★ ★

**M**atraca Berg's first album, *Lying to the Moon*, wasn't just one of the most promising debuts of 1990, it was one of that year's best country albums, with tender-sounding songs that belied the singer's no-nonsense attitude. However, Berg's singles performed so poorly at country radio that RCA refused to release her second album (which included her original recording of "Wrong Side of Memphis" with Dire Straits guitarist Mark Knopfler), and she ended up signing with the label's pop division.

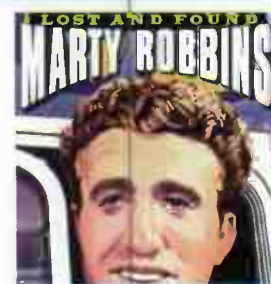
"Lying to the Moon" has since become something of a country standard, with covers by Trisha Yearwood and Robin & Linda Williams. Berg re-records the ballad for *The Speed of Grace* with a new crew of musicians. Replacing the



**Matraca Berg invites comparisons to Bonnie Raitt or even a bluesy, Southern Carole King.**

Appalachian acoustic sounds of her first album with such jazz-informed musicians as sax player Wilton Felder and percussionists Lenny Castro and Paulinho Da Costa makes for easy comparisons between Berg and Bonnie Raitt, or perhaps a bluesy, Southern Carole King, since Berg writes her own best material. Though Berg and her musicians lock into deep, moody grooves on "Slow Poison" and "Let's Face It," ballads like "River of No Return" and "I Won't Let Go" remain her strong suit. While Berg sings those songs in a

style that recalls the melancholy of mid-'60s Stax soul, only her cover of Dolly Parton's "Jolene," recorded with such Nashville pals as Kevin Welch and Kieran Kane, captures the dusky mysticism of the first album. Even so, Berg remains one of Nashville's most distinctive musical voices, not only because of the music she makes on *The Speed of Grace*, but because most of the other female voices in the town—from Suzy Bogguss to Reba McEntire—sing her songs in their voices, too.—*Brian Mansfield*



**MARTY ROBBINS**  
*Lost and Found*

COLUMBIA  
SELECTION 04007  
★ ★

**O**ne of the best-loved singers in country music's history, Marty Robbins was also one of



the most proficient. During his 30-year career, Robbins recorded more than 60 albums in styles ranging from rockabilly to mainstream pop to Western folk.

True to its name, *Lost and Found* packages some of Robbins' unreleased material from the last 10 years of his life. "Big Iron," a new recording by Michael Martin Murphey that borrows Robbins' vocal track from an earlier version, is the only song here that calls on Robbins' gunfighter image. The rest of the songs—seven of which Robbins wrote—recall the easy alliance that Robbins had made between country and pop. Like many of Robbins' later recordings, these songs are heavily produced: On "Some Times Love," Robbins uses a mariachi-influenced arrangement with horns and a marimba, while "Our Last Goodbye" borrows liberally from the Platters' "Only You." "Texas I Love You" and "Sweet Country Music" make surprising nods to Southern rock: Both were written by the Winters Brothers, once a regionally popular rock act.

Though the songs on this new collection are hardly on a par with singles like "El Paso" and "Singing the Blues," they're an adequate reminder of the scope of Robbins' capabilities.

—Brian Mansfield



## THE MAVERICKS

*What a Crying Shame*

MCA

SELECTION 04026

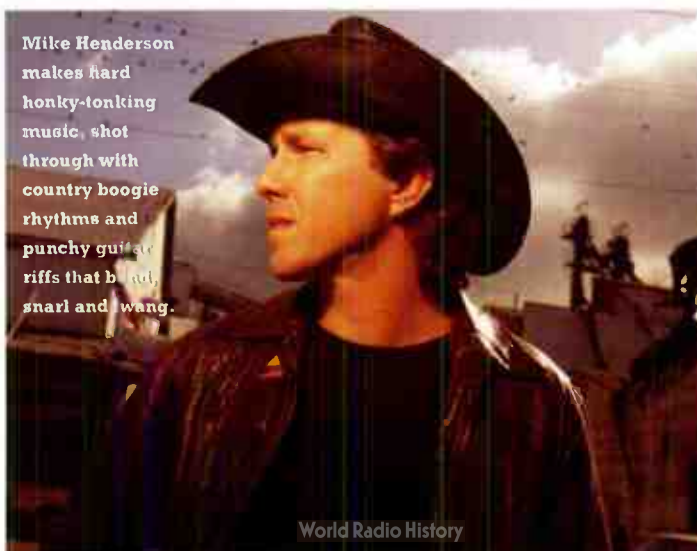
★ ★ ★ ½

**F**irst off, the third album by this highly touted quartet from Miami sounds fabulous—it's packed with swoony strings, sonorous male harmonies and subterranean bass, as if an FM

station were somehow picking up AM radio from 1964. Under the guidance of producer Don Cook, the Mavericks lovingly recreate the sound of vintage Roy Orbison ("I Should Have Been True") and Buck Owens ("There Goes My Heart"), with Raul Malo's impassioned vocals filling each track to bursting. Cranked up loud, *What a Crying Shame* barrages you with snappy melodies and hooks as irresistible as the goofy little instrumental figure that kickstarts "The Things You Said to Me."

The only problem with *What a Crying Shame*, surprisingly, is the songwriting—which includes collaborations with high-powered names like Kostas, Harlan Howard, NRBQ's Al Anderson and Stan Lynch of Tom Petty's Heartbreakers. Too many songs (like "Pretend" and "Just a Memory") are so insistent on meaning something to everyone that they wind up meaning nothing to anyone. And they sound even more empty alongside the Mavericks' marvelous rendition of Bruce Springsteen's "All That Heaven Will Allow," a song so rich with the particulars of overheard conversations and everyday lives that it overshadows everything else on the record.

Which still leaves you with, what, at least one sharp single, about three killer follow-ups and a handful of uneven but eminently listenable also-rans, all performed with gusto by Malo, drummer Paul Deakin, bassist Robert Reynolds and the electric guitarist Brent Mason? (Lead guitarist Nick Kane joined the group after the album's completion.) Those



Mike Henderson makes hard honky-tonking music, shot through with country boogie rhythms and punchy guitar riffs that bend, snarl and twang.



**The Mavericks:** Lovingly recreating the sound of vintage Roy Orbison and Buck Owens.

strengths make *What a Crying Shame* anything but.—Jim Ridley



## MIKE HENDERSON

*Country Music Made Me Do It*

RCA

SELECTION 04036

★ ★ ★

**A**s the gleefully corny title track of Mike Henderson's first album suggests, country

music probably did make him do it. After writing songs for Randy Travis, Patty Loveless, Joy White and the Fabulous Thunderbirds and spending years with a reputation as the Nashville guitarist most capable of kicking butt, Henderson got the inevitable chance to record his own album.

This is hard honky-tonking music, shot through with country boogie rhythms and punchy guitar riffs that bend, snarl and twang. Playing nearly all the album's guitar parts himself, Henderson takes average songs like "Hillbilly Jitters" and "If the Jukebox Took Teardrops" and transforms them into brisk rave-ups. Even when Henderson slows down to a shuffle on "That's How I Remember You" or a mid-tempo stomp on "The Restless Kind," recorded earlier by compadre Kevin Welch, his guitars often dominate the song.

*Country Music Made Me Do It* is hardly a great album. None of the album's songs pack as hard a wallop as the guitars, and Henderson's voice is kind of ragged. But when he lets his guitar do the singing, the music will move you. Or at least your feet.—Brian Mansfield





**ROBIN AND LINDA WILLIAMS**

*Turn Toward Tomorrow*

SUGAR HILL  
SELECTION 04023

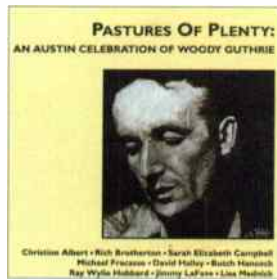
★ ★ ★ ★

**F**or the past 20 years, Robin and Linda Williams have remained one of country music's hidden gems, quietly recording for several small independent labels while building a solid reputation as songwriters.

Evidence of their songwriting prowess is found on recordings by many of their country, folk and bluegrass peers, including Emmylou Harris, Kathy Mattea and Michael Martin Murphey. From the national introduction on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion* to their latest release, *Turn Toward Tomorrow*, this husband and wife team has consistently churned out hook-laden melodies with lyrics solidly grounded in country.

No theme in country music is quite so universal as life on the road. "On and On" recounts the endless travails of living town to town while "The Country of the Night" reflects on the joys of country living. "The Other Side of Town," co-written by Jerome Clark, portrays the classic rich girl/poor boy love affair and echoes Hank Williams' "Mansion on the Hill." "On the Day the Last Tear Falls," a country shuffle that sounds like a future standard, is the real clincher here.

John Jennings (Mary-Chapin Carpenter) tastefully produced this album which is another career milestone for one of country music's undiscovered duos.—*Chris Flisher*



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*Pastures of Plenty: An Austin Celebration of Woody Guthrie*

DEJADISC  
SELECTION 04030

★ ★ ★

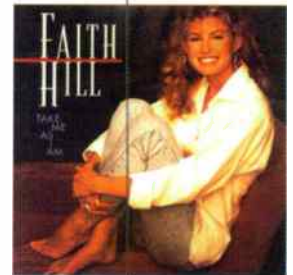
**T**aken from a July, 1993 tribute concert at Austin's La Zona Rosa, *Pastures of Plenty* traces the lineage of Woody Guthrie's populist folk to its descendants in the Texas singer/songwriter scene. On the album, a dozen performers, ranging from Oklahoma roots-

rockers the Red Dirt Rangers to country outlaw Ray Wylie Hubbard, interpret songs written by or associated with Guthrie.

While Guthrie's material doesn't receive the dramatic reworking it did on 1988's *Folkways: A Vision Shared* (this is a concert, not a carefully planned studio production), *Pastures of Plenty* often captures the spontaneity of Guthrie's songs. Hubbard casts "Jesus Christ" and "Vigilante Man" as opposite ends of the same story, while California transplant Steve Young offers a lively rendition of "Do Re Mi." Sarah Elizabeth Campbell sings a tender version of "Ilobo's Lullabye," reputedly Guthrie's favorite song, and Lisa Mednick recasts "Hard Travelin'" as a reggae tune that also invokes

the spirit of Bob Marley.

To a large degree, Guthrie created the notion of the singer/songwriter that many of these performers cherish, and while the folksinger probably wouldn't have cottoned to the idea of an annual concert celebrating his music, he would have enjoyed new generations of troubadours keeping the messages in his songs alive.—*Brian Mansfield*



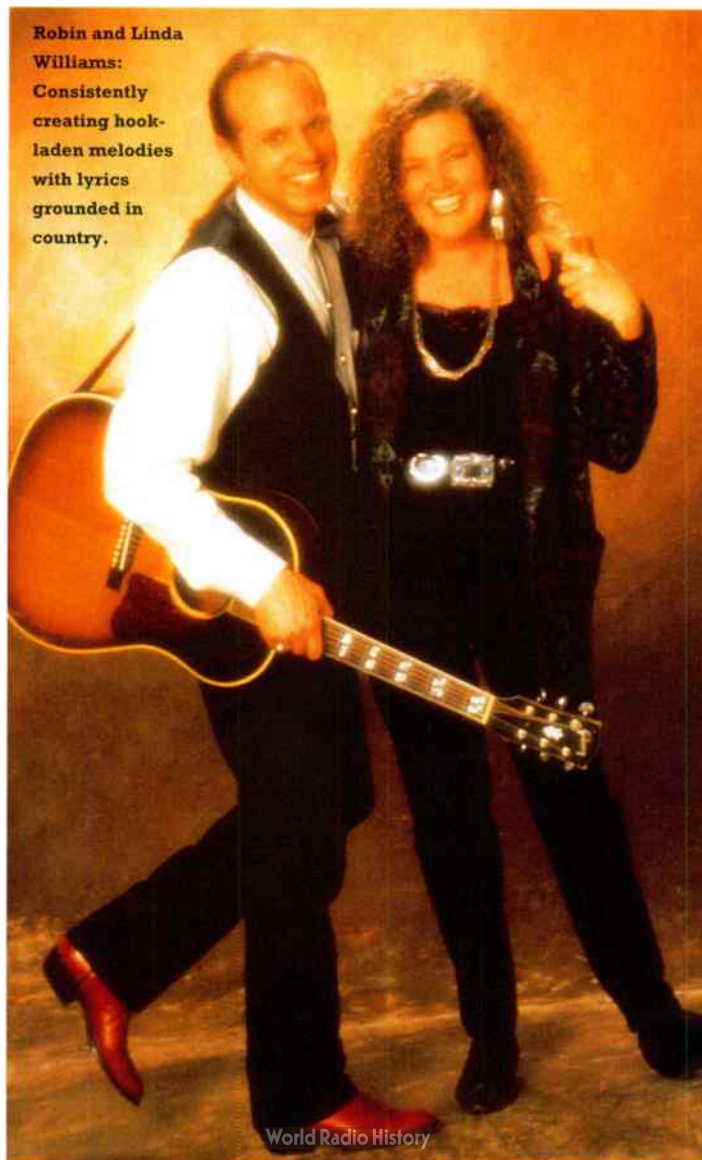
**FAITH HILL**  
*Take Me As I Am*

WARNER BROS.  
SELECTION 04003

★ ★ ★ ½

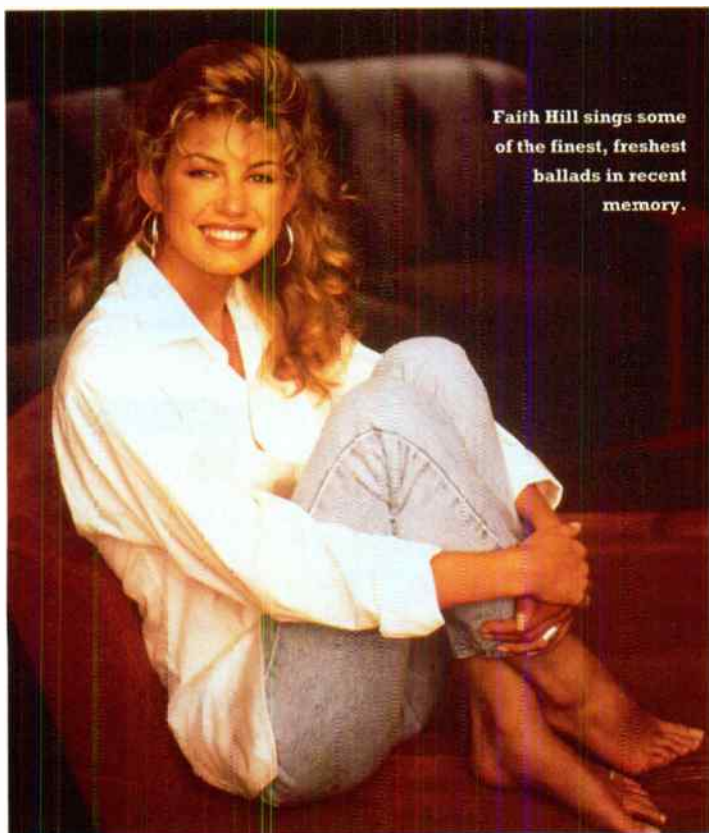
**F**or various reasons, Faith Hill's *Take Me As I Am* is one of the best mainstream country debuts of the past year. Though the record is heavy with ballads, they are some of the finest, freshest ballads in recent memory and include Gary Burr's compassionate "Just Around The Eyes" and the Troy Seals/Eddie Setser/Larry Stewart co-write, "But I Will," a hooky, low-key meditation with a Mexican-flavored suspension in the chorus. Hill's sheer joy in singing shines best on these slower songs, and at times the record's up-tempo numbers seem a bit stock. Although Hill got major chart action with the rebel-rousing "Wild One," the understated title will also set toes tapping.

The warm dobro on "I Would Be Stronger Than That" is an example of the special care that has been taken with the arrangements here. Hill's flawless singing, which has been compared to Reba McEntire's, also struts a sweet strain of Dolly Parton's.—*Travis Corder*

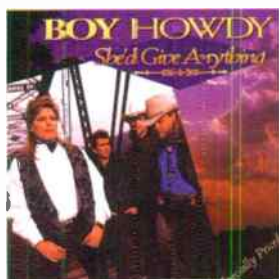


**Robin and Linda Williams:**  
Consistently creating hook-laden melodies with lyrics grounded in country.





Faith Hill sings some of the finest, freshest ballads in recent memory.



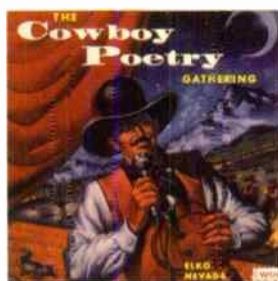
**BOY HOWDY**  
*She'd Give Anything*

CURB  
SELECTION 04132  
★ ★

Sometimes, maybe shorter is better. By the time Boy Howdy got around to its bluegrass-and-power-chord cover of the Kinks' "You Really Got Me" on *Welcome to Howdywood*, the boys had clearly run out of ideas worth putting to tape. On *She'd Give Anything*, named after the band's high-charting power ballad, the members of this California-based quartet still substitute Los Angeles show-biz gloss for Nashville's Southern shine, but at least they do it for only six songs.

Writing everything except the Skip Ewing/Don Sampson-penned "Homegrown Love," the members of Boy Howdy show an appealing versatility that many country performers lack—they

sing, they write, they play on their records. And while they occasionally come up with hooks strong enough to hold listeners into the next song, the most distinctive thing about Boy Howdy remains its name.—*Brian Mansfield*



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

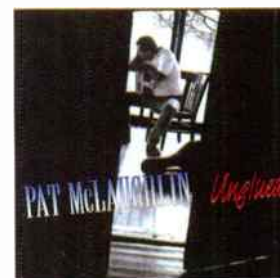
*The Cowboy Poetry Gathering*

RHINO WORLD BEAT  
SELECTION 04112  
★ ★ ½

The annual cowboy poetry roundup at Elko, Nevada's Western Folklife Center is a rendezvous of top cowboy and cowgirl wordsmiths from across the West. So the reading and reciting of 20 poems and songs here on *The Cowboy Poetry Gathering* makes for mighty fine entertainment for anybody who ever entertained cowboy dreams.

Highlights on this album include Montana rancher Wallace McRae's "Old Proc" as he recalls going to visit a legendary bronco-buster with his grandparents; yodeling, harmonica-playing Sourdough Slim with his "Ode to a Meadowlark"; Crow Indian cowboy Hank Real Bird's sing-song chant "Lone Star Woman"; Randy Rieman's rendition of "Lasca," as a cowboy laments love lost; Buck Ramsey vocalizing "Hittin' the Trail Tonight"; Tom Eaton's amusing rendering of "Riding Jay From Iowa" about a greenhorn who hops aboard one mean hoss; and Ross and Patty Knox's partnership on "Annie Laurie/Bad Half Hour" as a cowpoke reminisces about a sweetheart he left behind.

*The Cowboy Poetry Gathering* is recommended for cowboy aficionados, but there's no doubt these performances would be three times as good in person or—better yet—listened to around a prairie campfire with a cup of good ole cowboy coffee in hand.—*Ken Beck*



**PAT McLAUGHLIN**

*Unglued*

DOS RECORDS  
SELECTION 04145  
★ ★ ★ ½

It's amazing how many good artists whose music defied easy pigeonholing have fallen through the cracks over the years. Pat McLaughlin knows the experience first-hand. His 1988 self-titled Capitol Records debut scarcely made a dent in the marketplace, despite solid songs and typically tasty Mitchell Froom production. His second album, *Get Out and Stay Out*, never got to live up to its title, because a new label regime decided to can McLaughlin.

The problem is that McLaughlin's style resides in that



Boy Howdy: Still substituting showbiz gloss for Southern shine.



musical/cultural gray area where black and white music meets and gets along quite fine, in spite of radio's unwillingness to accept anything that's not either a candy mint or a breath mint. Go figure.

It's 1994, and McLaughlin has returned in fine form with *Unglued*, released on Austin, Texas' sympathetic Dos label. From the breezy opener, "Better You Get Ready," to the reflective closer, "Long Time," McLaughlin demonstrates a soulful synthesis of strong songwriting and earthy performances many notches above average.

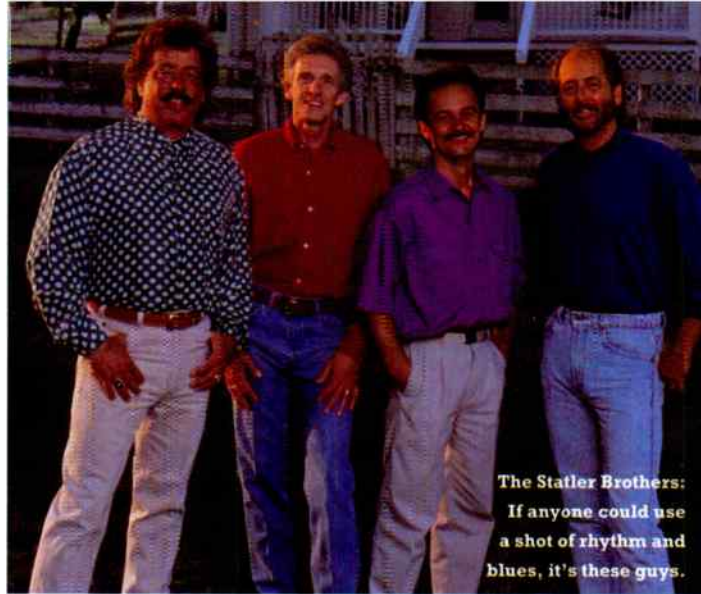
Produced by longtime Neil Young cohort Ben Keith, *Unglued* is an enjoyable blend of studio and live tracks, presented in a fashion that doesn't disrupt the continuity of the album's flow.

Highlights include the gritty rave-up "It's Hard," as well as "Good Woman Bad," "Memphis," "Friendly Bird" and the haunting "Highway of the Saints."

One minor complaint: The occasionally reverberant room production in the mix sometimes takes the edge off the raw stuff. Overall, though, *Unglued* is a solid album for anyone needing to add some heart and soul (and grease) to his or her musical listening diet.—Rick Clark



Pat McLaughlin: Heart and soul from a musical gray area.



### THE STATLER BROTHERS

*Home*

MERCURY  
SELECTION 04050

★ ★

**T**his multi-award winning combo has changed its approach very little since its inception way back in the early '60s: resonant, close-knit harmony spread over white-bread material. Gospel without the edge, yet earnest enough to move even one as thick-skinned as writer Kurt Vonnegut who's dubbed them "America's Poets."

On *Home*, the Statlers don't stray very far from their basic formula, which means an album full of perfect playing (often to a fault) and tunes that recall those days of yore, with nary a sour note in evidence. But the flawlessness can get to be grating, and after a painfully hokey tribute to Chet Atkins, you suddenly realize you're in Squaresville. Sure the Brothers remain tops at what they do, and tunes like "That Haunted Old House" and "Dream On" show off their vocal ability nicely. But the fact that Chuck Berry's name is intoned on one song in a not-so-flattering manner is a bit humorous: If anyone could use a shot of rhythm and blues, it's these

guys. Recommended only for those with a palate for this sort of thing.—David Simons

### BEN VAUGHN

*Mono USA*

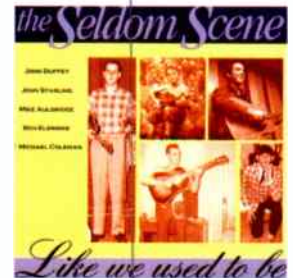
BAR/NONE  
SELECTION 04131

★ ★ ★ ★

Best known for a series of engaging, idiosyncratic recordings for the independent Restless label, Ben Vaughn has lately come into his own as a producer. His piloting of Arthur Alexander's 1993 comeback record had much to do with its artistic success, and now he's done the same for himself on *Mono USA*. Comprised of 8-track home recordings, the CD ("not available in stereo") offers 18 pink slip daddy cool covers of obscure songs and forgotten hits by everyone from Link Wray to Tom T. Hall. What's exceptional about this modest, low-fi project is that Vaughn has handled it with hi-tech expertise. Rather than shoot for a faux garage scruffiness (he outgrew that attitude years ago) the producer, one-man-band and pop culture history freak has maximized the glossy potential of his basement equipment. It's like a shut-in's indictment of bloated recording budgets.

As for the music, the overwhelming sensation here is discovery. Vaughn has chosen material not to show off his retro music knowledge but to indicate how many great songs and performances have fallen through the cracks of pop history. I swear, this album will have you scouring

used record bins for Lobo's "Big Red Kite" and Henson Cargill's "Skip A Rope—though in fact, Vaughn takes Cargill's country chestnut to a spooky limit that might scare Henson himself. Ditto for Wille Nelson's "Suffer in Silence."—Daniel Cooper



### THE SELDOM SCENE

*Like We Used To Be*

SUGAR HILL  
SELECTION 04024

★ ★ ★

**F**ew progressive country bands have contributed to the forward movement of bluegrass as significantly as the Seldom Scene. Formed by Country Gentlemen alumnus John Duffey, the band succeeds in striking a delicate balance between the past and the future, justly earning its reputation as a versatile "newgrass" pioneer. Although not the best representation of their progressive reach, which often includes rock and jazz, *Like We Used to Be* is filled with the group's trademark harmonies and tasteful musicianship.

The return of original member John Starling serves as the backdrop for this reunion and finds the band members looking back, remembering relatives ("Grandpa Get Your Guitar"), lovers ("I'll Remember Your Love In My Prayers," "Almost Threw Your Love Away") and incidents (Woody Guthrie's "Philadelphia Lawyer"). They deliver the tastefully chosen songs in a variety of styles, including full-throttle bluegrass and touching country ballads. The group's cover of the Pat Alger/Tim O'Brien's ballad "Like I Used To Do," a moving reminiscence of a fast-paced youth and a loyal lover, is outstanding.—Chris Flisber



# Hot Country T-shirts

We've covered the map looking for the hottest new country t-shirts for your choosing



DWIGHT YOAKAM  
W0952 \$14.98



WYONNA  
B0817 \$14.98



REBA MCENTIRE  
B0653 \$14.98



AARON TIPPIN  
W1019 \$14.98



VINCE GILL  
W1020 \$14.98



TRISHA YEARWOOD  
W0290 \$14.98



TANYA TUCKER  
B0301 \$24.98



MARTY BROWN  
W1021 \$14.98



WYONNA  
W0816 \$14.98



HAL KETCHUM  
B1024 \$14.98



DOLLY PARTON  
B0634 \$14.98



BILLY DEAN  
B1022 \$14.98



BROTHER PHELPS  
N1023 \$14.98



BROOKS & DUNN  
B0001 \$14.98

To order the t-shirts featured on this page complete and mail the order form on your invoice or call toll free

**1-800-71 MUSIC**

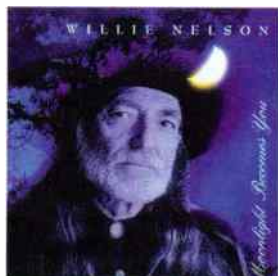
1-800-71-6871 World Radio History

**New Country Music**  
Buying Service



# Looking For Stardust

*Willie Nelson's Justice For All*



## WILLIE NELSON

*Moonlight Becomes You*

JUSTICE  
SELECTION 04037

★ ★ ★ ★

**W**illie Nelson's career is among country's most baffling—and thrilling. Rarely content to do the obvious thing, Nelson's most recent albums have ranged from an intense acoustic journey (*Who'll Buy My Memories*) to an unprecedented dive into younger performers' songs that also featured Nelson's tautest writing in years (*Across the Borderline*). Not counting a brief down period in the '80s, every Nelson record has been much-anticipated because none of his millions of fans could guess where he'd experiment this time.

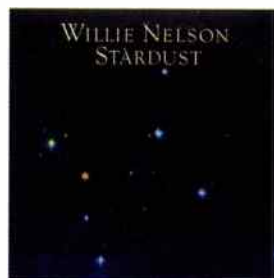
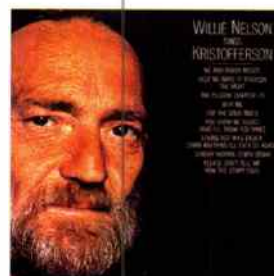
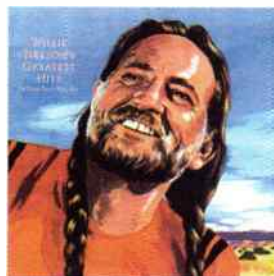
Easing into his seventh decade, Willie Nelson has nothing to prove. Still, he retains an insatiable desire to record, so it's not surprising that he's killing time between Columbia contracts by cutting a record for an independent label run by an old friend.

*Moonlight Becomes You* is Nelson's overt attempt to recapture the spirit (and, one supposes, sales success) of his 1977 pop standards collection *Stardust*—a feat he already pulled off once, on 1981's *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*. It's heartfelt, like Neil Young's recent reprise of *Harvest* with *Harvest Moon*, and like the Young record, *Moonlight Becomes You* offers a trade-off. The thrill of discovery is long gone. We've known for nearly a generation that Nelson can assay standards

with the intelligence and efficiency with which he dispenses country and country-tinged blues. But in place of discovery is a sense of experience and a dignified delight that make the new set worthwhile on its own terms, not as a retreat.

*Moonlight Becomes You* is heavy on ballads performed in the stalwart Nelson manner: spare, wise arrangements that lean forward without obtruding. "The Heart of a Clown" and "You'll Never Know" are well-served by this method, though "Sentimental Journey" would travel better without the backup vocals. Yet the fiercest performance on the record is the up-tempo "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone" that slams friendliness against anger just to see what happens.

Nelson bookends *Moonlight Becomes You* with two of his own compositions, a pair of strong downtempo numbers, "December Day" and "In God's Eyes." It's way too early to guess whether either of them will show up on anyone else's standards set; it's immediately evident that they stack up against the time-worn classics here.



## The Ten Best Willie Nelson Records In Print

*Nite Life: Greatest Hits and Rare Tracks, 1959-1971*

RHINO (1990)  
SELECTION 04047

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This is a solid retrospective of Willie's pre-Atlantic recordings. There's some overlap with *All the Greatest Hits Vol. 1*, which features a score of his RCA tracks.

*Shotgun Willie/Phases and Stages*

MOBILE FIDELITY (1973, 1974)  
SELECTION 04038

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This audiophile twofer in-

cludes one good record (*Shotgun Willie*) and one great one. *Phases and Stages* was Willie's first successful concept album, focusing on the breakup of a marriage as experienced by both sides. Produced by Jerry Wexler, it showcases Nelson edging toward broader triumphs just over the horizon.

*Red Headed Stranger*

COLUMBIA (1975)  
SELECTION 04039

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Recorded with his back to the wall in 1975, this is Willie's breakthrough record, with a convincing if knotty story and a bare, lanky sound.

*To Lefty From Willie*

COLUMBIA (1977)  
SELECTION 04040

★ ★ ★ ★

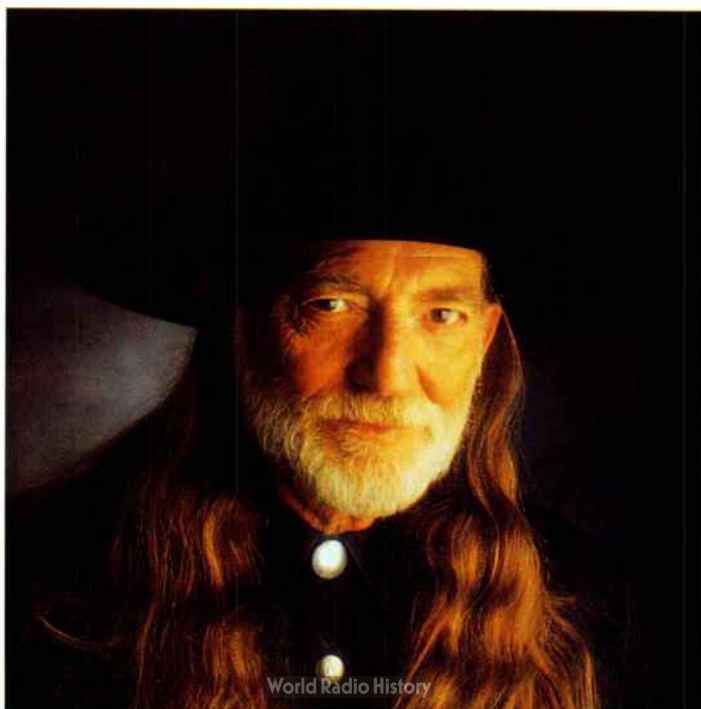
This 1977 tribute to Willie's Texas forebear Lefty Frizzell is almost as terse and rough as Lefty himself. (Too terse, maybe: This clocks in at less than a half-hour.)

*Stardust*

COLUMBIA (1978)  
SELECTION 04041

★ ★ ★ ★

Also cut in 1977, and produced by Booker T. Jones, this







set of pop standards traces the links between Tin Pan Alley with massive grace and a bit of grit. A similar standards collection, *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* (Columbia), from 1981, is almost as sharp.

*Willie Nelson Sings Kristofferson*

COLUMBIA (1979)  
SELECTION 04042  
★★★★

Kris Kristofferson is an often trenchant songwriter who is also one of country's all-time lamest singers; this 1979 collection give his greatest songs an ideal context.

*San Antonio Rose*

COLUMBIA (1980)  
SELECTION 04043  
★★★★

A 1980 duet record with Ray Price, this features terrific versions of Price's best-known tunes and set the pattern for a series of nostalgia-free partner sets.

*Greatest Hits (And Some That Will Be)*

COLUMBIA (1981)  
SELECTION 04044  
★★★★

For those who want only the first truckload of Columbia hits, this 20-tune compilation from

1981 is your best choice.

*Who'll Buy My Memories*

SONY MUSIC SPECIAL PRODUCTS  
(1991)  
SELECTION 04045  
★★★★

Also known as *The I.R.S. Tapes*, these are guitar-and-voice-only performances that are often as chilling as they are sparse.

*Across the Borderline*

COLUMBIA (1993)  
SELECTION 04046  
★★★★

From 1993, this represents Willie's Great Comeback, a witty, intelligent assemblage of duets, covers and originals ("Still Is Still Moving to Me") that catapults Nelson to the forefront of a country explosion he helped foreshadow a generation ago. ♪

*While I don't want to encourage anyone to watch infomercials, QVC is currently offering The Classic, Unreleased Collection, a fine 3-CD/4-cassette collection of Nelson rarities and oddities. They also sell clothes from the "Willie Nelson Collection," on which I offer no comment.*

# Deceptively Carefree Valerie Carter



## VALERIE CARTER

*Just a Stone's Throw Away*

COLUMBIA/LEGACY  
SELECTION 04033

★ ★ ★ ★

In 1977, when Columbia Records promoted this album with print ads that read “Come to Valerie Carter’s debut,” it seemed like an old invitation. The ultra-L.A. work of a young singer who’d earned her way doing backgrounds for people like Jackson Browne and Little Feat, it even then sounded oddly distanced from the punk moment, safely removed from any cheesy new-wave future. A good five years after everybody knew what Linda Ronstadt music was and how country-rock crafted in posh Los Angeles studios sounded, Valerie Carter appeared with *Just a Stone’s Throw Away*, nailing both.

She opened the album with a version of the Five Stairsteps’ “Ooh Child.” Produced and recorded by George Massenburg as though the truest analog rendering of Carter’s absurdly confident voice atop electric guitar and keyboards, bass and a snare drumbeat amounted to the most evocative swirl American pop might ever offer, she started easy. Yet in no time Carter, without ever grandstanding or showboating, turned her performance into a plea for a future, for a far less fragmented time when “my head is much lighter.” You had to hear the rest of the record.

It delivered. Working for

two songs apiece with Little Feat’s Lowell George and Earth, Wind & Fire’s Maurice White alongside Massenburg’s continuing sure touch, Carter went on to deceptively carefree refrains like “Ringing Doorbells in the Rain,” bummed-out ’70s torch tunes like “Heartache,” remarkably unstrained pop-jazz explanations like “So, So, Happy” and “Back to Blue Some More.” These different styles didn’t confuse or distract or dilute Carter; they compelled her, and you could hear it.

This was particularly the case with the refracted roots music that Carter jumped on with both hands and feet. On “Face of Appalachia,” with an arrangement that begins with some of the dislocated Americana of Charles Ives, Carter slowly winds up, inevitably, in a city apartment wondering whether all her dreams of mountains don’t boil down to her grandfather talking, to “an old man’s memories.” In the title song, lost and happy in whumping gospel vamps and choruses, she’s equally removed from any authentic baptism. But the power in this music is all tension and appetite anyway. This goes double for “Cowboy Angel,” a declaration of desire so intense — “Please come back my cowboy angel/ Bring with you that yesterday” — that you just have to wonder how the singer lasts through the whole song.

Did Wynonna Judd, Trisha Yearwood, Kathy Mattea and Suzy Bogguss, who later recorded “Heartaches,” hear Valerie Carter’s *Just a Stone’s Throw Away*? Did they sense the difficulties and the advantages of being drawn to country music during a time when the genre’s defining decades seemed a little or a lot out of reach in their lives? Even if they didn’t, they did. ♡



**Did Wynonna Judd, Trisha Yearwood, Kathy Mattea and scores of other '90s country singers hear Valerie Carter's *Just a Stone's Throw Away*?**





**DAVID BROMBERG**  
*Midnight on the Water*

COLUMBIA LEGACY  
SELECTION 04034  
★ ½

As a sideman for Jerry Jeff Walker, Bob Dylan and others, guitarist David Bromberg gained a reputation as a hot picker who could play just about everything (mandolin, dobro, fiddle, anything with strings). His solo albums, which gathered a cult following but never much more, saw no limits to Bromberg's musical ambitions—he dabbled freely in any style handy, playing bluegrass arrangements of jazz tunes and dubbing his band “The World’s First Folk Orchestra.”

Bromberg's premise—jazz is blues is country is folk is good music—had some merit, though his execution often lacked it. Despite backing from the likes of Emmylou Harris, Ricky Skaggs and pianist Mac Rebennack (aka Dr. John), 1975's *Midnight on the Water* is a mess of an album. Nothing on the album displays the blinding speed that made Bromberg famous. His gruff vocals destroy the simple beauty

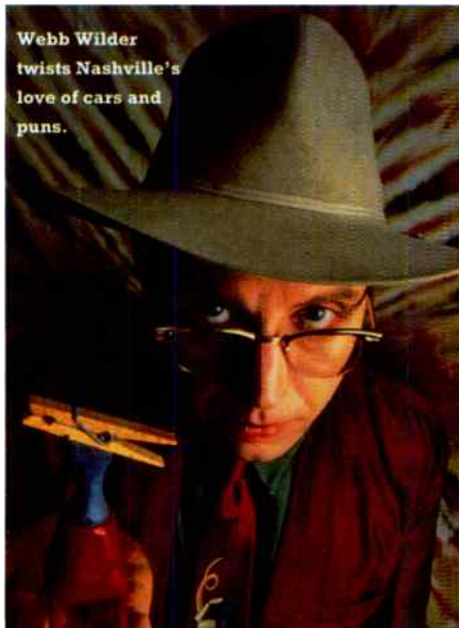
of “Mr. Blue” and “(What a Wonderful World,” two ingenuous pieces of '50s pop. On the rest of the album, he jumps from fiddle medleys to solo blues—nearly all of it dull or worse. If *Midnight on the Water* didn't have its eclecticism it would have nothing—and eclecticism without substance is as bad as nothing.—*Brian Mansfield*



**WEBB WILDER AND THE BEATNECKS**  
*It Came From Nashville*

WATERMELON  
SELECTION 04012  
★★★

On Webb Wilder's two albums for Zoo Records, the band has traveled into a deep-South swamp-rock dementia, but on this earlier 1986 independent album, the group—then with the Beatnecks tag—owed as much to hard-core rockabilly twang as it did to bad '50s sci-fi flicks. *It Came From Nashville* mixes guitar instrumentals that would do Duane Eddy proud with songs like “How Long Can She Last (Going That Fast)” and “One Taste of the Bait” that twist Nashville's love of cars and puns into side-show rock 'n' roll. “Poolside,” with its basic, common-sense rules for living—“No running, no pushing, no profanity and no dogs... No Dogs... NO DOGS!”—is an under-acknowledged summertime classic and the album's best song. Elsewhere, covers of Steve Earle, Steve Forbert, Johnny Cash and Hank Williams keep the band's motors gunning just over the red line.—*Brian Mansfield*



Webb Wilder twists Nashville's love of cars and puns.

# Which Gift Will They Remember Month After Month?

Looking for a unique gift for a friend or family member? Do they like country music? With a gift subscription to *New Country Music* magazine, your country music fan will receive all the excitement and news from Nashville and the country music scene, plus an exclusive CD or cassette with songs from today's hot country stars each month. It's all included in the subscription price.



To Send A Gift Call:  
**1-800-71-MUSIC**

*New Country Music* magazine is a great present and a one-of-a-kind treat for anyone who enjoys country music. Simply fill out the gift subscription form below. We will send out the latest issue of *New Country Music* magazine.

## Special Gift Offer

- 6 month subscription—\$39.95 (includes shipping and handling)
- 12 month subscription—\$69.95 (includes shipping and handling)
- Check here to send your monthly recording on Cassette
- Check here to send your monthly recording on Cassette

SEND GIFT TO:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ APT. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

GIFT FROM:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ APT. NO. \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

ACCOUNT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ (IF YOU ARE A SUBSCRIBER)

PAYMENT METHODS:

- Check enclosed (payable to New Country Music)
- Charge my credit card:  Visa  Mastercard  American Express

CARD NO. \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_ MO/YR \_\_\_\_\_

CARDHOLDER'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: **New Country Music Service**  
**PO Box 60040/Tampa, FL 33660-0040**

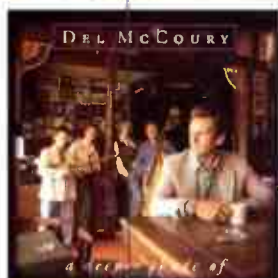
New gifts begin with the next available issue after payment is received.  
\* Residents of NY, CA and PA please add applicable sales tax. Canadian residents, \$55.95 for 6 months, \$109.95 for 12 months. GST and import duty extra.



## Bluegrass



Del McCoury and his band go cheek to cheek with the blues.



### DEL MCCOURY

*A Deeper Shade of Blue*

ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04005  
★ ★ ★ ★

**T**he new record by noted bluegrass bandleader and former Bill Monroe sideman Del McCoury concerns cheating lovers, fall-down drunks and other miserable loners for whom the only adjective that will suffice is "blue." So why does it lift my spirits every time I hear it?

You'll know 20 seconds into "Cheek to Cheek with the Blues," the first cut on *A Deeper Shade of Blue*. McCoury's fifth album for Rounder is one of the most exciting and purely enjoyable albums in years—whether you like bluegrass or not. On cut after cut, Ronnie McCoury's lightning-fingered mandolin playing and Jason Carter's fiddle soar, circle and swoop at each other like mating eagles, while Rob McCoury's banjo and Mike Bub's bass

create a rhythm section that can clobber virtually any rock band in the country. When the whole band plunges over the roller-coaster melodic curves of Ronnie's "Quicksburg Rendezvous" or tears through Kevin Welch and Gary Scruggs' "True Love Never Dies" with ominous fervor, you can do little more than shake your head in disbelief.

Del McCoury's vocals, however, are the icing that makes the cake. Whether he's cackling Lefty Frizzell's "If You've Got the Money Honey" in randy high spirits or romping through Willie Nelson's "Man With the Blues," he infuses every tune with joyous vitality, no matter how sad the song. Where Jerry Lee Lewis wailed "What Made Milwaukee Famous" with a drawl that said "go to hell," McCoury

sings it as though he's thankful to Heaven to still be making noise. This gem of a record is one case of the blues you don't want to end.—*Jim Ridley*



### THE LONESOME RIVER BAND

*Old Country Town*

SUGAR HILL  
SELECTION 04022

★ ★ ★

**I**n order for bluegrass to move forward, it needs the vision and voice of the young to carry it, and the Lonesome River Band has taken up the challenge. One of the fastest rising new bands on the bluegrass circuit, LRB has topped radio playlists and recently won the coveted Bluegrass Music Association's "Album of the Year" award. Their latest release, *Old Country Town*, is marked by spirited vocals, crisp instrumentation and an obvious reverence for tradition.

The title cut reels in images of life in a small country town and is an immediate charmer. By

contrast, "(Listen to) the Old Man" is a touching tribute to the elderly, whose values and advice have left an indelible impression on a small town youth. The band is at its best, though, when it flies through up-tempo bluegrass ("Old Lonesome, Welcome Back") and eases into the vocal challenges of gospel ("Solid Rock").—*Chris Flisber*



### DRY BRANCH FIRE SQUAD

*Just for the Record*

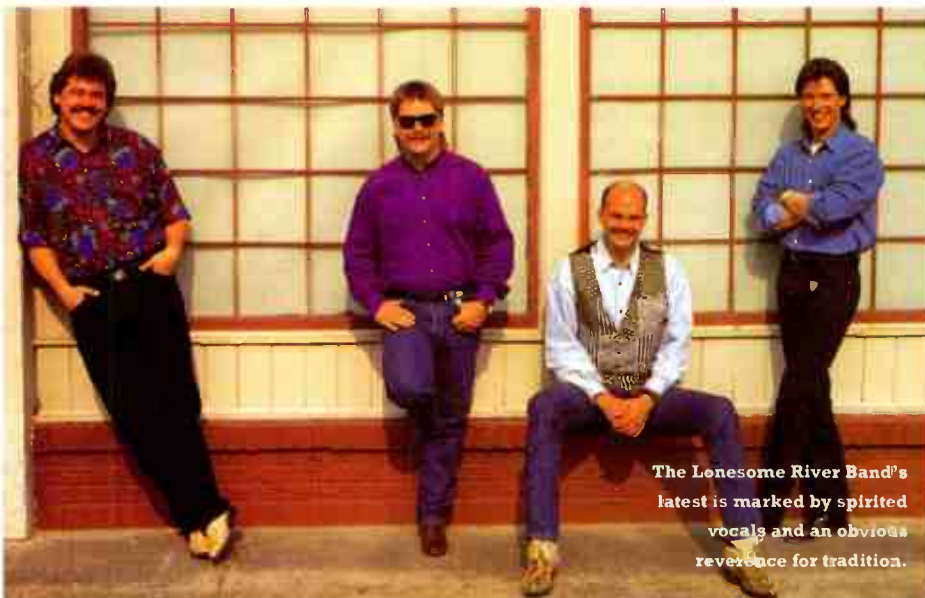
ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04020  
★ ★ ★ ½

**T**he music of the Dry Branch Fire Squad is hard to classify. For 13 albums, they've linked old-time and bluegrass music and this latest release is no exception. The material here ranges from the driving bluegrass of the Stanley Brothers' "Goin' to the Races" and the Carter Family ballad "A Distant Land to Roam" to the honky-tonk stylings of "Carolyn at the Broken Wheel

Inn," complete with pedal-steel guitar.

The band's repertoire spans more than a century of American music, ranging from songs of the Civil War through contemporary pieces and they make it all fit together. Here, they sink their teeth into John Prine's "Unwed Fathers" and it comes out sounding like an old Appalachian ballad.

The band's solid instrumental work is tighter here than on some of their earlier releases and Ron



The Lonesome River Band's latest is marked by spirited vocals and an obvious reverence for tradition.



## Christian Country

Thomason's lead vocals are characteristically unadorned and straight forward—and extremely heartfelt and effective. Guitarist/vocalist Suzanne Thomas strengthens the overall sound, and her harmonies with Thomason are distinctive and engaging.—*Doug Fulmer*



### THE TRADITIONAL GRASS

10th Anniversary Collection

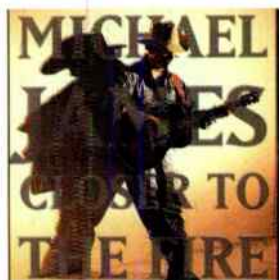
REBEL  
SELECTION 04063  
★★★★½

**T**he Traditional Grass' third Rebel album, *10th Anniversary Collection*, presents this fine traditional-style bluegrass band at its best. The group produces a distinct sound and remains deeply rooted in the traditional sounds of the early bluegrass bands. The album is full of impressive harmonies and crisp, straight-ahead instrumentals.

Half of the 16 cuts are new, including Randall Hylton's "Rough Edges" which has never before been recorded. Joe Mullins kicks the number off in high fashion with the ringing sound of his Rich & Taylor five-string. The remaining seven new songs were penned by members of the band.

This collection features old favorites as well, including "Weary Lonesome Blues," "You Can Keep Your Nine Pound Hammer" and "You Are My Flower." Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the album is how well the band's new material stands up alongside these old chestnuts.

Traditional Grass is only now becoming well-known on the bluegrass circuit and *10th Anniversary Celebration* is an impressive effort that should broaden their base.—*Doug Fulmer*



### MICHAEL JAMES

*Closer to the Fire*

REUNION  
SELECTION 04011  
★★★★

**I**f good intentions were the only criterion for art, Michael James would be an artist of Hank Williams' stature. A young contemporary Christian country artist with a streak of innocuous nice-guy sincerity, James sings of the power of faith and love in a voice as cozy as an embroidered quilt. If the production were as heartfelt or detailed as songs like "Family Tree" or "The Kite," *Closer to the Fire* would be a memorable record indeed.

Unfortunately, producers Gary Chapman and J.D. Cunningham have buried James' personality under an enervating mixture of mushy keyboards, synthesized strings and drums that sound like cannons firing. On the best cuts, such as Tony Arata's insightful "Handfuls of Dust," individual elements like Paul Franklin's steel guitar and Jimmy Mattingly's fiddle cut through the faceless backing. Overall, however,

the production seems so generic that even guest stars Amy Grant and Susan Ashton can't cut through the molasses on "Roll Back Again." James' warm vocals and plain-folks songwriting show promise, though, and he's surrounded himself with good Nashville writers (Arata, Austin Cunningham, John Mal-lory). Lay off the studio syrup next time around, Michael, and the follow-up to *Closer to the Flame* should give us all reason to rejoice.—*Jim Ridley*

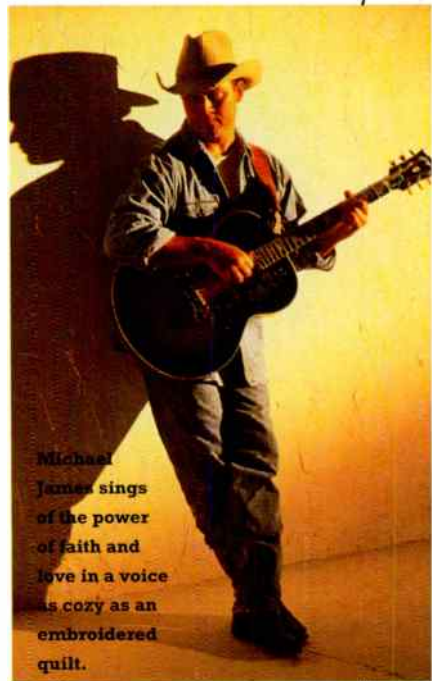


### BAD LIVERS

*Dust on the Bible*

QUARTERSTICK/TOUCH & GO  
SELECTION 04121  
(CASSETTE ONLY)  
★★★★

**I**n November, 1991, pickers Mark Rubin, Ralph White and Danny Barnes, an Austin trio known by the wonderfully evocative handle, the Bad Livers, decided that though they had a record deal, they'd make a tape to sell only at gigs. An acoustic band known as much for its



Michael James sings of the power of faith and love in a voice as cozy as an embroidered quilt.

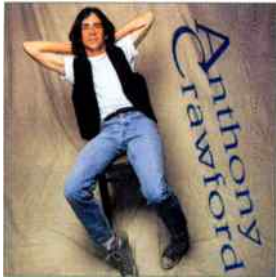
pickin' and grinnin' versions of punk-rock classics as for "Wild-wood Flower," the Livers are easily one of country's most eclectic and unpredictable acts. They're also the only bluegrass band on earth signed to a punk/alternative label like Chicago's Touch & Go, where their label-mates include noisy guitar bands Jesus Lizard, Grunt and Mule.

Captured live in Barnes' spare bedroom on a four-track recorder, this offhand project quickly became a bestseller on the bandstand, so much so that the band finally asked Quarterstick to take it off its hands. Re-released only on cassette, the relaxed set of bluegrass and mountain music classics on *Dust on the Bible* shows that no matter where these boys may roam musically, their roots still lie in them thar hills. "Precious Memories," "I'm Using My Bible for a Roadmap" and "Keep Your Lamp Trimmed and Burning" all have an easy, agreeable charm. A medley of "I Saw The Light," "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" and "I'll Fly Away" is a pleasure. And although Ry Cooder's version still reigns supreme, the Livers' cover of "Jesus Is On The Mainline" is a worthy addition.—*Robert Baird*

The Bad Livers: An unpredictable bluegrass band on a punk/alternative label.







**ANTHONY CRAWFORD**

*Anthony Crawford*

LITTLE DOG/ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04010

★ ★ ★

**A** Nashville songwriter who has been touted as one of the city's up-and-comers for a couple of years, Anthony Crawford has a high, pleasant voice reminiscent of the Rembrandts' Danny Wilde. It serves him well on irresistible Beatlesque numbers like "For All the Right Reasons" and the buoyantly catchy "Not Sure I Believe You." If Crawford ever writes lyrics as keen as his melodic sense, he'll be a wonder on the order of Marshall Crenshaw.

Right now, however, his lyrics rely far too much on stale language and obscure turns of phrase. "Got To Be More" is an unbroken string of clichés—"do or die situation," "sink or swim," "information overload"—while navel-gazing numbers like "The Noise Around Us" and "On the Edge" would profit from association with a concrete noun or two. Still, there's no denying the appeal of his melodies or vocals, and producers Pete Anderson (Dwight Yoakam, Michelle Shocked) and Dusty Wakeman provide memorable settings for every track. Next time around, maybe we'll remember the lyrics as well.—*Jim Ridley*

**MEAT PUPPETS**

*Too High To Die*

LONDON  
SELECTION 04120

★ ★ ★ ★

**F**or 15 years and 11 albums, the brothers Kirkwood (Cris and Curt) and drummer Derek Bostrom have comprised the Meat Puppets. One of a



**Billy Pilgrim: A keen pop sense, but something's missing.**

handful of '80s guitar bands that mixed punk's rowdy energy and deafening volume with the strum 'n' twang of the Byrds and Neil Young, the Pups, as they are known back home in Tempe, Arizona, created part of what now falls under the overworked term "alternative music."

In 1983, the Pups honed their country leanings even further and made *Meat Puppets II*, one of the cornerstones of a Southwestern variant of country-fied alternative music known as "cowpunk." Later expanded by bands like Green on Red and Giant Sand, cowpunk features sloppy "Rawhide"-inspired fuzz guitars, boozy singing and lots of c&w bar-band bad attitude.

One of the last alternative forefathers to jump to a major label, the Puppets have finally made the record that may push them into the national limelight they so richly deserve. More tuneful and disciplined than previous albums, *Too High To Die* finds the band buffing its time-honored hippie-jam rock to an accessible hue.

The band's country roots

show themselves on the git-along gospel honk. "Comin' Down." Opening with "I'm going down to the desert/The dirty filthy desert," the tune closes with a two-part harmony a cappella chorus worthy of any stained-glass hour: "Coming down from the mountain/I have seen the high and mighty/I will go again someday/But for now I'm comin' down." Yee-haw.—*Robert Baird*



**BILLY PILGRIM**

*Billy Pilgrim*

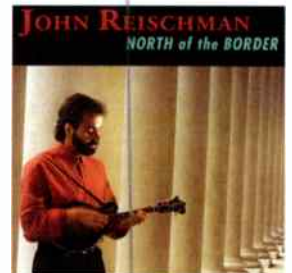
ATLANTIC  
SELECTION 04032

★ ★ ½

**O**n its major-label debut, named for the temporally dislocated anti-hero of Kurt

Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*, the Atlanta-based singing and songwriting team of Andrew Hyra and Kristian Bush harmonizes and croons aggressively literate post-graduate wordplay over defiantly strummed guitars—in short, they're the Indigo Boys. When the combination works, as on the bouncy "Hula Hoop" and the insanely catchy "Insomniac," their anthemic folk-pop has bite and wit; when it doesn't, the songs merely sound overwrought—which the duo's occasionally melodramatic vocals only exacerbate.

Producers Don McCollister and Hugh Padgham have placed most of the songs in huge arena-bound settings that tend to obscure Hyra and Bush's personalities; their music would benefit from more intimate arrangements and production. However, Hyra and Bush clearly have a keen pop sense, and we can look forward to hearing what they come up with next time. Here's hoping the next record isn't called *Roland Weary*.—*Jim Ridley*



**JOHN REISCHMAN**

*North of the Border*

ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04019

★ ★ ★

**M**andolinist John Reischman, who is best known for his work with Kathy Kallick and the Good Ol' Persons, steps to the front of this all instrumental solo release. Reischman gets backing here by an impressive group of musicians including Scott Nygaard on guitar, Sally Van Meter on dobro and Byron Berline on fiddle.

The mandolin is most closely associated with bluegrass, but





NRBO's nuggets creep up on you.

there isn't much of that style here. There is the fast-paced sound of the Reischman-penned "Big Bug" with Tony Trischka on banjo but most of the songs have a much slower light-jazz feel, highlighted by Reischman's melodic stylings and some very impressive sounds from bassist Todd Phillips.

Reischman is a true "musician's musician," an artist and innovator on his instrument. While the playing on *North of the Border* is consistently impressive, the album occasionally bogs down with its 10 mandolin-led instrumentals.—*Doug Fulmer*

## BILL LLOYD

*Set To Pop*

EAST SIDE DIGITAL  
SELECTION 04031

★ ★ ★ ½

**T**he most overheard phrase regarding Bill Lloyd's second solo album will be, "Haven't I heard that song somewhere before?" Of course, this mistak-

en *deja vu* is the hallmark of all expertly crafted Anglo-pop; Lloyd probably *wants* you to think you've heard these songs. He's such a fan of the Holy Trinity of Pop B's (Beatles, Badfinger, Big Star), he assimilates the best traits of these groups into each song he writes.

Though he was once half of Foster & Lloyd, Lloyd was a college radio popster before attaining country credibility. His independent-label LP, *Feeling the Elephant*, originally released in 1987 and reissued on CD in 1990, is still sought by power-pop aficionados. Recorded over a five-year period, *Set To Pop* marks his second foray into pop pastures.

Obsessively chiseled and seemingly lightweight, *Set To Pop* demands repeated listenings for the full effect of the razor-sharp songwriting to set in. Lloyd's sentiments rarely stray from the "love found, love tested, love lost" vein, but his explore it in unfailingly clever

ways. "I Went Electric," with power-pop maven Marshall Crenshaw guesting on guitars and vocals, compares the excitement of finding love to power surges and fuse overloads. When Crenshaw croons, "You send a current up and down my spine/I feel a little bit like Frankenstein," it's hard not to crack a smile.

Lloyd showcases inventive guitar playing and lyrics on the sly "Niagara Falls" and "Channeling the King," the best song ever written about Elvis Presley's psychic connections. He falls victim to clever-clever wordplay in "Trampoline" and "S.W.A.T. Team of Love," but he's more often dead on target. *Set To Pop* is a sunny postcard straight from old AM rock radio formats, replete with jangly guitars, tambourines and hooks galore.—*Kath Hansen*



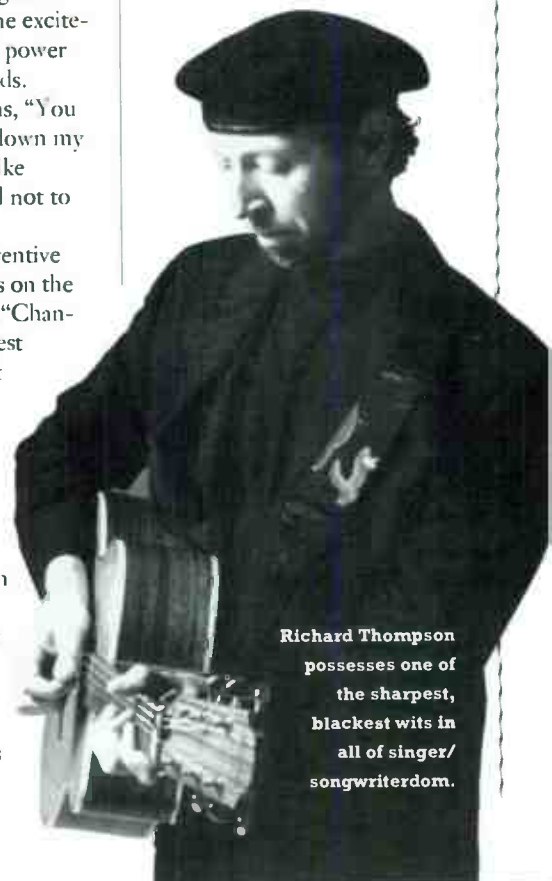
## RICHARD THOMPSON

*Mirror-Blue*

CAPITOL  
SELECTION 04118

★ ★ ★ ★

**R**ichard Thompson is one funny guy. Despite a reputation for terminal musical gloominess, Thompson, who wrote Jo-Eli Sonnier's hit "Tear-Stained Letter," possesses one of the sharpest, blackest wits in all of singer/songwriterdom. On *Mirror-Blue*, the immensely talented godfather of folk rock turns his admittedly off-center sense of humor loose on one of rock's most cherished subjects—the automobile. Instead of Daddy's T-Bird or a Heavy Chevy, Thompson sings about his rusting, temperamental "MGB-GT." The punchline is the



Richard Thompson possesses one of the sharpest, blackest wits in all of singer/songwriterdom.

music: a heavy Celtic tribal stomp more suited to lyrics about druids and dragons than “Lockheed discs and twin SUs.” For those in need of a less subtle attack there’s “Fast Food,” a head-on bash of those popular restaurant chains.

This supposedly brooding wet blanket is also an unabashedly romantic writer of pop hooks. Here, both “Mascara Tears” and particularly “I Can’t Wake Up To Save My Life” are memorable folk rock/pop tunes, complete with easy-to-love hooks and lots of Thompson’s quirky guitar mastery.

Hardcore fans who thrive on the gloom and doom needn’t be put off entirely, however. Thompson’s never going to be light and gay, and his moodiness haunts songs like “Easy There, Steady Now,” and “Taking My Business Elsewhere.” For those in search of excruciating pain, there’s the gorgeous, bittersweet love ballad, “Beeswing.”

As consistent as 1986’s *Daring Adventures* and as funny as 1991’s *Rumor and Sigh, Mirror*

*Blue* is the work of one of folk music’s most essential voices at its most assured.—Robert Baird



**NRBQ**

*Message for the Mess Age*

RHINO

SELECTION 04049

★ ★ ★ ½

**M**essage for the Mess Age, NRBQ’s first collection of brand new material since 1989’s Virgin Records release *It’s a Wild Weekend* is notable right from the get-go for one very good reason: It looks like it will be the last NRBQ record for burly guitarist-songwriter Al Anderson, whose fiery rhythm and lead work helped give the Q so much of its spe-

cial soul all these years. Word is that Big Al has tendered his resignation, thereby ending a 23-year affiliation with the group and severing the band’s direct link to Music City.

Anderson has made substantial inroads in the country music market, which helped hasten his departure. Taking over for Anderson, at least temporarily, is bassist Joey Spampinato’s younger brother Johnny.

For a group often hailed as the “world’s greatest bar band,” *Message for the Mess Age* doesn’t flat-out rock nearly enough (though they do a persuasive job on the opener, “Over Your Head”), and given that we’re dealing with one of the mightiest rhythm sections in the modern world, that’s a tad disappointing.

The nuggets are here; they just creep up on you instead of smacking you in the face. There are a lot of memorable moments—from the resurrecting of the decades-old quirky theme “Don’t Bite the Head” and the moving melody of “Advice for

Teenagers” to the McCartneyesque “Ramona,” written by Terry Adams and Joey Spampinato. All three of Anderson’s tunes are particularly likable, including the guitar thumping “Nothin’s Wrong With Me” and an understated take of “A Better Word for Love,” a song previously recorded by Alabama.—David Simons

**COWBOY JUNKIES**

*Pale Sun Crescent Moon*

RCA

SELECTION 04119

★ ★

**T**here’s no way to hate the Cowboy Junkies. They’re unfailingly nice, polite people who make graceful, inoffensive folk-rock music. Lately they’ve even become cultured in all the right ways. A 17th-century Spanish still life graces the cover of *Pale Sun Crescent Moon*, and quotes from William Faulkner and Gabriel Garcia Marquez appear in two of its tunes. One of the two title songs, “Crescent Moon,” was inspired by the work of long-neglected Texas troubadour Townes Van Zandt.

After four albums, though, the Junkies remain fatally addicted to boring, mid-tempo beats. The band drowns thoughtful and inventive lyrics in interminable stretches of sameness. Add to this pleasant but undistinguished songwriting and a lack of instrumental solos and you’ve got the makings of an odd, mind-numbing experience. It’s like listening to one long song. You get the feeling that if this mellow Canadian quartet wrote about horny sex or cop killers instead of the Great Plains, they’d still crawl at the same measured pace.

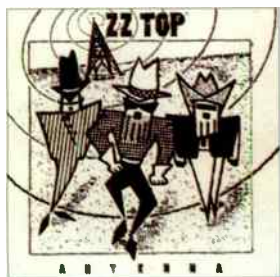
In their defense, there’s lots to like about Margo Timmins’ warm and nimble voice. And drums, thank God, are now a regular part of the mix. Inexplicably, the words to this album’s most varied and interesting cuts, the bluesy “Explain” and the noisy (in a Junkies kind

**Cowboy Junkies: Still crawling at the same measured pace.**





of way) “The Post” have been omitted from the CD booklet. Did the Junkies play all their comatose cards on their wonderful 1984 debut, *The Trinity Sessions*, or can we someday expect something, anything, different?—*Robert Baird*



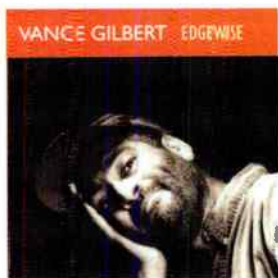
**ZZ TOP**  
*Antenna*

RCA  
SELECTION 04117  
★ ★

**S**hhhhhh... Wanna hear a secret? Billy Gibbons, Dusty Hill and Frank Beard disappeared in 1979 after the release of their seventh album, *Deguello*. Since then, efficient robots, Texas cyborgs if you will, have been behind those unkempt whiskers still lookin’ for some Tush. The result has been a run of records filled with formula rock so dry and predictable that you couldn’t squeeze a drop of Texas barbecue out of them.

After a switch in labels (Warner Bros. to RCA), the lumbering, rock-by-roto Texasaurus that is ZZ Top has produced another set of jammy, power-trio rumble rock. Fans will find lots to love in boogie wallows like “Pincushion,” “World of Swirl” and “PHC.” Unfortunately, the rest is slack, unambitious filler, the kind that could come as easily from New York as from Nacogdoches. Even Gibbons’ once-hefty guitar chops are on cruise control. Once the proudest lords in the Texas musical court, this little ol’ band from Tejas have sadly become just another big band from anywhere. And a tired one at that. Come back to the Five and Dime Billy, Dusty and Frank!—*Robert Baird*

## Songwriters



**VANCE GILBERT**  
*Edgewise*

PHILO/ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04008  
★ ★ ½

**O**n “Country Western Rap,” Vance Gilbert, one of the few black artists to emerge from Boston’s folk scene, tries to mock his unique position by combining two easily stereotyped musical styles. Taken by itself, the song insults both genres by quoting *Green Acres* and Hammer while never realizing that Tom T. Hall made country rap records more than two decades ago. Laid next to

the more subtle conspicuousness of “Good Cup of Coffee” or a tender cover of the Eagles’ “Lyn’ Eyes,” it’s just Gilbert’s most heavy-handed commentary—though it’s still not a very good song.

Gilbert does much better on the rest of *Edgewise*. His high, breezy tenor has the phrasing of Richie Havens and the tone of a lighthearted Bill Withers; it adds a fanciful touch to “When Jimmy Falls in Love” and takes flight with the gospel melody of “If These Teardrops Had Wings.” “Rocket to the Moon” exhibits Gilbert’s storytelling wit at its best, and the a cappella “King of Rome” shows the scope of his vocal abilities. Though Gilbert considers himself a folk artist, guitar-and-vocal duo Tuck and Patti bring out his jazz influences, and he sounds more emotional the closer he gets to the blues.—*Brian Mansfield*



Vance Gilbert's high, breezy tenor has the phrasing of Richie Havens and the tone of a lighthearted Bill Withers.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*Christine Lavin Presents*  
*“On a Winter’s Night”*

PHILO/ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04009  
★ ★ ★ ½

**T**he second in an apparently seasonal series (1991 saw the autumnal *When October Goes*), *On a Winter’s Night* collects winter-themed songs by some of the brightest stars of the contemporary folk scene including John Gorka, Patty Larkin and Cheryl Wheeler. Willie Nininger’s gorgeous title track depicts the ideal setting for listening to this album—“Turn off all the lights/Wrap the blankets warmly/Shut the window tight/Put your arms around me/For all we know, it may snow tonight.”

Beyond Nininger’s contribution and a few other songs (Larkin’s “Winter Wind,” David Wilcox’s “Frozen in the Snow,” Hugh Blumenfeld’s “Let Me Fall in Love Before the Spring Comes”), most of the album’s 15 tracks don’t have much to do with winter.

The bare-limbed arrangements of David Roth’s delightful “Rising in Love” and Bill Morrissey’s chilling “She’s That Kind of Mystery” fit snugly into presenter Christine Lavin’s vision of the album. In many cases, such as in Lavin’s “The Kind of Love You Never Recover From” and Megon McDonough’s “Sweet Summer Dreams,” the cold doesn’t come from the weather outside; it comes from the frozen places inside people’s souls.—*Brian Mansfield*



## Borderline



### KIPS BAY CEILI BAND

*Digging In*

GREEN LINNET  
SELECTION 04018  
★ ★ ½

### FOUR MEN AND A DOG

*Shifting Gravel*

GREEN LINNET  
SELECTION 04017  
★ ★ ★

**A**merican country music has long held a fascination among Celtic musicians and, as ethnomusicologists have noted, country's roots were first tended by Irish, Scottish and English immigrants. From the other side of the Atlantic come these two releases that show how the music

has reversed migration and has been re-integrated by the Celts.

Four Men and a Dog (actually six men and no dog) sound like they come from a section of Ireland that borders east Texas. Vocalist Kevin Doherty's passion for country music shows in original songs and in the band's arrangements featuring upright bass, fiddle, steel guitar and accordion. The only thing Irish about the song "Another Irish Rover" is its title; it sounds like a Cajun two-step.

Doherty is especially sharp on honky-tonk songs like "I'm Walkin'" and "Work Together," but he also toys with bluegrass ("The Mountain Road") and with melancholy country ballads. "Struggle On" could have been an old Bob Wills composition. The band performs some straight Celtic tunes, and occasionally the "American" pieces are more Irish reel than country swing, but even die-hard country fanatics will find plenty to their liking.

A bit more caution is needed with Kips Bay Ceili Band. The

line-up features All-Ireland accordion champ John Whelan, jazz-rocker Richard Lindsey on bass, guitarist extraordinaire Pat Kilbride and ex-Billy Idol drummer Steve Missal on percussion. This serves notice that variety is the order of the day; country influences tinge numerous pieces here, but so do rock, pop, jazz and Celtic. Their cover of the Jimmy Horton hit "The Battle of New Orleans" is equal parts rave, rock and bluegrass. Zydeco influences crop up and there are touches of bluegrass, a country ballad ("Broken Promises"), as well as the Top 40-flavored "Talk to Me" and several Irish tunes and songs. All of which makes the band either schizophrenic or eclectic, depending on your perspective.—*Rob Weir*



### VARIOUS ARTISTS

*Conjunto! Texas-Mexican Border Music, Volume V: Polkas de Oro*

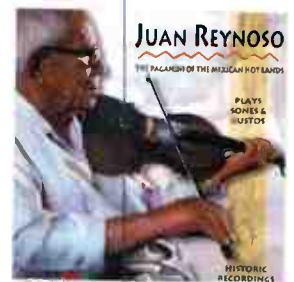
ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04035  
★ ★ ★

**T**he fifth volume of Rounder's *conjunto* series focuses on the influence of the polka, the accordion-based dance music German and Czech immigrants brought to Texas in the mid-19th century. The state's Chicano population quickly absorbed polka's rhythms and melodies into its indigenous music, first adding the guitar-like *bajo sexto* and later acoustic bass and drums.

*Polkas de Oro* compiles 14 tracks by current *conjunto* acts. Since the tunes on the album are all instrumental and mostly traditional, they don't give the performers much chance to establish their own identities. Save for Los Dos Gilbertos' *redova* "El Cuero

Tostado," which even though it's in straight time lurches like a drunken waltz, most cuts stick to a standard polka form. The uninitiated won't be able to tell old-timers like Tony de la Rosa from such rock-influenced upstarts as David Lee Garza.

*Polkas de Oro* may not serve as a good introduction to today's varied *conjunto* scene. Still, it's a consistent, though narrowly defined, collection of dance music that grooves in its own way.—*Brian Mansfield*



### JUAN REYNOSO

*Plays Sonnes and Gustos: Historic Recordings 1972-1993*

DISC CORASON/ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04016  
★ ★ ★ ★

**I**n the Tierra Caliente (or Hot Lands) of Mexico, violinist Juan Reynoso is known as "the Paganini of the Hot Lands," and on this thrilling recording, it's easy to see why. On the 15 selections here, recorded over the past 20 years with family members and longtime associates as back-up, the 80-year-old musician whips his way through the traditional *sonnes* (usually instrumental) and *gustos* (usually sung) of the area with a fervor Jerry Lee Lewis would envy.

With their traces of Central European folk music, along with the obvious Spanish influences, the *sonnes* and *gustos* are touched by the simultaneous joy and agony of life. And Reynoso's playing is voluptuous and passionate. At his most exuberant, with his bow skittering with daredevil grace across the strings of his violin, this ageless virtuoso makes you feel like dancing and crying all at once. We should all live to be so young.—*Jim Ridley*

## Zydeco



### JOHN DELAFOSE & THE EUNICE PLAYBOYS

*Blues Stay Away From Me*

ROUNDER  
SELECTION 04013  
★ ★ ★ ½

**T**here must be something in the water down in Louisiana—Tabasco sauce, cayenne pepper, Jolt Cola—that gives middle-aged men like John Delafosse the stamina to mop up the stage with musicians half their age. On this, the new recording from the zydeco master and his tire-

less Eunice Playboys, Delafosse whips his family and friends through a breathless set of standards and his own compositions, pumping his accordion like the bellows on Hell's furnace. The music gets even hotter when John's sons Geno and Tony take over the rhythm section: Geno beats his snare drum like a redheaded stepchild, while Tony's loping bass wouldn't sound out of place behind James Brown's Famous Flames. If this album has any minor drawback, it's that it could stand a bit more variety in its pacing. But when the elder Delafosse rears back his head and hollers out tunes like "Outside Woman" and "Make Me Yours," even supporting himself on a delightfully scratchy fiddle on two numbers, the Eunice Playboys are all the medicine you need for warding off the blues.—*Jim Ridley*



## Brucing It Up

Stacy Dean Campbell Talks About Some Big Influences

BY STACY DEAN CAMPBELL AND BRIAN MANSFIELD

Stacy Dean Campbell hit the country music scene in 1992 with the charming *Lonesome Wins Again* (Columbia) (Selection 04051), a low-key rockabilly-influenced debut that produced such moderately successful singles as the title track and "Rosalee." In preparation for his second album, due later this year, Campbell has immersed himself in the music of his favorite songwriters, such as Steve Earle and Bruce Springsteen. Here's his story.

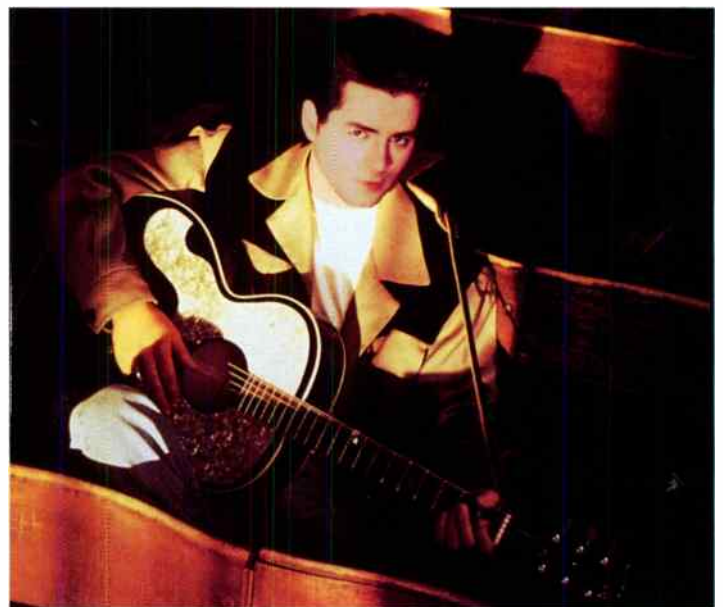
**M**Y BROTHER GAVE ME MY FIRST Bruce Springsteen album, though I honestly can't remember which one. I knew who Springsteen was, but I was more in tune with real country stuff—Tammy Wynette, George Jones and newer guys like Dwight Yoakam. I had heard his radio tunes—"Born in the U.S.A.," "Glory Days"—but I had never gotten into them.

I learned that the guy was a great country writer. His lyrics were down-home and American. When I got done listening to one of his songs, I could totally see what he had been singing about. I could see his hometown; I could see Charlie Starkweather sitting in an electric chair with his girlfriend on his lap.

"Tougher 'Than the Rest," from *Tunnel of Love*, would work as a country record. (Emmylou Harris has recorded it.) I think a lot of blue-collar dudes could relate to that; that's my background, and I know I did. I'd love to have the nerve to say, "If you're looking for love, honey, I'm tougher than the rest," to a girl.

"I Wish I Were Blind," from *Human Touch*, would work well, too, because it's a real common concept. He sets up his hook with these lines: "Though this world is filled with the grace and beauty of God's hand/ I wish I were blind when I see you with your man." I love many times do you think that when you lose somebody? Your worst fear is going around town and seeing them with somebody else. Some of the legendary country songs—"Crazy," "I Fail to Pieces," "Stand By Your Man"—talk about simply expressed but universal emotions that normal people relate to.

I actually wanted to cut "I Wish I Were Blind." We were doing some pre-production for the new album, and I demoed it. It's a stripped-down guitar-and-vocal thing. I love the song and I was happy



with the way I sang it, but I wouldn't want to do a Springsteen song unless I had some kind of endorsement from him. Otherwise, I would feel like I was just doing a cover. Plus the Mavericks did "All That Heaven Will Allow." It might have been corny for another young country act to do a Springsteen tune. There was a time, though, when I really wanted to cut the song.

I've been listening to him in depth for the past year, because I've been working on a new album and honing in on my songwriting. It's important for me to write, and I'm just learning to do that. Springsteen's influence has helped me learn how to take a feeling and put it into words. That's hard to do. For one thing, it's hard for me to figure out what that feeling is and what I'm trying to say with it.

Springsteen's a master at that. Every time you hear something of his, whether it's "Bobby Jean" or "Glory Days," you get the feeling he's gone through that experience, he's really telling you a story. Slowly but surely, I am learning how to tell a story. ♪

### Suggested Listening

#### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

*Nebraska*

COLUMBIA (1982)  
SELECTION 04122

★★★★½

#### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

*Born in the U.S.A.*

COLUMBIA (1984)  
SELECTION 04123

★★★★★

#### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

*Tunnel of Love*

COLUMBIA (1987)  
SELECTION 04124

★★★★★

#### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

*Human Touch*

COLUMBIA (1992)  
SELECTION 04125

★★★

# That's R-A-D-N-E-Y

*Radney Foster On Forestry, His Vision, Honey Nuts And More*

BY KATH HANSEN

**R**ADNEY FOSTER IS ONE HAPPY GUY. He's effectively recast himself from being half of an acclaimed duo—Foster & Lloyd—to become a successful singer/songwriter on his own. He enjoyed three Top 10 country hits in 1993, and his *Del Rio, TX 1959* (Selection 04100) album garnered spots on many critics' year-end "Best of" lists. Currently wrapping up work on his second Arista Records album, due this fall, the thinking woman's country heartthrob recently took time to contemplate some rarely asked questions.

*NCM: What is currently your favorite U.S. postage stamp?*

RF: It would have to be the Buddy Holly one that's out right now. I'm a really big Buddy Holly fan. I have a life-size cutout of Buddy that I saved from a Foster & Lloyd video shoot. It kind of stares at you as you walk through our upstairs hallway.

*How many pairs of cool glasses do you own?*

Two. I would not have been able to say that as of yesterday, but I just went and got a new pair today. My vision is dreadful. We're talking God-awful here.

*If you could be on the front of any cereal box, which would you choose?*

The natural one to choose would be Wheaties, because that would mean that you were a world-class athlete. But being the half-assed athlete that I am, I don't imagine that's ever going to happen to me! So I would probably have to go with something a little more realistic, like Cheerios. And not any of those new-fangled Cheerios, either. I'm not into this honey nut, apple cinnamon, multi-whatzahotzit. I'm a real traditionalist when it comes to that stuff.

*Continuing in the breakfast vein, how do you like your eggs?*

Actually, my favorite way to have eggs is poached, but that's damn tough to get at a truck stop in Ogallala, Nebraska. So I eat them scrambled, sunny side up, whatever. I prefer them poached, though.

*Bill Lloyd told me you once studied forestry. Which type of tree do you prefer: conifer or deciduous?*

Oh, definitely deciduous trees, because I think the change of seasons is really delightful. I particularly like the fall in middle Tennessee

better than just about anyplace on the planet. We live in what is called a mixed mesositic forest, which means we have a lot of different kinds of trees. In the fall, the colors are so unreal, it's almost a patchwork-quilt kind of effect. You know, I think this is the first time studying forestry has done me a bit of good.

*Ginger or Mary Ann?*

Oh man, that's tough! I guess I'd better pick Mary Ann, 'cause I married a kind of short brunette. So for sentimental reasons, I'd pick Mary Ann. If I said, "Hey, I'm really into tall redheads," it might not bode too well for my marriage!

*Nudie himself has custom-designed two suits for you. You have to make a choice, so which would you choose: the periwinkle blue or the peach?*

Oh, definitely the peach. 'Cause if you think about the guys in the Flying Burrito Brothers, and Gram Parsons in particular, Gram would have gone for the peach. Gram would not have fooled around with a periwinkle suit. I actually saw the jacket that Nudie made for Gram Parsons, the one with the hula girls on it. I saw someone wearing it at a concert, and I thought it might be a reproduction, but it turned out to be the actual jacket he wore on the Flying Burrito Brothers album cover.

*Do people ever call you Rodney instead of Radney?*

Oh God, all my life. I mean, I've seen my name misspelled as long as I can remember: Rodney, Randy, Bradley, you name it. I get Randy a lot. When I first came to Nashville and was waiting tables, I worked at this restaurant that demanded you say, "Hello, my name is..." So for the first couple of months I was determined to use my own name. But after a while, I just gave up and started using a different name each time. I became David, Bob, Bill, anything so long as I didn't have to try to explain Radney one more time!

*You're chosen to co-host the CMA Awards show and get to pick your female co-host. Whom do you pick?*

Well, I could think of a really sexist answer or I could give you a really good one. It's the Ginger and Mary Ann thing all over again. I would really want Mary-Chapin Carpenter because she's a dear friend and really funny and a great cut-up. She's also one of America's most intelligent singer-songwriters. It's either her or that girl who's the model in the Victoria's Secret ads. ☺





**A VOICE  
THAT MAKES IT MATTER.**

**AN ALBUM  
THAT MAKES IT REAL.**

**A NEW ARTIST  
THAT MAKES IT CLEAR:**

**THIS IS WHAT GREAT  
COUNTRY MUSIC  
IS ALL ABOUT.**

# **DUDE MOWREY**

His debut album features the hit

## **SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN**

and much more.

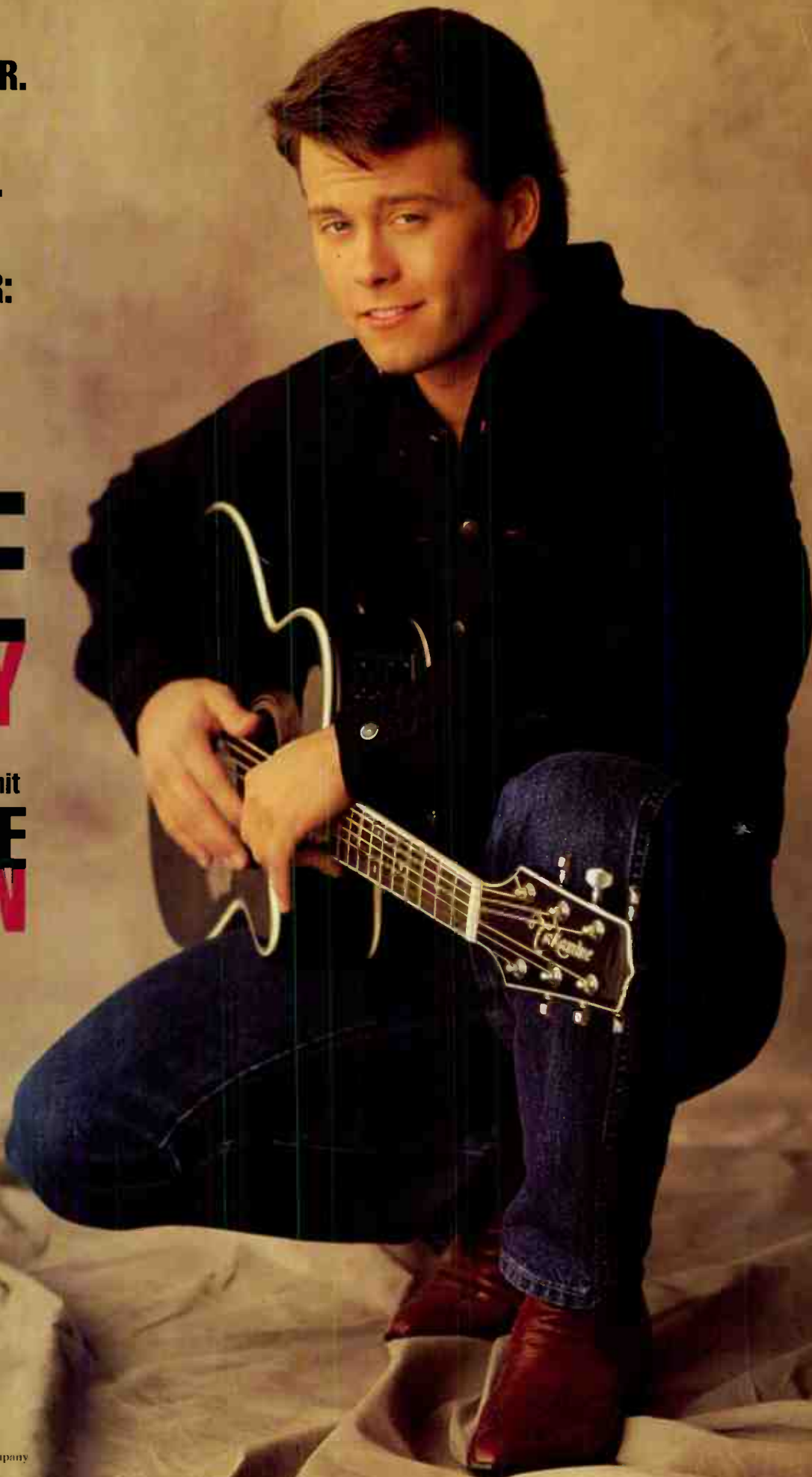
"In the midst of a boom that has Nashville turning out more than a few cookie-cutter Country stars, DUDE MOWREY turns out to be the REAL DEAL."

—**BILLBOARD**



**ARISTA**  
NASHVILLE

© 1994 Arista Records, Inc., a Bertelsmann Music Group Company



**JOHN  
MICHAEL  
MONTGOMERY**

**AMERICAN MUSIC AWARD WINNER -  
FAVORITE NEW COUNTRY ARTIST**

**THE #1 ALBUM KICKIN' IT UP,  
FEATURING THE #1 SINGLE "I SWEAR"**

**THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PLATINUM DEBUT ALBUM  
LIFE'S A DANCE**

**PRODUCED BY SCOTT HENDRICKS  
FOR SCOTT HENDRICKS PRODUCTIONS**



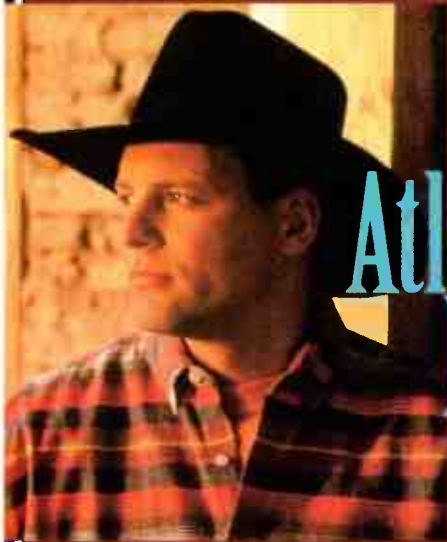
**CONFEDERATE  
RAILROAD**

**ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S  
BEST NEW GROUP**

**THE NEW ALBUM NOTORIOUS**

**THE FOLLOW-UP TO THEIR SELF-TITLED  
PLATINUM DEBUT ALBUM**

**PRODUCED BY SALLY BECKETT FOR BECKETT PRODUCTIONS**



Atlantic  
Nashville  
presents  
some of  
our  
new country

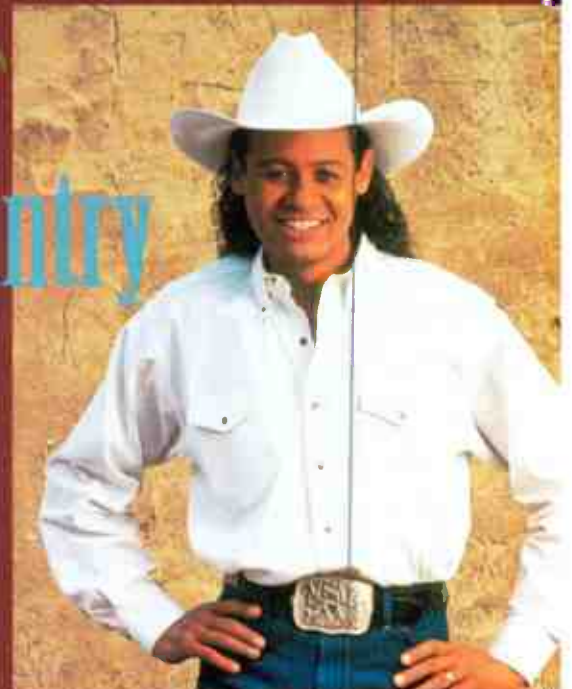
**TRACY  
LAWRENCE**

**BILLBOARD'S  
BEST NEW MALE ARTIST**

**HIS PLATINUM ALBUM ALIBIS**

**THE FOLLOW-UP TO HIS GOLD CERT. ALBUM  
STICKS AND STONES**

**PRODUCED BY JAMES BYRNE**



**NEAL MCCOY**

**THE NEW ALBUM  
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT**

**FEATURING THE TOP 5 SINGLE "NO DOUBT ABOUT IT"**

**PRODUCED BY SALLY BECKETT FOR BECKETT PRODUCTIONS**



THE ATLANTIC GROUP © 1994 ATLANTIC RECORDING CORP. A TIME WARNER COMPANY