

Buck Owens: Empire Building in Bakersfield

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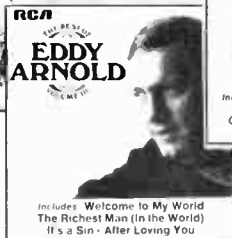
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Letters

Yes, Charley Pride is the very best since Hank Williams has been gone. I still vote him at the top, but Charley Pride is great.

We have a son, now six. Two years ago when we started getting all of Charley's tapes that we could lay our hands on, our little son would say, "I wish *Parlie Chide* would come and see us." We thought it was real cute—we still think he's the tops.

WENDA BRYANT
BUCKEYE, ARIZONA

The story on Charley Pride by you shows how good an editor you are. Seems like I actually know him now by your story. I got a big kick out of the way he likes the phone.

He's my favorite, by the way. I have a few of his records, but sure would love to win the 14 albums.

Will be glad if he ever gets to make an appearance around here.

Keep up your wonderful magazine.

P.S. How nice of our President to express his opinion. Johnny Cash is great!

MRS. WALTER STOREY
BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT

I would like to say you have an excellent magazine. The articles are interesting, well written, and not dragged out too long.

I travel 5,000 miles each month and at night being tired from driving I find the articles relaxing, educational, humorous, etc.

There are not very many magazines on the market today that have any truth in them. I hope this one always does.

H. B. KERR
PRINCE GEORGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Your fine December issue of COUNTRY MUSIC finally arrived on our Calgary newsstands. I was so anxious to read your article on our favorite Charley Pride. It was just the greatest story I've ever read on him.

Your other COUNTRY MUSIC stories were of course all very interesting

and it is by far the best country music magazine I've ever seen. I missed the very first issue and feel sorry I did. Is there a way of securing a back copy?

M. LUTZ
CALGARY, ALBERTA CANADA

Ed: See our announcement in the Classified Section of this issue.

I can't help wondering how you can coordinate such widely spread operations (New York, Illinois, Tennessee, and California) and still come up with such a fine production as COUNTRY MUSIC. Congratulations on your fine accomplishments!

Your November issue asks for suggestions from readers regarding programming on country music stations. I, for one, would like to hear more "western." If we're going to call it "country and western music," let's include a little of both. Also, I'd like to hear a bit more centered around the history and heritage of country music—like a half-hour series centered around members of the Country Music Hall of Fame.

The stigma of country music's being something one has to feel ashamed of liking, bothers me. I sincerely feel that it embodies a great wealth of commentaries on life and a great deal of worthwhile, down-to-earth wisdom, if we could just get more people to realize this and start listening . . . or perhaps it needs to be the other way around?

JAY TAYLOR
SCIENCE INSTRUCTOR,
WINGATE COLLEGE
WINGATE, NORTH CAROLINA

I am a disc jockey on KSTN-FM in Stockton, California. I have a three hour show every day of the week featuring country music (including country gospel on Sunday morning).

I'm just writing to say thanks for COUNTRY MUSIC. You have quite a magazine there, I must say! I've read a lot of country magazines and

material, and you have the most varied and in-depth articles on the subject imaginable. You take extra care, as only someone who really likes what they do will bother to do. You take extra steps to insure your readers a multi view of things and people. The Johnny Cash article is a good example.

DENNIS R. STUDER
KSTN-FM
STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA

I am 20 years old and a military policeman at Oakland Army Base, near San Francisco and Berkeley, where country music takes a back seat to rock, hard rock and country rock. This is frustrating because I hail from Texas, where I was weaned on the music of Hank Williams, Bob Wills, Ernest Tubb, and Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs.

And speaking of Flatt & Scruggs, I certainly enjoyed your interview with Lester. That prompts me to ask, when may we expect an article concerning the "undisputed virtuoso of the five-string banjo?" Therein I believe you have the basis for a most interesting story . . . Okay?

LARRY HARRIS
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Ed: You must have missed our October issue. Expect a complimentary copy post haste.

I am very impressed with your magazine because it's not all public relations material like most country publications. Before COUNTRY MUSIC I raved about "White Man's Blues" by John Grissim and "The Johnny Cash Story" by Hugh Cherry. The story on Charley Pride was excellent. I've never read or heard before about the problem of Charley Pride getting a contract because he's black. Insights like this should be given. More than the pictures and slick paper, I am impressed with the way you just tell it like it is. You're just—right on.

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A Letter from the Publisher

We have now published seven issues of COUNTRY MUSIC. During this time, mail has flooded in from our readers, offering all kinds of story suggestions. We hear from readers who suggest new music and non-music editorial ideas; we hear from radio stations who want to promote the magazine; we get mail from people who have been pleased to see the magazine on their local newsstand; and we receive suggestions about new products and records we should review.

As I have said before, we carefully consider all suggestions made to us. Some of you, we are sure, have already seen the results of your good ideas in our latest issues. If we have not yet heard from you with your thoughts and comments, we hope we will soon.

When we started this magazine, it was primarily our magazine based upon our instincts about what you would like to see and read in a country music magazine. Since then, however, the magazine has been shaped directly by feedback to us from our readers. We appreciate this input, and the more imaginative the ideas, the better.

JACK KILLION, PUBLISHER

About This Issue

Everybody now associates the name Bakersfield with Buck Owens. But Bakersfield and Buck didn't just happen overnight, and in our cover story this issue Jeff Young has cemented together all the ingredients—the characters and events—which led to the formation of the “country music capital of the West.”

Jeff Young was born in Sacramento, California and went to the University of Oregon for six years, before teaching for two years at the State University of New York. He did *not* develop an early interest in country music; like most of his peers he preferred to listen to rock 'n' roll. He had accumulated more than 1,000 rock records, and was beginning to realize that none of them really interested him, when RCA press officer, Grelun Landon sent him one album, *Singer Of Sad Songs* by Waylon Jennings.



Jeff Young

That did it. His collection of country records leaped from three to nearly 300 in the space of several months, and he has never looked back.

“I've written a lot about country music,” he says, “but I've one ambition unfulfilled. I'd like to visit Disneyland with George and Tammy and all their kids.”

The Buck Owens story is the story of a displaced “Okie” who fought his way to the very top of his profession. The Johnny Paycheck story, written by another California writer, John Morthland, is a tale about a man who fought an even more difficult battle—with himself.

And leading off our news section this time is a narrative that could have easily served as an exaggerated Hollywood movie script—except that the story of Johnny Rodriguez is true.

Peter McCabe

PETER MCCABE, EDITOR

COUNTRY MUSIC™

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Country News (The Johnny Rodriguez Homecoming)		15
Buck, Bakersfield And The Talent Boom: A Music Empire In The West.	JEFF YOUNG	24
<p>Buck Owens, the man who put Bakersfield on the map, has virtually redefined the country music sound. Jeff Young documents the entire story of the man who nearly singlehandedly changed the name Nashville to Bakersfield East. Young traces Buck's roots back to Sherman, Texas, examines the people and events that influenced him when he first came to Bakersfield, and takes note of the array of potential superstars who surround him today.</p>		
The Second Coming Of Johnny Paycheck	JOHN MORTHLAND	34
<p>In late 1968, Johnny Paycheck left Nashville for a self-imposed exile in Los Angeles. He spent nearly two and a half years in the gutter, at absolute rock bottom, until Billy Sherrill of Columbia Records in Nashville got to work and recorded Johnny singing "She's All I Got." It took only one appearance at the Nashville Disc Jockey Convention to break him wide open.</p>		
The Oaks: Mod Clothes, Shaggy Hair And Astounding Success.	JERRY BAILEY	40
<p>Before the Oak Ridge Boys arrived on the scene, most gospel fans assumed that their music had to be cast from one proven mold—four singers and a piano. The initial reaction to the Oaks from blue-blooded gospel lovers—one of resentment—was quite understandable. But not only have the Oaks survived, their progressive ideas have made them one of the most successful groups in gospel.</p>		
White Lightnin': Still The Biggest Thrill Of All	NICK TOSCHES	47
<p>The subject of illicit liquor has always loomed large among country songs, and it isn't surprising that a large number of country artists have their favorite moonshine story. In addition to a survey of moonshine in song, we offer a little practical advice—only we've confined our recipes to beer and wine—but suggest that you don't try and sell any.</p>		
Dickey Lee Didn't Need A Helping Hand From Elvis	GAIL BUCHALTER	52
<p>Dickey Lee is sometimes referred to as the world's oldest teenager, even though he is now in his thirties. He has fought off the image of a teenage rock 'n' roll idol, and made a smooth transition into country music. But he hasn't forgotten those early days in Memphis.</p>		
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IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF COUNTRY MUSIC, YOU CAN READ ABOUT:

The Astounding Success of Tammy Wynette . . .

Waylon Jennings' bright future . . .

How To Play Harmonica by Charlie McCoy.

Down Home and Around

by Dixie Hall

Eddy Arnold can still drive the fans wild ...
A standby recipe for unsuccessful fishermen from Burl
Ives ... and Shel Silverstein abandons his dungarees.

In springtime, as migratory birds begin their homeward journey, country music artists spread their wings and "flock" so to speak, to Wembley in London, England and the International Country Music Festival. Results of the British CMA Popularity Poll will be announced during the mammoth show, but unofficially we've heard that "Female Vocalist" this year goes to **Anne Murray**, "Album of the Year" to **Tom. T.**, and "Single of the Year" to **Faron Young** for "Four In The Morning."

Come to think of it, "The Singin' Sheriff" should have won the duet category with that record, 'cause he sho' nuff did enough singing for two people.

Eddy Arnold stopped all traffic in the lanes of Brentwood, Tennessee's main parking center the other day, as he abandoned his Cadillac to pet a Basset hound I was endeavoring to inconspicuously exercise on a patch of forbidden decorative gravel. "I just had to stop and pet her," Eddy boomed, realizing suddenly that he was holding up a busy lane.

As he headed back to his car, apologizing to the other drivers, a lady's voice screamed from a car: "It's him. It's Eddy Arnold. Ooh, now my knees have gone to shaking and I can't get the darn thing started!"

A group of motorists was obliged to push "the darn thing" into a side lane, where the avid fan could recover at her leisure.

Entering the Pedler, one of Music City's newer restaurants recently, I was delighted to run into **Burl Ives** and his wife, Dorothy. You might say doubly delighted because it's a known fact that "where Burl does dine, the food is fine." Most Music City fisherman are taking down their "poles" this month and heading for the lakes, so for the benefit

of the more unsuccessful (who mentioned Porter?) here is one of Burl's standby recipes:

- 1 lb. can of salmon, drained.
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- ½ can of water (not from the lake Bobby Bare)
- 1 tspn. dried crushed dill leaves
- 2 cups of cooked rice
- 4 tspns. lemon juice
- 1 cup of cooked green peas
- ½ cup sliced almonds
- 2 or 3 lemon slices
- paprika

Blend soup and water in a 1½ qt. lightly buttered baking dish. Add the remaining ingredients except almonds, paprika and lemon slices. Bake in a 350 degree preheated oven for 30 minutes. Stir in almonds and decorate with lemon

and paprika. This should feed four people. For starving songwriters all quantities should be doubled.

Roger Miller is back in the saddle again with "Hoppy's Gone." Good tune to include in his album could be "Pinto The Wonder Horse Is Dead."

According to trade publication, *Record World*, Dr. Hook's one hour special for Danish television has not yet been aired, but this is not because of a nude scene of the entire Medicine Show band and composer, **Shel Silverstein**. Wonder can this possibly be "our" Shel, writer of "Boy Named Sue" and "One's On The Way?" If so, maybe Shel is planning to go a step further at this year's BMI awards banquet. In the past he has turned up at the formal affair in dungarees.



Burl Ives

PHOTO: ERIC SKIPSEY



**Tammy Wynette
My Man**

including:
Good Lovin'
I'll Get It Right
Walk Softly On The Bridges
The Bridge Of Love
My Man

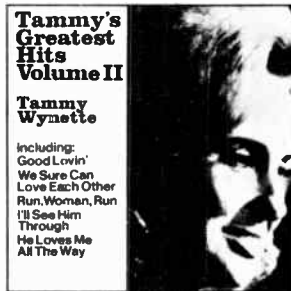
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Apartment #9
Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad
Almost Persuaded
Stand By Your Man

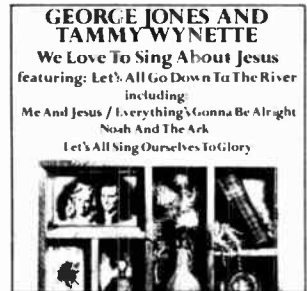
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We Sure Can Love Each Other
Run, Woman, Run
I'll See Him Through
He Loves Me All The Way

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including:
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Noah And The Ark
Let's All Sing Ourselves To Glory

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The Man Worth Lovin' / You / Second Handed Flowers
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Tomorrow Never Comes

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Someone To Give My Love To
Easy Lovin'
I'm Gonna Write A Song
Delta Dawn
Lonely Women Make Good Lovers

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The Best Of Charlie Rich

including:
A Woman Left Lonely / Big Boss Man / July 12, 1935
A Part Of Your Life / Take It On Home

KE 31933*



**THE BEST OF TOMMY CASH
Volume I**

including:
Six White Horses / You're Everything
That Certain One / I'm Gonna Write A Song / Listen

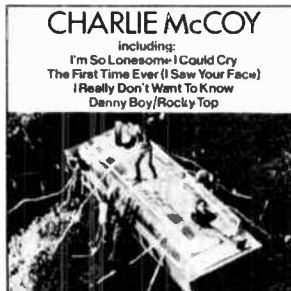
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**George Jones and Tammy Wynette
Me And The First Lady**

including:
The Ceremony
We Believe In Each Other / A Lovely Place To Cry
The Great Divide / To Live On Love

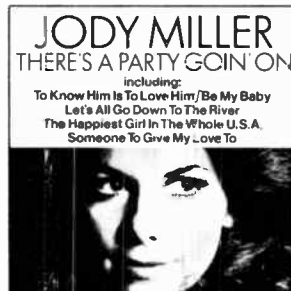
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CHARLIE MCCOY

including:
I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry
The First Time Ever (I Saw Your Face)
I Really Don't Want To Know
Danny Boy / Rocky Top

KZ 31910



**JODY MILLER
THERE'S A PARTY GOIN' ON**

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To Know Him Is To Love Him / Be My Baby
Let's All Go Down To The River
The Happiest Girl In The Whole U.S.A.
Someone To Give My Love To

KE 31706*



**JOHNNY PAYCHECK
SOMEBODY LOVES ME**

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IT TAKES
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SOMEBODY LOVES ME

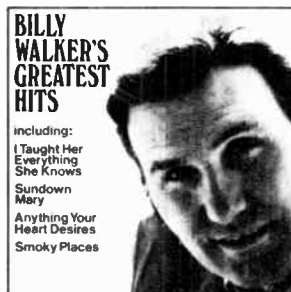
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**JEANNIE SEELY'S
Greatest Hits**

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Don't Touch Me
I'll Love You More
It's Only Love
Don't You Ever Get Tired

KZ 31911



**BILLY WALKER'S
GREATEST HITS**

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Sundown
Mary
Anything Your Heart Desires
Smoky Places

KZ 31912

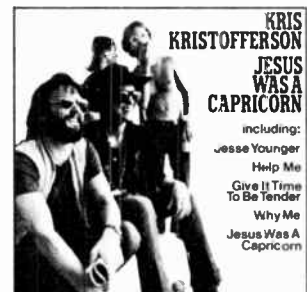


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People on the Scene

Glen Campbell and Anne Murray to tour Europe...
Alan Rich and his father, Charlie both make debuts...
and KBAM, WDVA and KAFF win top CMA awards.

Glen Campbell sets off on his first major concert tour of England and Europe on April 20, and appearing with him throughout the three-and-a-half week engagement will be Canada's "singing sweetheart" **Anne Murray**. Anne's popularity is currently running high in England, following the chart success of her two songs, "Snowbird" and "Destiny." Also on her overseas agenda is the MIDEM Festival in Cannes, France, an international gathering of music industry executives.

Shortly before Christmas, Anne made her first appearance at the Grand Ole Opry. She was introduced by Tex Ritter, and the crowd gave her a resounding ovation and called for an encore. The band was familiar with her song "Snowbird,"

but not with "Cotton Jenny." A Capitol Records' representative dashed across the street to the Music Mart store, where Sue Klein quickly came up with the disc, and the musicians learned it within a few minutes.

Alan Rich, 18 year-old son of the great **Charlie Rich**, made his recording debut with a session at Columbia studios in Nashville. The following night his father made a debut of his own... he appeared on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry. In 20 years of performing country music, he had never played there.

In its annual radio competition for promotion of Country Music Month, the Country Music Association awarded first place for most

outstanding local promotion to **KBAM** in Longview, Washington. Second place went to **WDVA**, Danville, Virginia, and third place to **KAFF**, Flagstaff, Arizona. The contest is judged on the basis of originality of promotions, involvement of listeners, and the station's total effort to promote October as Country Music Month. The presentations will take place during the CMA festivities in Nashville next October.

Arne Peterson, General Manager of KBAM, gave credit to his staff for winning the award. "We kind of made up our minds that this was the year we would win it," he said. "We'd had an Honorable Mention once before, but this time we went all out. We invited all our local bands to play on the air, and we

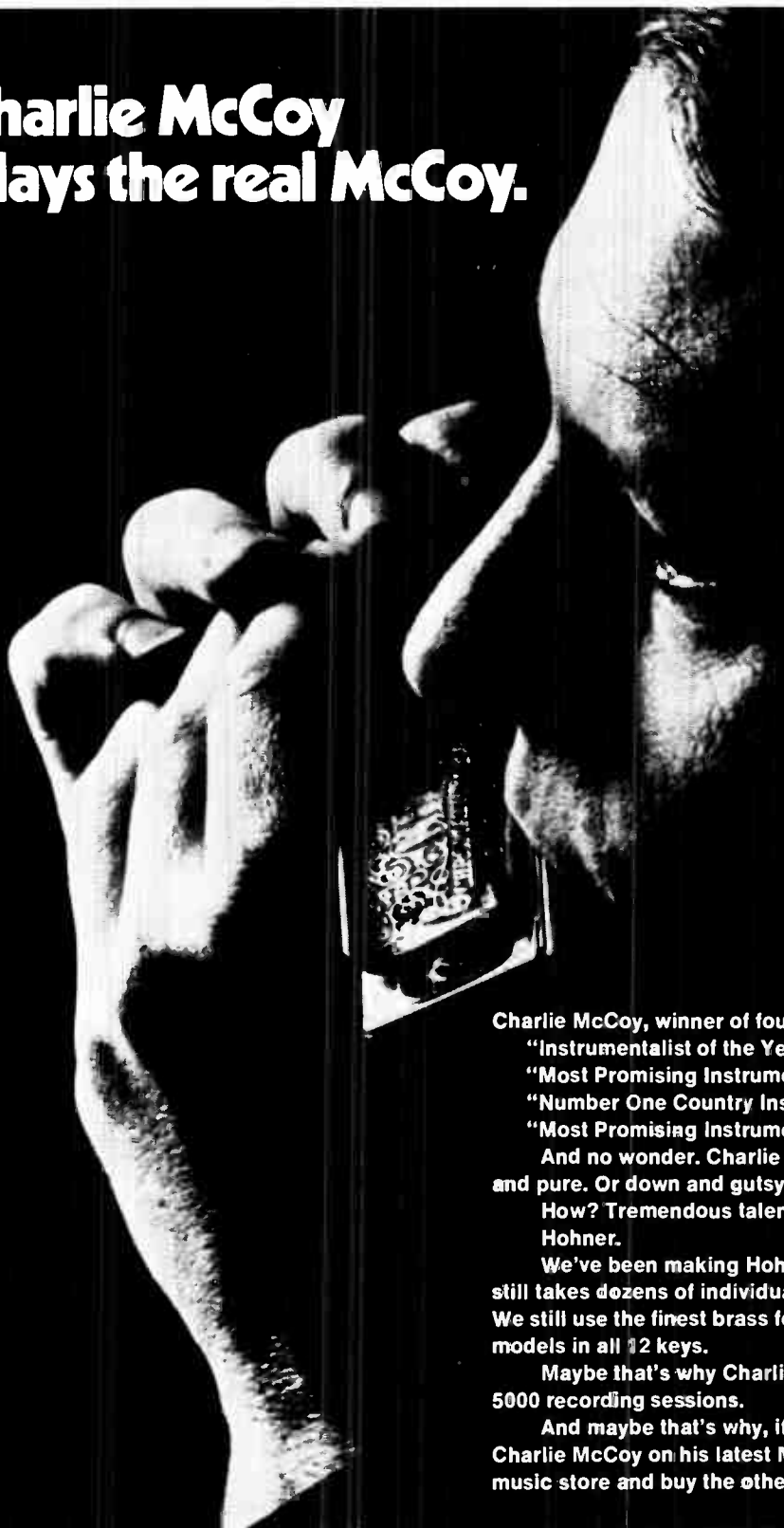


Glen Campbell



Anne Murray, Canada's Number One country gal singer.

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Charlie McCoy, winner of four coveted music awards.

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"Most Promising Instrumentalist of the Year"—Cash Box

"Number One Country Instrumentalist of the Year"—Billboard

"Most Promising Instrumentalist of the Year"—Record World

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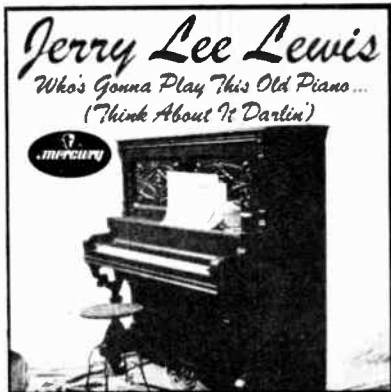
And maybe that's why, if you're into harps, you should listen to Charlie McCoy on his latest Monument album. Then go to your music store and buy the other real McCoy. Hohner.

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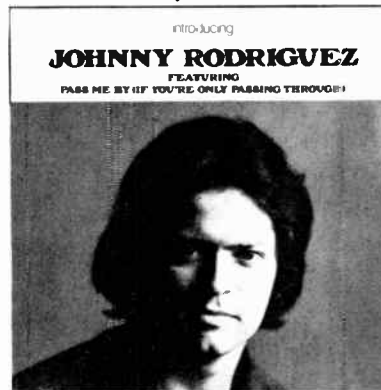
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KAFF's Miss Country Music Month, Rhonda Rhodes.

featured one a day throughout October." KBAM also distributed special "Country Music Month" bumper stickers to listeners, who in return for attaching the stickers on their cars, got a free car wash. Another successful promotion was a contest to see how many words could be constructed from the slo-

gan "Country Music Month." The winner was able to produce 986.

WDVA's General Manager, Eddie Allgood, purchased billboards and had his entire staff dress in Western attire. KAFF, meanwhile, ran an extremely successful "guess-the-mystery-sound" contest. It took a few weeks before the winning listeners figured out that the mystery sound was soap bubbles. KAFF's other major contest, a Miss Country Music Month competition, also took some figuring out. As station promotion manager Chuck Alsop and General Manager Guy Christian noted: "It was getting to be a tough decision by the time we got to the semi-finals."

An Excellent Merit Award went to WYRL in Melbourne, Florida for the station's all-out efforts. The FM station in Orlando was first place winner in 1971. This year, Honor-

able Mention was won by the following stations: KGAF, Gainesville, Texas; KGEM, Boise, Idaho; KJBC, Midland, Texas; KLAC, Los Angeles, California; KMAC, San Antonio, Texas; KMOO, Mineola, Texas, KNEI, Waukon, Iowa; KQIN, Seattle, Washington; KUSN, St. Joseph, Missouri; KVRE, Santa Rosa, California; KWPM, West Plains, Missouri; WAXX/WEAU-FM, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin; WCKI, Greer, South Carolina; WDXN, Clarksville, Tennessee; WESC, Greenville, South Carolina; WFWL, Camden, Tennessee; WKTE, King, North Carolina; WLKE, Waupun, Wisconsin; WLNO, London, Ohio; WRIC, Richlands, Virginia; WSVS, Crewe, Virginia; WVAP, Langley, South Carolina; WXCL, Peoria, Illinois and WZND-FM, Zeeland, Michigan.



Archie Campbell takes us behind the scene at "Hee Haw"



At this writin', we just finished a thirteen-week series of "Hee Haw" and I'm pooped. (Pooped is an old East Tennessee expression meaning "fagged out." Fagged out is an old Hollywood expression which I'd rather not discuss.) Three weeks on the set, laughin' at that bunch will wear you out. **Junior Samples** had a pretty rough time of it. Somebody left the cork out of his lunch and it spilled and ran all over the floor. Beauregard licked it up and that's the happiest that dog's been since the show started. Junior says whiskey improves with age, 'cause the older he gets, the better he likes it.

Roy Clark is an early riser, al-

ways up at the crack of noon, rarin' to go by two o'clock. If I had his talent, I'd sleep late, too. **Stringbean** is always on time even with that wounded leg. Maybe you hadn't heard? He fell off his billfold and broke his leg. String says he gets up in the morning and reads the obituaries. If his name ain't there, he goes fishin'. Speakin' of String and his fishin', one day his wife come a bustin' into the studio, grabbed him up by his breeches, and said, "String, you remember the trout you went fishin' for last weekend?" String was pretty shocked.

"Yeah, I do," he said.

Then his woman yells, "Well, one of 'em called you this morning."

While we were taping the shows, **Grandpa** invited us all out to his house for a corn bread and bean dinner. I never saw so many beans in my life. The next day we did a satire on "Gone With The Wind." **George Lindsey** was all over the place. That's the corniest cat I've ever seen. He makes Grandpa Jones sound like a New Yorker; but corny or not, two towns are in an

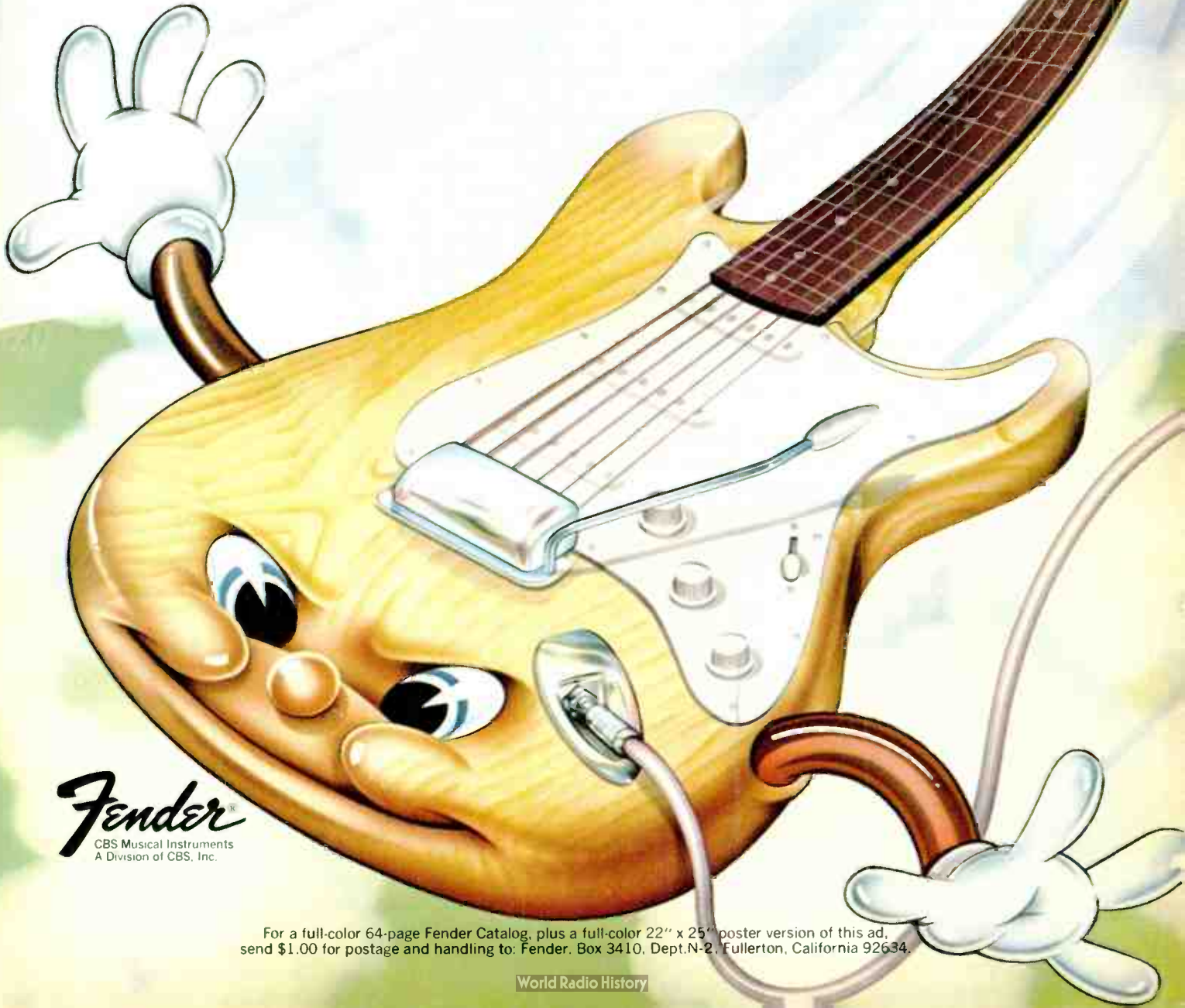
argument about where he's from. Hollywood and Jasper, Alabama. Hollywood says he's from Jasper, but Jasper says, no thank you.

Buck Owens got lonesome while he was here, and went and made another million. Nothing will cure the blues quicker than that long green. I know everybody loves to hear the **Hager twins** sing. They've got some mighty good harmony to listen to and they're a couple of the nicest guys you'll ever meet. The girls all did a good job; Lisa, Gunilla, Misty, Anne, Barbie, Mary Ann, Kathy. We're gonna have to stop those girls from wearing those low cut dresses. I look down on those things. Gunilla was sittin' on my lap one day and I made her get up. I wasn't as old as I thought I was.

Speakin' of gettin' old, I asked **Minnie Pearl** how old she was . . . darndest uppercut I've ever seen. Minnie said, "I'm too young for *Medicare* and too old for men to care." That Minnie Pearl, she's really a loyal woman. She's reached an age she likes and she's gonna stick to it.

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Country News

Not too long ago Johnny Rodriguez was in a Texas jail cell. The story of his career since then might have been rejected by Hollywood as far too fanciful.

Johnny Rodriguez Returns Home In Style

by Richard Harbert

The Sabinal, Texas streets were the same as usual, except for the hand-made posters up on store windows, telephone poles and trees. But the high school had opened that Thursday morning with the bright promise of a special mid-morning assembly. The students, unable to concentrate on lessons, clutched autograph booklets or polished 45 rpm records. Routine announcements were drowned out by classroom phonographs, and in the gymnasium the school band polished their brass horns and buttons.

Over in nearby Uvalde at the

Lions Club, preparations were being completed for a mid-day luncheon in honor of the young man who only three years earlier had sat in the County Jail across the street. Around the corner at Governor Briscoe's Uvalde Bank, streamers were being hung and Cokes were being put on ice for a late-afternoon autograph party. And at a little house on a dirt road skirting Sabinal, a strikingly handsome hometown hero was being fussed over by mother, sisters, brothers and friends. He was about to start a day that would not seem real, the kind of thing he thought only happened in movies was about to come true for him: "Welcome Home, Johnny Rodriguez."

The late Sixties were a trying, soul-searching time for John Raul Davis Rodriguez. His family was poor, and after graduating from high school he had little to look forward to. His older brother Andy had taught him to play guitar, and had urged him to pursue a musical career, but Johnny, wary of the frustrations of a struggling singer, preferred the life of a young drifter, and picked guitar only under shady trees or in small local cafes. His fine talents were discovered accidentally, in fact, through a chain of events that reads somewhat like a film script. Indeed, the sharpest team of promotion people would be hard put to come up with a more heartwarming tale.

Garner State Park, located near Concan, is a beautifully picturesque preserve nestled in the rolling Texas hill country. During the summer its grassy fields and peaceful woods offer escape, freedom and adventure to hundreds of young people, some of whom come for a weekend and stay for weeks. One warm June evening sitting around a campfire, 18-year-old John Rodriguez and a few buddies had guzzled plenty of beer when their stomachs began to hanker for a hearty meal. The boys, all experienced hunters, headed for the woods, but en route came across a frisky young goat that promised to be tasty. They rustled it, skinned it and hung it over the fire to roast. No sooner had Johnny torn himself off a juicy, barbecued leg than up drove Joaquin Jackson of the Texas Rangers. Arrested and jailed, Rodriguez's future looked mighty grim.

Ranger Jackson is a tall, lanky fellow with a friendly smile. He allowed Johnny to keep his nylon-stringed, plastic-bodied guitar in the cell to pass the hours away.





Ranger Jackson: he allowed Johnny to keep his nylon-stringed guitar in the cell.

And always looking to lend a helping hand to a directionless youngster, Joaquin was sufficiently impressed with Johnny's voice that he drove the boy 40 miles to Brackettville, Texas and introduced him to James T. "Happy" Shahan. Shahan owns Alamo Village, a popular tourist attraction originally built for the filming of John Wayne's "The Alamo."

"The first time I heard him, I knew he had it," Happy says nowadays. He immediately hired Johnny as a performer for his summer shows—wrangling horses, getting "shot" off stagecoaches and singing with the Alamo Village band. Johnny was in a choice position for discovery by Nashville, for many country celebrities visit the Shahan Ranch to perform, watch other performers and sometimes hunt deer.

So it came to pass that on Labor Day, 1971, Bobby Bare and Tom T. Hall heard Johnny Rodriguez for the first time, picking and singing on the Alamo Village stage. Both took note of his talent, and Tom T. suggested that Johnny come to Nashville at the end of the month and look him up. Rodriguez couldn't believe it, nor was he at all convinced he had what it would take to survive in Music City. He wasn't even sure he wanted the strenuous out-on-the-road life of an entertainer. He preferred the security of his summer job in Brackettville, and during his off months he worked at several differ-

ent jobs—picking cotton, loading oil drums on the Houston docks, wielding a hammer for his brother's construction company. Andy Rodriguez kept urging him to go to Nashville, but Johnny didn't feel ready to meet the challenge.

Then, in January of last year, Johnny's cancer-stricken father passed away in a San Antonio hospital. Life was already tough for the Rodriguez family, their cramped three-room shanty was in dubious repair with the worst of winter just ahead. Nor had tragedy finished with them. A week later brother Andy was killed in a car accident and Johnny's hankering to give Nashville a try suddenly snapped into full gear. With eight dollars and a plane ticket in his pocket he hugged his family goodbye. As he landed at Nashville Municipal Airport, little did he know that Tom T. Hall's secretary was calling all over Texas trying to track him down. Lead picker Pete Blue had left the Storytellers, and Johnny was to be offered the job.

Johnny Rodriguez had already bypassed the years of starvation and struggle which many pickers have endured, when one day, shortly after his arrival in Nashville, he and Tom T. were driving to the airport to pick up a late-arriving guitar. Tom T. decided to stop at



The Rodriguez family. Life had been pretty tough for them until Johnny left for Nashville.

the offices of Mercury Records, to let A&R man Roy Dea "have a listen" to his new front man.

"I remember walkin' in there kind of nervous," Johnny recalls, "and then Tom T. told me to start singing." As Tom T. remembers: "It took Roy about half a song to make his decision. When Johnny started singing a chorus in Spanish, Roy broke in and offered him a contract, right there on the spot."

Things have happened so fast since that day in Roy Dea's office that Johnny's still not sure how much of it he believes. After his first roadshow tour with Tom T. Hall and the Storytellers, he cut "Pass Me By" at Mercury studios. The record hit the charts like a point blank shotgun blast, and was soon number one not only in San Antonio, but also in San Bernardino, California, Houston and other areas. Johnny Rodriguez began to get a following of his own.

December 14, 1972 was proclaimed Johnny Rodriguez Day. It was a bleak drizzly Thursday, but the students in the Sabinal High School gym didn't care. When Johnny entered, the school marching band raced through two nervous numbers, and a deafening blend of shrill screams, applause and cattle calls ricocheted around the basketball court. Girls squirmed in their bleacher seats and boisterous boys playfully elbowed each other, but all eyes were nevertheless trained on the smiling young man of the hour.

It took ten minutes for faculty members to control the noise, and then Happy Shahan adjusted the microphone and properly introduced the Nashville guests, local dignitaries and members of the Rodriguez family on hand for the occasion. Shahan held the speech-making to a bare minimum, envisioning the likelihood of a Presley-like stampede. When he brought Johnny up to the microphone, the bleachers began to rumble and the din again exploded. They wanted his song, so he took the guitar offered by a grinning brother and self-consciously sang "Pass Me By," followed by "Jealous Heart." As his clear, pure voice went from English to Spanish and back again, dozens of hankies were raised to tear-shedding teenage faces.

Johnny talked for a few minutes



Johnny Rodriguez may try to be modest, but some of his fans seem to want more than a handshake or an autograph.



about his days at Sabinal High, his teachers and coaches, the people he grew up with and was now indebted to. He mentioned some familiar names, cracked a joke and reminded them that he was one of *them*, that this was his home and always would be. Johnny granted them a second "Pass Me By," before the autograph session. As the school principal frantically summoned reinforcements for the hallway, the guests seated behind Johnny braced themselves for the imminent deluge of adolescent human bodies. The teachers, however, had wisely given strict orders to the kids that they must remain in their seats until permission to step down was granted. In exchange for obedience, they'd promised everyone the chance to meet Johnny. So for nearly two hours, the Rodriguez seal of personal acquaintance was implanted upon booklets, records, arms and jacket linings.

Johnny seemed pensive during the 20-mile drive to Uvalde. Asked why, he confessed that "this is all pretty hard to believe." Too modest to admit it's true, he laughs off a back-seat crack about a "strange hypnotic power" that "mesmerizes every female who gets near him."

"I'm the exact same person I always was," he says. "These folks are just happy to see me again, but no happier than I am to see them." He flashed a wide grin as the horn of a pickup truck honked hello.

At the autograph party inside the bank later Johnny was literally buried under a flock of adoring girls, whose mothers patiently waited to have their own chance to squeeze him. An hour had passed and the bank wasn't getting any emptier, but Johnny had to leave. He needed some rest before the finale that was now only three hours away. The most important ceremony, the official homecoming celebration, was to take place on the campus of Southwest Texas Junior College at 8:00 p.m.

By 7:45, La Forge Hall was filled to the brim. Standing room was accepted until the legal limit was reached. At Johnny's request, the box office proceeds were to be donated to the Crippled Children's Hospital in Kerrville. Predictably, the show was a smashing success. Tom T. Hall walked out and began picking "The Year That Clayton Delaney Died," and an electric current shot through the audience. The crowd was waiting to be demolished with "Pass Me By." The following night, however, would offer



When Tom T. Hall suggested Johnny come to Nashville, Rodriguez was about to bypass many years of struggle.

a tougher test. Johnny was to front The Storytellers alone—without Tom T.—for the first time.

The two-hour drive to San Antonio Friday afternoon shook Johnny out of the previous day's pinch-me-so-I-know-I'm-awake frame of mind. It brought in its place frequent pangs of stage fright. He recalled his first appearance at the Grand Ole Opry.

"Tom T. came backstage and told me, 'Get a guitar, you're fixin' to sing.' I guess he didn't tell me before so I wouldn't get nervous, but I didn't know what to do. Guy Willis loaned me his guitar—I didn't know it was him 'til I saw his name on the strap—and I went out there and did 'I Can't Stop Loving You.' Well, they encored me. I just couldn't believe it. Nobody had ever even heard of me before."

Perhaps that pleasant memory came to mind because tonight would be equally unforgettable. Rodriguez knew the difference between a ten-minute, two-song shot and a four-hour headliner. The Farmer's Daughter, a bring-your-own-bottle club had sold out by mid-afternoon that day, and the manager couldn't remember the last time so many young people had bought tickets. They came not

to drink and dance, but to listen and watch. From the first song to the last, and even between sets, the hypnosis was in effect. What may become known as Rodriguezmania was born that night. As Johnny left the club and climbed into a waiting car, through the door poured a mass of girls in hot pursuit, with hopscotch the farthest thought from their minds.

Johnny Rodriguez may not yet have realized the power of his charisma. He refused to compare himself to potential superstars, insisting that he's "just a country picker and singer who got a lucky break." His modesty is sincere, but he'll have to get used to being accosted by fans not content with a handshake or an autograph.

"I don't mind," he laughed, "just as long as I make it out alive."

Registration Opens For This Year's Fan Fair

At approximately noon on June 6th this year, in the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, a fiddler will raise his bow and kick off the Second International Country Music Fan Fair, the event that promises to provide the very finest feast for the ears and eyes of all country music fans who make the journey to Nashville. A tentative schedule of events has already been set, and the Fan Fair Committee has announced that reservations for the five days of activities are now being accepted. To register for Fan Fair one should send \$20 per person to Fan Fair, Post Office Box 100, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.

The Country Music Fan Fair is sponsored by the Country Music Association and supported by all major record companies, leading artists and fan clubs. It aims to offer country music fans a "convention" of their own, and an opportunity to watch many leading artists perform and meet with them on an informal basis. Last year's Fan Fair, which was held in the Spring, drew fans from as far away as California and Maine.

Scheduled plans to date include:

- A bluegrass kick-off show at the Opry on Wednesday, June 6 from noon until 5:00 p.m.

- On Thursday and Friday, June 7 and 8, record companies will

sponsor shows featuring their artists.

- On Saturday morning, June 9, a special three-hour show will take place, and the Fan Fair Reunion Show will be held Saturday afternoon; with many of the traditional and pioneer artists of country music performing.

- Sunday afternoon and evening, the second Grand Masters Fiddlin' Contest and squaredancing will be held.

Included in this year's \$20 registration fee are tickets to the Country Music Hall Of Fame and Opryland USA (which fans may use during the Fan Fair week), as well as lunch on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. All events except the bluegrass concert and the Fiddlin' Contest will be held in the Municipal Auditorium.

Time has also been made available each of the days for Fan Fair registrants to visit the booths and country music exhibits in the lower level of the Auditorium. Persons interested in booking space for a booth should write to: Mr. Bill Hudson, Chairman of the Booth Committee, 905 Sixteenth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37212.

Assistance in obtaining hotel reservations and tickets to the Grand Ole Opry may be secured by so indicating when one submits a \$20 registration fee. Tickets to the Grand Ole Opry performances on Friday and Saturday, June 8 and 9, are being specially held for Fan Fair registrants, but the cost of these tickets is not included in the registration fee.

The International Fan Club Organization has announced that its annual banquet and show is to be held on Wednesday night, June 6, at the Sheraton Hotel in Nashville. Tickets to this event may be obtained by writing IFCO, P.O. Box 177, Wild Horse, Colorado 80862.

As the Country Music Association makes more details available, we will keep readers fully informed. This year's Fan Fair should be an even greater success than the first. More people will be able to attend because the Fair is taking place in the summer months, and more artists should be available than last year because the Fair will not be coinciding with the International Country Music Festival at Wembley, England.

**WEKG—Heartthrob
of The East
Kentucky Appalachians**
by John Filiatreau

JACKSON, Ky. — Jim Maggard is at the mike, gracing the airwaves with his biscuits-and-gravy voice, rich in the inflections and rhythms of the Appalachian ridges. His is the kind of voice you might hear spinning a story on a coon-hunt night when the campfire glows in a whisky jar and the blue-ticks yalp in the distance.

He's hosting one of those "flea market" shows, where listeners call in to buy or sell articles ranging from bicycle sprockets to butter churns. This particular caller wants to sell 17 bushels of Idaho potatoes.

Maggard goes nearly crazy. "Idaho potatoes!" he screams into the mike. "Idaho potatoes! Lady has 17 bushel baskets of Idaho potatoes for sale. Now, let's see, how does that go . . .?" And Maggard starts trying to remember his little poem. His frustration comes sizzling out of radio speakers all over Breathitt County and beyond. He can't remember. He's like the first-grader onstage at a PTA meeting, choking on the first line of "Trees" as his parents wait expectantly, nodding encouragement. Finally, he gets it, and blurts triumphantly:

"You can boil 'em, you can stew 'em,
You can fry 'em, you can bake 'em,
Idaho potatoes—
Any way you make 'em."

Now Maggard's intense satisfaction is oozing out of those same speakers. He chuckles, and continues casually with his impromptu Ode to the Idaho Potato.

"I've got an uncle, lives over here in the country . . . Now let's see, I reckon he's got 22 bushels of potatoes," he continues. "But they're not for sale . . . I wonder what in the world he's going to do with all them potatoes . . . I reckon he'll eat some of 'em, and use some of 'em for planting next year . . . I can remember we used to always have a big pile of potatoes . . . You can bury 'em, they'll keep forever, I guess . . . They might get a few sprouts on 'em, but that don't hurt a bit . . ."

And on and on, with the same kind of light and friendly conversation you can get any day down at the



Deejay Jim Maggard. He doesn't sound like Dan Rather. He'd rather sound like his listeners.

Breathitt County courthouse. Without urgency, without strain—the kind of conversation that's traded just so friends can feel the reassurance of a voice close by, and all of it delivered in that pleasant mountain dialect, the kind of style that would surely be discouraged by the broadcasting schools. Jim Maggard don't even *want* to sound like Dan Rather. He's no fool: he'd rather sound like his listeners.

He takes the advice of James M. Hay, the station's vice-president and general manager.

"You got contact, you got the ballgame won," Hay says. "You don't need to be college educated. You don't need to worry too much about such things as grammar. I tell all our boys, 'Don't try to be somebody else.' Because if they do, our listeners out there, they'll be looking down their noses at us."

This is WEKG, the heartthrob of the eastern Kentucky Appalachians, the biggest jewel in the crown of Intermountain Broadcasting Co.—the giant with a 215-foot tower, 1,000 watts of power, and good country music. The station, established by four area businessmen in 1969, broadcasts all day every day, satisfies its listeners and advertisers, and thrives in one of the nation's poorest counties.

Hay, the station's chief of operations, is a man who says he's "as afraid of a microphone as if it were a snake." But Hay has a background as a consulting radio engineer, and understands the business and technical aspects of his

work as well as anyone. And he has the intelligence to brag about what's significant: "Ralph Stanley comes from the same county that I come from—Dixon County, Virginia."

When Hay and three other investors set up WEKG four years ago, there was considerable doubt that they'd be able to make a go of it; but a small and hard-working staff got out and cultivated their market, and now—while the station is still in its infancy—its continued good health seems pretty well insured.

Part of the reason is that the station employees are very responsive to the desires of their audience.

"I like to think of country music as the working man's opera," Hay says. "You know what I mean? Opera is a tongue that I just don't understand. There are a lot of people who really love it, and I can understand that, but I don't share their enthusiasm. And country music is a language that our listeners can understand. It's the kind of music that they've always heard, always played. It's important to them."

Hay is helped in his important task by a staff of eight. Maggard is the sports director "and I think the news director too—I have to take that and tag it on somebody." Charles Lynch is program director; his mandate is "to go where the music is—to festivals, the Opry, wherever. Since he's taken over, he's become much more interested in country and bluegrass."

WEKG may hold some sort of record for the amount of air time it devotes to bluegrass—a kind of music

that often has trouble finding its way into the play schedules of country stations. They come by it honestly at WEKG. Jackson is also the home of Cager Farler, a bluegrass performer familiar to Renfro Valley fans. Farler runs a record shop in Jackson which offers as fine a selection of bluegrass discs as there is anywhere. He owns a restaurant with an A-1 jukebox. And he has a syndicated bluegrass show, "The Cager Farler Show," heard on several mountain stations. This past summer, Farler, also sponsored a bluegrass festival near Jackson, featuring performers like Jim and Jesse, Lester Flatt, Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley, and the McClain Family. Though the festival grounds were peppered with rain throughout the five days, the festival attracted more than 12,000 fans and proved a success worthy of repeating in 1973.

Hay leans back in his chair and dials Farler's number to ask how many of the United States were represented at the first Jackson festival. Farler doesn't know, but wants a plug. Seems he recently recorded a song titled, "There'll Be No Hippies In Heaven," and why not give it a little mention?

"I hope you don't mind," Hay says to me about the request for a plug. "I always try to help the local boys out. There's so much talent around here it'll make your head swim. For example, there's the Charles Brothers over at Prestonburg. They're about as good as anybody I've ever found in a record store. But they just can't get played.

"I push them as hard as I can on my station, because I am against a bunch of big boys in Nashville, New York, Los Angeles and those places telling me what I need. Sometimes I may lose revenue because of it, but I'll play the local groups, I'll do it every time. That's what I'm here for. What makes me mad is that you'll have some boys who really are good, who really have the talent, but no opportunity.

"I may be a little strange about all this. I may be all wet. But I believe certain people could make anything at all, put it on a record, get it out and sell it to the public."

It becomes clear that this point gets a stronger reaction from Hay, by nature a quiet man, than anything else one might discuss with him. It comes from living in these



Station manager, James Hay: "I like to think of country music as the working man's opera."



WEKG's 215-foot tower; 1,000 watts power.

mountains, where the front porches and barns are simply crawling with people who can make magic with a stringed instrument. Some of the musicians you stumble across are as young as 10, some as old as 90. And a surprising number are really professional in their performance and dedication to the music.

Hay has some dreams for WEKG. He'd like to expand his operation, provide nighttime service for his listeners. He'd like to sponsor a Saturday night program "something like the Renfro Valley show." He'd like to do a better job of news and sports coverage. He'd like to start a new discussion program, have listeners call in and say what they think about local issues. He'd like somehow to get better response from local officials and politicians, who are characteristically reticent. And he'd like to strengthen WEKG's signal by adding another 100-foot tower section.

Most of the changes can be made when the men at WEKG decide to make them, but some would require FCC approval (and the FCC has been reluctant to make changes in AM radio for several years, and probably will remain so for awhile.)

None of them are urgent anyhow. WEKG has a pretty good lock on the local market. "Most of the people in five or six counties listen to us," Hay says. "We have no competition to speak of. Selling has never been a problem in this area. And since we're pretty much right on the fringe of the bluegrass region, there's plenty of room for expansion."

Most of the music played on WEKG is either country or bluegrass. Now and then a smidgen of gospel is offered, but a nearby station plays gospel exclusively, so WEKG goes easy on it. Pop has recently been making its way into the schedules, largely as the result of some part-time DJs. "I don't tell them what to play, so they do pretty much what they want to," Hay says without apology. "Besides, we have quite a few young people around here and we can't ignore them either."

But the station's really strong point is that its on-the-air personnel communicate with their audience in a way that even Walter Cronkite cannot match. They offer their comments with a liberal serving of humor. They mispronounce every

fifth word in newscasts and don't apologize for it. Most of them grew up in Jackson or in a town very much like Jackson. And they like the music they play. The upshot of it all is that Southeastern Kentucky has a country-and-bluegrass station of excellence. And it's stations like WEKG that take on the lion's share of the task of keeping country music alive at its roots.

Vince Matthews Sings About Kingston Springs

by Gail Buchalter

Change does not come quickly to a Tennessee town with a population of 510, even when a city the size of Nashville spreads its tentacles or Interstate highways in the town's direction. In Kingston Springs, Tennessee a few weeks ago, only deeply rutted tire marks, the result of rain for about 45 of the last 60 days, gave any clue that this town had moved into the 20th century. Most of the townspeople were born and raised there, and in brief flashbacks they will tell you how their grandfathers helped to settle the land.

One newcomer to the town, however, brought with him a vision of what "progress" could accomplish and what "tradition" meant. Songwriter Vince Matthews and his wife, Melva, settled in Kingston Springs six years ago and for the first time in his life Vince Matthews found a home. Despite his long hair, and his unsettled frame of mind,

the town accepted him. Vince had been running away from home since the age of 14, and made his final departure by the time he was 18. Kingston Springs represented a way of life he had been searching for, but had not found along the streets of cities like Chicago, where he spent many a night sleeping under the stars, a situation far from romantic, for it was winter in the Windy City.

Vince, in his turn, has been good to the town. With the help of his friend and co-writer, Jim Casey, he has spent four years creating the "Kingston Springs Suite," an audio-visual presentation of life in a small town, a way of life that may be rapidly dying, but not without a song from Vince.

The "Suite" is 25 minutes of non-stop music which portrays the townsfolk in song—Mr. Sam, the railroad man, who spent 50 years caring for the great steel horses that helped settle the land; Mr. Newsom, the blacksmith who has grown old with the town; there is also a warning to the young that city life can be, in reality, a flashing, glittering cage.

The first run-through of the "Kingston Springs Suite" was held the week before Christmas in the gymnasium of the local grammar school, which for some reason didn't smell of sweat socks and past basketball games. Folding aluminum chairs placed in a semi-circle reached back to the wooden benches lining one of the walls. In the first row, seated well off to the



Vince Matthews. Despite his long hair and unsettled frame of mind, he found a home in Kingston Springs.

PHOTO: YVONNE HANNEMANN



side, were Johnny and June Carter Cash, accompanied by John Carter Cash and other members of their family. But even *they* blended into the background of coal oil lamps, while the Kingston Cardinals, a chorus of the town's daughters, came to the forefront. For as Johnny Cash said, "This time I came to be entertained."

The "Kingston Springs Suite" evolved from one song that Vince had written called "Melva's Wine." I have had the good fortune to dip into Melva's brew, and hear the song that Vince wrote commemorating this beverage. Both are poignant and to the point. The wine comes from an old recipe copied down by the father of Mrs. Nana Oakley, proprietor of the local grocery store and landlady to Vince and Melva.

"Melva's Wine" was recorded by Johnny Cash, and it was Cash who brought Kris Kristofferson and also Vince Matthews to their first Newport Folk Festival. A reporter who was doing a story on Cash heard the song and suggested Vince do a series of songs about the town. It is hardly surprising that Vince identifies closely with the people of Kingston Springs. Brought into the world by an Indian mid-wife, in a lean-to shack 90 miles outside of Nashville, Vince recalls his mother taking in washing and ironing, while his father cut railroad ties and found solace in playing the banjo.

"I think the people here don't know what they've got and won't know it until they lose it," Vince remarked. "Philosophically I'm in a league with Mr. Billy Beard, who owns the Springs themselves. He said, 'As long as I live, Kingston

Springs will remain a small country town.'"

For Vince, the first presentation of the show was more than just a musical triumph. The acceptance that the people showed him that night was in stark contrast to the events in a similar town where he didn't fare so well.

"It was a very religious town and I had publicly announced that I didn't believe in God. That statement brought the wrath of the town down on me. At that time I wasn't able to separate the difference between God and religion. Now I know what I was really saying was I didn't believe in organized religion, and still don't, but I believe deeply in God."

Johnny Cash, who identifies with Vince strongly enough to call him

"brother," returned to Vince and Melva's home after the show along with many of the townspeople. There was a huge pot of chili on the stove with a more than ample ratio of meat to beans, pots of coffee and homemade cakes. Someone thrust a guitar into Cash's hands and he obliged the folks with "I Still Miss Someone," and then returned to his bowl of chili. Standing in the corner of the kitchen, surrounded by Melva's jars of preserves, Cash said he regretted that he hadn't helped Vince Matthews even more during the five years he's known him. "I see a lot of things in Vince that I know in myself," he noted.

Cash isn't a man to live with his regrets. He has offered his help, his studio and his staff to bring Kingston Springs to the entire nation.



Vince with Jim Casey co-writer of the "Kingston Springs Suite."



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Buck, Bakersfield, And The Talent Boom: A Music Empire In The West

by Jeff Young

In Oildale things were cooking at 1215 North Chester Avenue all week long. Oildale, the growing north bank suburb across the Kern River from Bakersfield proper, is the site of the once elegant 1930's movie house which used to feature Ken Maynard and Hoot Gibson thrillers on Saturday afternoons, but now, remodeled and modernized, is the home of Buck Owens Enterprises. Inside it looked like any Credit Bureau office.

It was pressure cooking in those inner offices to be more exact. The 2nd Annual Buck Owens Pro-Celebrity Invitational Golf Tournament was coming up *that* weekend, and everyone was madly attending to the last minute details, from Buck, himself, to the glamour girls in the outer office. Everybody was up to their smiling teeth in details. Nothing was slipping by anybody, because this tournament is dear to Buck's heart. Two years ago, he lost his younger brother, Mel, to cancer, and it was out of a personal sense of futility that he put together the Buck Owens Health and Research Organization. The Buck Owens Golf Tournament was to aid in the funding of the project. Everyone in the Buck Owens business family was working overtime and on their own time.

Bob Beam, young and modishly inclined publicity director, leaned back in his spring chair inside his crowded walnut paneled cubicle and thumbed through the growing celebrity list, making additions and can-



cellations each time the phone rang. "Clint Eastwood was here last year," he said, looking quickly up and grinning, "but he's in Mexico on location and can't make it. Mickey Mantle is back this year. He drives

. . . Buck is the man who nearly singlehandedly changed the name Nashville to Bakersfield East . . .

the ball a mile. Efreem Zimbalist, Jr. Peter Marshall from the 'Hollywood Squares.' The Dodger pitcher, Don Sutton. Evel Knievel. Johnny Bench. Archie Campbell. Charley Pride. Lots more. We had some professional golfers last year, but Bakersfield isn't a big golf town. So this year it's just celebrities. That's who the people want to see. People they really know. And, of course, Buck will be there."

What sort of a tournament would

it be without ol' Buck? Or what would Bakersfield itself be without Buck? As the press releases say, Buck is "the man who put Bakersfield on the map; the man who wrote and sang songs for the people, all the people; who redefined the country music sound; who nearly singlehandedly changed the name Nashville to Bakersfield East; the man who built an empire for himself, an empire carved from cool, clean country music."

Before Buck, Bakersfield was known to its Los Angeles neighbors as a scorching hot town full of air-conditioned adobe motels where the Los Angeles Rams games could be seen on TV when they were blacked out at home. To this day, some of Los Angeles' finest fans can be found on certain Sundays holed up in the stuccoed opulence of the Bakersfield Inn, glued wide-eyed to the bolted down TVs. To all others, "pre-Buck Bakersfield" meant only a stop at a shady Orange Julius stand on a boring trip north or south. That, however, isn't the whole Bakersfield story, Buck not withstanding.

The flat semi-arid Central Valley town is the symbolic center of Kern County, whose riches are extracted from an almost perfect rectangle, 67 miles north to south and 120 miles east to west. The 1970 agricultural crop topped \$345 million, third largest in the nation, and its 20,000 oil and gas wells, its mines and its mineral products brought in \$462 million, one quarter of California's entire mineral production. Bak-

ersfield, itself, contains almost half of the county's population of 400,000, and with all the wealth the

**. . . To many people,
pre-Buck Bakersfield
meant only
a stop at a shady
Orange Julius stand . . .**

land has supplied, the town is slowly moving into the 20th century, while still retaining the small valley town sense about it.

There is a drug problem in the high schools as in all growing cities. Downtown is said to be dying. But the people have a basic faith in themselves, a Protestant self-reliance. They've come too far for a little brow-lining bafflement and certain troubling visitations from modern suburban spectres to keep them down. They have spirit and dedication.

And they've got their music, and *their* music is *country* music. There are "good" and "refined" citizens of Bakersfield who consider country music an embarrassment, but for the tough oil workers and field workers and sassy blonde bubble-headed secretaries and truck drivers—and especially for those who dance nightly at Tex's Barrel House, or the Blackboard, or Trout's or the other country music bars—it's the music of their lifeblood.

For more than 25 years, Bakersfield's own brand of country music had been growing in the Bakersfield soil since the Okies and other busted and homeless citizens from the dust bowls of Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas arrived in California to seek their fortunes or mere employment. Along with the blankets, pots, pans, chairs and tables strapped to their broken down trucks, the hardworking people also brought banjos, fiddles, guitars and songs . . . and their love for music. Bob Wills with his Texas Playboys was the biggest thing around in Bakersfield in the late thirties, and Bakersfield soon became one of his regular West Coast stops. He'd play at Beardsley Garden out on the Edison Highway, southeast of town and the toughest place around. In the early days of the big dance halls, whole families would truck on in from the surrounding agricultural communities such as Arvin, Lamont, Weedpatch, Pumpkin Center, and make a night

of it doing the western swing. The Rhythm Rancho was another ballroom on South Union that attracted big name bands.

With the ballrooms came the early music clubs, the Clover Spot and the Lucky Spot also out on the Edison Highway, and, in town, the Blackboard. Not only did the Hank Williamses, Spade Cooleys, and Pee Wee Kings all begin to stop by regularly, but Bakersfield's own musicians found steady work, and

hair. It's difficult to tell just how old he is. "They were both naturals." Today, Bill works with Merle's band, the Strangers. He recently reinjured his back and was in traction at St. Mercy Hospital in downtown Bakersfield, but he was more than willing to delve into his past and that of the town. He was originally a boilermaker before he seriously got into the club and music scene in the forties, and put his first band together. He also had the first



Evel Knievel: a regular at many invitational golf tournaments.

local bands began to pop up. The Tex Marshall Band; the Tex Butler Band; Odel Johnson's Band; and the most memorable of the local bands, the Billy Woods Band.

Billy Woods is a musical landmark in Bakersfield. He's been there since the early days and it is Bill Woods who discovered not only Buck, but Merle Haggard, among others. "Discovered," however, isn't his word.

"Let's just say they both started with my band," Bill said. He's a big, soft, kindly man with slicked, black

local country music show on the radio.

"The first country music radio in Bakersfield was in 1946 on KGEE. It was a 15-minute Bob Wills Show. They just played his records. Then a little after that I got my own live noontime show on the same station, 'Bill Woods and the Orange Blossom Show.' That just about made my band the most popular around because more people heard it."

Soon after, KBIS went all country and Bill Woods became one of the first disc jockeys, along with Lewis

Talley, and Terry Preston, (now known as Ferlin Husky) another Bakersfield immigrant. When TV first hit Bakersfield in the early 50's, country music was right in there on the local channels. The most influential of all the local television personalities was the Bakersfield country daddy, Cousin Herb Hensen. It was Cousin Herb, a folksy oldtimer, who gathered the town's finest musicians around him and called them the Trading Post Gang. Many were from Bill's band, including Bill himself, Fuzzy Owen (now Merle Haggard's manager), Roy Nichols, Bonnie Owens, Johnny Cuviello, and the Farmer Boys. The Trading Post Gang became Bakersfield's favorite group, and whenever they would play in places such as Oakwood Park just south of Fresno, 10 to 15 thousand foot-stomping people would come out of the woodwork with fried chicken and potato salad and beer and make a Sunday picnic out of it. The most popular of all the Trading Post Gang was a young guitarist newly arrived from Arizona by the name of Buck Owens.

“ . . . You could tell even back then that Buck was going to be big. He just had it . . . ”

“The folks really knew how to have fun then. Swimming, eating, dancing,” Bill remembers. “Most of all they loved the music. And Buck Owens. You could tell even back then that Buck was going to be big. He just had it.”

It is out of this tradition that Buck emerged. Like so many others, Alvis Edgar Owens, Jr. (“Buck” from quite early) was an immigrant from America's heartland. Sherman, Texas in the early 30's, was a hot dusty town up near the Oklahoma border, and Buck's father was a hard-working sharecropper when Buck was born in 1929. The family's small framed house had only dirt floors and no electricity. It was not an easy life, but not an untypical one for workers in the area.

Buck was an early worker, and through the eighth grade, he tramped into the fields of cotton and maize, both before the school bell rang in the morning and after it rang in the late afternoon, to help out with the grocery bills at home. He grew up big and strong early, and the summer following the eighth



PHOTO: ALAN WHITMAN

Susan Raye with her husband, Buckaroo drummer, Jerry Wiggins.

Susan Raye was discovered by Buck and Jack McFadden in Portland, Oregon when she was a teenager singing on a local TV show, “Hoedown.” She is now an installed resident of Bakersfield, a permanent member of the All American Show, and a star of growing stature in her own right.

“I went to the club I often sing at,” Susan recalls with her radiant and now famous Susan Raye smile, “to see Buck play when he was in Portland. I was introduced to somebody called Jack McFadden. I didn't know who he was, but apparently someone had told him about me. We sat and talked for awhile, and then, when Buck went on stage, Jack asked if I wanted to go up and do a couple of duets with Buck. *That's* when I found out who Jack was. Well, I was nervous to say the least but I went up on that stage and sang some songs with Buck, and both Jack and Buck liked the way I sounded. That was the beginning.”

It was almost two years later before Susan signed and actually got into the Buck Owens act. Buck and Jack bided their time until they felt she was ready for the big time.

“I was young and inexperienced when I first met them, and I honestly think that they both felt I wasn't ready to make a real serious go of it. Buck told me later he didn't want to ruin my life by getting me into the pressure of travel and all the things that go with the hard work of trying to make it before I was ready. So I worked around Portland, a few

dates in Las Vegas, and grew up both professionally and personally. Jack kept in constant touch with me the whole time, but didn't put me under any pressure. Then one day, they asked me to come visit them in Bakersfield.”

When Susan arrived, she sat and talked with Jack and Buck and the two men decided that she was ready to join the Owens gang officially and begin touring and recording. They also suggested she move to Bakersfield.

“I talked it over with my mother for about ten minutes,” Susan laughs, “and we both figured *why not?* If I was going to be singing, I might as well be with the best. So I went home to Portland, packed up my belongings, and drove back to Bakersfield.”

Susan's first single “Maybe If I Close My Eyes” was released in September, 1969 under the management and guidance of Buck.

“I probably could have started out by doing a duet with Buck, but he decided he wanted me to make it alone. Still, he picks all my material, does all the producing, makes all the decisions. And I'm grateful, because he knows a whole lot more about the business than I do.”

Her trust has been well-founded because she has had hit after hit, including “L.A. International Airport,” “Pitty Pitty Patter,” “Wheel of Fortune,” and, of course, the duets that she now does with Buck that have made them one of the newest and hottest duos in country music today.

grade, he worked fulltime “doing a man’s work for a man’s pay,” as he is fond of saying.

It was also that year that the Owens family picked up what was left of its windblown stake and drove an old car to Tempe, Arizona, looking for a better life in more fruitful fields. Buck started Mesa Union High that fall, but quit after six weeks and went back to work as a truckdriver, a ditch digger, a hay baler, a fruit swamper, anything that had to be done and that he could do. The war was on, and for a strapping towheaded young man too young for the Army and World War II, jobs were plentiful. He lived with his folks until he was seventeen, the year he married his first wife, Bonnie Owens.

“I don’t know why I got married,” Buck recalled. “I just wanted to I guess. Why does anybody get married?” He was married just long enough to have two sons, Buddy and Mike.

Music had entered his life quite early. His mother played piano in church for as long as he can remember, and he was hauled off to sing each Sunday. Soon after the family moved to Tempe, his father went out one afternoon and purchased a rickety old piano that he set up in the family parlor. That’s when Buck learned to play. They also got an old radio, and Buck, for the first time, heard country music on the airwaves early in the morning and late at night after the work was done, music pulled in from the powerful Mexican stations and the one in Coolidge. Buck’s early favorite was Bob Wills, along with Red Foley and Roy Acuff. The radio in the house also filled another function. Buck had purchased a battered old electric guitar when he was fifteen, and his father soldered a jack into the back so that Buck could practice with amplification. It wasn’t much but it was enough, and Buck practiced. By the age of sixteen, he was performing in the honky-tonks.

His first booking was in Eloy, Arizona, the toughest town he had ever seen. He stood on a stubby wooden platform barely six inches off the beer and blood stained floor and witnessed his first really hairy barroom brawl, a roaring fight that saw beer bottles by the dozen bouncing off heads and walls. Buck’s eyes opened to the size of bright silver dollars and he continued to play for

more than a minute. But things kept getting worse and as the bottles flew closer to his own head, he put down his guitar and tried to sneak off. The owner spotted him and ran after him hollering, “Keep playing. Keep playing. You can’t quit.”

“ . . . I first hired Buck as a guitar player,” Bill Woods said. “That’s what he was selling himself as . . .”

Even the joints, however, were few and far between in Arizona, so in 1951 at age 21, Buck packed up his family in another old car and headed out on Route 66 for Bakersfield. He had kin there, and he had heard there were places to play his music. In Bakersfield he found a home and neighbors that were his kind.

“I first hired Buck as a guitar player,” Bill Woods said. “That was around ’53. That’s what he was selling himself as. A guitar player. He played a few casual nights with my band when I was at the Blackboard on Chester. It was a rough and tumble place back then. Drinkin’ & Fightin’ clubs had taken the action away from the ballrooms by then. Hell, there were no admission prices at the clubs, and you could get drunk and dance and whoop it up until you were crazy. It got pretty mean sometimes. A fight-and-lick-your-wounds type club. But the music was damn good.

“By then the trend was toward small bands. That’s pretty much how it was when Buck was with me. I had a small band and a singer by the name of Billy Mize. Now, Billy left me one night on short notice, went to Los Angeles to make it *big* on his own, and I told Buck that he was going to have to sing, and he threw a fit. He hated to sing because people *stared* at him, and all he wanted to do was play guitar. But I made him sing. And he did, but *only until Billy gets back* he always said. But Billy never came back, and Buck would walk off madder than a wet hen each night. But the crowd loved him. *More Buck*. Always *more Buck*. That’s when I knew he was going to be a big star. He had the talent, the drive, everything.”

While Buck was working Bakersfield by night, he was also traveling to Hollywood by day to play sessions at the famed Capitol Towers for a multitude of Capitol recording

Buddy Alan: Stepping Out of His Father’s Footsteps

The spitting image of his old man? Well, not quite, but there’s no mistaking that Buddy Alan Owens is Buck’s son. He’s as tall (taller in fact), as rangy, and has that easy smile that lights up his eyes. Buck and Buddy both smile with their eyes.

Buddy was born in Tempe, Arizona in 1947 and moved to Bakersfield when he was three. As a youngster he was indifferent, if not turned off, by the country twang. Like most kids his age, he grew up listening to rock ‘n’ roll, and even at that, music was “no big deal” with him, although he put together a rock band in high school and played local dances.

“I liked the Beach Boys and the Beatles, but the whole band thing was really loose. I liked music, sure, but I had no ambitions in it. It was mostly just fun, an ego thing. Girls liked guys that played in bands, you know?”

After high school, the band broke up. Some were drafted. Others went to college. Buddy went to the local Junior College for three years, and during that time worked at Owens Enterprises-owned KUZZ as a disc jockey. It was that maximum exposure to country music that first turned his head, especially the music of Waylon Jennings. Buddy was coming around.

The following year, Buddy went to Phoenix to continue his education. He also continued his disc jockey work and picked up a job on a 50,000 watt station. He came home from school for a Christmas vacation and arrived just in time for the Toys For Tots Benefit Show that Buck puts on every year before a jam-packed audience in Bakersfield (admission is one new toy). Buddy asked his father if he could sing a couple of songs in the show.

“It was weird,” Buddy laughed thinking back, “because I’d never sung before so many people before, much less real country music, or in front of my Mom and my Dad. I was scared to death, but once I got out



there, it was okay. I sang my two songs, but they kept on applauding, and I had to sing another. Except I didn't know another. The Buckaroos were playing behind me and Don Rich had to whisper the words to me as we went."

Buck asked Buddy to go on tour with him the following summer.

"Twenty five dollars a day plus expenses. I did that for two years. It was great experience."

And since that time, things have continued to roll. He signed with Capitol in '69 and his first release, a duet with Buck called "Let The World Keep On Turning," hit number one on the charts. He records with the Buckaroos, and plays guitar on almost all the sessions that they play in Hollywood or Bakersfield. He's also doing lots of writing these days, and has written songs for Tony Booth and Susan Raye, among others.

When asked the most obvious question, *What's it like trying to make a name for yourself when you're the son of Buck Owens?*, Buddy just smiles.

"It's got its good points and its bad points. I'll admit that it's made my acceptance a whole lot easier, but with the acceptance goes a certain attitude by lots of people. They expect a certain something from you, and when I get up on stage, some people are disappointed when I'm not an exact duplicate of my father, musically or otherwise. That's why I use the name Buddy Alan, obviously. Someday, though, when I get it all together, I may change my name back to Buddy Owens. If I'm lucky."

stars, including Tennessee Ernie Ford, Tommy Sands, Stan Freberg, Kay Starr, Sonny James, Gene Vincent, and Tommy Collins. He got his session break when he toured with Tommy as a lead guitarist. It was an easy step into session work after that. By this time, he knew he wanted to get into the country music business as more than a session man, and it looked as if the best way was as a songwriter. He had knocked on doors to try to make records himself, but people always asked, "Got any songs?" They said they had plenty of singers, but they needed material. Buck began writing, and people began to take an interest in him.

After a minor contract with Pep Records ("The guy sold over a thousand of my records out of the back of his car."), Buck finally hooked up with the people that knew him best in the business. Ken Nelson, the famed country producer at Capitol Records, signed Buck in 1956.

His career didn't exactly break immediately. In fact, it was three years before Buck scored his first hit, "Under Your Spell Again," but from there, Buck Owens reached the top of the country music field with his recording of "Act Naturally," a record that turned country music's musical head.

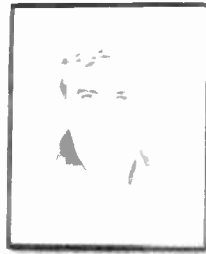
"I'd always been criticized," Buck says, "because I used too many drums on my records, but when this one broke, it changed a lot of people's minds. I think I always felt more beat than the country music

people who grew up in the East. I mean, I was influenced by all the greats, but I never played the schools and the churches and those type of affairs where people sit down. From Arizona to Bakersfield, I played dances in VFW halls and ballrooms and clubs, and those people wanted rhythm. They wanted to dance. I was also influenced by a lot of early rock and rollers: Chuck Berry, Carl Perkins, Fats Domino, Elvis, Eddie Cochran. Eddie Cochran, in fact, used to come into the Blackboard when he came through town, and I even played a couple of dates with Gene Vincent. I used to do a lot of rock at the Blackboard, anyway, so the rhythm

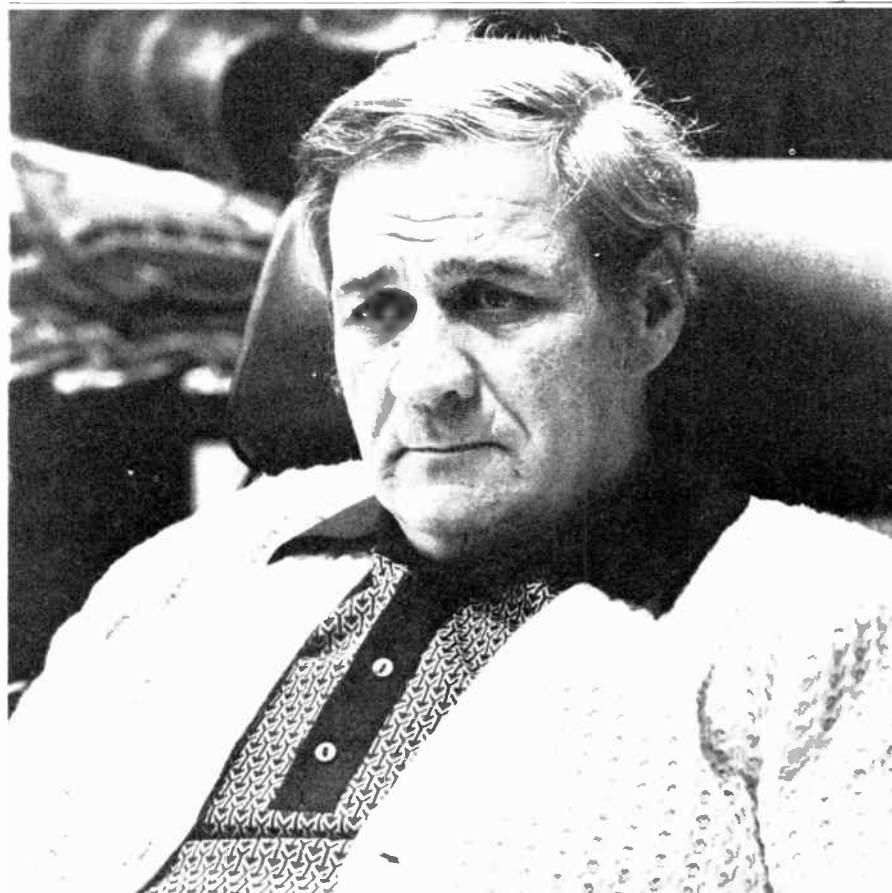
“. . . I think I always felt more beat than the country music people who grew up in the East . . .”



The Bakersfield studio, elegant by any standards, including a full-sized Moog synthesizer.



Jack McFadden: not only Buck's manager, but also one of his biggest fans.



came natural to me. I felt it."

Just as "Act Naturally" was beginning to climb the national charts, Buck received a phone call in Bakersfield one day that was to change not only his life, but the life of the caller.

Jack McFadden in 1963 was a longtime-aspiring West Coast promoter who lived on the periphery of the big time. Today he is a distinguished down home and greying man who commands attention. He smiles easily, can talk business a mile a minute, and is always ready. His career in the entertainment industry began as an eager ticket taker at a small theater in Sikeston, Missouri when he was only twelve. The owner had several theaters throughout Missouri, Tennessee and Arkansas, and he would periodically visit the theater where Jack worked. The owner took a liking to the boy and on one occasion took him to a corner grill near the theater, bought him a hot dog and Coke and asked him what he wanted to be. It took Jack fewer than five seconds to answer. He wanted to be in show business. Not as an actor or performer, but still in show business.

“. . . I knew Buck was like I was,” said Jack McFadden. “He was hungry, not only for money, but to get things done . . .”

By the time Jack McFadden was twenty, he was managing movie theaters and radio stations in San Francisco. Later in Stockton, California, he managed an appliance store, an auto dealership, and more radio stations. It was in 1954 that Jack first met Buck Owens.

"I'd been around Buck, and had seen what he had done in the years since I had first met him at the Blackboard. He was an aggressive and hardworking man. I called him that afternoon in '63 just to say 'hello', but as we talked that afternoon, the subject of me handling Buck exclusively came up. We agreed to meet that afternoon to talk about it in more detail. That's how it all began. I knew a manager can only do what an artist will let him do, and after talking with Buck, I knew he was like I was. He was hungry. Not only for money, but to get things done. This is what I had looked for all my life. He had both

feet on the ground. Realistic and positive.

"In 1964, I predicted Buck would have eleven number one records in a row, but I was wrong. We had *twenty seven*." Jack leaned back behind his massive walnut desk and lit up a cigarette. "You know, Buck and I were driving to Las Vegas one day, and Buck asked me, 'What's your main ambition in life?' 'To make you a millionaire!' I answered." Jack looked coolly around the spacious mahogany elegance of his thick carpeted office, and then leaned forward with a handsome smile, "It don't take much to figure out why either."

Jack McFadden is not only Buck's manager, he is also one of Buck's biggest fans, even after all these years. He believes that Buck's next big move is into the movies.

"Almost everything that we planned," he confides, "we wrote down on paper a long time ago. A list of things that we wanted to do. And do you know it has all happened, and in almost the exact order that we planned it. During the original negotiations, we decided that all my time would go to Buck. But there was so much activity going on around him after he broke that we knew it all had to grow. We had to help other people."

Thus it was that Buck Owens Enterprises was formed, a foundation upon which Buck's growing empire could grow even more. In 1965, Buck and Jack took their first big step in diversification. Both saw a need for a central West Coast country booking agency to handle country acts exclusively. They formed OMAC, a booking agency to develop a stable of known stars and an agency that would give the artists the best results. OMAC immediately signed Joe and Rose Maphis, Wynn Stewart, Merle Haggard and Bonnie Owens, Freddie Hart, Rose Maddox and other West Coast based country acts.

Jack's son, Joe McFadden has taken over the controls of OMAC. Although Jack still handles Buck exclusively, and the Buck Owens All American Show, OMAC handles the individual bookings of each of the Owens entourage, including Sheb Wooley and Red Simpson. Joe McFadden's office is right next to his dad's, but it is smaller, with less-tuft-per-inch carpeting, a smaller desk—less a place to live than to work.

"When an artist comes to Buck Owens Enterprises," Joe explained, "and wants to be represented, he usually comes for the whole ball of wax. OMAC handles his or her individual bookings, but when he or she goes out with Buck on the road, that's my dad's territory. Freddie Hart, on the other hand, has no business dealings with Jack. He's separate from the Buck Owens Show altogether. I handle all his bookings. For the most part, however, like I said, it's usually the whole ball of wax, like Susan Raye or Buddy Alan or the Buckaroos, or Kenni Huskey or the Brass. Most of them even live in Bakersfield, like a family unit. It just makes things easier, and it gives us a base. People aren't spread out all over and out of touch."

With his developing stable of artists under one business umbrella, Buck then set out to get all his publishing rights under the same roof. He formed Blue Book Publishing in 1967. Prior to Blue Book, Buck was signed with Central Songs, but when so many artists, ranging from Dean Martin to Peter and Gordon to Ray Charles to the Beatles

started doing Buck's songs, it only made good business sense for Buck to channel all that money being made into his own business.

Buck Owens Productions was the next arm of the empire to be established. It handles "The Buck Owens Ranch Show," and the two radio stations that Buck owns, one in Bakersfield, KUZZ-KZIN, housed in the Owens building, and KTUF-KNIX in Phoenix. Mike Owens, Buck's youngest son, manages Buck Owens Productions, but at one time, like his brother, Buddy, he was the janitor and then a DJ for the radio station in Bakersfield.

"The Ranch Show" these days is seen in seventy plus markets across the country, and is shot at WKY-TV in Oklahoma City. Several times a year, the Owens entourage flies to Oklahoma City and in one madcap week puts together months and months worth of shows by working virtually around the clock. The shows are edited in Oklahoma, but the musical tracks are pre-recorded in the Buck Owens Studios in Bakersfield. It's all handled like clockwork. As Buck says, between

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“Hee Haw” and “The Ranch Show,” and the way TV overlaps, he can be seen on TV sometimes six times a week.

Virtually all of Buck Owens’ needs are now taken care of by Bakersfield. (Except for the audiences and the few sojourns to Oklahoma.) Sitting in his thoroughly masculine, interior decorated office with dark walnut furniture, thick gold carpet, black leather chairs, a couch, a fully outfitted bar and a grand piano, it’s hard to think of Buck as a country boy. The crew cut he sported for so long is gone, but the eagerness is still there in his eyes as he leans back in his chair and smokes his pipe. This is “the man who put Bakersfield on

the map.” He is looking through a one-way glass window looking out on North Chester Avenue.

“No, I can’t really see Bakersfield becoming a music capitol,” he says thoughtfully, and narrowing his eyes. “For that we’re gonna need to see more growth, and the growth will have to be more people producing things, pressing records here, that sort of stuff. The big labels will have to come in. Otherwise, it’s just my organization and me. We’re gonna have to have more competition, more quality product. A lot of people believe that Bakersfield will develop into that, but I haven’t seen it as yet. It’s like spread a rumor and watch it grow. But then I kinda like it as it is. It’s a quiet little town with few hassles. You can concentrate here on what you’re doing. I can never concentrate in Nashville.”

When Buck says he’ll stay *here*, he may mean it in a more literal sense than just living in Bakersfield. Buck knows that with all his record successes, and more recently with the success of “Hee Haw” and his own “Ranch Show,” that so much exposure sometimes hurts an artist. He seems more than prepared to take himself away from the center spotlight that he has held for so many years. His records aren’t automatically number ones anymore, and last year he ranked #16 in *Billboard’s* Top Country Artists. In the last few years, Buck Owens the stage figure has by choice taken a less prominent place in the life of Buck Owens the person.

“There’s a certain mystery that must remain about an artist, if you’re going to continue,” Buck said. “When you become a household word and everybody can see you as much as people have seen me over the past few years, it takes away the mystery. I know that Glen Campbell’s record sales are down. His TV show has hurt him in that respect. Same with Roger Miller and Jimmy Dean. TV almost killed them as far as record sales, and even personal appearances.” He leaned forward, cocking his head with a Buck Owens smile. “The biggest record buyers are women, right? If they’re listening to somebody sing on the radio, who knows what’s going on in their head. But if they see that person a lot, well, it changes them. It removes that essential mystery.” He pauses a moment, his

eyes twinkling as he looks you square in the eye. “Image is a very strange and touchy thing. Especially in country. The audience out there wants to know if you’re fish or fowl. But if you as an artist don’t know, then you’re in trouble. If you have a record that breaks over into the pop category, that’s okay, but if the country people think you’ve gone over into the pop area totally, then they’ll think you deserted them, and then you do have a problem.

“When I released ‘Bridge Over Troubled Waters,’ *whew*, did I get letters about that. One minister from Missouri got all over me for



A few of the Bakersfield country stable.

singing a *dope song*, of all things. He was really uptight about that. But at the same time, I get requests to do that song every show. People love it. I will admit that I went after a much broader audience with ‘Bridge,’ but my belief is that you always have to be yourself. I would like to enlarge my audience. I would like to just sing and not really be labeled as pop, country, or whatever. But it’s not easy. I can do gut bucket country and some people will say I’m regressing, while others will say, ‘now you’re cooking.’ But I don’t lose any sleep over it. I do things with sincerity and honesty. If they like it, great. If they don’t, I’m sorry, but I’m not going to go jump in a lake or anything.”

Producing now takes up most of Buck’s time. He’s always out looking

Buck Owens Quiz

1. What is the name of Buck’s band?
2. What was the first instrument Buck learned to play?
3. What year did Buck receive the Capitol Country Artist Of The Decade award?
4. Who is the president of OMAC?
5. What female singer most recently appeared on an album cover with Buck?
6. What is the name of Buck’s first national chart hit?
7. In what state did Buck get his first experience as a professional musician?
8. What songwriter wrote “Excuse Me (I Think I’ve Got A Heartache)” with Buck?
9. How old is Buck?

COUNTRY MUSIC is offering a set of 6 Buck Owens albums to the first 10 contestants who answer all the questions in our Buck Owens Quiz correctly. The first 10 correct entries with the earliest postmarks will be the winners. We’ll publish the winners’ names and the answers in our May issue. All entries must be postmarked by March 12, 1973.

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**“ . . . When I released ‘Bridge Over Troubled Waters,’
whew, did I get letters about that . . . ”**

for new talent. checking on an act that someone told him about, checking new presentations that he may be able to incorporate into the Owens Enterprises, making plans that will enable him to stick closer to Bakersfield.

“I’ve planned for a changeover from being known as Buck Owens, the guy who plays the clubs, who makes the records, who goes out and beats the road, to Buck Owens who is known as a producer, a coordinator. That’s what I’m work-

Buck laughed and shifted in his chair. “You know, when I identified with Bakersfield, I was trying to tell all those people who believed you had to go to Nashville to cut a hit country record that I didn’t believe that. I don’t believe that anymore than I believe you have to go to Memphis to cut a blues record. I believe if you’ve got the right material, the right people to perform, that you can have a hit record.” He winked. “And I thought it might be popular to be an underdog to Nashville.

national recognition. They came around very slowly at first. Today, of course, it’s a different story. Today, the people, the politicians, seek to have your home phone number, but I suppose it’s a normal thing. The city is full of typical American people. They take a wait-and-see attitude about anything that’s new, or that they don’t understand.

“The golf tournament is a good example. It’s recent. Last year it was tough. We didn’t get city cooperation from certain areas which might have made it easier. But I think we showed them something. This year



From the left—Buddy Alan, Stormy Winters, Tony Booth and Buck.

ing on now. The most satisfying part of everything I’m into now is producing and watching the acts that are signed to me grow. Susan Raye. Freddie Hart. Buddy. The Brass. I watch their record sales, and if they move, I get five times as much satisfaction out of watching their records than I do mine.”

Buck says that country music needs a czar, like baseball or football.

“You’ve got to have organization and planning. I don’t think any Joe Blow should be able to call up and book anybody but maybe the top five country acts. Promoters should be licensed and should belong to an organization. Country music is a business, and it should be recognized as such.”

“Centered in Bakersfield?”

America loves underdogs, and God knows if you’re in country and don’t do *it* in Nashville, you’re an underdog. You sure are.”

Buck is quick to add that there is no animosity between him and Nashville. In the early 60’s, in fact, he was going to move there at the request of the late Hubert Long, “the only man who could have gotten me there.” But Ken Nelson talked him out of it, and Jack McFadden swears that keeping Buck in his home environment was an “instinctively shrewd move.” Bakersfield, at first, wasn’t that sure, especially the people who court Buck for his attention today.

“At first the city looked upon me with some disdain. I was, in their eyes, a hillbilly with manure on my boots who had gained some sort of

we received much more help. In fact, the city fathers can’t do enough. Now they’re happy to have the movie stars. It’s something they’ve never seen before. I only hope it doesn’t rain for the damn thing.”

It did rain that Saturday morning, and the wet drove everybody into the clubhouse for a mad celeb-filled party before the golfers could tee off again at noon. Back on the course, Mickey Mantle hit the pill a mile, Charley Pride cracked jokes every third step he took, and Buck played with a bad sore on his back that just about killed him everytime he swung. But you never would have known it. It all went off like clockwork. And Joe McFadden won the tournament in some of the ugliest golf shoes ever worn at the Bakersfield Country Club.

About three years ago he was living destitute in Los Angeles... His career, if it could still be called that, was at a dismal, all-time low. But...

The Second Coming Of Johnny Paycheck

by John Morthland

Sitting across from a cheerful, talkative and healthy Johnny Paycheck in his touring bus, it's mighty hard to believe the incredible stories about him that have filtered down over the years. Stories of a self-destructive young man who went on

endless booze-and-pills binges, stories of financial mismanagement, a whole career washed down the drain. But they're all true, that's exactly how it happened, and Johnny Paycheck is the first to admit it:

Little more than five years ago,

after serving apprenticeships with Faron Young, Ray Price and George Jones, he was considered one of the most promising new stars in all of country music. He had been nominated, on the basis of one single, in every category of the 1966

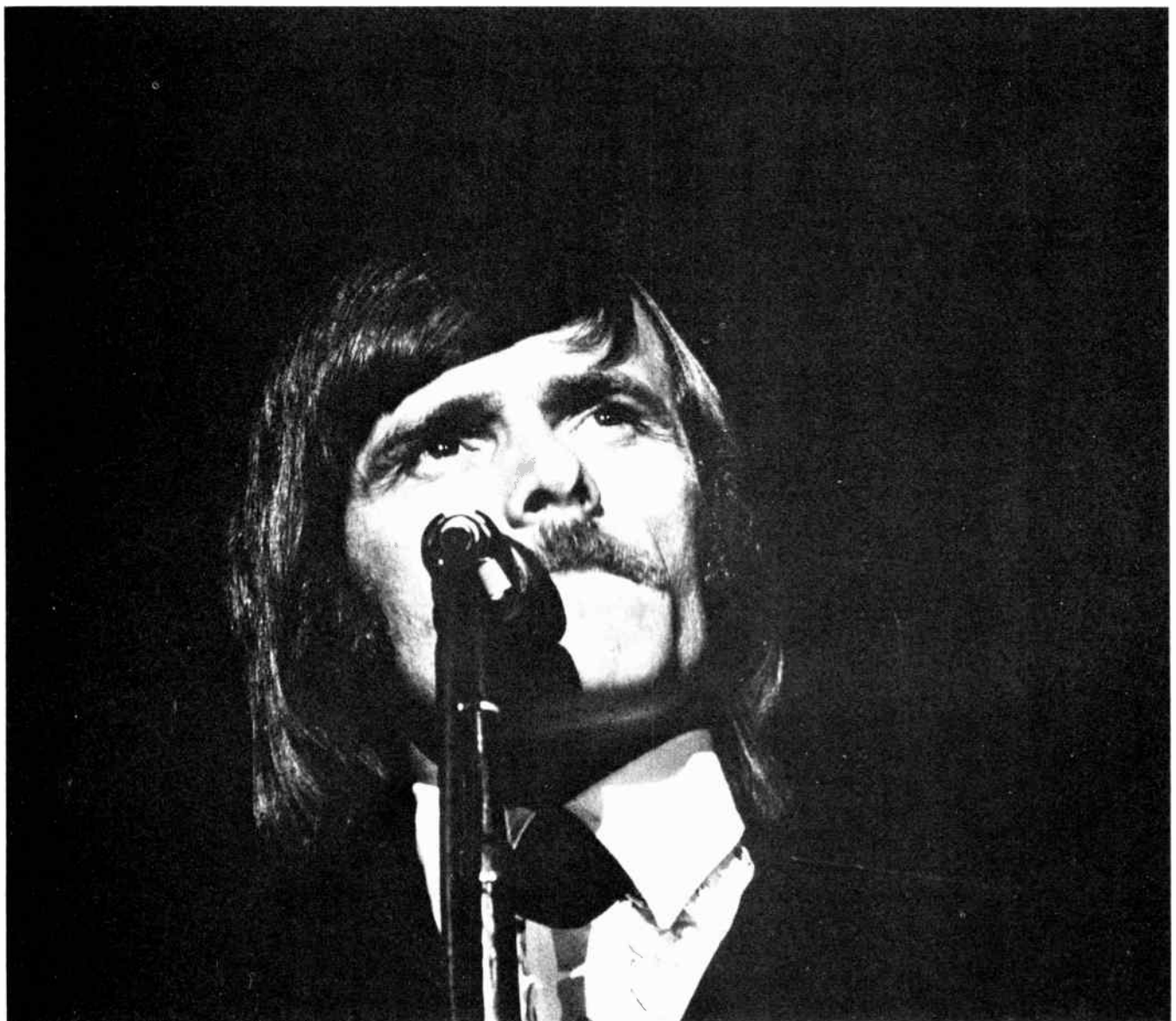


PHOTO: ALAN WHITMAN

NARAS Awards, and, while he hadn't won in any of the finals, his records were selling. He was very

. . . When he says he spent most of two and a half years in the gutter, he means he was at the absolute rock bottom . . .

much in demand for personal appearances, and he was being talked about like a potential successor to George Jones for the King of Country Music crown. How much more promising can a man still in his 20's be? Well . . .

About three years ago, after all that promise, he was living destitute in Los Angeles, unable to record, living hand-to-mouth, doing just a little picking between bottles at a few local dives. He went about virtually unnoticed, seemingly without a friend in the world. His career, if it could still be called that, was at a dismal, all-time low. But . . .

Was it only a year ago that he made his comeback with "(Don't Take Her) She's All I Got" at the Disc Jockey Convention in Nashville, where an audience of several thousand rose as one to give him a long standing ovation for his performance? Yep—one year—that's all it's been, and the story doesn't end there . . .

For in the last year or so, country music audiences have welcomed him back just as enthusiastically. Since "She's All I Got" Johnny has had four straight hit singles and three successful albums. He's working 25 nights a month, and it looks for sure as if there's no stopping him now.

The Johnny Paycheck comeback is one of the most heartwarming stories in recent years, but in order to get its full effect, we have to see what he came back from. And that story begins 15 years ago, when a 19-year-old Johnny Paycheck, then known as Donald Lytle, showed up in Nashville from the farm country of Greenfield, Ohio, with the music of Hank Williams and Lefty Frizzell ringing in his ears.

It wasn't his first trip there—when he was 14, he'd given in to the wanderlust he felt all his life and hit the road. He hitchhiked, rode freights, and bummed around, but that lasted only a month before he returned home. He'd come to Nashville again when he was 16, again failing to make any headway.

But this time he was determined to make it or bust in Nashville. Buddy Killen of Tree Publishing heard him sing, and the next thing he knew he was recording a couple of singles for Decca under the name Donnie Young, one of several pseudonyms he'd been using. Both records bombed, as did two more for Mercury, and so Donnie Young took a job with Faron Young. He played bass and sang tenor, warming up Faron's audiences for the star; he also recorded such tunes as "Face To The Wall" and "Country Girl" with Faron.

That lasted about a year, because Donnie Young was still a restless soul. He moved over to Ray Price's band, holding down the same job for the next three years off and on, recording "Heart Over Mind" and "24th Hour" with Ray. Then, from 1962 to 1966, Donnie Young fronted the Jones Boys for George Jones. It was the longest time he'd ever held a job.

". . . George Jones would fire me one night and hire me back the next, that kind of stuff . . ."

"It's hard to say why I stayed with him so much longer," Johnny says today. "I guess I really liked him. I mean, I liked them all, don't get me wrong, but there was just something about him. I guess we were so much alike. I liked his music and I liked him as a person and the whole bit. You know, I had a terrible drinking problem most of my life—I now have it whipped—but during those years I drank all the time and roared and had a big time. George was that way then, and him and I was like two peas in a pod. He'd fire me one night and hire me back the next day, that kind of stuff. His phrasing and mine are quite a bit alike, too, although I was singing that way from the time I was a kid. But he came out first and was *the* George Jones, and after I went to work for him, I probably was influenced quite a bit; I'd be wrong if I said I wasn't."

That vocal influence became apparent in late 1965, when Donnie Young changed his name to Johnny Paycheck and formed a partnership with Aubrey Mayhew. Johnny would sing and Aubrey would take care of business matters. The first

big single was a Hank Cochran tune "A-11." They leased it to Hilltop Records, and it went high up the charts, earning Johnny all those NARAS nominations. It was time to go it on his own, with Mayhew as business partner. They started a new label, Little Darlin', which at various times included steel guitarist Lloyd Green, the Homesteaders, Bobby Helms, and even the first sides by Jeannie C. Riley.

" . . . ' Jukebox Charlie' and so forth, that's the way I was living, and I identified with those songs . . ."

But there was no doubt about who was the label's star. Johnny broke into the Top 10 in 1966 with "Lovin' Machine" and again the next year with "Jukebox Charlie." A selection of material from that period is available on *Johnny Paycheck's Greatest Hits* (Little Darlin' SLD-8012), an album of some of the very finest country music of the mid-60's, but one you'll probably have to search the drugstore bargain bins to find. Johnny's songs then were a monument to the honky-tonks, their neon and jukeboxes, fast women and whiskey.

"I liked those songs then, because I *lived* those songs. 'Jukebox Charlie' and so forth, that's the way I was living, and I identified with those songs. I still kinda like them, but I don't identify with them anymore. I still do some of them, but mostly because I get a lotta requests for 'em.

"Those were my big years, but I didn't know how to handle it," he continues. "I was drinking like crazy, and wasn't taking care of business at all. I was very bad. Mayhew and me finally separated; we just dissolved the partnership. He went his way, and I went mine, so to speak."

Exactly what happened with Little Darlin' is so tied into a morass of legal complexities that it's hard for anyone except a lawyer to understand. Johnny displays a lack of bitterness when he talks about it, but the gist of it is that Little Darlin' went out of business and Johnny Paycheck was left holding a stack of bills that it would take him two and a half years to pay off. Worse yet, he still had certain attachments to the Little Darlin' organization that made it impossible for him to make

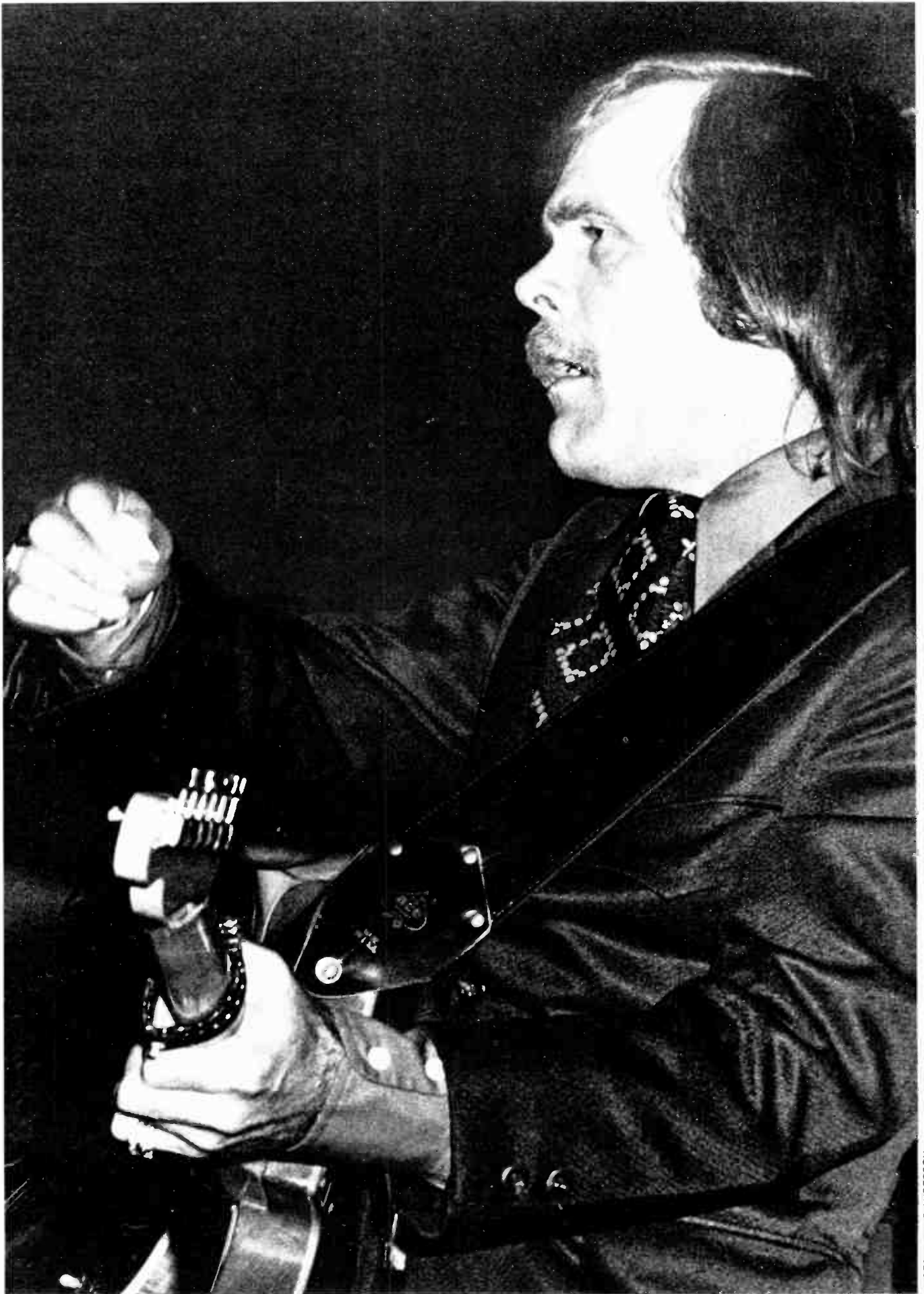


PHOTO: DENNIS ANDERSON

records for anybody else. In late 1968, he left Nashville for self-imposed exile in Los Angeles.

"I'd lost everything, and was really depressed and not giving a damn about anything. And I spent two and a half years in the gutter. I still had those ties with Little Darlin' and as long as those ties were there, nobody would touch me. At the same time, there really was no such thing as Little Darlin' anymore," he remarks, shaking his head at the memory of it. "I had to resolve that, and it was almost impossible. I had planned to keep going in country music, but I didn't know how. There was nothing I could do, and I just had to let it work itself out. I was strictly on my own through that period. I had nobody. Matter of fact, nobody wanted nothin' to do with me because of the other stuff."

"The other stuff" was his drinking, which had reached enormous proportions. He had started as a youngster, when he ran with a much older crowd, and just kept drinking more and more as he grew older. Pretty soon he was taking pills in large quantities as well. When he says he spent most of that time in Los Angeles in the gutter, he means he was at the absolute rock bot-

when Nick Hunter, a CBS distributor in Denver, tracked Johnny down to tell him Columbia was interested. Billy Sherrill, Columbia's man in Nashville, had once made the statement that if he could ever get his hands on Johnny Paycheck, he'd make him the biggest thing in the country. Hunter felt that this might be the time, and urged Johnny to come to Denver.

“. . . I woke up one morning, and I don't know how a man knows these things, but I just knew that I was gonna die if I didn't quit . . .”

tom—he was too wasted to do more than occasional picking in various seedy bars. One foggy day blurred into the next, and virtually overnight, he'd gone from being The Next Big Thing to being Nobody.

Reprieve finally came in late 1970,

"But first I had to get myself squared away, and I did. I thought many times I wasn't going to make it at all, but every time I thought of it, it made me mad. I just wouldn't give up," Johnny stresses. "I finally got to the place where the booze was killing me, and I just had to get away from it. I woke up one morning, and I don't know how a man knows these things, but I just *knew* that I was gonna die if I didn't quit. And so I just quit—from that day forward, I never touched nothin' again. I knew I had a good shot on the CBS thing, and that helped me. Once I got a hold, I just wouldn't let go."

When he got to Denver, Johnny worked a club while Hunter and Billy Hall, a music publisher, were trying to help Sherrill get Johnny signed with a new label. After some complex wheeling and dealing between companies, everything was finally sorted out and Sherrill signed Johnny to Epic.

Then it was Sherrill's turn to put up or shut up. He now had to make good on his earlier statement. It took him nearly five months to find Johnny just the right song, because he wasn't going to take any chances. "(Don't Take Her) She's All I Got" was released just before the Disc Jockey Convention, and took off. Johnny was on his way back, but it took the convention to put him over the top.

"I don't know if I can tell you how it felt at that convention. I was very surprised at the reception I got. I thought that because the record was hot at the time I'd get a nice welcome, but I wasn't prepared for what they did. There was 10,000 people there at the CBS banquet dinner, and I did the song and they gave me a standing ovation, which



PHOTO: ALAN WHITMAN

to me is the ultimate a man can get, especially from his fellow workers. I was the only one on the whole show they did that for, and it was very gratifying. They did the same thing again this year, and it's really terrific. That's about the only way I can describe it."

From there the word spread fast: Johnny Paycheck's back!

Billy Sherrill has since given him a free hand in choosing his own material. If Billy doesn't like a tune Johnny's selected, it's understood that they'll throw it out, but Billy hasn't exercised his veto power once. Back in the Little Darlin' days, Johnny wrote most of his own material, but when he's ready for a new song today, he gives a call to the team of Jerry Foster and Bill Rice. So far, they haven't missed, having custom-written for him "Someone

“. . . I was forced to cut all my own stuff in the Little Darlin' days, and let's face it, anybody who says everything he does is good is a liar . . ."

To Give My Love To," "Love Is A Good Thing," and now the jazzy "Somebody Loves Me."

"I was forced to cut all my own stuff in the Little Darlin' days, and let's face it, anybody who says everything he does is good is a liar," Johnny explains. "If I write a song and I think it's good, then I'm gonna record it. But I don't fool myself - if I write a song and there's a better one there that Foster and Rice wrote, I'm gonna throw mine out, because I want the best possible ma-

terial there is. I think I'm a good writer under certain circumstances, but I'm primarily a singer. I don't think I could write for a living, because I don't have that consistency.

"When I tell Foster and Rice I need a song, I have to have someone sing it to me right there with just a guitar, and I can tell about it from just that. I listen for a lyric, and what the story has to say. I never degrade a woman, and it has to be a . . . you know, a positive song. That's the type of song it has to be, because I sincerely believe that with all the trouble and everything that's in the world today, people are looking for a happy song, even if it is make-believe. Then I look for the melody, I look for the opening where certain little things can be put in that will attract people, and when I find what I'm looking for, I show it to Billy."

The sole exception to that procedure has been "Let's All Go Down To The River," a spiritual written by Peanut Montgomery (Melba's brother) that Johnny cut on a whim with Jody Miller. Anyhow, once he's got his songs, he goes to Billy Sherrill and they record.

"When Billy made that remark about me a few years ago, it was because he liked my style of singing, and he felt he could take that and polish it and project it, which he has done," Johnny says. "He's the best producer I've ever worked under, because he knows exactly what he wants. He doesn't just sit in there behind the glass and say, 'That sounds good.' He comes into the studio and tells each and every player and singer exactly what he wants, and they do it right down to one note in the bass line. It's unbelievable how he puts the stuff together. He knows exactly how it's supposed to sound, and it either ends up sounding that way or it doesn't come out of the studio. All I have to do is get up on a stool and let him work it out and then sing it. It makes it very easy for me.

"We cut the whole thing live, all at once. Every single thing on my records is all done at once, so we get that fresh sound. All I do is sing; that's the drive I have to project myself as an individual, to become the man Johnny Paycheck. I've had it all my life; that little thing inside a man that makes him wanna become a leader. I'm very lucky that I had



PHOTO DENNIS ANDERSON

Three years ago, Johnny Paycheck was destitute in Los Angeles, doing a little picking between bottles.

“ . . . I know my band plays loud, and that’s another thing I think people want. They wanna dance and have a good time . . . ”

that spark inside me, and I kept it. I could’ve gotten lost very easily. But the records I’m doing now are a very accurate projection of the man Johnny Paycheck.”

Johnny Paycheck and the Cashiers play a loud, hard-hitting set. Even on a small stage, Johnny looks very tiny, and his hair spills way down over his collar. That’s his wife Sharon’s influence; she’s a bit younger than Johnny, and not only did she suggest the longer hair, but also most of the pop and rock tunes he records. He may have left the honky-tonks behind in his lifestyle, but it doesn’t seem as if he could ever get it out of his music.

Johnny doesn’t talk much during his set, charging right into the next song.

“I don’t tell any jokes or anything,” he warns the audience at one point. “I started out in the business being a comedian and everybody laughed at me, so I quit.

“I have a firm belief that people

pay their money to hear you sing, so I’ve based my whole career on that,” he explains after the show. “I come to sing for ’em, that’s what I do. I don’t know if you noticed, but when I come on stage, everybody comes alive with me. You should always enjoy what you’re doing. And all my band do.

“I know my band plays loud, and that’s another thing I think people want. They wanna dance and have a good time, and they like the beat. If you’re playing soft enough that they can talk to each other over the music, then you’re losing ’em. But you take that wah wah pedal on the guitar. We used it on the first record and it’d been around a long time, but it was pretty new to country music. The disc jockeys heard that on the first record and they really liked it. We’ve used it on every record since then. It’s become kind of a trademark with me, and they expect to hear it now.”

At age 34 and just hitting his

peak, what’s left for Johnny Paycheck? He’s booked for major television shows this year, and in April will be going to England for the International Country Music Festival at Wembley. He recently found out, much to his surprise, that he’s got a cult following in England, and collectors there are paying black market prices for his old Little Darlin’ singles.

And as for staying on the road a rugged 25 days a month: “Well, in the first year here, I think that I had to reach as many people as I could, and probably for the next year I’ll do the same. Because it’s very important to get to the areas where people wanna see you. And I think that after a couple years of really laying it on, a man can slow down a little, and that’s what I plan. But I plan to stay right on it for the next year; I’ve performed in probably 40 of the states this year, and they treat us real fine everywhere. There’s no comparison between now and the Little Darlin’ days; that was *nothin’* compared to this.”

Make no mistake about it — Johnny Paycheck is back, and the second time’s a charm.

Play Guitar? So do all our readers!

What other magazine has featured such guitarists as:

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Andres Segovia	B. B. King	Les Paul	Joe Pass
Barney Kessel	Pete Townshend	John Fogerty	Herb Ellis
Eric Clapton	Larry Coryell	George Van Eps	Jorge Morel
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The Oaks: Mod Clothes, Shaggy Hair and Astounding Success

by Jerry Bailey

For more than a few years, “gospel music” has been synonymous to many people with the word “antique.” Although the message of God has been translated more than any book in history, and the followers of Christ are of every age, color, nationality and hair-cut imaginable, the bulk of gospel music groups and fans assumed that their music had to be cast from one proven mold — four singers and a piano. The resulting sound found listeners only among a very select audience.

Roughly five years ago, when it was felt the industry was teetering on the verge of a slump, a stir took place among gospel ranks. A Tennessee quartet bearing an inherited name, “The Oak Ridge Boys,” entered a period of change. New ideas were formed and various instruments tried. All the while the group’s thinking evolved, and what finally emerged three years later startled a large segment of the gospel audience.

The Oaks, as they frequently call themselves, appeared flaunting shaggy hair, mod clothes and strange musical instruments. The initial reaction from blue-blooded gospel lovers was understandable resentment.

DJ’s smashed their records, other gospel groups refused to perform in the same show with them, and one college forbade its students to listen to their music. To an observer not familiar with gospel idiosyncrasies, this might have appeared bizarre, but to Bill Golden, baritone singer and elected manager of the Oaks, it represented a reaction to a serious decision.

“We decided to sing the songs exactly the way we felt and dress however we pleased, regardless of what people expected,” Golden said. Consequently, the group discarded songs with screaming tenor and growling bass, along with their suits and ties. Expanding on that “feel,” the quartet added a four-member

backup band with electric guitars, drums and an electric piano. Taking another step, the Oaks gradually revised their show, lessening the shouting and preaching. Instead, they concentrated on the message in their songs and sought to transmit their personal spirituality.

“We just felt if it was real, there would be a spirit about it you could feel,” Golden said. “It’s not a thing we try to create, but a thing we try to let happen.”

That spirit, Golden claims, is spawned by sincere beliefs, though he said that members of his group do not adhere to a strict traditionalist strain of religion. The personal views of the Oaks range from the more conservative beliefs of Duane Allen, an ex-preacher from the Assembly of God, to those of Mark Ellerbee, who has a Methodist background. Ellerbee confessed, “I’m an occult freak—flying saucers and the whole works. But I can relate it all to Jesus.”



The Oaks. Left to right: Willie Wynn, Duane Allen, Bill Golden and Richard Sterban.

PHOTOS: JERRY BAILEY



"Everybody in the group feels an obligation to point people in the right direction and to do it in a plain, honest way," Golden said. "In our own way, we're as religious as anybody in the business.

"The biggest percentage of our audience is not plastic or fake. They're hard-working, honest people who live like we do," Golden said.

Obviously he was speaking of matters other than financial when describing his audience's life-style, for it is hardly likely that many fans could live like the Oaks in that respect. They are one of the more prosperous quartets in gospel, and if the length of a man's car is indicative of anything, the Oaks are not opposed to showing it. Two members drive Cadillacs, and another a Lincoln Continental. The newest partner, bass singer Richard Sterban, sported a Ford Pinto when he joined last October, but Golden said he could own a Cadillac in a few months, if he wanted. Sterban made it clear that he is more than satisfied with his new position.

"The record sales of this group amaze me," Sterban said. "They sell more than any group I've ever seen."

To be sure, financial rewards are only a minor, but delicious, portion of Sterban's reasons for joining the Oaks. He had struggled along with several gospel teams for more than a third of his 29 years, having dropped out of college at Trenton (N.J.) State after his freshman year to form the Keystone Quartet. He stayed with that group for eight years, barely earning enough to support his family.

"The group never really made it, and having three kids, I just had to leave," he said.

So a little more than two years ago, he packed up his family and headed for Nashville "to where it was happening." In the next few months he learned that breaks do not come easily for most young musicians who come to Music City looking for fast money. Sterban was luckier than many and found a job doubling up on bass with J.D. Sumner and the Stamps. A year later the Stamps landed a deal to sing backup behind Elvis Presley. Sterban had never been a big fan of Elvis, but he learned to appreciate his professional style, and more importantly, picked up what he believed



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could be valuable lessons for gospel singers. In the process, he got his face in Elvis' movie, "On Tour," almost as much as the "King of Rock 'n' Roll" himself.

Sterban's association with the Oaks began back in his Keystone days. When he was looking for pointers from other professionals, Bill Golden was the only person to lend a hand. Moreover, another Oaks singer, Duane Allen, got the Keystones their first recording contract.

"Bill said back then he would keep me in mind if he ever needed a bass," Sterban remembered. "We used to joke that someday I would be with them. It got to where I was

times and looking ahead."

Sterban said that in order to be successful, the Oaks had to do a lot of things they did not enjoy. One of his gripes is that they have to go out into an audience before concerts and "hawk" records.

"This is something we would love to eliminate from our industry, but we need the sales. Our business is based on tradition. Getting into an audience and saying hello to the ladies and patting the kiddies is expected of us," he said.

He was not speaking for all of the Oaks, however. Drummer Mark Ellerbee said he really enjoyed mixing with crowds.

"I guess it's not the same with

Sterban said. "It kind of elevated us."

He emphasized that the Oaks are not lazy or unsociable. "It's just that having an hour or so to be together backstage to talk about spiritual things made us feel better and it showed in our singing."

Another innovation which has found favor with the group is singing before "secular" audiences. They frequently appear at state fairs, colleges, and other shows not limited to gospel groups. The Oaks feel that taking gospel to people who have not heard it before will expand their following. Occasionally they do not even advertise themselves as gospel singers, hoping to attract curious ears formerly turned off by traditional groups.

The Oaks' sound is also geared to appeal to a broader audience. Because a large proportion of the group is backgrounded in rock music, the Oaks are not afraid of a different song, and Ellerbee readily admitted the band is influenced by "pop" entertainers.

Ellerbee likes to recount an incident at the Utah State Fair in which a musician playing with Tammy Wynette and George Jones confronted him backstage, saying, "Man, you guys aren't playing gospel or country, that's rock 'n' roll!"

Ellerbee explained, "That's not a fair statement. What we've done is created a whole new bag."

The Oaks "bag," which received so much abuse only a couple of years ago, is currently earning a lot of respect from their peers as well as their fans. Longer hair is noticeably more common among gospel quartets nowadays, and a larger sprinkling of drums and other unorthodox instruments has begun to show up also. The crowning compliment was given the Oak Ridge Boys last fall when they received five Dove awards at the Gospel Music Association's awards presentation. The Oaks were named "Best Male Group," while pianist Tony Brown was honored as "Best Instrumentalist." Their album, "Light," won awards for "Best Album," "Best Album Cover" and "Best Liner Notes."

Golden's reaction to the laurels is a reserved appreciation. "The awards are nice to have," he said, "but we have to be careful not to let them go to our heads. The important thing is what we do tomorrow."



Some members of the Oaks would like to eliminate "hawking" records, but others in the group enjoy the chance to mix with the crowd.

hoping it would come true, and they were too."

When Noel Fox decided to leave the Oaks last October to work for the Don Light Talent Agency, Sterban wasted no more than a week in moving in with Bill Golden, Duane Allen and Willie Wynn to complete the quartet. He brought not only his voice, but also some progressive ideas picked up from being around Elvis.

"Our field of music sometimes seems kind of amateurish compared with others," he said. "The Oaks are really different. They're concerned with keeping up with the

me as it is for the singers," Ellerbee explained. "One of the nice, unusual concepts about the gospel music industry is that you can get into the audience."

Both Sterban and Ellerbee agreed that being their own stagehands could be a little awkward at times. To alleviate some of the pre-concert hassle, the Oaks have been experimenting with an alternative. At an appearance in Chattanooga, Tennessee before Christmas, the singers did not show themselves until their stage performances.

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White Lightnin'

Still The Biggest Thrill of All

by Nick Tosches

I sincerely doubt that my chortling brain will ever allow the memory of my first encounter with moonshine to lose even a degree of clarity.

A friend and I were travelling south from New York to Tampa when our car broke down one afternoon about ten miles out of Savannah on Route 17. We left the car on the side of the road, checked it out, found that the brake lining was busted in two places, and decided to hitchhike back into town to get the necessary parts. We got back to Savannah, tried a few auto repair shops, and eventually discovered that the only place where we could definitely procure some brake lining was closed for the evening

Chet Atkins

"One time there was a still operation above our house in Tennessee. One day the still busted open and gallons and gallons of 'beer' ran into the nearby stream of water, which resulted in a bunch of drunken cows . . .

"When I was living in Georgia, I knew this one old guy who had this unbelievable crow that would squawk its head off whenever anybody came near the guy's still. The Feds tried to catch him for years, but they just never could, thanks to that crow."

and wouldn't be open until 10 o'clock the following morning. OK, we figured, we'll stop off and have a few beers, then hitch back to the car, spend the night, and return to town in the morning. We then unthinkingly proceeded to while away the next several hours quaffing suds and shooting pool in a local bar.

We left the joint at about half past one in the morning. It was cold and the streets were deserted. We decided that Broad Street would be the best bet for grabbing a lift, so we posted our shivering selves at the curb and watched with imploringly outstretched thumbs as an occasional set of headlights appeared

in the distance, grew closer, closest, then turned to taillights and finally vanished where the white line ended.

We were still there, cursing ourselves out, when Luther picked us up in his retching, once-blue Ford. He said he was "just drivin' around." He had had a fight with his wife, we later found out, and whenever he had a fight with his wife, he usually spent the night "just drivin' around." Was he from Savannah? Nope. Where was he from? Out near Sandfly a-way. WXLM-FM coughed a few chords out of the burned-out car radio every thirty seconds or so. Old Luther produced a Tropicana quart jar from beneath his seat. It was filled almost to its squat neck with a semi-clear liquid that took on the darkness within the car.

"You boys like a drink?"

It was actually like nothing I had ever tasted before. It was strong and harsh, but in a very weird way. It seemed to stop and bite snarlingly into my gullet periodically on its way down. The word "character" is often used in describing whiskies. Well, the booze in Luther's grapefruit juice jar had character all right, so much character that it almost had a personality, albeit a somewhat uncompromising one of its own. But, as with any kind of liquor, after a while each hit became more palatable than its predecessor, and my friend and I found ourselves "just drivin' around" and sipping it up with our gracious host.

Shortly before the sun came up, and after we had finished off the moonshine, Luther dropped us off at our car (we had declined an offer to accompany him to someplace



Moonshiners watch the destruction of their still in the early 1900's.

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

called Shorty's for "a few shots of wake-up"), whereupon we immediately crawled in and fell asleep as the noise of traffic began to build on the nearby road. Now, I've had some prodigious hangovers during the course of my numerous tete-a-tetes with John Barleycorn, but none has ever compared with the atrocity that threw itself upon me when next I opened my eyes. My mind seemed to be about two steps to the right and one step to the rear of my head. My mouth felt as if I had gone to sleep chewing on a mouldy sock. A vague sense of electricity ran through me, and with each new movement my dehydrated body moaned for a season or two in some soft, cool place.

*I'll eat when I'm hungry
And drink when I'm dry
If moonshine don't kill me
I'll live till I die*

Traditional Kentucky Ballad

The making and drinking of whiskey has always been part of American life. Long before this country gained its independence, the people who worked its lands had become firmly entrenched in the practice of transforming corn and grain into that most hallowed liquid—booze. The dominant moral forces of Scots-Irish Presbyterianism had gracefully given their blessings to the moderate drinking of the South's flowing corn and, up North, Increase Mather praised alcohol as one of God's greatest gifts

to man. But when the distilling of hard liquor became taxable, the whiskey-makers became "moonshiners," clandestine producers of illicit hooch, sought after by the

Tom T. Hall

"A couple of months ago I was at O'Hare Airport in Chicago. Inside my suitcase I was carrying a quart of moonshine that a fan had given me. A Federal Investigator checked my luggage and came across the jug. He asked me what was in it, and I told him. I guess it's a federal offense to carry moonshine over state lines, because they almost didn't let me on the airplane. They made me dump it into a trash can outside the airport, but they let me keep the crock because it was an antique. I was seated on the plane when a Fed came on board and told me it must have been pretty good, on account of the way it smelled. I told him that it was and gave him a big smile.

"Kentucky is mostly a dry state, though a county can choose to be wet if it's large enough. When I go back, I usually pick up a jug, but you have to be very careful and buy it from someone you know real well, because a lot of people make better antifreeze."

law but known throughout their communities by all.

*I went up the hill, I found a still
So gather 'round, boys, we'll all
keep mum*

"Crabtree Still"

With the advent of the whiskey tax in 1791, distillers of whiskey were faced with two alternatives: pay the prescribed tax or go underground. For economic and ethical reasons, the great majority of distillers felt that the tax was

both ludicrous and repugnant. They tried their best to ignore it and continued to make whiskey for their own use and for a steady source of income.

So it was that the Federal Tax Agents came upon the scene with a loathsome mission, to root out these distillers, destroy their equipment and wares, and bring the moonshiners before the gavel. They had their handicaps, though. They didn't know the backwoods the way the men they pursued did. Then, of course, there were certain country ways that were hard to cope with. No one in the hills, for instance, paid attention to a single shotgun shot, for it most likely meant that a neighbor was picking off a rabbit for dinner; everyone, however, paid attention to two shots in succession. That was a warning of Federal Agents in the vicinity.

The Agents did, and indeed still do, have their work cut out for them. Today, for example, the weekly manufacture of illicit whiskey in the mountains of Tennessee is estimated at 25,000 gallons. Officials of the Tennessee State Alcohol Tax Division give the yearly production rate, which is centered in the eastern third of the state, at 1,664,000 gallons per annum, which means an annual state tax loss of over \$3,300,000. The yearly Federal tax loss in Tennessee is estimated at over \$16,500,000, even though agents report that they manage to destroy an average of 94 stills a



Big business: 24 "submarine" stills captured by federal agents in December, 1972, near Ferrum, Va.

PHOTO: JESS CARR

Bobby Bare

"The first time I had moonshine was when I hitchhiked to Tennessee to see the Grand Ole Opry with a friend of mine who lived in Crossville. We stopped by there on the way to visit his friend and relatives. They fried up a bunch of chicken and got some moonshine from a local bootlegger. Someone poured me out some into a glass. I sat down and ate the chicken and forgot that the glass was full of moonshine. I thought it was water. After the dinner, I turned up the glass and drank almost all of it before I realized it wasn't water, and remained sick for four days. Four days later I barely made it to Nashville."

month in that state.

When Congress passed an Act in June of 1934, authorizing the Internal Revenue Commission to require dealers of raw materials from which whiskey could be made to submit reports of all such commodities sold, it turned out that one small county in Eastern Tennessee had gone through 4 million pounds of sugar in a year (4 million pounds of sugar makes 500,000 gallons of moonshine, which means a one-million dollar tax loss for the government). The dimensions of the moonshine business become even clearer when Federal Agents of the Alcohol and Tax Division of the Internal Revenue Service in southern Appalachia say that Tennessee's moonshine production is only one-fifth of North Carolina's and one-third of Georgia's. The total production in southern Appalachia is estimated at over 21 million gallons per year - a quantity equal to 20% of the yearly legal liquor manufacture in the entire United States.

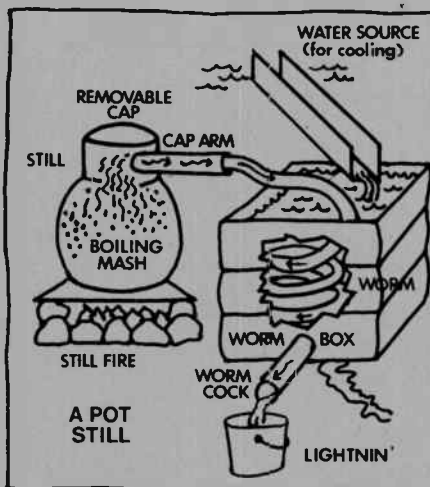
And, as the inexorable drip, drip, drip of fresh whiskey has continued to ooze from the coil, the image of the moonshiner and the praise of his wares have become familiar ingredients of country music. Songs like "Abie's White Mule," "Crabtree Still," "Goodbye, Old Booze," "Squirrel Whiskey," and "Drunkard's Song" predate the recording era and can still be heard in southern Appalachia. (A number of these songs have been transcribed in the "Stillin' and Drinkin'" chapter of Jean Thomas' *Ballad Makin' In The Mountains Of Kentucky*.)

The Skillet Lickers, among the earliest country & western (or "hillbilly," as they put it in those days of the Okeh Phonograph Company) recording artists, cut a series

of 14 musical dialogues collectively called "A Corn Likker Still In Georgia." Good Georgia mountain boys that they were, the Skillet Lickers' series represents, as they say on the scholastic circuit, the sum of extensive field research. In one of the dialogues, James Gideon Tanner, the group's fiddler, echoed the question every moonshiner asks himself:

"What's the use of sellin' corn for \$2 a bushel when you can get \$20 for it in a can?"

There are almost as many variations of making booze as there are of making love or money. My father, a lifelong friend of Mr. Barleycorn in all that distinguished gentleman's various incarnations, had a couple of simple recipes. He would buy 5-gallon tins of pure ethyl alcohol from a local New Jersey



bootlegger at \$25 a tin. Since pure alcohol is 200 proof, and about 20 proof would be lost through evaporation upon exposure to air, a 5-gallon tin cut with 5 gallons of water would yield 10 gallons of 90 proof alcohol. Which it did. He would then flavor the stuff with extract of anise or extract of rye. He sold it for \$10 a gallon (\$12 around the holidays), thus netting a 200% profit. There were, of course, occupational hazards. He recalls going without his voice for three days once after inadvertently swallowing a mouthful of pure alky while siphoning it from its tin.

Applejack was another recipe my father was acquainted with ("Jersey Lightning," he called it). He would simply separate the alcoholic portion of a batch of apple squeezings through freezing (alcohol won't freeze under normal conditions).

My grandfather, on the other

hand, stuck to making wine—200 gallons a year, for his own consumption, naturally. That's legal.

Yes, they had their recipes all right. Everybody does. But true down-home moonshining calls for somewhat more complex measures. And that means the moonshine still.

In a survey of still types, one would have to include: the common pot still, most popular of them all; the submarine still, featuring an elongated boiler; the groundhog still, which nestles into the ground, its heat supplied by gas or oil; the box still, which gets its name from the rectangular shape of its main elements and is most common in Alabama; and, finally, the mushroom still, which produces booze of an unusually high proof strength. Each of these stills has its proponents, as do the many varieties of moonshine they distill.

*I've had my fun with canyon rum
And Tennessee mountain dew
But when I go first class, fill my glass*

*With Oklahoma home brew
"Oklahoma Home Brew" ©1969 Brazos Valley Music*

And so, Hank Thompson, a man who could never be accused of not caroling his share of praise to the sacred fluids, professes his affinity for homemade beer.

Another old standard is homemade wine, touted and hailed in such songs as Johnny Cash's "Melva's Wine," Roger Miller's "Chug-A-Lug," Lynn Anderson's "Listen To A Country Song" and Tom T. Hall's "Watermelon Wine."

Hank Cochran

"We threw a monstrous party for Buck Trent, Porter and Dolly's banjo player, and everybody was roaring drunk. There was a quart of moonshine in the refrigerator. Well, Buck got thirsty, and since the moonshine was pretty clear, he thought it was water and took a nice-size drink. It almost finished him off.

"That same night, I forgot about it being moonshine and mixed myself a drink. It wasn't scotch and water like I thought it was; it was scotch and moonshine. Yech!"

Well, it may not be Chateau Mouton Rothschild 1959, but it does the job.

There's more than a few different schools of thought on how to go about making moonshine. We've set out basic recipes for beer and

wine. Follow just one of them and you should end up with enough homemade juice to keep yourself and a small circle of friends from feeling any pain for a number of fortnights. Just don't try and sell any.

an amazing piece of derring-do called the "power slide" or the "bootleg turn." It involved throwing the car into second gear, cocking the wheel, stepping on the accelerator and holding tight as the car's rear end skidded around in a 180°

days. Now he makes upwards of \$100,000 a year racing.

He's just an old hard ankle down in Carolina

He can push a Ford with any man alive

That's Junior, Junior Johnson

Lordy have mercy, how that boy can drive

You can see him on the track over there at Charlotte

Makin' about a hundred-and-fifty or more

That's Junior, Junior Johnson

Instead of blood in his veins there's oil

"Junior Johnson" ©1965 Cedarwood Publishing Co.

Doing It Yourself: Beer

Get a crock that can hold from 5 to 10 gallons. Get a hydrometer. Mix malt, sugar and water together at a 2:5:3 proportion; this should be heated in a large pan and stirred well. This is then poured into the crock (using the proportion, you might have a mixture of 2 cups of malt, five cups of sugar and 3 gallons of water); heat the mix in the crock to a mild warmth (very hot water will kill the yeast); now make a mixture of 1 raw egg and brewer's yeast; spread this thickly onto a slice of dry toast; float the toast in the mix; insert a hydrometer; when the hydrometer fluid reaches 1.010 (should take a couple of days), The mix is then ready to bottle (siphoning is the optimum method) and cap. Cheers.

To make such winning home-brews as pale lager, honey beer, spruce beer, and Munich dark, consult Leigh P. Beadle's *Brew It Yourself*.

There is, however, a vast array of still types and booze recipes other than this basic schema, a lot of them worse, a lot of them better. For a thorough overview, two books should be read: Jess Carr's definitive *The Second Oldest Profession: An Informal History Of Moonshining In America* and John F. Adam's *An Essay On Brewing, Vintage And Distillation* (definitely a man on the right track, Mr. Adams proposes that boozophiles be given a break by levying taxes on the likes of fruit punches and hymnals, for a change).

North Carolina and East Tennessee are the two most important centers of moonshine activity in the country. Tennessee's heritage of fine whiskey production consists not only of such noted distilleries as Jack Daniel's (Uncle Jack himself started out as a moonshiner at the age of 13) and George Dickel's, but also of a continuous flow of some 25,000 gallons per week that oozes from the hills and hollows of East Tennessee. Much of this whiskey is transported regularly into larger cities, mainly by cars adjusted with jacked-up back ends and heavy duty springs (Fords and Chevys are the favorites) that can handle loads of up to 1,000 pounds and the threat of tax men along the way. Down in the backwoods of the moonshine states, you can hear their souped-up V8's blasting by in the night.

The most legendary runner in the annals of moonshining has to be Junior Johnson of Ingle Hollow in northwestern North Carolina. Junior started out as a runner for his father Robert Johnson, one of the biggest pot still operators of all time. As a testament to the skill and know-how involved in being a big-time runner, Junior went on to become one of the greatest stock car racers of all time, setting, among other things, an all-time stock car speed record in a 100-mile qualifying race at Daytona in 1960. Junior's specialty as a runner was

arc to the chagrin of many a roadblock party. Once, he got through a roadblock by roaring down the road with a red flashing light and a siren affixed to his car. He would make from \$500-\$1,000 a run in those



Deep in the woods, barrels of mash stand ready for the still.

The runners in Dolly Parton's "Daddy's Moonshine Still" and "The Ballad of Thunder Road" (the title song from the definitive moonshine movie) fare less fortunately. Bang.

Using drivers much like the famed Junior Johnson, and with a parallel success story, a North Carolina moonshiner and bootlegger from Johnston County allegedly became a millionaire through his whiskey-making activities. Anyone entertaining thoughts about following in his footsteps, however, should keep in mind that the 1,000 gallon stills that this particular bootlegger used are pretty hard to hide.

And sure, a man can make his fortune in moonshining. There's many a wealthy man living high off a legitimate business funded by moonshining, but the overwhelming majority consists of men who moonshine just to make ends meet. It's a steady income where steady incomes are hard to come by, and it's about as glamorous and romantic as an aching back and a rotted liver, even though country singers *do* love to sing songs about the joys of working the still with the good clean mountain air in your lungs and the smell of the cooking mash wafting up your nostrils.

Like so:

Get you a copper kettle

Get you a copper coil

Fill it with new-made corn mash

And nevermore you'll toil

We'll just lay there by the juniper

While the moon is bright

Watch them jugs a-fillin'

In the pale moonlight

"Copper Kettle (The Pale Moonlight)" ©1953 Melody Trails, Inc.

PHOTOS: MORRIS STEPHENSON

Then there's the women. Try finding a happy moonshiner's wife. While her man's up the hill or down in the hollow or out in the barn cooking up his booze, she's left at home to worry about the Feds sneaking up behind him with their axes ready to destroy the family livelihood, or about the local competition doing him in or finking on him to the Agents.

Then there's the stuff itself. The Feds make a lot of noise about finding dead skunks in captured stills and scenes of incredible filth around moonshiners' operations — and while the moonshiners themselves will quickly point out that fermenting alcohol kills any unhealthy influences double quick, they really can't say much in their own defense when confronted with certain incidents like the one in Atlanta, Georgia in 1951, when forty-two people died from drinking poison moonshine and three hundred were hospitalized, or when eight men kicked off in New York in 1955 from the same cause.

When the alcohol doesn't manage to kill whatever nasties find their way into the moonshine during its preparation, the drinker is in trouble, but probably not the fatal kind. Find a situation where a touch of lead has come in contact with the booze in the still, however, and it's a different story. It takes only .0004 of an ounce of lead salts to send any booze enthusiast to the Big Drink in the Sky, and that's why the golden rule of safe moonshining is: every part of the still which touches the hooch *must* be made of copper. Sloppiness in that particular area just will not do...

There *are* the party-poopers. Loretta Lynn doesn't allow drinking on her bus. Sonny James won't play a place that serves booze. But, all in all, country music's praise of hooch has been vociferous and staunch. A sampling from the moonshine contingent:

The great "White Lightnin'" has been recorded by legions, including George Jones (who had a hit with it in 1959), The Big Bopper (who wrote it), Bill Reeves, Gene Vincent, the West Virginia Harmonettes, Waylon Jennings, Glen Campbell, Conway Twitty, John Hartford, and Ed Hardin: *Well, in North Carolina, way back in the hills*

*Lived my old pappy and he had him a still
He brewed white lightnin' til the sun went down
Then he'd fill him a jug and he'd pass it around
Mighty, mighty pleasin', pappy's corn squeezin's
Whew . . . white lightnin'!*

"White Lightnin'" © 1959, 1963, Glad Music Co.

And, recorded by Porter Wagoner, Lynn Anderson, Conway Twitty, Charlie McCoy, Chet

*Dirt's too rocky by far
That's why all the folks on Rocky Top
Get their corn from a jar*

"Rocky Top" © 1967 House of Bryant Publications

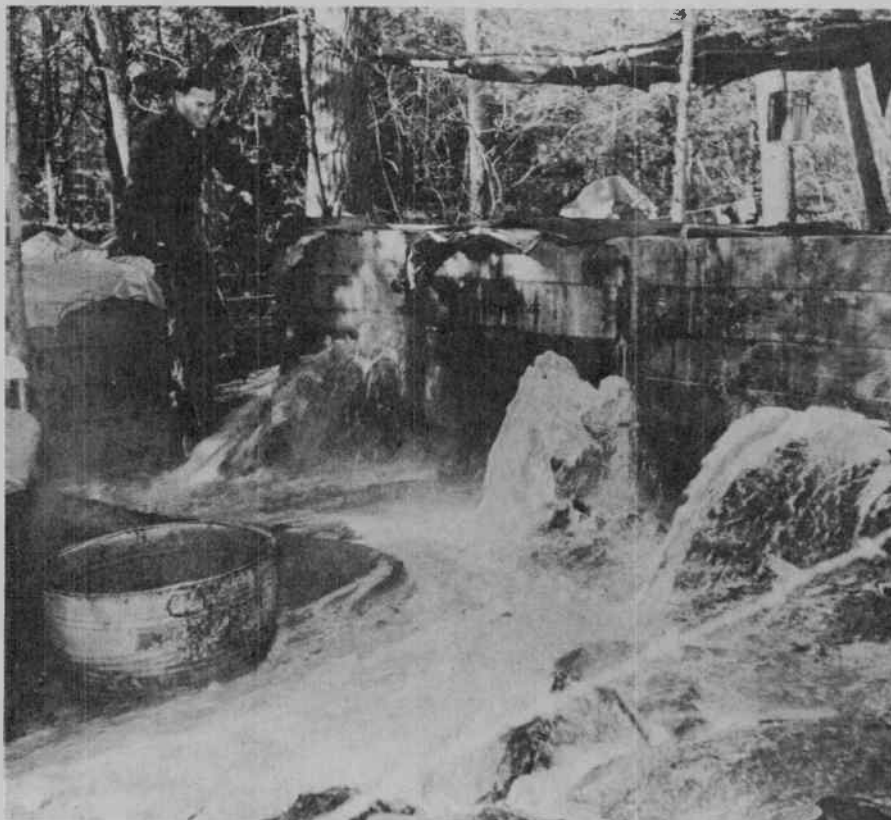
Boudleaux and Felice Bryant, who wrote the song, purchased a farm shortly after copyrighting the piece in 1967. The farm, which lay about 20 miles south of Nashville, came complete with several still-functioning stills on it. Felice's mom, by the way, used to deliver

Doing It Yourself: Wine

Fill a 5-gallon carboy with about 13" of cool water; pour 1 gallon of that water into a saucepan and heat to just below boiling; pour in 6 cups of sugar and dissolve; place 6 level teaspoons of winemakers' acid blend into a large Primary Fermenter; transfer all but 1 quart of water from carboy to Fermenter; pour in the sugar water; add 1 gallon grape concentrate or fruit concentrate; add rest of water from carboy and stir well; pour in 1 pack dry yeast to a cup of warm (105°) water; after 15 minutes, stir and pour into wine mix; cover with Saran Wrap and seal with tape; cover the whole mess with a dark cloth; allow to ferment until bubbling ceases; add 1 level teaspoon of ascorbic acid to the carboy and pour in the wine mixture; add teaspoon of gelatin and cover; let set for 2-3 days; syphon wine off yeast layer into the Fermenter along with 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid; when the mixture in the Fermenter clears, syphon into bottles, seal and let set upright at room temperature, the longer the better. Don't complain, it's cheap. For further recipes and information on equipment, write: Specialty Products, Ltd./Box 784/Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514.

Atkins, Bill Anderson, Buck Owens, Dillard & Clark, Grandpa Jones, Carl Smith, Roy Clark, Kitty Wells, and Jimmy Dean:
Corn won't grow at all on Rocky Top

homemade booze in the baby carriage she wheeled Felice around in. And from Merle, who knows from whence he speaks:
White lightnin's still the biggest thrill of all!



Agent watches eight thousand gallons of beer go down the mountain.

Dickey Lee didn't need a helping hand from Elvis

He has lost the image of teenage idol and made a smooth transition from rock to country.

by Gail Buchalter

Dickey Lee has managed not to wear the weariness of the road on his face. He didn't wince, cringe or give off any other signs of displeasure when asked why he is sometimes referred to as the "world's oldest teenager," even though he is now in his early thirties. He explained that it was a label he acquired 15 years ago when he was regarded as a teenage idol, although he was attending college.

"I was going to Memphis State, majoring in commercial art. I wanted to be an entertainer, but you know how that is—I figured I probably never would make it. I had put out several records which didn't do anything until I recorded 'Patches'."

Dickey launched his singing career with a high school country band in the assembly halls and auditoriums of Memphis. But the country aspect of the group was short-lived. Elvis Presley had exploded, and any kid who played guitar was enthralled by rhythm. Born and raised in Memphis, there was no way for Dickey to escape this influence and his band turned to rock 'n' roll.

"I met Elvis when I was still in high school and had put out my first single on a fly-by-night label. The strange thing was that it out-sold Elvis' first single on Sun Records. I was visiting at his house when someone there suggested he give me a helping hand. He replied, 'Dickey's off to a better start than I was when I began; I think he'll do all right on his own.'

"I went to his house several times after that and always brought a girl with me that I was trying to snow." This time Dickey's smile went past his eyes and his mouth turned up mysteriously in a way faintly reminiscent of the Mona Lisa's, as he

added, "And you know, it usually worked."

Unlike many entertainers, Dickey Lee is endowed with an unusual shyness. Today, having reached a point in his career where he is recognized in supermarkets and on the

streets, he tries to keep away from the limelight once offstage.

"I don't like to be the center of attention except when I'm on stage. I've got my hang-ups; I guess you could say a semi-inferiority complex. Sometimes I get a little scared



PHOTO AL STEVENSON

because I think I'm not what a lot of people think I am. I never was hung-up on the star trip and I get embarrassed when people try to put me on a pedestal—I don't belong there." Dickey admits he had little confidence in himself when he started out in the music business and was consequently led around by the nose by the pop disc jockeys. When they wanted any type of free promotion, Dickey was one of the first to be called. It was the typical story of when you're hot, you're hot, and when you're not nobody gives a damn.

One person who had little time for teenage idols in Dickey's early recording days in Memphis was Jack Clement, now one of Nashville's most successful producers.

"Jack was an engineer there and at the time I thought he was a real bastard. We would go into the studio feeling like heroes and Jack wouldn't pay much attention to us. While we were recording he would be sitting there reading a comic book or something, and it really deflated us. But I think that has been one of the things that has really helped me in this business, because every time I let myself get out of hand, Jack comes along and accurately tells me where I am, which has aided me in maturing."

When Jack Clement opened his own studio in Beaumont, Texas, he became Dickey's producer and was responsible for his number one pop hits, "Patches," and "I Saw The Light." Dickey became involved with production work in Memphis, and Jack eventually persuaded him to work for him in his studios and publishing companies. Dickey had no desire to record again, but ended up doing a session with Jack "just for kicks." The feel for country music which had been lying dormant began to flow, and although his first two singles received little attention, the next four songs established him as a legitimate country artist.

"I don't follow any set pattern in choosing the songs I cut—I just look for good material. 'Ashes Of Love' is an old country tune, while 'A Never Ending Song Of Love,' was written by a pop artist a few years ago and was a big rock hit. I respect a lot of the old country tunes, but that doesn't mean I can't appreciate the new ones coming down the line."

Last month Dickey began working with Charley Pride, and will be doing more dates with him this year. He considers it a great opportunity due to the additional exposure he will gain, but what he really would like to do most is get on the college circuit.

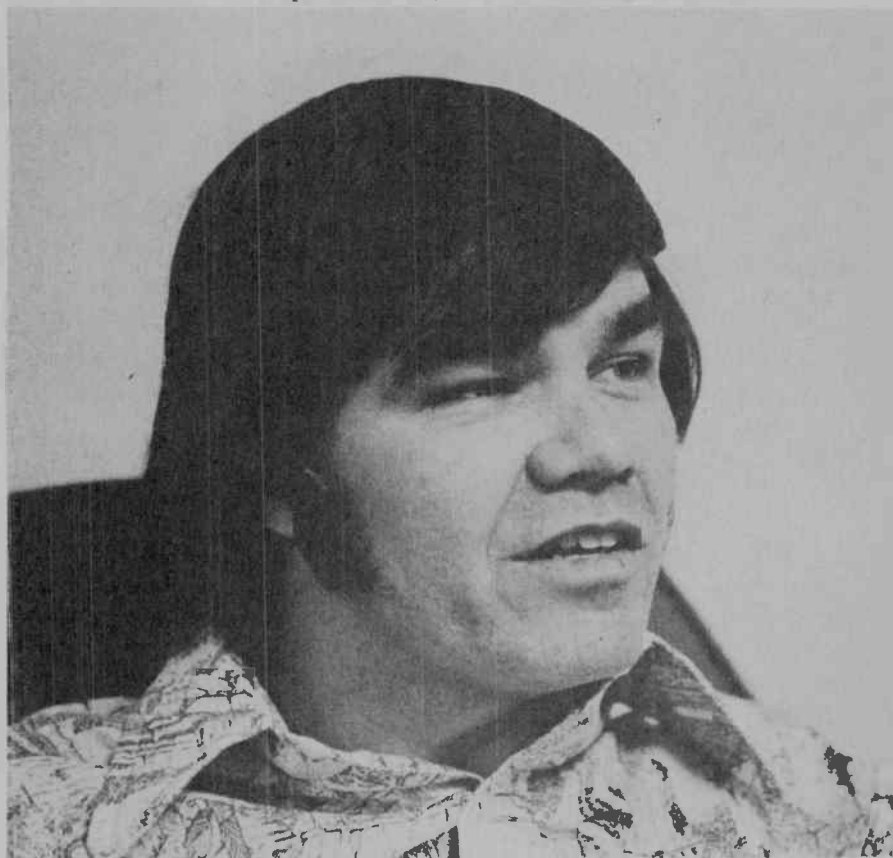
"I think country music could gain a wider acceptance in the college market if it was presented better. I've heard more great artists put on bad shows simply because they were forced to use faulty sound systems. I guess I'm on a crusade to upgrade the sound quality of country music. Not that I consider myself to be a savior—other guys are doing the same thing, like Freddy Weller and Joe Stampley. People like Johnny Cash and Glen Campbell have gone a long way to bring respectability to country music by the way they present it, and by the other people they have gotten involved in."

There is now an ever growing stable of artists who have made smooth transitions from rock 'n' roll to country. Dickey Lee must surely rank among them. Early success in rock 'n' roll has not lessened his stature as a performer in the eyes of country music fans. Dickey Lee is above all a professional,

whose years of experience in the music business have enabled him to score swift successes in country music. Like many of his contemporaries, he may well be just on the verge of his greatest musical achievements.



Dickey Lee. Sometimes referred to as the "world's oldest teenager."



For a while he had no desire to record again. Then he worked on a session with Jack Clement, and the feel for country music began to flow.

PHOTOS MARSHALL FALLWELL, JR.

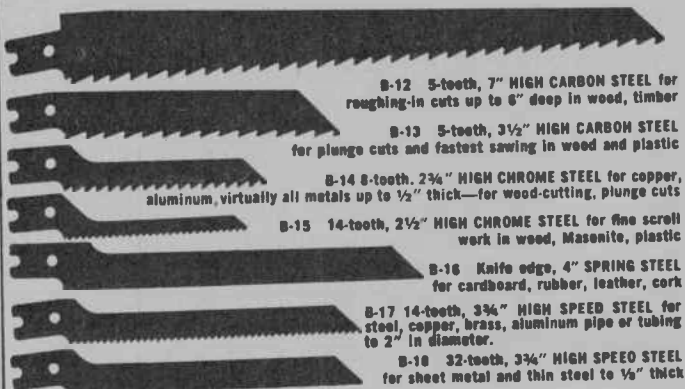


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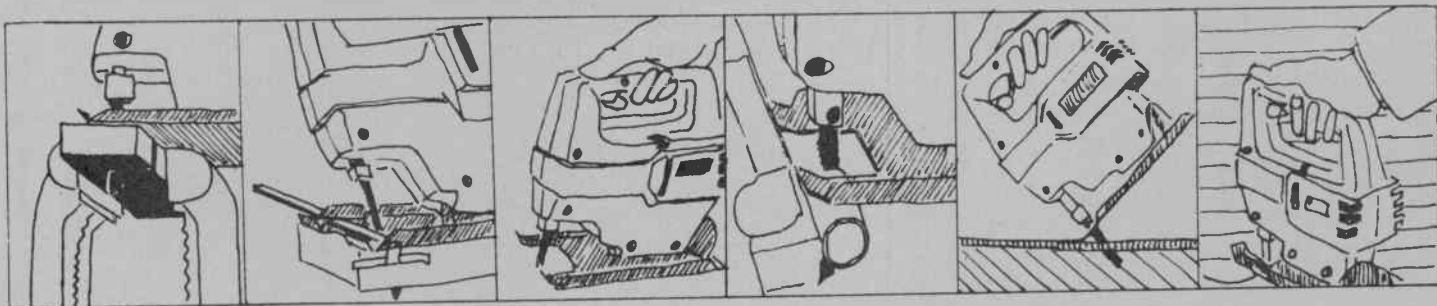
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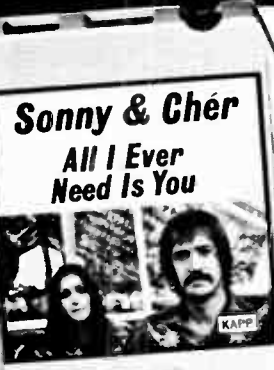
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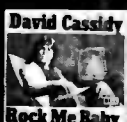
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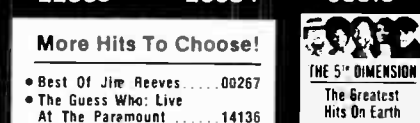
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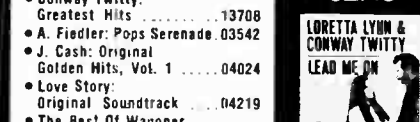
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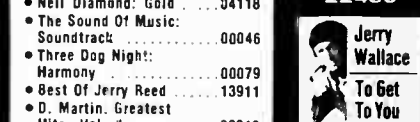
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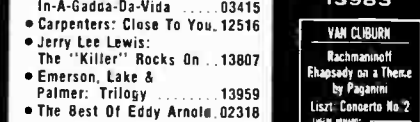
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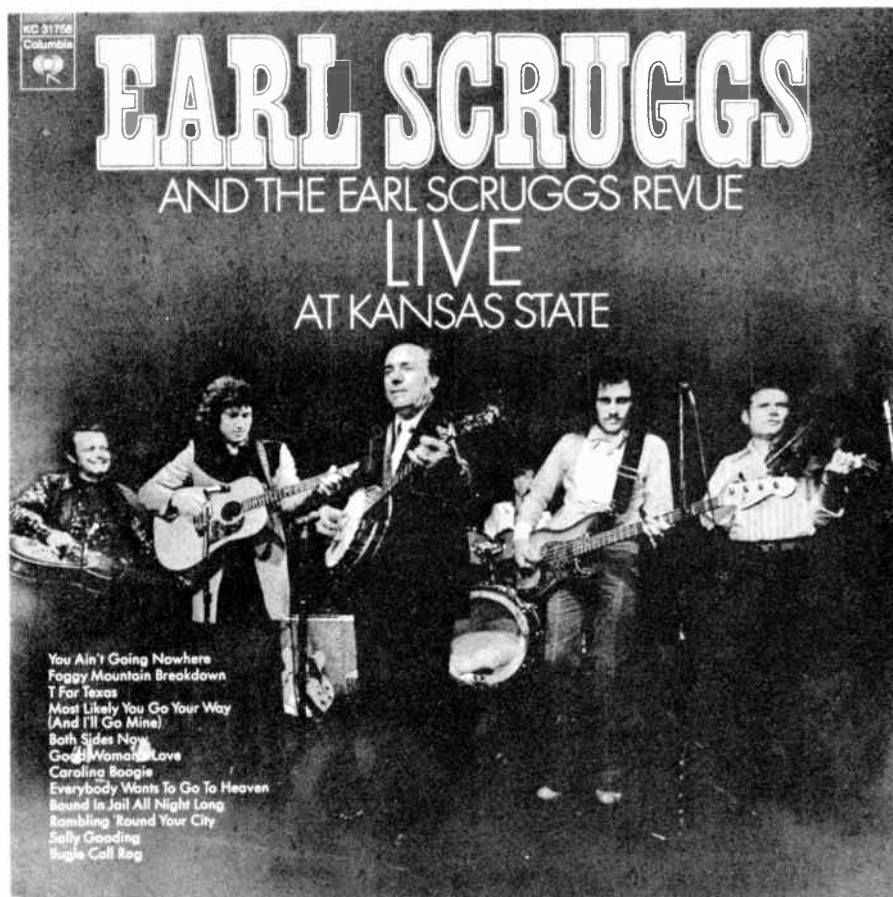
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Records

Earl Scruggs and the Earl Scruggs Revue Live . . .



There's a thoroughly brilliant instrumental of Joni Mitchell's pop folk standard, "Both Sides Now" and another helping of non-vocal excitement in "Carolina Boogie." Here, pianist Bob Wilson really gets a chance to show his stuff.

Although the liner notes could give you the impression that this group just might blast you with rock sounds once struck with the notion, only Jody Maphis' drums could be so construed, though more often than not they serve as a reflection of the Revue's energy rather than as an independent source. Vassar Clements' violin and John Graves' Dobro are just where they ought to be, every time. Randy Scruggs' guitar work is gifted and appropriate, while Gary's bass and harmonica also seem a logical extension of, and complement to, Dad's pickin'.

The cut "Sally Gooding" (with narration by Earl) explains what this band's all about: bringing the ease of down home up to the higher energy and fidelity levels of today. The extended version of the Scruggs clan heard on *Live At Kansas State* affords everyone the opportunity to dig in and enjoy country music with the spirit in which it was originally created.

ROBERT MITCHELL

Charley Pride

The Incomparable Charley Pride
RCA Camden CAS-2584

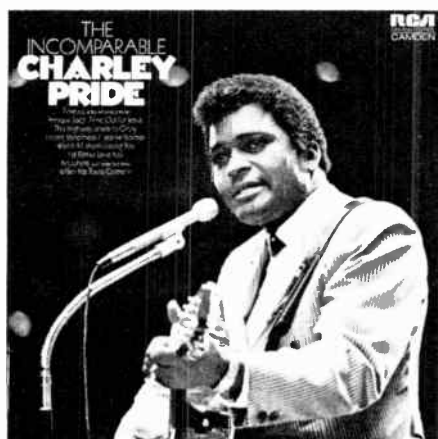
On this particular reissue album, the arrangements may be a little too well-oiled, but Charley Pride's voice is the same fine and mellow instrument which followers of country music have come to know and anticipate over the stretch of his 17 albums. *The Incomparable Charley Pride* is his 18th, and it belongs more to his record company than to the artist, as it is a "Best Of" album in

Earl Scruggs & The Earl Scruggs Revue Live At Kansas State Columbia KC 31758

With so much trading-off going on between country musicians and the rest of the popular music community these days, it seems like an opportune moment for the second Earl Scruggs Revue LP to hit the record racks. Their first was a studio effort, deriving much of its excitement from the interplay between Scruggs, his two sons, his basic band and guest artists. On this follow-up LP they are more comfortably a family unit, drawing upon the enthusiasm of a live college audience that knows what it likes.

Sure, they give you yet another version of Scruggs' first and still best-known song, "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," but that's only one in a series of climaxes. While son Gary may at first seem more up-front (because he handles both the lead vocals and most of the narrative transitions between songs), it's father Earl and his banjo that are really in command throughout. Together they insure us a country good-time feeling while various other musical elements are explored.

Perhaps the strangest track is "Everybody Wants To Go To Heaven." While blues is no stranger to the country tradition, this shade is very much more South Side, Chicago than Music Row, Nashville.



the most traditional sense of the word. The selected titles include some of Charley's biggest sellers, with a strong percentage of them coming from his early records.

In typical budget-line fashion, Camden does not supply data on session personnel or on anything else that might tell you who (besides Charley and "vocal accompaniment by The Jordanares") is on the album, or what instruments they played. It's not going to make or break this album, since most "Best Of" albums are bought by collectors who probably already have most of the cuts on other albums. They usually buy these collections because the cuts chosen are the kind people can't forget and want to hear more often without picking and playing off several records.

So if you like Charley Pride and already have 17 of his albums, chances are you'll still want this one, too, because we're all lazy, and the Camden people have done our picking for us. The bill of fare includes "Time (You're Not A Friend Of Mine)," "Jeanie Norman," "Anywhere (Just Inside Your Arms)," "When The Trains Come In," "Piroque Joe," "Instant Loneliness," "This Highway Leads To Glory," and another churchy chestnut, "Time Out For Jesus."

Charley got where he is because he was determined and because he has a special talent for expressing warmth and conviction. He conveys nothing but good vibrations through purified pipes. Yes, I guess you could call him "incomparable."

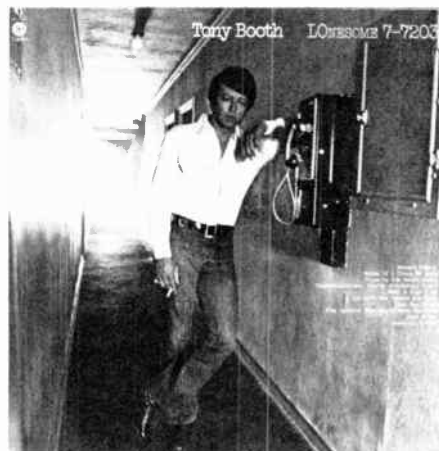
LINDA SOLOMON

Tony Booth

Lonesome 7-7203
Capitol ST 11126

It was September 11, 1972, and Johnny Rodriguez had just recorded "Pass Me By." "The music industry gets smart and intelligent," observed Tom T. Hall, who was present. "Everybody cuts with big strings and voices and tubas, and then somebody like Buck Owens or Loretta Lynn or Mel Street comes along and wipes the whole thing out." This phenomenon is what Tom T. calls "getting back to basics." Enter Tony Booth.

If anything in your background enables you to identify with that particular style of country music



some call "Texas honky-tonk shuffle stomp," you'll find this album pretty basic. You don't have to have ever lived in Texas, either—it could be something as universal as hearing the wind blow through the grass or a tree (a New Hampshire pine or a Mississippi scrub oak), or having your body reverberate with the bump-bump-bump of car wheels going across expansion joints in a cement highway, or feeling lonely somewhere—anywhere. Of course, if you have ever lived in Texas, I don't have to explain all that.

The fundamental elements of this music evolved out of the Bob Wills influence that peaked before the Nashville Sound had either a name or its present substance. Other people have been involved, but Ray Price had a lot to do with this evolution. Then there was Buck Owens, who gave the approach a

specific identity with his own special twist. It's fitting that Buck heads the production efforts of this album (he also wrote or co-wrote seven of the songs) because of his prominence in establishing Bakersfield's reputation as a country music center. This is the kind of country music that has kept the West in western music ('scuse us for using your slogan, KRSD).

Tony's gigantic success with the "Lonesome 7-7203" single confirms Tom T.'s assertion that the country music fan will never let the music get too far from the basics; this entire album salutes those foundations. Fiddle, steel, and vocal background fills inspired by the prairie wind, flattop licks that remind us that Mexico is just across the Rio Grande, walking bass and shuffling drum rhythms that possess the drifting spirit of tumbleweeds and cowboys—this is as "country" in its own way as the Smoky Mountain influence on Roy Acuff or the North Woods influence on Dave Dudley.

Nineteen seventy-two was the year a lot of good talent broke into the national and even worldwide limelight. Only time can tell how many and which of them will stay there as long as country acts can, but it seems a safe bet to expect Tony Booth to be around.

BILL LITTLETON



Tommy Overstreet
Heaven Is My Woman's Love
Dot Dos 26003

Tommy Overstreet is from Texas, his father is retired from the insur-

ance company that owns the Grand Ole Opry; Gene Austin was an uncle of Tommy's; and, like all of us who are trying to adjust to hearing college students call us "Sir," he was a teenager in the well-they-seemed-wild-back-then Fifties. He is also one of the hundreds of performers who have worked long and hard (often with little credit) to bring country music through the Sixties and into the Seventies.

If you've been in the same county with a radio receiver during the past several months, you've heard the title song. You've also heard Tommy sing "A Seed Before The Rose" and you're familiar with "To Get To You" and "It's Gonna Take A Little Bit Longer" (although you're in for a couple of tempo surprises on the latter), but the rest of the package is probably new ground.

Unlike the frequent perils of unexplored territory, this route travels nicely. "Your Love (Is Just Like Sugar)" smacks a little of ducktails and hotrods; "How Do I Tell You Goodbye" is the timeless sort of ballad that keeps the soul of country music alive; "Baby's Gone" is one of those melodic reincarnations that seems familiar upon first hearing—it's also one of those sad songs that could make a happy instrumental—and "Love Don't Live Here Anymore" is a well-constructed, well-performed number, but somehow it lacks enough oomph to make the cut stand you on your head (as most of the remainder of the album does.)

The merging of different forms of music is illustrated in "Forget Him" and "I Believe In You" which get the point across perhaps better than all the recent volumes of discussion on this topic, and "Don't Be Afraid To Give Me Love" is a heavy love ballad (to quote a line: "What's left to say?").

BILL LITTLETON

Tommy Cash

The Best Of Tommy Cash,
Volume 1
Epic KE 31995

By the time an artist gets to his very first "Best Of" album, the public has



pretty much made the decision whether or not the "Volume One" after the title is really a threat or a promise. Tommy Cash has realized his promise, and there's more where it came from for future "Best Of" LPs. Right now, we have an impressive first one to enjoy.

If the biography seems a bit familiar, (born in Mississippi County, Arkansas, the son of a Baptist minister whose wife is the daughter of a Methodist minister . . . growing up in an Arkansas town just north of Memphis . . .), it's because Tommy is Johnny's brother. And though his first hit in 1969, "Six White Horses," made him sound very much like the elder Cash, Tommy hasn't really made it in the long run on his brother's coattails. More like in spite of them.

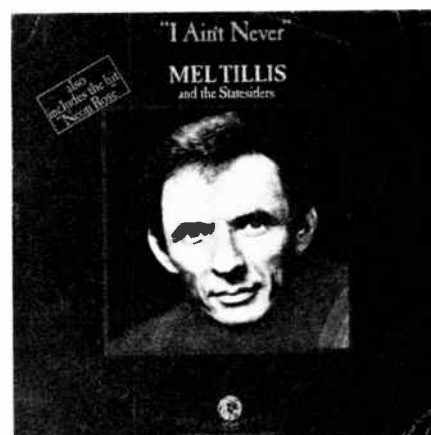
Tommy did appear with Johnny on stage, but he was not a regular of the show like June Carter Cash, Carl Perkins, or The Tennessee Three. He also opened shows for Ray Price, George Jones and Sonny James, until he could quite honestly be called a headliner in his own right. To tell the truth, Tommy would appear to have more of a flair for love songs than does brother John. He has worked his act into shape in a very personal way, and one that owes little to family ties.

His latest hit, "Listen," which leads off this album, is a strong indication of how much Tommy can do with a love song. It also shows how his own songwriting talent has progressed. With the repetition of a simple, yet beautiful phrase ("Every sound you hear means I love you . . ."), Cash puts across an un-

mistakable winner with a smoothness that never gets too slick.

Just as Tommy has outgrown his Johnny-like stance, producer Glenn Sutton now seems to believe that Tommy doesn't need the obligatory ease of soppy strings and a painted-smile chorus to keep the interest building. On "Listen" and most of his more recent tunes, the support is more understated and seems much more successful. If this is how Glenn is going to handle Tommy in the future, the next "Greatest Hits" LP from *this* Mr. Cash should be an even greater overall success than this first "lookin' over the shoulder" offering.

ROBERT MITCHELL



Mel Tillis
I Ain't Never
MGM SE-4870

In Mel Tillis' way of turning a tune, there has always been a mild touch of Jim Reeves and Webb Pierce. However, on his last two records Mel seems to be definitely forging his own identity. *I Ain't Never* is stamped with a very personal touch.

Mel has come up the ropes as a performer and writer over the years and he gets better and better at both. If you have ever seen him perform live, you will know that there is really no way to bring Tillis across on record like he comes across in person. But on the LP both Mel and producer Jim Vienneau come close to achieving the raw appeal of singer and style, and Tillis' backup group, the Statesiders, make an excellent contribution of a free-wheeling fiddler and lusty steel guitarist.

Tammy Wynette . . . Glen Campbell . . .

Of the ten tunes on this album, there are six that really stand out. The title tune, penned by Tillis and Pierce, does get the album off to a rousing start with the singer's rough-edged voice setting a blithe uptempo mood—enhanced by a sparkling ragtime piano arrangement. It is one of two hit singles on the LP. The second is the infectious but strikingly different “Neon Rose,” a complex and intriguing number. I have listened to it several times and I like it more each time. It is marked by some nice pop moments, yet remains as country as country can be.

Mel is famous for his honky-tonk vocalizing. You get a fine sampling of it here, especially in “Over The Hill,” a low-keyed, but most enjoyable cut. But let's not forget Mel's other strong staple: the “crying in my beer” numbers. The tone is soft, the spirit down, and the soul exposed as Mel tells us the story of an empty mailbox and a silent telephone that makes a man realize too late that “The Sweetest Tie” was the one he didn't bind.

ELLIS NASSOUR



Tammy Wynette
My Man
Epic KE-31717

There has always been something about Tammy Wynette that has set her slightly apart from the rest of country music's singing queens. Her songs deal with the usual themes—love, heartaches, happiness, loneliness—but there's an element inherent in her treatment and delivery that hits a chord of poignancy which can only be de-

scribed as exquisite.

The eleven songs included here are all love songs à la Wynette. There are the celebrative songs: a fine rendition of Donna Fargo's monster hit of last year, “The Happiest Girl In The Whole U.S.A.,” done here with a simpler, more down home arrangement than the original, falls into this category, as do “Hold On (To The Love I Got)” and “Loving You Could Never Be Better,” which, by the way, also features some especially nice pedal steel.

Then there are the warning songs: “You Can't Hang On” and “Gone With Another Man” are both pieces of cautionary advice to a wayward guy, the former explaining that unless he starts putting out some love, he's gonna find himself alone one day soon. “Good Lovin',” on the other hand, is a warning to women with a tendency toward resting on their laurels (“*Good lovin' keeps a home together . . . keeps your man around at night*”). And, one of the album's best tunes, Dallas Frazier's “Walk Softly On Bridges,” directs its advice at both parties: “Don't slam the door behind you.”

The melancholy songs are represented by “The Bridge Of Love,” a break-up ditty centered around a “London Bridge Is Falling Down” motif, and a plaintive little piece featuring an unobtrusive string chart, “Til I Get It Right,” that's currently making it in a nice way on radio.

And, of course, there are the dedication songs, accounted for here by “Things I Love To Do” and the title cut, “My Man.”

Poignancy is certainly the right word, and *My Man*, the latest chapter in Tammy Wynette's running definition of that term, contains some of her finest moments on record.

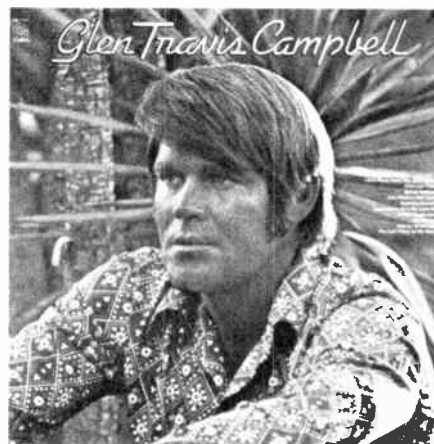
NICK TOSCHES

Glen Campbell
Glen Travis Campbell
Capitol SW-11117

Let me say that I had been taking Glen Campbell too much for granted lately. I mean, he is always good; his records are always pleasant and

interesting. But this new album is excellent entertainment, something that will stand on its own for many years to come.

Many have felt that while Campbell was involved in his television variety show, his records suffered. Maybe. The show is now, sorry to say, a thing of the past, but there is still a Glen Campbell and he is still making records. Campbell has re-discovered his music—every song on this LP creates a spark of excitement. The music is a combination of soft country, dignified and sophisticated pop, and sweet rock. A



blurb on the jacket calls this recording “a new musical path for Glen Travis Campbell based on the strong foundations of his past.” It is an apt description.

The album begins with “I Will Never Pass This Way Again,” one of the most inspiring tunes ever to come our way. Credit, of course, is due to writer Ronnie Gaylord, but it is impossible to overlook Campbell's stirring reading. Campbell follows with “One Last Time,” a heart-tugging story of a love affair that is ending—or is it? Then there are two ballads, Dickey Lee's “She Thinks I Still Care” and Dallas Frazier's “Just For What I Am,” followed by Tom Paxton's “The Last Thing On My Mind.”

Campbell comes up with two songs that were the rage in the fifties—Roy Orbison's “Running Scared” and the Frank Sinatra hit “All My Tomorrows.” In Campbell's hands these two songs may become the rage all over again. I heard that Campbell is a fan of Leon Russell, the rock singer/pianist. He pays tribute to him on this album with

George Jones

"My Cricket" and the lush background adds just the perfect seasoning to make this cut a standout.

Glen Campbell, with all his many and significant achievements, is a multi-faceted entertainer who could, at this stage in his career of recordings, television and motion pictures, sit back and rest on his laurels. On *Glen Travis Campbell* the singer is telling us that he's still going to make waves.

ELLIS NASSOUR

George Jones

A Picture Of Me (Without You)
Epic KE 31718

There are very few artists in the country field these days who spend quite as much time on my turn-

table as King George. Not only because he has those dozens of albums out, either; I really don't think he could make a bad record if he tried.

The title tune is yet another George Jones classic of the sort that inevitably makes you turn up your car radio just a notch. A beautiful melody with nicely understated production (Billy Sherrill gets better and better); an instant hit. But the album doesn't deliver just a hit and ten filler songs—George Jones albums seldom do. Almost every cut here is George at his best, which is mighty good indeed. And, more, he's beginning to try out more modern-sounding material, with unusual chord changes and irregular phrasing, and you know what? It sounds fine.

The high spots? There's George's moving reading of a fine Tom T. Hall song, "Second Handed Flowers," which makes me want to hear him record more of The Story-



teller's songs. My personal favorite is "That Singing Friend Of Mine," a tribute to a dead country singer. It's not about anybody in particular, and I suspect it's so touching because you can consider it a tribute to all your favorites who have passed on, from Hank Williams to Cowboy Copas to Johnny Horton to Jim Reeves to . . . Then there's "She Loves Me (Right Out Of My Mind)," which would make a fine single similar to Merle Haggard's "It's Not Love."

Look, a Rolls Royce is a Rolls Royce and a George Jones album is a George Jones album. With each new model there are changes, but what keeps the customers coming back for more is the fact that they're getting the best there is. Even if you can't afford a Rolls (or if you're satisfied with the one you've got), you should pick up *A Picture Of Me (Without You)*.

ED WARD

Recent Album Releases

Statler Brothers	The Statler Brothers Sing Country Symphonies in E Major	Mercury SR-61374
Faron Young	This Time The Hurtin's On Me	Mercury SR-61376
Lester Flatt	Foggy Mountain Breakdown	RCA LSP-4789
Roy Orbison	The All-Time Greatest Hits of Roy Orbison	Monument KZG-31484
Roy Orbison	Memphis	MGM SE-4867
Ray Pillow	Slippin' Around With Ray Pillow	Mega M31-1017
Freddy Weller	The Roadmaster	Columbia KC-31769
Alex Harvey	Souvenirs	Capitol ST-11128
Roy Acuff	Why Is Roy Acuff	Hickory LPS-162
Chet Atkins	Finger Pickin' Good	Camden CAS-2600
Skeeter Davis	Skeeter Davis—The Hillbilly Singer	RCA LSP-4818
Floyd Cramer	The Best Of The Class Of	RCA LSP-4821
Sam Neely	Loving You Just Crossed My Mind	Capitol ST-11097
Charlie Louvin	The Best of Charlie Louvin	Capitol ST-11112
Dolly Parton	My Favorite Songwriter Porter Wagoner	RCA LSP-4752
Marty Robbins	I've Got A Woman's Love	Columbia KC-31628
Susan Raye	Love Sure Feels Good In My Heart	Capitol ST-11135
Mel Street	Borrowed Angel	Metromedia MCS-5001
Jerry Lee Lewis	Who's Gonna Play This Old Piano	Mercury SR6-1366
Kenny Price	Sea Of Heartbreak & Other Don Gibson Hits	RCA LSP-4839
Jack Greene and Jeannie Seely	Two For The Show	Decca DL7-5392
Webb Pierce	I'm Gonna Be A Swinger	Decca DL7-5393

RECORD HUNTING?

If any of these albums (or 8-track tapes) are not available at your local record store, you can get them from COUNTRY MUSIC. Just send us a list of the titles you want, plus \$4.98 per album or \$5.98 per tape cartridge and 25 cents postage per album or tape. (Monument 31484 is \$5.98 per record and \$6.98 per tape.) Send check or money order only to:

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Are you playing your records or ruining them?

If you're like most music listeners, you never think about your records after putting them on your record player.

You just sit back and enjoy the music.

Chances are you'd be less relaxed, if you knew that your records might be losing something with every play.

Like the high notes.

It's something to think about.

Especially when you consider how many hundreds or even thousands of dollars you have invested in your record collection. And will be investing in the future.

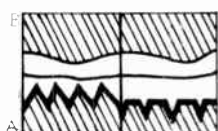
What happens during play.

Even the cheapest record changer can bring its tonearm to the record and lift it off again. But what happens during the twenty minutes or so of playing time is something else.

The stylus is responding with incredible speed to the roller-coaster contours of the stereo grooves. This action recreates all the music you hear, whether it's the wall-shaking cacophony of a rock band or the richness of a symphony orchestra.

The higher the frequency of the

music, the more rapidly the contours change, and the sharper the peaks the stylus has to trace. If the tonearm bears down too heavily, the diamond-tipped stylus won't go around those soft-vinyl peaks. Instead, it will lop them off.



High frequency peaks can be lopped off as in A right. Less fragile low frequency contours are shown in B.

The record will look unchanged, but your piccolos will never sound quite the same again. Nor will Jascha Heifetz.

It's all up to the tonearm.

What does it take for the stylus to travel the obstacle course of the stereo groove without a trace that it's been there? It takes a precision tonearm. One that can allow today's finest cartridges to track optimally at low pressures of one gram or less. For flawless tracking, the tonearm should be perfectly balanced with the weight of the cartridge, and must maintain the stylus pressure equally on each side wall of the stereo groove. And in order to maintain this equal pressure during play

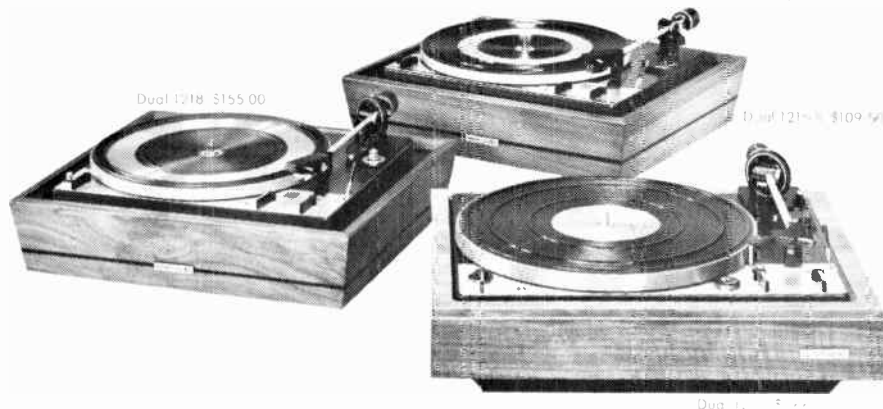
the tonearm must not introduce any drag. This requires extremely low friction pivot bearings.

There is much more to the design and engineering of tonearms and turntables. But this should be sufficient to give you the idea.

Dual: the music lovers' preference.

By now you probably understand why serious music lovers won't play their precious records on anything but a precision turntable. And the most serious of these people, the readers of the leading music magazines, buy more Duals than any other make of quality turntable.

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(If I'm Still In Love With You)
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TAKE THESE CHAINS FROM
MY HEART
I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY
HALF AS MUCH
THERE'LL BE NO TEAR DROPS
TONIGHT
I COULD NEVER BE ASHAMED
OF YOU
MAY YOU NEVER BE ALONE
MANSION OF THE HILL
MY HEART WOULD KNOW
MOVE IT OVER
SETTIN' THE WOODS ON FIRE

WHY DON'T YOU LOVE ME
HONKY TONKIN'
HOWLIN' AT THE MOON
JAMBALAYA (On The Bayou)
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS
KAW-LIGA
NOBODY'S LONESOME FOR ME
ROOTIE TOOTIE
I'LL NEVER GET OUT OF THIS
WORLD ALIVE
MY BUCKET'S GOT A HOLE IN IT
HONKY TONK BLUES
LONG GONE LONESOME BLUES
WEDDING BELLS
RAMBLIN' MAN
LOVESICK BLUES
LONESOME WHISTLE
MOANIN' THE BLUES
HEY, GOOD LOOKIN'

THE BLUES COME AROUND
LOST HIGHWAY
LOW DOWN BLUES
WEARY BLUES FROM WAITIN'
I CAN'T ESCAPE FROM YOU
YOU'RE GONNA CHANGE
I'VE JUST TOLD MAMA GOODBYE
WHY SHOULD WE TRY
ANYMORE
I'M SORRY FOR YOU, MY FRIEND
I HEARD YOU CRYING IN YOUR
SLEEP
A HOUSE WITHOUT LOVE
MY SON CALLS
MY SWEET LOVE AIN'T AROUND
I'M A LONG GONE DADDY
I WON'T BE HOME NO MORE
BABY, WE'RE REALLY IN LOVE

Hank Williams died in 1953; he was only 30 years old. He had not even reached the peak of his career, yet he was recognized as "the king of country and western music. His death was a tragedy. It meant that America had lost one of its greatest artists, for Hank Williams had brought joy and pleasure to millions . . . had truly interpreted "country and western music" so greatly that his influence is evident in many country and western artists popular today.

In memory of this unsurpassed artist, here is a wonderful memorial Album produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, for whom Hank Williams recorded exclusively. Hear Hank Williams sing—as only he could—such haunting hits as *Cold, Cold Heart*; *Your Cheatin' Heart*; *Move it on Over*; *Hey, Good Lookin'*; *Jambalaya*; *Honky Tonkin'*; *Howlin' At The Moon*; *Lonesome Whistle*; *You're Gonna Change (Or I'm Gonna Leave)*; *A House Without Love*; and dozens more!

Truly a fitting memorial to Hank Williams are these four 12-inch LP records containing 48 hits! Faithfully reproducing every note and nuance of his homey, haunting delivery, these records will thrill and delight you as only Hank Williams' voice and music can.

And best of all, you can hear these records in your own home for 10 days at no risk! You can sit in the comfort of your own living room while you listen to the hit songs previously mentioned *plus I'm So Lonesome I could Cry*; *There'll Be No Teardrops Tonight*; *Rootie Tootie*; *Lovesick Blues*; and still more—most of which were Hank's own compositions.

Yes, play these fabulous records in your own home over and over, to your heart's content! Then, if for any reason you decide you don't want to keep them, return them in 10 days for a full refund of your purchase price . . . no questions asked.

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Hi-Fi Corner

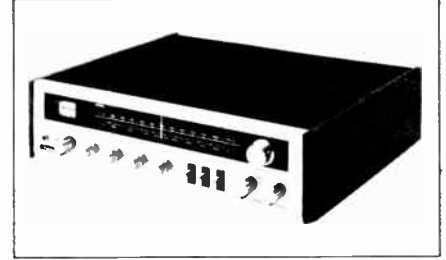
Tuners, Amplifiers and Receivers



Model 1120 console amplifier from Marantz



Pioneer model QX-4000 four channel receiver



Panasonic model SA-5700 60-watt stereo receiver

Realizing that there are people for whom the words “stereo system” mean the thing which sits in the corner of a living room, we present the following guide to its basic components. This is an explanation of what those baffling boxes do. Once you understand that, the choice is yours, and we wish you good luck and good listening.

A hi-fi system's *tuner* is the electrical equivalent of one third of that old radio you have on top of your refrigerator. It's the first third... it can pick up radio signals from the air, but it can't do much with them, and you can't hear anything.

An *amplifier* is the middle section of a regular radio. It takes the weak signals from a tuner, makes them stronger and has controls for modifying the sound before feeding the signals to the final third—the speakers—where you can finally hear something.

A stereo system may have a separate tuner and amplifier, but most people prefer the convenience of a *receiver*, which combines a tuner and amplifier in one “box.” People less concerned with convenience may stick to separate tuners and amps, rather than a receiver, but everything we say in this column about either tuners or amplifiers, also applies to receivers.

Tuners

A tuner is a fairly complicated

device which performs a fairly simple function. In picking one there are certain specifications to watch out for:

1. *Sensitivity*: the ability to receive radio signals. This figure is expressed in μV (microvolts) and represents the minimum signal that can be picked up from an antenna and still sound good. The very best units may go as low as 1.2 μV .

2. *Selectivity*: this figure, expressed in dB, shows a tuner's ability to select either of two stations close on the dial, without picking up both at the same time. The higher the dB number the better, with 50 being about right.

3. *Capture ratio*: also expressed in dB, but with smaller numbers being better. It represents a tuner's ability to suppress noise, as well as to ignore the weaker of two stations broadcasting on the same frequency.

4. *Separation*: this shows a receiver's ability to keep the left and right signals in an FM stereo broadcast from overlapping. The higher the number the better, with 25 to 40 dB being typical at various audible frequencies.

A number of tuners and receivers have automatic tuning devices to insure that a station is tuned in properly. Some hardware remains silent until the signal is perfect; others use meters and/or lights to tell you things are OK. These are a genuine help. Tuners usually have a switch or knob position to select *AFC*, an automatic frequency con-

trol circuit that is switched in *after* a station is selected, to enable a tuner to follow a particular station should it “drift” slightly off the proper frequency.

A growing number of tuners and receivers, from such manufacturers as Sherwood, Magnavox, JVC, and Heath, have *digital* frequency read-out devices, which show an illuminated number to represent the station, rather than having a long cluttered dial. Very sexy, and very easy to use, but they tend to be expensive. An even sexier tuner is Sony's new \$1000 wonder which has 100 buttons on the front panel—one for each possible FM frequency. It also has a computer to pick out which stations are good enough to listen to.

Another useful feature is a *muting control* which makes the tuner ignore weak stations, and turns off annoying noise between stations. The new and elaborate TX-9100 tuner from Pioneer even has two different muting levels, for different degrees of signal acceptability.

Amplifiers

An amplifier's job is to amplify, to make weak signals stronger, so its most important specification is power. This is expressed in watts. In buying a component system, raw power isn't everything. Pick out a speaker first, and then get an amplifier strong enough to play it loud enough in your listening room. Speakers vary widely in efficiency, and two models, even with the same

Classified

price, might require 3 watts or 100 watts to play at the same volume in the same room. For most speakers, and most rooms, 10 to 25 watts *per channel* should be sufficient.

Power ratings should also specify a speaker-matching *impedance*. This is usually 8 ohms. Make sure that when you are comparing amplifier specifications, you are comparing equivalent specifications. Wattage ratings also should be accompanied by a *distortion* figure. Distortion, basically fuzzy sound, generally increases as power goes up. There are two kinds of distortion, harmonic and intermodulation, and both should be as low as possible, below 1% for real hi-fi sound.

Two basic knobs found on everything from cheapie portables to high powered components are *volume* and *balance*. Normally you leave the balance control in the center position to provide equal volume from each speaker, but if you sit closer to the left speaker you will likely want to boost the sound coming from the right, and vice versa.

Bass and *treble* controls vary the power in the low and high frequency ranges respectively. Don't be afraid to use them. There is nothing sacred about the center "flat" position on the dials. More and more components, like the new Marantz 2270, expand the tone control system by adding a *mid-range* control to handle frequencies between bass and treble.

Besides these conventional knobs, most amps and receivers have switches labeled high- and low-*filter*. The high filter is used, either with or instead of the treble control, to lessen the effects of record scratches, tape hiss, vocal sibilants and the like. At the other end, the low filter will reduce turntable and tape deck rumble, AC line hum, and breathy microphone blasts.

Stereo FM reception ordinarily requires much greater signal strength than mono FM for equivalent noise-free performance. Often, a signal that sounds fine when listened to monophonically will be reproduced with much background noise, if stereo listening is attempted. A number of manufacturers, notably Panasonic, have solved this problem with a "high-blend" circuit. When noisy stereo FM is

encountered, the use of this circuit (activated by a front panel switch) causes significant cancellation of noise while maintaining adequate stereo separation.

The *loudness* switch boosts bass and treble when you are playing the amp at low volume. This compensates for the tendency of the human ear to hear mostly mid-range sound when the volume goes down. It's best not to use loudness compensation at other than low volumes, because high-power high frequencies can really wipe out a speaker.

The *tape monitor* switch is useful if you have a recorder or deck equipped with three heads—one for erase, and separate (rather than dual-purpose) heads for record and playback. While you are making a recording, the speakers will normally reproduce the sounds being fed to the tape machine, but if you switch the tape monitor control from "source" to "tape", the system will then play, with a slight time delay, the signal from the recorder's playback head, or in other words, the sound as it was recorded a moment before. This lets you check the quality of the recording right away, and it can save a lot of time if anything is going wrong.

Another feature found on receivers and many amps is a *speaker selector* switch, so you can set up speakers in different rooms and choose the set you want to play. Most equipment can handle two pairs simultaneously, and with the proper wiring can be made to power three or four pairs.

Receivers, tuners, and amplifiers run the gamut from the simple, yet very dependable Dynaco and AR models, to Kenwood's new "Jumbo" which even includes a shut-off timer, reverb unit, and rhythm generator. If you study the manufacturers' literature and talk to knowledgeable friends and hi-fi store salesmen, you can surely get a model to suit your needs and your budget.

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

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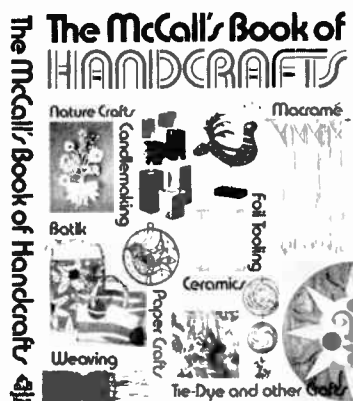
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Books



The McCall's Book Of Handcrafts

by Nanina Comstock and the Editors of McCall's Needlework & Crafts Publications
Random House, \$10.00

Everyone has a bit of the craftsman in him (her), and if the recent trend towards making your own is any indication, it's eager to come out with a little coaxing. *The McCall's Book Of Handcrafts* is the perfect provocation. With its assistance you can attempt anything—a macrame belt, a tie-dye tablecloth, a candle. And it doesn't have to turn out like the lopsided clay ashtray you labored over in grade school, because here are detailed pictures of what the end results are going to look like and simple, diagramed, step-by-step instructions for you to follow.

So just choose your discipline—it may be corn cob plaques one week and batik prints the next (There are more projects included on these pages than you could accomplish in a year of serious crafting)—and in no time at all, your friends will be calling you a hippie.

Aside from working up a clear, well-ordered method of presentation—for every undertaking there are lists of equipment and materials and sets of general and specific instructions—the authoresses of this Learn-And-Make book have made the whole package very appealing

to the eye. There are many illustrations, and the colors are unusually fresh and bright. You could put it on your coffee table alongside the craft clay cigarette box you made with its help. But more than a fashion item, this guide (for both beginning and experienced craftsmen) is a cheerful invitation to give your talents a whirl and make something useful. s.w.



Treasury Of Big Game Animals

Text and Photographs
by Erwin A. Bauer
Harper & Row, \$12.50

Treasury is a somewhat overworked word, and much literary fare offered up under that heading turns out to be pretty bankrupt. But this book presenting the major big game animals of 5 continents in their natural habitats, a handsome collection of creatures made all the more precious by their impending extinction, is truly a volume of treasures.

Erwin Bauer, author of *Treasury of Big Game Animals*, has had plenty of first-hand experience throughout the world, stalking big game for the kill, though recently he's been doing most of his shooting with a Nikon F and a telephoto lens. It's rare these days, when shooting polar bears from airplanes and chasing whitetail deer in snowmobiles is considered sport, to come across a hunter with profound respect and compassion for his prey. But Mr. Bauer turns out to be a

true animal lover, and he is always careful here to draw a distinction between the real challenge of meeting an intelligent and skillful animal on its own terms and downright slaughter.

Besides lots of lively hunting anecdotes and practical advice for the sportsman, the book contains scientific observations and historical data about more than 60 animals, and there is a chapter in the back on how and where to photograph the world's wild animals. The author's strongly pro-animal point of view is supported by his photographs which attest to the magnificence of a host of awesome beasts, many of whom are doomed by the destructive expansions of modern man.

The book is divided into continents, and I felt the first two sections on North American and African big game were the most successful. The first section, *Big Game Animals of North America*, could be a book in itself. Mr. Bauer evokes the vanishing beauty of our continent so effectively, you feel that if you don't get into the woods, onto the mountains and next to the rivers soon, you will have committed an unpardonable, un-American sin.

SUSAN WITTY

Country Music's Book Bin

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Of course, if you want to go beyond its price, we've got lots of options. Starting with our 4-speed record changer, Model RD-7703. Or maybe you want tape along

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complete home entertainment system. Radio, tape, phonograph, and speakers. You can get all that in Model RS-257DS, if you want cassette tape. Or in Model SE-2080, if you'd rather have 8-track tape.

And you can keep the music to yourself. If you choose our optional stereo headphones, Model EAH-40.

Now that you've made your choice. Go ahead and listen to it. At your Panasonic dealer.

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