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June 1974, 75 cents

# COUNTRY MUSIC™

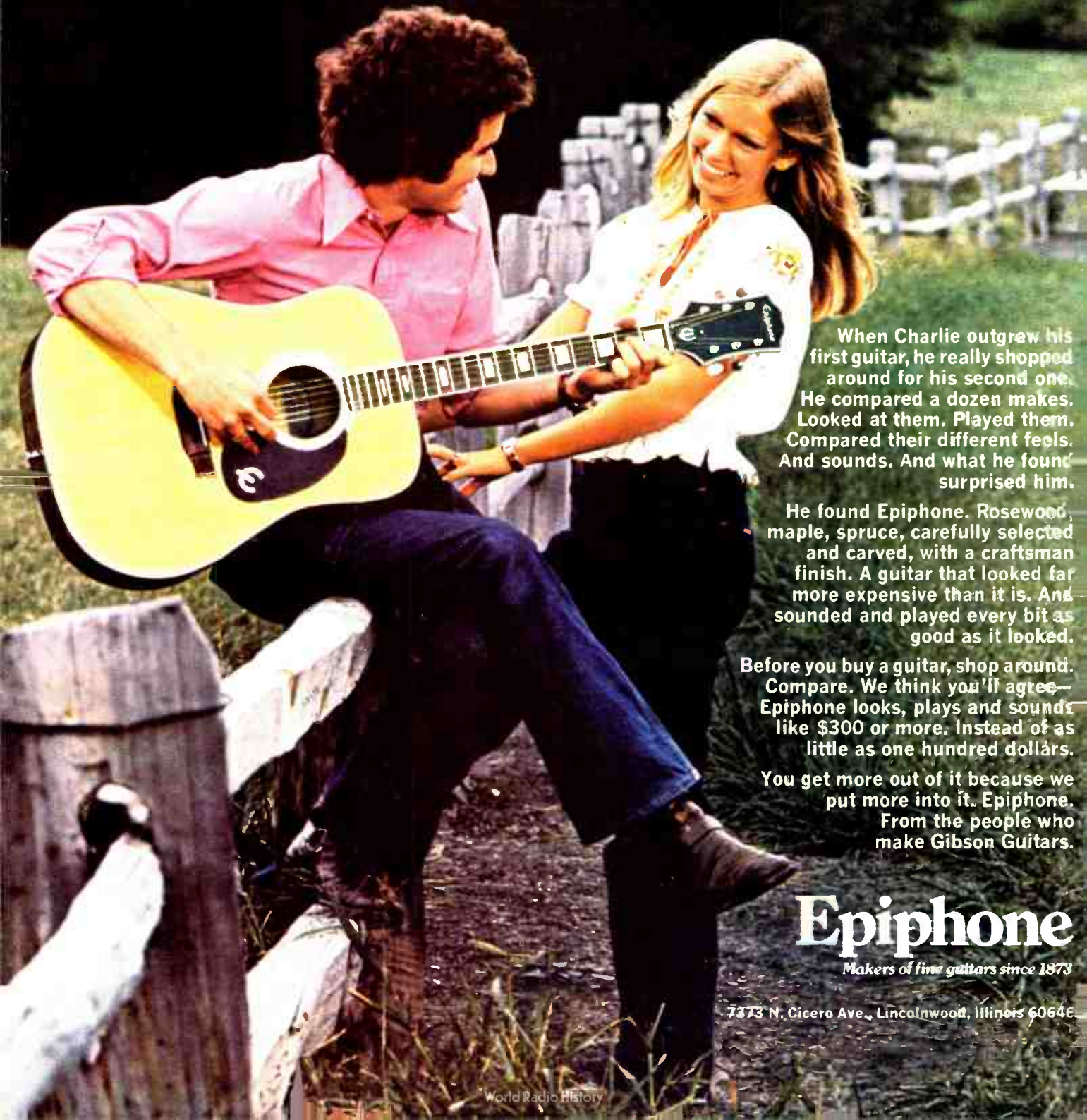
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laying back in  
Kansas**

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# COUNTRY MUSIC

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<b>Watch This Face: Crystal Gayle</b>		<b>20</b>
<b>Charlie Rich: Portrait Of A Late Bloomer</b>	PETER McCABE	<b>24</b>
At last, he's a Superstar, and nobody deserves it more after those long, lean years. We found Charlie in Memphis—moving into his new home, working up that new act, and wondering how he's going to cope with his new success.		
<b>Nashville's Biggest Weekend</b>	PATRICK CARR	<b>32</b>
It's done. Country music has moved Uptown. Here's a report on the Ryman Auditorium's last night, President Nixon's yo-yo Spectacular, and how it is at the new Opry House.		
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No frills for Bobby Bare, no sir. There's just your basic Bobby, loping along by himself in Wichita, Kansas—not an ego in sight. That's something for an act Johnny Rodriguez doesn't want to follow.		
<b>Record Reviews</b>		<b>81</b>
<b>Nothing's Been 'Slippin' Away' From Jean Shepard</b>	CAROL OFFEN	<b>90</b>
Jean Shepard's going strong. That is, <i>strong</i> . Even with a family of five, she can still say, "I dare any 25-year-old woman to follow me around and do everything I do."		
<b>Radio Forum</b>		<b>98</b>
<b>Hi-Fi Corner</b>	MICHAEL MARCUS	<b>100</b>

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70



90



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

Women in country music: interviews with Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette, Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn, Barbara Mandrell, Jeanne Pruett, Lynn Anderson, and many, many more.

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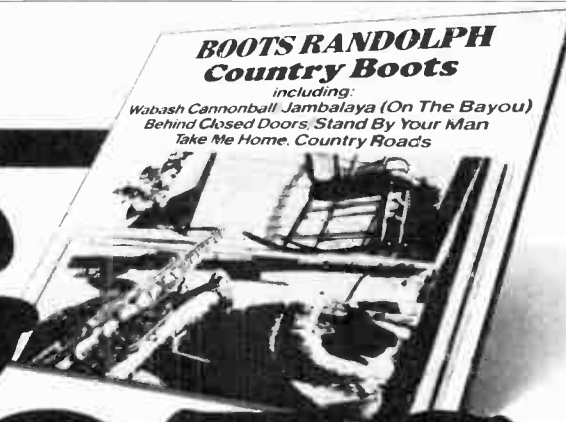
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For years Boots Randolph has been one of the definitive instrumentalists in country music. On his latest album, "Country Boots," he applies his extraordinary saxophone to some of the biggest songs in the history of country music, from modern classics like "Behind Closed Doors" to all-time classics like "Wabash Cannonball" and "Jambalaya (On the Bayou)."

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**On Monument Records and Tapes**

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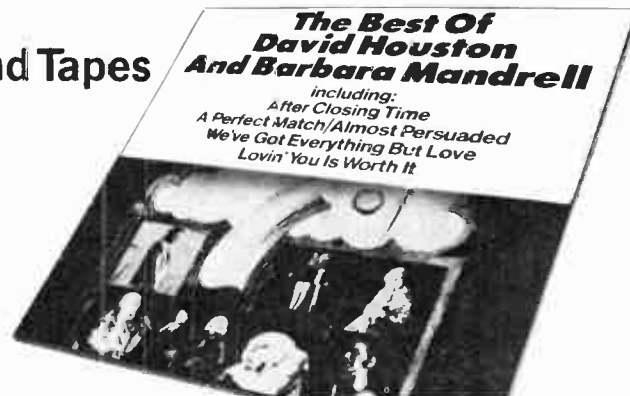
## You don't have to be married to be a perfect match.

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David Houston and Barbara Mandrell—a "marriage" that was made in Nashville.

**On Epic Records and Tapes**



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# Letters

I read the article "I Knew Glen Campbell Before He Was A Superstar" in the March issue, and I really can't say I think much of some of the people from his hometown! Instead of cutting Glen, I figured they would be proud of him! I know I would be if he was from my hometown. I think he should be respected there for making a dream come true. Sounds like he worked hard enough at it. Congratulations Glen! I'm proud of you.

TRACY BLAIR  
SHALLOWATER, TEXAS

The Glen Campbell story in the March issue is beautiful. John Fergus Ryan managed to write in such a way that it appeals to people in general. I'm sure that country music folks will regard Glen in a different manner, after reading your story. Thank you very much for such an interesting article on the now-so-great Glen Campbell. It's a masterpiece, surely!

MARGARET S. PATTERSON  
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

Dave Hickey writes like I wish I could write—sort of a cross between H. Allen Smith and Larry McMurtry. "Growing Up On The Jaxbeer Hwy." (Nov.) and "In Defense of the Telecaster Cowboy Outlaws" (Jan.) were wonderful reading. When a writer can make you nostalgic for a honky tonk and you've never set foot in one, and then a couple of months later sum up your feelings that country music and country artists are in danger of being over-interpreted and homogenized when you weren't sure of what was bugging you about the current wave of country, then you know you've found solid gold. It's great to have your magazine to quote to my New York friends. It has helped establish this transplanted Texan as the local authority on country music. Just about the only thing that could make *Country*

*Music* magazine any better would be at least one Dave Hickey story per issue.

MARGARET TOUCHSTONE  
CHAPPAQUA, NEW YORK

I must totally disagree with Jerry Leichtling's review of Bobby Bare's album *Lullabys, Legends and Lies*. I think the album is the most fantastic thing I ever heard. If it has any faults it's because it's too good. It is the favorite album of my collection and... contrary to what Jerry says, this album definitely should be a 2-record set. I think your record reviews should only *describe* the albums reviewed and *not criticize* them so that the reader can make an intelligent decision about the album described without some pre-determined decision by a likely biased writer. This will prevent irate reactions to reviews (like mine) and will also save space by leaving out useless words. That is the first fault I have ever found in your magazine. Your magazine is the best thing that happened to country music since Hank Williams.

ALAN DAVENPORT  
OGDENSBURG, NEW JERSEY

I, too, feel as Mrs. Leslie Haney (April letters column) does about the stream of non-country coming from Nashville. They're letting everything invade and filter into the mainstream of country music. If they don't want to stick to pure, wholesome country, why don't they give their "thing" another name and leave ours alone?

MRS. V. BREWER  
ONIA, ARKANSAS

Your April issue with Alan Whitman's less than favorable review of Hank Snow's new album arrived just as Hank's "Hello Love" made it to the number one spot on KLAC, Los Angeles. I have to argue with

Whitman in that Hank's voice is in fine style on "Hello Love" and that his contemporary sound is nothing new. It goes back several years. It's just that he has been ignored for years now as the stations turned to a "rock" sound to lure a younger audience. Our local country station in San Diego will not play Hank. Lefty or Ernest but they sure play the hell out of Leon Russell and Creedence Clearwater. Yessir, Hank, it's good to see you're back again; the most fantastic country singer of all.

KARL E. DAVIDSON  
NATIONAL CITY, CALIFORNIA

Just reading your February edition and the thing on Freddie Hart. I enjoyed it up to near the end, especially about the humble country boy and all. But when I got to that "investment in Hartline and ten refrigerated Kenmores," you done it! I've been truckin' for years and still was under the impression a Kenmore's a washing machine and a *Kenworth's* a truck. Looks like Freddie best invest in a *humble editor* or his music will be played in more laundries than trucks. And there are lots of us, in Kenworths, Macks, Ginnys, Chevy's, and Fords and all, but not many in Kenmores, that I know of.

ALBERT L. HALL  
LAKE CITY, FLORIDA

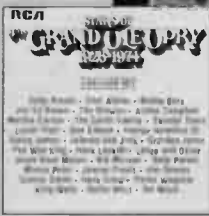
I have enjoyed your magazine a great deal these past few months very simply because it is a first class magazine, and I feel it reflects country music's *now* image. I disliked country music until about two years ago because it was just too twangy and hillbilly. The industry has changed, I feel, mainly because of the musicians and their great background music and the better quality songs written. That's why my tastes have changed.

RITA GANTZ GEELS

# If you got a hunger for some good ole down home fixins, RCA's got the country that's cookin'!

Startin' this month and continuin' through the end of May, RCA is launchin' one of the biggest country wing-dings ever. With a whole array of major new releases by all of our biggest country stars, RCA's Country Cookin' 1974 is just what you've been waitin' for. So come and get 'em. Country Cookin' is ready when you are.

**Country Cookin' 1974**  
RCA Records and Tapes



# People on the Scene

by Audrey Winters

Streiking with Tom T. and Commander Cody . . .  
Fashions at the new Opry and a tribute for DeFord Bailey . . .  
House-hunting with Tanya Tucker's family . . .

Country music has had its first streak. Nobody is quite sure about who gets the honors, but it's a contest between **Tom T. Hall** and **Commander Cody**. Cody—he's the leader of that strange outfit called the Lost Planet Airmen—darted behind an amplifier at Atlanta's Electric Ballroom during the fiddle solo on "Diggy Liggy Lo," removed his clothes, and streaked across the stage. Cody is slated to go to England for the Wembley Country Festival, where, as his publicist noted, "the English hope to present him with his award in the flesh." Tom T. didn't streak any stage, but he did the next best thing. He parked his bus outside Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, dashed through the doors in his birthday suit, stayed just long enough to announce that Tootsie's had now been officially streaked, and escaped back into the bus.

At the Grand Ole Opry opening (with President Nixon), the Opry performers went all out and really dressed up for the occasion. The **Smokey Mountain Boys** wore new yellow shirts with their faded overalls. **Del Woods** looked beautiful in a long white gown. **Jeanne Pruett** was dressed in black chiffon. When asked on another occasion if her gown with ostrich feathers wasn't awfully uptown for the Opry, she replied, "I don't see why. Country music is uptown."

**Minnie Pearl** was complaining she had waited so long backstage for the President to arrive that her dress had gone out of style. **Dolly Parton** was a pretty sight in her red skin-tight jumpsuit with sequins on it. She wore one of her



PHOTO: PETER BORSARI

Tanya and her family are looking for a farm.

long blonde wigs. She asked Lt. Tom Cathey, a detective, to introduce her to Alabama's Governor **George Wallace**.

If you thought that **Charley Pride** was the first black country artist to be recognized as such, think again. **DeFord Bailey**, a long-time Nashville resident, was one of the earliest performers on the Grand Ole Opry, and is generally credited with cutting the city's first record in 1928. Bailey still plays the harmonica like a train although he's in his seventies. He ran a shoeshine stand in downtown Nashville for many years. Recently, he was feted by a local tenants' group at Gernert Homes, a Nashville public housing project. He was supposedly miffed about being dropped from the Opry roster years ago, but he refuses to discuss it. The reception

was the first acknowledgement of his artistry in years.

Backup singers seem to be the "in" thing now that **Charlie Rich** has led the way with his new act. **Johnny Rodriguez** has added three girl singers to his band. Johnny has just had a crippled children's home named in his honor. It will be called the Johnny Rodriguez Life Enrichment Center, and is located in Corpus Christi, Texas. Johnny worked on a telethon to raise funds for the Center.

**Tanya Tucker** and her parents are in the market for a farm near Nashville. They now live near Las Vegas . . . the **Charlie Walker's** are expecting a baby in July . . . **Faron Young** was on tour in Canada when he learned that his mother had died in Shreveport, La. He flew home for



# Freddie Hart's

*Smash Single*

# Hang In There Girl

*is Freddie's New Album!*

*Hang In There Girl  
Till The Wind's Out of Me  
The Most Beautiful Girl in the World  
Phoenix City  
Thanks But No Thanks  
Let Me Be There  
If Loving You Starts Hurting Me  
A Little Bit of Heaven  
Whatever Turns You On  
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# ALL ABOUT TOMMY OVERSTREET AND WOMEN.



Tommy has a way with women. He sets them to music. His new album, "Woman, Your Name Is My Song," tells all about Tommy, and Jeannie Marie, Rosey, Ruby, Nancy, Annie, and others. To hear Tommy tell it is an education that also entertains.

## "Woman, Your Name Is My Song"



Album: DOS-26021  
Available on GRT Tapes  
8-Track: 8150-26021  
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Tulsa, Oklahoma



The one on the left is . . . you figure it out.

the funeral and had to return the same day to Canada to finish his tour . . . **Ray Griff** has just received two compliments. One was his Green Belt in karate, and the other was his recent election to the board of directors of the Bill Wilkerson Hearing and Speech Center, where Ray has taken classes to overcome his stuttering. Tennessee Governor Winfield Dunn congratulated Ray . . . **Jack Greene** has bought a farm near the Ridgetop, Tenn. area where Stringbean was killed. The farm belonged to Oscar Sullivan of **Lonzo and Oscar** . . . and at the auction that was held to sell Stringbean's estate and personal property, a pair of the performer's old faded overalls sold for \$21. His record albums went for \$11 each. More than a thousand bidders showed up, and by the end of the day, the sale had reached \$131,085 . . .

In case you missed it on television, the Academy Of Country Music Awards this year went as follows: Most Promising Female Vocalist—**Olivia Newton-John**; Most Promising Male Vocalist—**Dorsey Burnette**; Top Vocal Group—**Brush Arbor**; Album of the Year—Charlie Rich's *Behind Closed Doors*; Best Female Vocalist—**Loretta Lynn**; Best Male Vocalist—**Charlie Rich**; Best Single—Charlie's "Behind Closed Doors"; Entertainer of the Year—**Roy Clark**. That's some achievement by Charlie Rich. Three awards, plus all the praise that was heaped upon him by the CMA. **Roy Clark** got another honor recently. His likeness will now be on display at the Movieland Wax Museum in Anaheim, California. When the wax

figure was revealed, Roy laughed nervously and said, "Well, I'm sure glad it's standing up and not lying down. That would be too much." The figure was based on measurements taken when Roy was 30 or 40 pounds heavier than he is now, and has several more chins than the living Superpicker. "It was all fairly creepy," said one visitor.

The Second Annual **Willie Nelson** Fourth of July Picnic will be held this year at the Texas Speedway, College Park, near Bryant, Texas. Willie's agents are talking about an "expanded lineup," which sounds pretty spectacular, considering that Waylon Jennings, Leon Russell, Kris Kristofferson, Sammi Smith, Tom T. Hall and others appeared last year. Tentative dates are July 3rd, 4th, and 5th.

**Douglas Green** has a big job. He has been named "oral historian" of the Country Music Foundation, meaning that he is going to be interviewing country music figures (performers and people behind the scenes) for the Foundation's archives. People being interviewed will be given the option of having the tapes sealed for ten years to encourage candid talking.

**Don Gibson** has acquired a rare Selmer guitar, one of six designed by the late French Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, whom Chet Atkins, among others, calls "the best guitar player who ever lived." Gibson wanted one of those guitars for years, and finally tracked one down while on vacation in Europe last year. "All the guitar players in the world have copied Django," said Don. "Some don't even know it." ■

# I TOOK MY GUITAR TO THE SUPPER TABLE.

By Johnny Cash



**W**I got so excited writing the songs in this album that you'd think I just started in the music business. It's something I always wanted to do, write an album of all my own songs, and for some reason, I just never got around to it.

"But it seemed like in the last year or two, these songs started bubbling out of me more than ever and I started putting down everything that came out.

"I sang them for my family and my friends, and all they had to do was say they liked one and I'd go write another one.

"I've been doing things I did twenty years ago, jumping up in the middle of the night, grabbing a piece of paper in

the dark, writing down a line or two so I wouldn't forget it tomorrow, and I found myself actually finishing all the songs that I started. It was like I was about to audition my own songs for the first time and I'd grab every passing thought, every catchy phrase and put it down.

"And there were times I even took my guitar to the supper table. I was working so hard on a song, I didn't want to give it up even for a few minutes. So while I ate with my family, I worked on the song at the same time.

"Some of them came easy, within a matter of minutes or an hour at the most. But on some of them, I wrung my mind, I bit the pen and I

walked the floor and the songs didn't want to come. But they finally did, they all came together. So I guess you'd say they are some of my most profound, passing thoughts.

"And I sang them for you, making believe that you were one of those that were sitting down to dinner with me when I took my guitar to the supper table. //



ON COLUMBIA RECORDS AND TAPES

# Country View

by Paul Hemphill

Like most of those who were prepared to hate the new Grand Ole Opry House but were unable to be there in person on the night it opened, I looked forward more than usual to the network news programs on television the next day. Sure enough, there it was, fairly early in the report: Minnie Pearl and Roy Acuff and all the rest, working from this clean and comfortable new emporium with its air-conditioning and carpeting and the other amenities. *Not bad*, I thought. It even *looked* and *felt*, over television, like the Opry we have known and loved. Then I was jolted out of my sofa by a sight that still seems incongruous. Here was the President of the United States up there on the stage kibitzing with Acuff and trying to yo-yo, and then playing the piano and leading the singing. Dick Nixon, the Wall Street lawyer, trying to be jes' folks.

I am sure the Opry people and the movers on Music Row were proud to have the President in to christen the new place—it is their business, after all, to create big business out of country music—but I recall being stirred by those same vague little angers that first struck when I strayed north from Alabama to play baseball and was considered a folk hero for saying “ain’t” and “y’all.” Anybody can like Southerners and country music who wants to, I always say. “We gon’ send ‘em a message up there,” is how George Wallace would put it. The more the merrier. But I remember my old man, a truck driver all his life, explaining why it angered him to see wealthy Ivy League kids lolling around in blue jeans and work shirts: “It almost seems like they’re making fun of us.” A fancy word for it is condescension.

Not that it was the first time I had seen Nixon in a patronizing role. Since his ascension to the



PHOTO: MARSHALL FAILWELL

throne, he has hosted a series of weekend soirees known as “An Evening at the White House.” A crowd of Congressmen and wives in tuxedos and chiffon gowns gathers beneath chandeliers in the elegant East Room, rising to strains of “Hail to the Chief” as the President and Mrs. Nixon enter, laughing at a couple of Nixon jokes, then sitting for an hour of entertainment by somebody like Sammy Davis Jr. I was invited about four years ago when Johnny Cash was the performer of the evening, and again on St. Patrick’s Day of 1973 when it was Merle Haggard.

I can’t for the life of me envision a meeting of two men—Nixon and Haggard—more dissimilar. Nixon was born relatively well, learned Wall Street, did the necessary wheeling and dealing, and became head of the land. Haggard was born in a boxcar to Okie migrants, ran away from home at 14, served three years at San Quentin, worked the roadside taverns, whipped whiskey, and lived to write songs about it all.

Merle swung out nervously at the White House, looking like an elegant cowpoke in his white tennegallon and a flared burgundy Western-cut suit, and opened with “Workin’ Man Blues” (“I ain’t never been on welfare, that’s one place I won’t be”). The President sat impassively until Merle closed with

“Fightin’ Side of Me” and “Okie from Muskogee,” but then he began grinning and tapping his foot and applauding as though Watergate had just been declared a rumor. Here was our No. 1 Politician (three days earlier he had asked Congress to act against criminals “without mercy”), nuzzling up to one of our genuine sons of the soil, one who knows what it is like to sweat and bleed and go hungry and sit in a cell, as if to say, *Life’s hell, ain’t it?* I feel certain that the best line Haggard has ever written—“Things I learned in a hobo jungle are things they never taught me in a classroom/Like where to find a handout while bumming through Chicago in the afternoon”—went right over Nixon’s head.

Merle would have been playing Lubbock, Texas, that night, if not for the White House invitation, and he was, of course, proud to be there in Washington. “Bar whiskey was pretty good stuff,” he winked later, the energy drained out of his wiry body, as they prepared to take a 2 A.M. flight to San Antonio. Did he and the President chat? “Yeah, I told him if there was ever anything a hillbilly singer could do for him, to let me know.” And the response? “He said, ‘Just keep on singing songs like that “Workin’ Man Blues” and maybe we can get some of these people off their asses.’” Haggard seemed confused. ■

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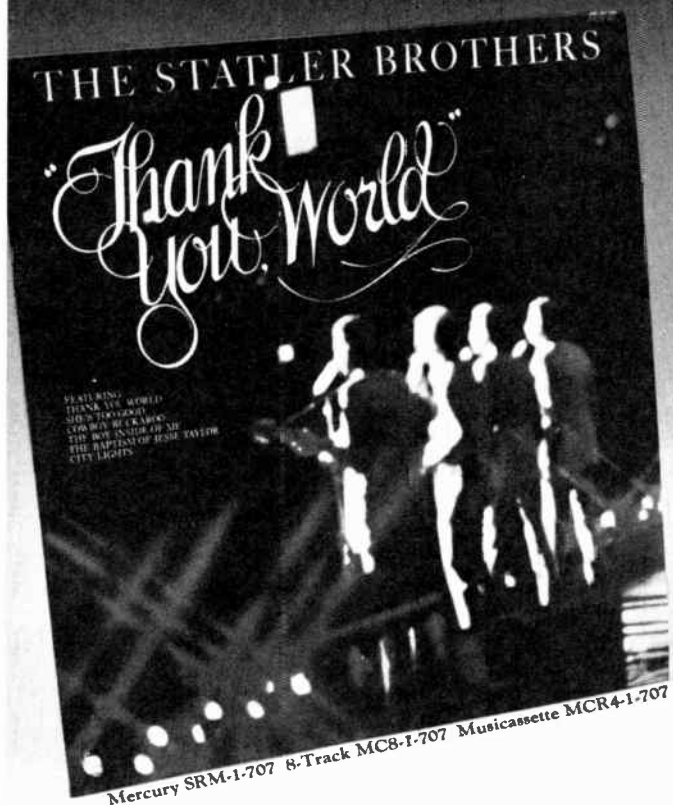
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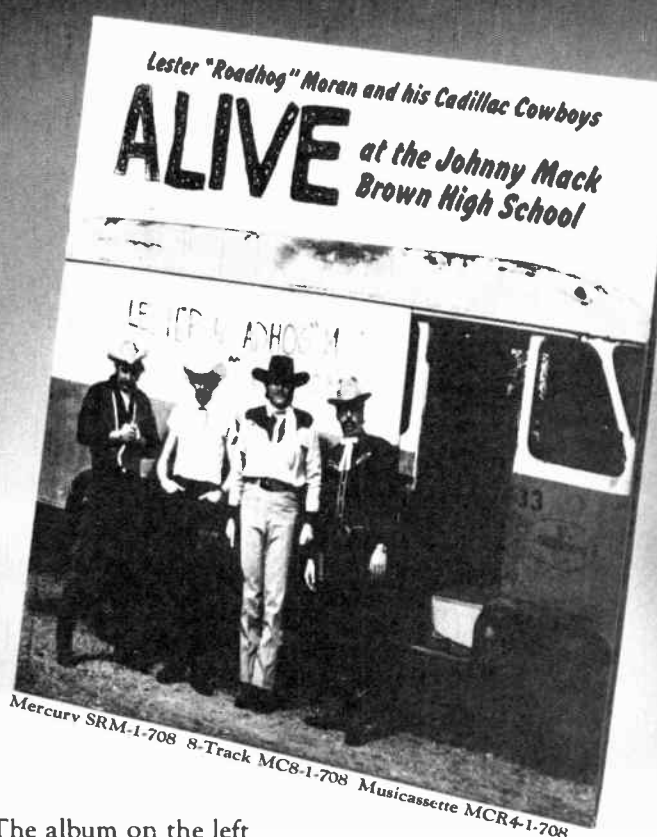
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# Which one is the new Statler Brothers album?



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Mercury SRM-1-708 8-Track MC8-1-708 Musicassette MCR4-1-708

Foolja! They both are. The album on the left is, "Thank You World", a new selection of country songs that vividly demonstrates all the reasons Country Music Magazine, Music City News, Record World, Billboard, and Cashbox all voted the Statler Brothers as the top country vocal group of the year.

Unlikely name notwithstanding, the album on the right is also by the Statler Brothers. And it's unlike anything you've ever heard them do before. In this album they borrow a part of their "live" act, and assume the identities of Lester "Roadhog" Moran and his Cadillac Cowboys. The result is 36 minutes of old fashioned country radio satire, and a whole lot of song, comedy and fun.

So now that you've solved the riddle of which one is the new Statler Brothers album, you're stuck with another one, aren't you? Which one are you going to buy first?



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# Country News

With a little help from a Southern Gentleman,  
a sophisticated 14-year-old makes her  
country music debut in a manner befitting her name.

## Marie Osmond: A Tale Of Modern Country by Toby B. Mervis

The ways of modern country music are strange indeed. Take Marie Osmond, for instance. Marie is the fourteen-year-old sister of the Osmond Brothers, whose particular brand of bubblegum pop has been captivating the hearts of little girls and earning many millions of dollars for some time now. Little Jimmy Osmond (age ten) has begun to establish his very own recording career, appearing in top hat, cane and tails and singing sentimental ballads about Mother and related subjects, but Marie—Marie is country. "Paper Roses," her first single off her first album, reached the top of the country charts—as well as all the rock, pop, and easy listening charts around the globe—faster than a speeding freight train.

Now, obtaining an interview with the Osmond Brothers has often been compared to getting an audience with Howard Hughes, and with Marie, things weren't very different. Still, we made it, and so it was that we found ourselves in Los Angeles with the stunning young superstar-to-be.

Marie is quick with a laugh, and quicker yet with a smile. Right off the bat, we asked her if the huge success of "Paper Roses" had gone to her head, if she'd noticed that the song was more successful than any her brothers had recorded in months.

"No," she replied, "we're not like that in our family. I was very lucky to have a hit my first time. 'Paper Roses' is a great song for me—that was Mike Curb's idea, he



PHOTO: EMERSON-LOEW

Though still too young to date, Marie has the look of someone who's been around.

produces with my brothers (and formerly was president of MGM Records during the Osmonds ascent to stardom), and it was also his idea to have Sonny James produce me. I'd never heard the song before they played it for me."

With good reason, as Anita Bryant's hit version of "Paper Roses" was a hit when Marie was barely six months old back in 1960. When everything had been worked out between the Osmond family, MGM and Sonny James, Marie and her mom flew to Nashville for the recording sessions in early 1973. With the tiny exception of having sung a couple of times in duet with Donny at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, that was Marie's entrance into show business.

What kind of music does the country Osmond appreciate? "I like ballad songs for the most part, not fast songs, but that's just as a

singer. As a listener, I enjoy all types of music. I don't really have any favorite performers because I listen more to each individual song. But I usually like whatever Stevie Wonder's doing. My voice isn't really a typical country twangy kind of voice, and I'm not strictly a country singer, either, although my heart is now in country more than ever because everyone has been just so fantastic with me, and everything has gone so well. I've really come to love country music and enjoy it. And I listen a lot to country in order to keep up with what else is going on.

"I might someday decide to change my sound, and then I'll just go ahead and do it. But right now we just recorded another country album, in Nashville again with Sonny James again, and we're really happy and I'm real excited about it."

Marie looked dressed to kill. In a sleek and slinky long dark dress, she didn't appear to have an ounce of leftover baby fat, and the ultra-high platform heels she was wearing added to her height. That, plus her make-up, would give you the impression that Marie was several years older than fourteen. As many a young man has been heard to remark after seeing Marie—"old enough." In fact, she looks like the kind of girl her brothers might not be allowed to date by their protective parents. There's something about her appearance that is decidedly *not* "wholesome."

The Osmond family is very religious, and they belong to the Mormon faith. Like most Mormons, they live in Utah. Also like other Mormons, they don't drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes, although you normally wouldn't offer either one to a fourteen-year-old, anyway.

At home, near Brigham Young University in Utah, Marie can be found curling up with a good book. "I like true stories much more than fiction. I loved 'Jonathan Livingston Seagull' because there was so much truth in it." Sometimes, she'll do some Italian-style cooking, and she finds relaxation in needlepoint, too.

As for dating? "Not yet, I'm still too young. Most of my friends are older, from the university, and my

older brothers' friends." But she knows what she likes already: "I mostly check out older guys." Obviously all teen-age girls are alike. "Besides, when we're not travelling, I'm supposed to be in bed by 10 PM, although usually it's more like midnight or one. And I'm up every morning by nine."

Musically, the Marie Osmond sound is straightforward traditional country pop. Listening to her, you might never know there is an undercurrent of change in the country music world. Marie is lined up solidly with the old-timers. Her voice rings clear and is capable of singing a wide range of songs, from the relatively direct "Paper Roses" to the cajun-flavored "Louisiana Bayou." She takes off on a hot version of "Sweet Dreams" on her debut album, but on a couple of the numbers, her youthful voice sounds a little strained.

Hopefully, Marie's third album will take a somewhat more adventurous tack, with Marie taking her brothers up on their stated offer to "write some country tunes for me, if they can."

But for now, Marie seems content to sit and catch her breath. As recently as late 1972, she was a pudgy tomboy with no career plotted out for herself. And now, less than two years later, she is a poised young woman. Perhaps she said it

best herself when she said "You know, I've done an awful lot of growing up in the past two years, and there's so much more to go." ■

## Moscow Goes Country by Richard Nusser

Shortly after arriving in Moscow, George Hamilton IV sat alone in a hotel room overlooking Red Square. He stared out a window, his gaze drifting across roof tops punctuated with glowing red stars that twinkled through a lightly falling snow. Eleven stories below, the goose-steps of the Kremlin guard echoed off ancient cobblestones.

"I looked out the window across to the Kremlin," Hamilton recalled, "and I thought, 'We're gonna go in there and sing hillbilly songs!'"

George Hamilton IV, a soft-spoken family man from Charlotte, N.C., became the first country artist to perform in Russia when, on March 26, 1974, he entertained some 200 students in a lecture hall at Moscow's Institute of Foreign Languages. It was the culmination of a series of last minute diplomatic efforts and, certainly, the highlight of the career of a man dubbed by his English fans "the ambassador."

"It was the most memorable six days in my life," he said, referring to the trip that took him first to Prague, the Czech capital, and then to Moscow. "When I get to be an old man, sitting in my rocking chair, I'll tell the grandchildren about this one over and over again."

Hamilton was asked to become the first American country artist to perform in Eastern Europe last year during the annual DJ convention in Nashville. One of Czechoslovakia's leading country bands, Jira Brebac and the Country Beat, had responded to their appearance at the DJ convention by asking Hamilton to reciprocate with a Prague concert. He accepted, and arrangements were made for him to give three concerts in Prague following a scheduled 27-day tour of England in March. Accompanied by English promoter Mervyn Conn, Hamilton arrived in Prague March 21, and held a quick rehearsal with Brebac's band, which was to back him up. "Those guys are as good as any country band I've ever played with," he said. "We rehearsed each song one time, and they played it



PHOTO: EMERSON-LOEW





George Hamilton IV: The man who brought hillbilly music to the Soviet Union.

just like they would've in Nashville."

The next day after an impressive display of Czech attention to lighting and sound details, Hamilton and the Country Beats had fans in Prague's 7,000-seat Sports Arena hootin' and hollerin' like a Tennessee Saturday Night. An additional two concerts the next day drew 14,000 more country music lovers.

After three days and numerous phone calls to various embassies, the Moscow visit was confirmed. Hamilton and Conn left Prague on a Soviet jet liner, a tumultuous airport send-off ringing in their ears. The Czechs had hated to see him leave. He was, after all, the first country star they'd seen.

After arriving in Moscow, and spending one and a half hours going through customs, Hamilton checked into a modern skyscraper hotel overlooking Lenin's Tomb and other Red Square landmarks. After freshening up, he was hustled off to a reception at U.S. Cultural Attache Len Noah's nearby apartment.

"There were a lot of big-wigs there," Hamilton noted. "Russian and American. But a lot of young people, too." Christopher S. Wren (Moscow correspondent for the New York Times and author of "Winners

Got Scars Too," the Johnny Cash biography) was on hand, and he just happened to have his banjo with him. Before long, Hamilton, Wren and the young folks were singing, picking and humming along to "Jimmy Brown the Newsboy" and the old folk standard, "Streets of London." Hamilton was flabbergasted.

"There was one kid there, you know he couldn't *spea*k a word of English, but he knew all the words to these Neil Young tunes, and he wound up *singing* them in perfect English. He even *sounded* like Neil Young." Then, drawing on a phrase he was to repeat several times during his account of the trip, he added: "It just *warped my mind*."

The next day, after musing over the moonlit splendors of the Kremlin ("it was like watching re-runs of 'Dr. Zhivago,'" he said), he went to the University of Moscow, and then to the Institute of Foreign Languages, to deliver two lectures on the history of country music and offer a few songs.

"At the end of the lecture (at the Institute of Foreign Languages) I put down my prepared remarks and looked around for an interpreter," Hamilton said. "I told them I wanted to speak from the heart. It turned out most of them spoke English

fluently, so I asked if anyone had any questions. One boy in the back of the room raised his hand. 'We'd like to sing with you,' he said."

At that moment the students rose and sang Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land," in English. "When that happened the hair was standing on the back of my neck," Hamilton remembers. "Here I was, standing in Moscow, listening to a Woody Guthrie song sung by Russian students."

As if that wasn't enough, the students segued into "Gotta Travel On," changing the last verse to read: "We're gonna lay down our atom bombs . . . down by the river-side, down by the riverside . . ."

"The best thing that happened then was this little grey-haired lady who came out of the crowd of students and grabbed my hand," Hamilton recalled. "She had tears in her eyes and she looked at me and said, 'This was a beautiful thing that happened. This music came from your heart and it came from our hearts. This is the hope of the world.'"

Hamilton's visit concluded the next day with an impromptu performance in a panelled conference room at the Ministry of Culture. "All the leaders of the Russian music culture were there, I think. It was a very formal setting, all these starched shirts and stiff collars, and there I was picking and singing 'I'm a Truck Driving Man.'"

Throughout it all, Hamilton kept reminding us that it wasn't *him* that deserved any special credit.

"It's not me. I'm no Daniel Boone or anything," he exclaimed. "It was just country music, selling it self." ■

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### A Listener's Guide To Nashville by Marshall Fallwell

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OK, so you're in Nashville. This is a big deal for you, maybe a vacation, so you want to do it just right — go to the Hall of Fame, see your favorite stars, go to the Opry and Opryland, maybe stop by Ryman

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Auditorium. That's great. There'll be a lot to do. But sometime, you might just want to sit down with a cold beer and listen to some live music in a club. But when you're in a strange city, you really don't know where to go, so that's what this article is all about.

Following is a list of a few clubs near downtown Nashville that feature live country music. This is not a complete list, but I think it mentions most of the really good places.

Far and away the best club in Nashville for live music (fast becoming one of the top clubs in the country) is the Exit/In, at 2208 Elliston Place, near Vandy and about five minutes west of Ryman Auditorium. The Exit/In is informal and has featured such acts as John Hartford, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Bill Monroe and John Prine. There is a full bar, two shows at 8 P.M. and 11 P.M. Last call—2:45 A.M. This is the place to go if you want to *listen* to music—get as loose as you want, but don't make noise during the show. Others are trying to listen.

Strictly for bluegrass fans is the Old Time Pickin' Parlor, about

three blocks from the Ryman at 105 2nd Avenue North. Brother Oswald and Charlie Collins are featured Wednesday and Thursday nights; the Misty Mountain Boys on Friday and Saturday. There is a \$1.00 cover; beer and pizza served. You can expect to see just about anybody drop in for a guest set—from Leon Russell (Hank Wilson) to Bill Monroe and Vassar Clements. I recommend this place as highly as the Exit/In—take off your shoes, sip a brew and listen.

In Printer's Alley, between Third and Fourth Avenues in Downtown Nashville, are several clubs, some of which feature strippers. Out of an innate sense of decency, I will not name them (you'll find them anyway), but there are three clubs which have very good live country music—Boots Randolph's Carousel, The Library, and Hugh X. Lewis' Country Club. The Carousel features not only Boots' yakety sax, but Eddie and Joe, and Rebecca and the Saratoga Trunk. There's no telling who might walk in. In the Alley, you can get just about anything you want, from serious music to bumps and grinds; but

you'd better bring a lot of money and dress up, or you might find yourself window-shopping. The Library has a full restaurant and bar and features Sandy and Diane, with Bobbie Joe Walls upstairs. There is a \$2.00 cover charge.

The Hugh X. Lewis Country Club (with the Brass Rail adjoining for food) features Jim Vest and the Nashville Cats. All of these places on the Alley are very dark—moody, you might say—with pretty waitresses in brief costumes. There is all the difference in the world between the Alley and the Exit/In. Good music, however, is common to both.

There remains to be mentioned Tootsie's, near Ryman; the Music City Lounge, across the street from Tootsie's; Jock's; and Roger Miller's King of the Road. Tootsie's has the best chili in town. The Music City Lounge is just a good country beer bar; Jock's is loud and expensive, but has very good music sometimes—I saw Jimmy Martin there once and had a fine time. The Roof at the King of the Road now features Steve Best and his band. This is sort of a high-toned place, but interesting, because Charlie Rich or Charley Pride or Roger Miller himself may drop in for a guest set.

There they are. A few clubs for live country music after the Opry. Have fun. ■

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## Here's What Happened To Randolph Scott

by Don Reid, of the Statler Brothers

*When the Statler Brothers recorded their Carry Me Back album, there was one song in particular that drew an astounding amount of attention. That was "Whatever Happened To Randolph Scott?" The song was no idle throwaway: the Statlers are confirmed Randolph Scott fans, and to judge from the response to their song, so are a good many other people out there. But Randolph Scott is retired. That is, RETIRED. Nobody sees him. Nobody could have been more surprised than the Statlers, then, when at 9:30 a.m. on March 14th, 1974, the telephone rang in their office and a voice on the other end said, "Randolph Scott is waiting to meet*

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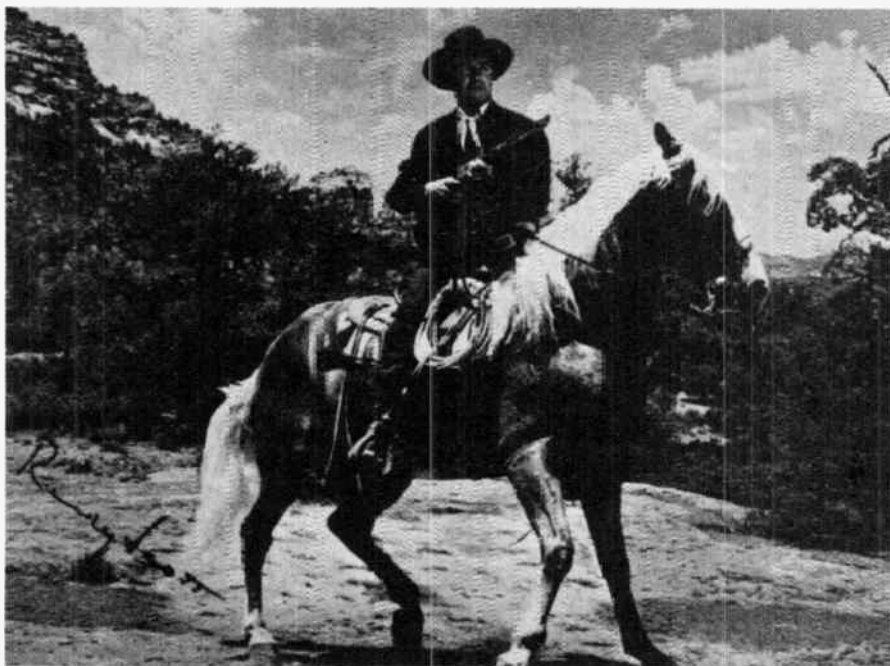
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you. He likes the record." Naturally enough, they accepted the invitation. What follows is Statler Brother Don Reid's account of the meeting.

Someone opened the door, and we walked into Randolph Scott's outer office. His secretary bounced out of her chair to greet us, and just then the corner of my left eye accidentally caught the form of a man sitting behind a desk in the side office. I turned away quickly as if I had cast my eye on some forbidden holiness that would deem me stone blind, but before I could reason with myself as to why my eyes, my neck, and my mind were working in this manner, a tall, elderly gentleman in a gray business suit was standing in front of me reaching for my hand, which was full of movie posters and perspiration. His wife, coming from I never did see where, then made the same handshaking rounds and chairs were gathered for us all.

The next hour and forty minutes were among the fastest I've ever spent. Within those fleeting 100 minutes we found out what had happened to Randolph Scott.

We talked about Virginia, our mutual home state, early Hollywood, and the Arab oil embargo which had allegedly been lifted the night before. Our questions were coming easily, as were his generous answers. His wife and secretary sat and listened in the same child-like, awesome way as we as he told stories of his beginnings, some, which they later told us, they had

never heard before.

George R. Scott, the name he goes by today, grants no one an audience. Grants no interviews. Allows no quotes. But yet here we were. The only reason an exception was made for us was because he enjoyed the record his wife had bought him for Christmas, and appreciated the salute from four fans from his home state. We planned to stay for ten minutes, have him sign a few movie posters for us, and then leave with our memories and inflated egos, but "Randy" (that's what his friends all call him, although the closest we ventured to this familiarity was *Mr. Scott, Sir*) insisted we stay. To our surprise, he was enjoying it as much as we were cherishing it.

He entertained us with anecdotes and stories of his arrival in Hollywood in the '30s. His stories were sprinkled with magic names and legends, and he spoke of them with the naturalness that one speaks of his sister or next-door neighbor. Howard Hughes, John Ford, Duke Wayne, Irene Dunn, Donna Reed and so many more, each one enticing more questions from us and more episodes from him. He told the story of first meeting Cary Grant and how they came to share a house for three years during their bachelor days.

As he talked, I stood and studied that face that has served him so well for 76 years. I thought of all it had seen and all that had seen it. I watched his hands as he leafed through the posters we had brought



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along which he said brought back a lot of memories. Those hands wrapped around a .45, those knuckles that had cleaned up so much corruption in so many towns.

We all agreed that had we run into him on the street, we would have known him immediately because he looked not a day older than when we last saw him on the screen in "Ride The High Country," his last film. When he and Joel McCrea, who was not only a contemporary on the screen but a close personal friend, finished that 1962 western, they both said it was over. Randolph Scott has not reneged on his word. His retirement is still firm twelve years later.

But as our record was peaking in popularity throughout the country, he was increasingly becoming the subject of numerous magazine and newspaper articles. The networks wanted him. Carson, Cavett, and the Today Show all called within the same week, but Randolph Scott has retired and he wants none of that publicity. The morning after our meeting with him in his Beverly Hills office, he was called by the Jaycees of Simi Valley, California to appear at their pioneer days festival which this year they're calling "Whatever Happened To Randolph Scott Days." He turned them down. Ten minutes later they called us at our hotel wanting us to appear. We turned them down, too. We figured "Randy" would want it that way.

For some reason Mr. Randolph Scott took a liking to us and treated us as old friends. After graciously signing a dozen pictures and posters for us, he and his wife produced two of our albums and asked us to sign them to "Pat and Randy". We signed them, but all the time we were thinking "who's gonna believe this?" Then his wife walked us to our car and made us promise to call the next time we were in town. She wanted us to come by the house and take "pot luck." Needless to say, I'm sure we will.

Harold and Lew and Phil and I had actually met Randolph Scott, and as we drove back through Beverly Hills to our hotel in complete silence, a convertible pulled up along side us. It was Elliot Gould. We sat at a traffic light and looked at him, and then looked at one another, and I knew what we were thinking. Our sons are growing up

on Saturday mornings with television cartoons and sex heroes of the 70's like Elliot Gould. They have no Randolph Scott to show them right from wrong, good over evil. Will they grow up and come to Hollywood twenty years from now and aspire to meet Bugs Bunny or Elliot Gould.

Then the light changed and he sped off and left us. Sped off somewhere deeper into the '70's, and left us sitting there smack dab in the middle of 1951.

And then we knew the answer. Nothing has happened to Randolph Scott. He's doing just fine. The question is, whatever happened to all of us? But then we have a generation of sons, and we'll let *them* answer that. ■

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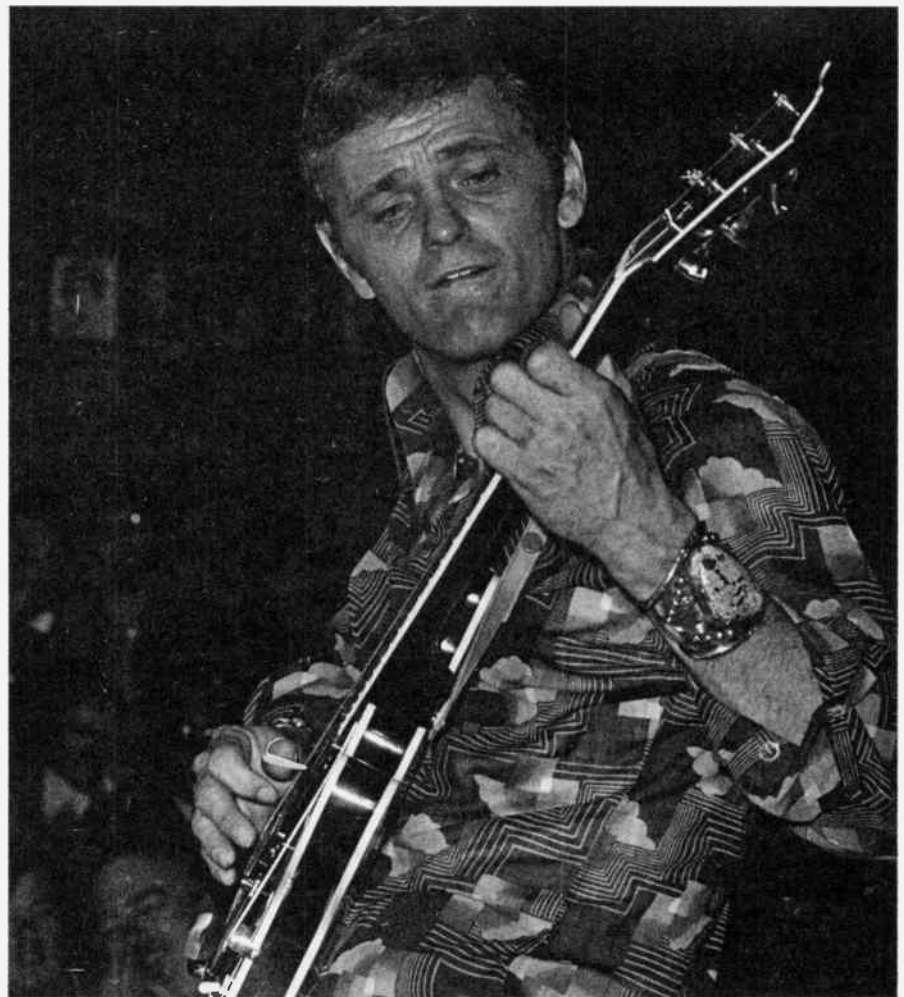
### RCA Puts On A Show For The Boys by Marshall Fallwell

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On March 28 in Nashville, RCA gave a party and concert for its sales and promotion staff from all

over the country. All of the record companies do this sometime during the fiscal year. The stated purpose for the event—and the concert is only the capper for several days of sales meetings and lectures and drinking and more sales meetings and more drinking—is to "fire the enthusiasm" of the sales and promotion people so they will return to the boondocks and spread the gospel about their artists. Understand now, the promotion and sales staff of any record company are very important folks; if you're an artist, it's not enough just to have a good record; you also have to convince these people they can sell it before it will have a chance, because they are the guys who wheedle and cajole the disc jockeys into playing the record in the first place. In short, if you don't have the sales and promotion boys on your side, forget it and go back to the farm because your record ain't got a chance.

The RCA concert was held at the Barn Dinner Theater, just south of town. About 6:30, chartered buses carrying the delegates arrived from



RCA's Jerry Reed: Deus ex machina and "Amos Moses."

PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL

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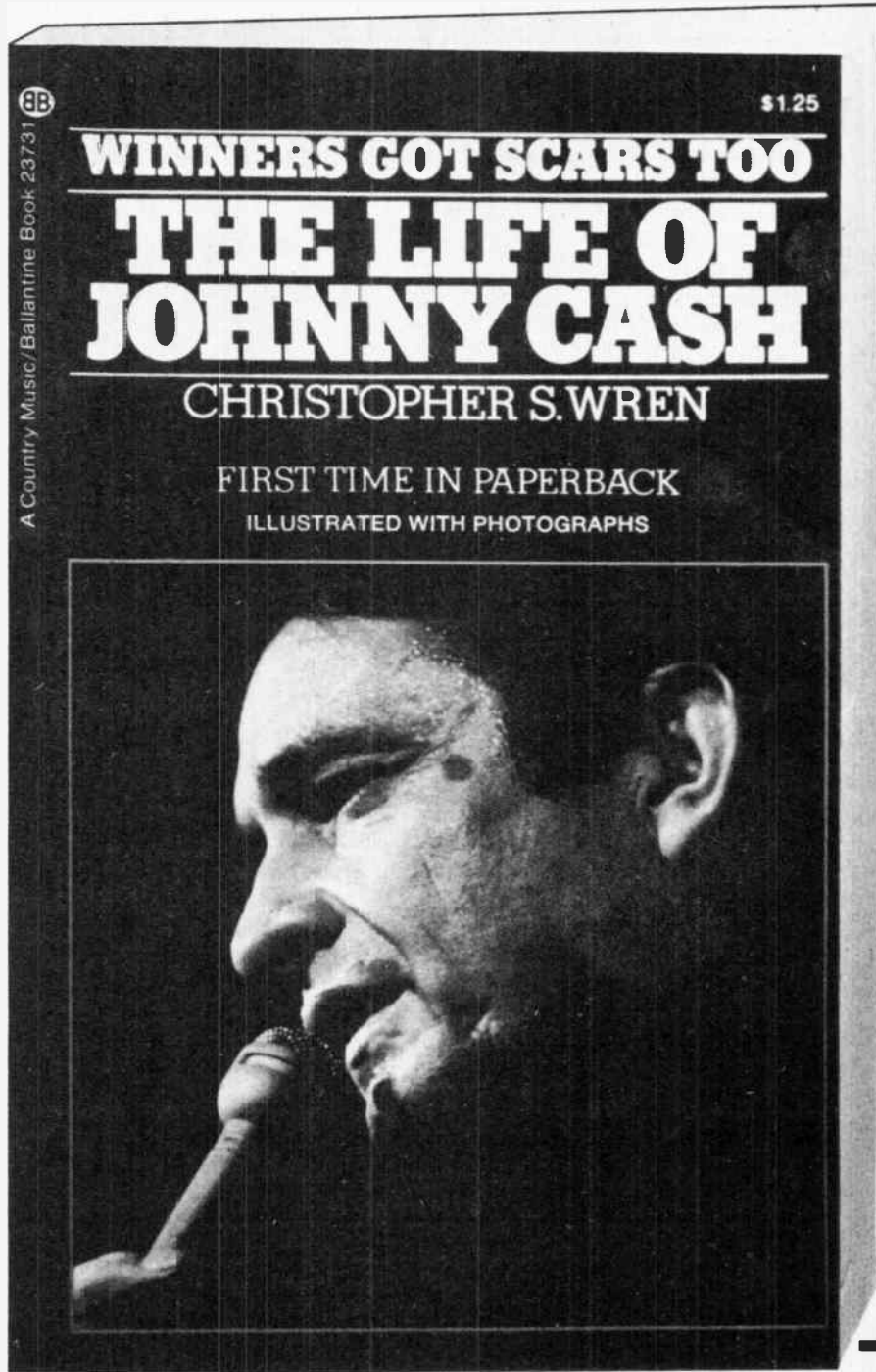
Roger Miller's King of the Road. And everybody by this time was well-oiled and ready for some action. More drinks were served and then dinner ("RCA Country Cookin'"), with everybody milling around, trying to get in a conversational word with Mac Wiseman or Bobby Bare or Dottie West or Waylon Jennings or Jessie Colter, Waylon's incredibly beautiful wife ("Phooey on politics," one of the guys said, "who is that chick in the satin dress?").

After dinner, the stage was lowered out of the ceiling with Jerry Reed and his band playing "Amos Moses." By the time it settled on the floor, we knew the concert was going to be good. I mean, how could it miss? After all, your audience is boozed-up, well-fed and on vacation. Tonight, they are person-to-person with the artists they have been promoting from afar, lo, these many months. Tonight, they are hob-nobbing with the gods; but most important, the gods, in giving them this show, are pursuing *them*.

After Reed finished, Johnny Russell did a song and introduced the other acts. In order, they were: Karen Wheeler, Jimmy Hartsook, Josie Brown, Dickey Lee ("America's oldest teenager"), Ronnie Mil-sap, and Waylon Jennings. Without exception, they all sounded good. By the time Waylon started his set, the audience was literally jumping up and down. One of the delegates—feeling a little pert, you might say—walked up and down one of the aisles *on his hands*; then, he started dancing with himself. Nobody cared.

Afterwards, the delegates I polled fairly gushed with praise for RCA and its artists. It was clear that they would go back to Waco or Double Springs or Hartford and *sell some records*.

I was left with only one negative feeling: I wished every fan of country music had heard the concert. Most fans get to hear Jerry Reed on record, which isn't intimate at all, or in the company of ten thousand other fans in one of those horrible municipal auditoriums, which isn't very intimate either. It seems that most of the really good concerts—in congenial surroundings from a maximum distance of about twenty feet—happen for people in the record business itself, and not for the fans.



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# COUNTRY MUSIC

## Watch This Face: Crystal Gayle

If there is any family other than the Stoneman's and Carter's that resembles a music business dynasty, it may well be the Webbs. *Who?* You know, the Kentucky Webbs. You remember pretty little Loretta Webb, the one that married Mooney Lynn and went off to Nashville and got famous?

Well, Loretta has seven brothers and sisters. First, Jay Lee Webb and Peggy Sue became known as fine artists in their own *right*. Now, along comes baby sister, Crystal Gayle, and durned if she ain't the prettiest thing you ever saw. Ain't that just like a Webb?

Crystal Gayle is truly gorgeous. When I first saw her, in the offices of Top Billing (her booking agency) in Nashville, I tripped all over myself during the introduction. Nevertheless, I managed to croak out a stunned hello, and then we got down to the interview. Back-off guys, she's married—I'm as disappointed as you are. Her husband's currently a student at Indiana University, studying something that has to do with psychology. At present they both live in Bloomington, Indiana, but are planning to move to Nashville in the near future.

Oh well, I can listen to her records anyway—which brings me to the point, which is that she's *very* good. You could listen to her records if she looked like Ma Kettle in a chicken suit, and it wouldn't matter.

Ever since she was a kid, Crystal Gayle has been around music. Although she plays piano and guitar, she says she prefers not to accompany herself while she's on stage. She got her first taste of the limelight when she accompanied big sister Loretta on tours during summer vacations from high school. She liked the feeling, and deter-



"I'm camera shy," she says.

mined she would become a performer *in her own right*.

Certain things help when you're trying to make it in the music business: obvious things like talent, good looks, good career guidance, a producer who can do the utmost with your style, and so on. But it's tough no matter what you've got or who you are, especially if you happen to be Loretta Lynn's sister.

If the public or the *business* ever got the idea that you're trying to hitch a free ride on someone else's bandwagon, you might as well have your cowboy boots bronzed, because you won't be wearing them on stage. But Crystal Gayle has the brains to match her beauty, and the ability to be every bit as popular as her sister. She's not riding anybody's coattails.

Nor does she want to. She loves her sister and respects her as an artist, but she does *not* want to be thought of professionally as "Loretta's kid sister."

In her senior year at high school, Crystal Gayle signed a recording

contract with Decca records. Her first single, "I Cried The Blue Right Out Of My Eyes," was one of the top twenty country records across the nation. Later that year Crystal became a regular on Jim Ed Brown's TV show, "The Country Place." Since then, her records include "Show Me How" and "I Hope You're Havin' Better Luck Than Me." Just this year, she moved from MCA (Decca) to United Artists and her new producer, Kelso Herston. "I'm really excited about some of the things we've done," she says. "One of the songs, called 'Restless,' will probably be the single."

Although she and her husband had driven all the way from Bloomington to Nashville for the interview, Crystal looked wonderful as she talked to me of her hopes and dreams. She stroked her long, dark hair with one hand as she spoke.

"Did you come all the way to Nashville just for this interview?" I asked.

"Yep," she said, "I just really appreciate the opportunity to be in the magazine and let people know that I'm going to do whatever I do on my own. That's the only way I'd want it. What do you want me to do, smile or what? I'm camera shy."

Regretfully, as all good things must, our talk came to an end. We shook hands, and I told her that maybe when she got rich and famous, I'd do a longer piece on her. She said she hoped so.

And that is really one of the most interesting things about this business—to be around somebody like Crystal Gayle when they are just starting out, and to know that if they're given half a chance, nothing, not even having a famous sister, will stop them.

MARSHALL FALLWELL

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# Charlie Rich: Portrait Of A Late Bloomer

by Peter McCabe

In the corner of his living room, sitting behind a Steinway grand piano which bears the signature of Charles Steinway himself, Charlie Rich weaves his way through an obscure jazz riff. It is most likely one he remembers from the days when his high school buddies called him Charlie Kenton, he loved Stan Kenton that much. They call Charlie "country" today, though he is still primarily a jazz buff. That's what he listens to—Brubeck, Miles Davis, Count Basie.

That's how Tally remembers Charlie when they both played in the Sharecropper club in Memphis 20 years ago—as a jazz musician. Tally is a black man who plays piano in a four-man combo in the Quality Inn East, a few miles from where Charlie now lives. It's a good little band, fronted by a very promising girl singer, and Charlie has been down to see Tally and swap tales about old times. "You know how I knew he was serious even back then?" Tally asks. "He used to carry around a little rubber ball, and he used to flex it with his fingers just so's he could keep 'em supple. And man, I tell you, there was times back then when he could sit down at that piano and knock me out." It is time for Tally's next set. He wanders back into the dimly lit hotel lounge and takes his seat at the piano for the third time this evening. And as he goes, he leaves me to reflect on the thin line between success and failure, for if it were not for "Behind Closed Doors," a good producer, and some lucky breaks, Charlie might well be behind that piano in the hotel lounge.



Instead he is posing for the cover of a magazine.

He is supposed to be sitting still for a few minutes, though to sit Charlie behind a piano and expect him to keep his hands off the blacks and whites is like giving a child matches and hoping he won't strike

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**... It was always one  
problem or another;  
poor promotion, the wrong  
material, booze ...**

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them. In two minutes he is deeply into his music, staring hard ahead at nothing in particular while his fingers dance instinctively over the keys. Occasionally, he remembers the presence of the photographer, leans back, and gives him a broad, beaming smile. Then he's back to the jazz number with all the concentration he might muster if he were on stage at Carnegie Hall.

Margaret Ann, Charlie's wife, emerges from the kitchen, bringing him his fourth cup of coffee in two hours. It is mid-morning, and like

Charlie, Margaret Ann is wearing jeans and an old shirt around the house, but the casual clothes don't detract from her dark, delicate beauty. Margaret Ann is the other half of the Charlie Rich story. She has known him since high school, when she idolized June Christie in the same way Charlie admired Stan Kenton, and as she readily admits, she will tell you more about Charlie than he's ever likely to tell you himself. Margaret Ann has also written some of Charlie's finest recordings, songs like "Field of Yellow Daisies" and "Life's Little Ups and Downs," and she has served as his number-one booster through the long, hard years when the records just would not sell. This morning she has been chatting away a mile a minute to her brother (she is as much a talker as Charlie is a brooder), but now she notices that Charlie is at the piano, doing what he does best.

"Well now, good," she says, confiding to me just loud enough so that Charlie can't help but overhear. "You know, that's the first time he's sat down at that piano since we moved here." The Riches moved into their new house in Germantown near Memphis just a few days earlier. "And I know," Margaret Ann continues, "that when he starts playing, he's starting to relax."

She sets his coffee down, gives him a big, loving, almost sensual smile, then sets off back to the kitchen. "That sure ain't country he's playing," she giggles. "I ask you, is *that* country?"

Charlie brings his song to an end,

PHOTO: ALAN WHITMAN

closes the piano and motions me over to the small desk which sits below the three C.M.A. trophies he won for "Best Single," "Best Album" and "Male Vocalist" of last year. He acts like he needed that spell at the piano; his brow is furrowed and he seems to be under a lot of pressure. What bothers him most now, he says, is having so little time to spend with his family.

"We were kind of set in a pattern," he says of his 15 years in the music business wilderness. "I suppose you could say we were stagnating. But now, look!" He flips open a big schedule diary and turns to the month of May. Every date, except maybe two, is blocked out in ink;

music business in the first place, when she sent some tapes across the river from their Arkansas farm to Bill Justis, a producer at Sun Records. At that time, Charlie had more or less made up his mind to be a farmer. Margaret Ann likes to recall that "as a farmer, Charlie made a pretty good piano player."

In the lean years since those Sun days, Margaret Ann made many an effort to persuade him to hit that road in one fierce drive, to give it all he had in one energetic burst, even if it was just for six months or a year, but Charlie always said no.

"I thought, 'what the hell.' I'd always driven a pretty nice car, always could go fishing when I want-

tings of stardom he has always shunned. Like Johnny Cash under the same circumstances, he continually fidgets, shuffles, snorts, grunts and looks for distractions.

"Now, I probably don't mean that last remark," he says, having thought about the full significance such statements can have in print, "but you can see the pressure I'm under. You can see the dilemma."

Before he joined the Air Force, Charlie had been playing in a local band in Arkansas since he was 14. He had even studied musical theory for a year at the University of Arkansas. During his years in the service he had formed a combo, and when he arrived at Sun, he was good, though his timing was awful.

Sam Phillips was losing interest in the record label in favor of what turned out to be a more lucrative interest—Holiday Inns. Phillips was one of the original stockholders. Charlie remembers that Jerry Lee had only about a year to run at Sun, and Johnny Cash had only a few sessions to do. Phillips did pay Charlie Rich one mighty compliment, declaring that of all the acts that entered his fabulous stable, only Charlie had the raw talent to rival the success of his greatest discovery, Elvis Presley. But still Phillips did little to promote his records.

So in 1963 he left the Memphis-based label to begin a bleak, seven-year round of the major record companies. Several times he nearly made it. He had "Big Boss Man" on RCA, and a hit at Mercury with "Mohair Sam," but again he couldn't follow up. It was always one problem or another; poor promotion, the wrong material, booze, or just plain old depression. In spite of this Charlie feels he did some of his best work during those years before he signed with Epic, and as is so often the case with poets who are hungry, he and Margaret Ann both wrote some fine personal statements about their own lives. Charlie:

*I know the same thing has happened before  
and every time it does I hate it more and more  
But when I'm drinking  
I am nobody's friend  
So, please baby, wait for me until they let  
me out again.*



PHOTO: GRANT SEXTON

At the Houston Livestock Show with manager and friend Sy Rosenburg at the wheel, country's hottest superstar receives his due rewards.

details of bookings, recording sessions for Epic, TV shows, Midnight Specials, radio interviews, and all the other endless demands which are always made on a big star. No doubt about it, Charlie is big now.

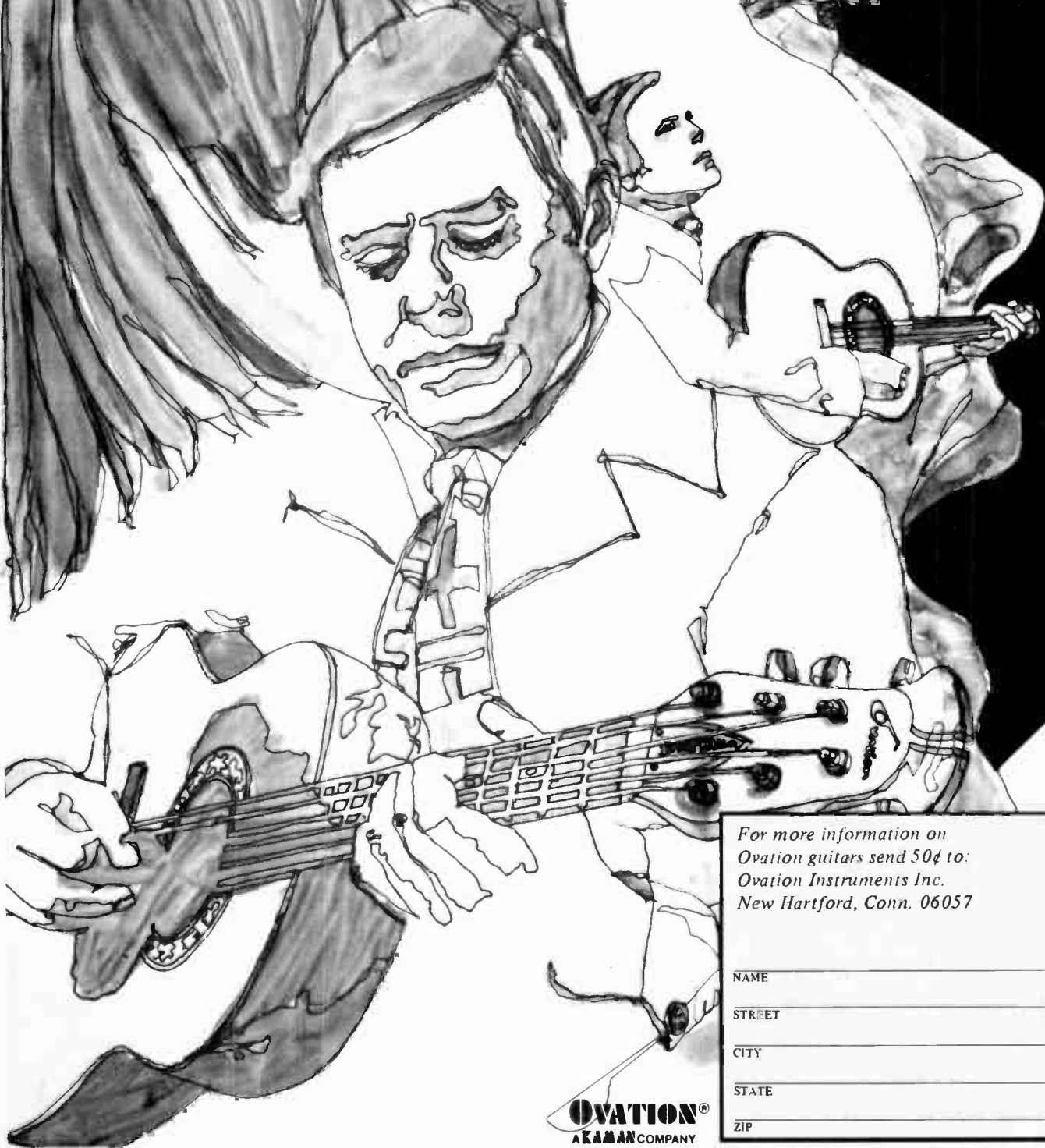
"The trouble is, I hate to disappoint people," says Charlie, "and I have a hard time making quick decisions, saying yes or no to a booking, just like that. All my family were the same. We like to take our time and think things through. Maybe it's the Indian blood in us."

Charlie Rich never did harbor what you might call a driving ambition for stardom. Even today he finds it hard to join in the music business backslapping. Margaret Ann always likes to kid him that it was *she* who got him into the

ed. I guess most people are a lot more ambitious, more energetic than me. They're more concerned with hits, or just greatness. Now I'd rather be rich than poor, don't misunderstand me, but I don't want to be rich at the expense of my family, and they're the ones that's likely to suffer right now. You know, this is a single man's game, this music business, and right now things are moving a lot faster than I'm accustomed to. If they drive me too hard, I'll just quit."

I ask him who *they* are, and he points to the schedule diary. He grinds out one cigarette and immediately lights up another. He is a compulsive chain smoker, a big nervous man who has never felt at ease being interviewed, part of the trap-

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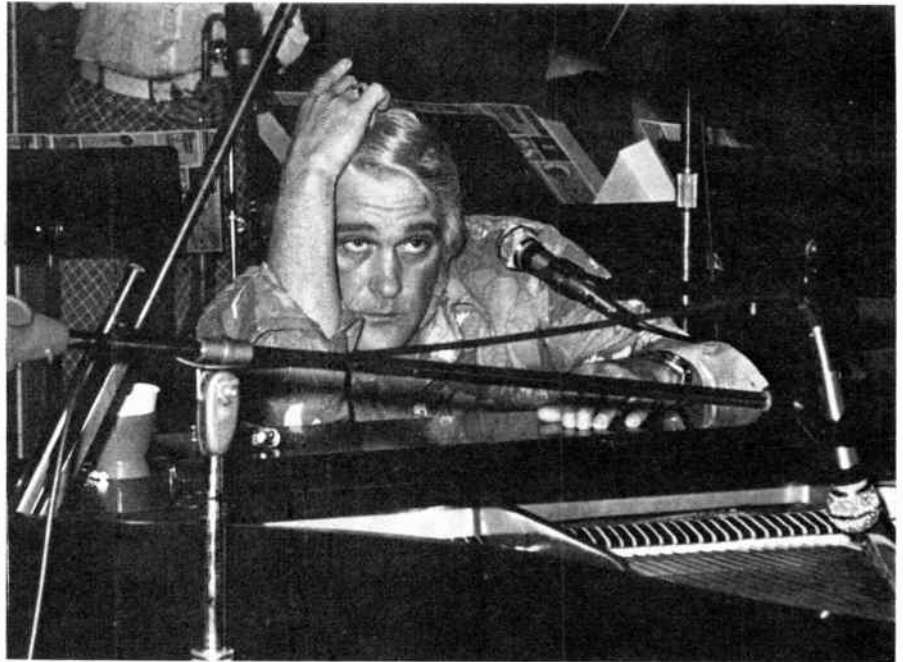
Margaret Ann:

*Life has its little ups and downs  
Like ponies on a merry-go-round  
And no one grabs the brass ring  
every time  
But she don't mind.*

These days Charlie gets quite a kick from watching RCA and Mercury rush to release his old songs, and seeing them climb the charts in competition with his newly recorded songs on Epic. "Makes me think I may have been doing something right all along," he says.

He is grateful to his producer, Billy Sherrill, for sticking with him until they found something the public liked, and he never fails to mention his promotion man, Bill Williams, who nursemaided him through the terrors of emergent stardom. "They're fine people," he says, "and I owe them everything." This is not just idle praise, the kind of throwaway I'd-like-to-thank-my-producer afterthought that might be delivered from the TV screen. Charlie means it. He does owe them everything, the difference between being a total success or the local favorite in a hotel lounge bar.

"You hadn't seen him in six months? Well, what do you think now? He's a whole new man, isn't he?"



A pause in the studio rehearsal of the new Charlie Rich Show . . .

Sy Rosenberg, Charlie's manager and long-time friend, is telling me about Charlie's victory over the bottle. Like most music business managers, Sy is an affable type who drives a big, expensive car, but his relations with Charlie probably are a lot more personal than most managers and artists. He and his petite blond wife, Natalie, Charlie, and Margaret Ann are all close friends.

Sy, Natalie and I are on our way to hear Charlie rehearse with his new back-up band.

"He quit just before the Grammys," says Natalie, with a touch of pride that suggests she and Sy were an influence on Charlie's decision. "And what a difference it's made. What we see now is an intelligent, sensitive man with a really fine, dry sense of humor which I never knew existed. He's even become interested in business, stuff he never used to care about, and he wants to

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**"... things are moving a lot faster than I'm accustomed to. If they drive me too hard, I'll just quit..."**

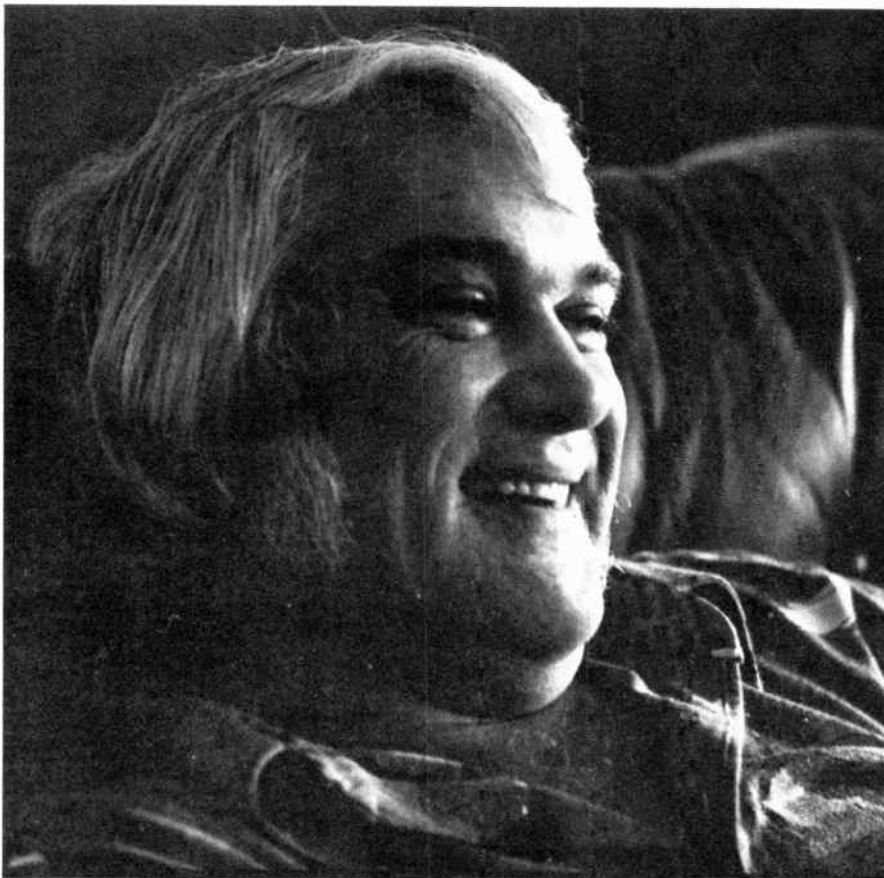
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know how things are done and how his money is spent."

"You know, a few weeks ago I ran him through the doctor's," Sy interrupts. "That doctor couldn't find a thing wrong with him. Can you believe it? All that booze! I thought it must have done some damage, but the doctor said he was in great shape."

"Now we have to stop him smoking," says Natalie.

The change in Charlie had been just as Sy Rosenberg described it—truly amazing. It was Charlie Rich who once said "a guy who's had just the right amount of gin can sing the blues a hell of a lot better than a guy who is stone sober," and Charlie had been standing by



PHOTOS: MARSHALL FALLWELL

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that maxim for the better part of 15 years except for one slight difference—he rarely stopped at the right amount. In the past an interviewer talking to Charlie usually elicited a series of grunts, while Margaret Ann did most of the talking, doubling her efforts at conversation, and explaining that Charlie was really very shy, though he was really very blotto. Surprisingly, Charlie usually managed to keep up a high standard of performance on stage in spite of the booze, though on the one occasion I saw him when he was stone sober, at the Columbia Records convention in San Francisco last year, the difference was quite noticeable. On that day Charlie held off until after he had performed, though when I saw him in his hotel room immediately after the show, he was on the phone ordering himself three double gins. It was a reward to himself for his act of forbearance.

“It wasn’t easy,” is all he says of the whole experience of quitting, “and I had a little help in order to do it.” Then he gets up from the studio piano, goes out to the lobby and returns with a large Coke. “Heavy stuff,” he says with a grin.

In the Memphis studio, surrounded by the young folks in his new entourage—the new “Charlie Rich

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**... They call Charlie  
"country" today,  
though he is still primarily  
a jazz buff.  
That's what he listens to ...**

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Show”—Charlie suddenly looks older than his 41 years. His hair has lost some of the sheen which the hairdresser gives it before he goes on stage, and his face, though still distinguished and handsome, looks tired and slightly vulnerable as he waits for the musicians to set up. Alongside his lead guitarist, David Mayfield—a bouncy, energetic 20-year-old with an excess of flash—Charlie looks like a veteran. He still has a tendency to withdraw from the turmoil around him, and his brooding silence gives the impression of an almost volcanic power held in check. His music is his only real expression. His personality seems to change the minute he strikes the keys, and whatever it is that lurks in his soul finds expression in his voice. If anything,



PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL

he is a soul singer, but he has managed without strain to borrow from countless areas of music and come up with a cohesive whole. Today his voice has improved beyond all doubt, his phrasing is better, his delivery stronger except for a few high notes, and even his stage presence has acquired a brand new confidence. The memory of those years in the honky tonks is behind him, and it is not hard to see why that diary is so full.

Sy Rosenberg has added two saxes, a trumpet and a trombone to Charlie’s piano and voice, as well as three black girl singers. Somehow it all seems superfluous, though one can see why Charlie thinks it’s a good idea. He couldn’t be in a musical rut if he tried, and the enlarged band appeals to his love for experimentation. Besides, it offers a fuller sound in the large halls which Charlie is playing these days. Charlie and Sy, however, are both anxious for opinions on whether all this will alienate his country fans.

“Of course we want to keep his country audience,” says Sy, “but you have to remember that Charlie probably has three to five years at the top. Life is always short in this business. The object for this year is

to transform Charlie from a recording act to a full entertainer. That way he can have longevity. I mean, look at Wayne Newton. He hasn’t had a hit in years, but he still gets top dollar, and the reason is he’s an entertainer.”

While the thought of modeling Charlie on Wayne Newton strikes horror into the heart of a believer, one can see the sense in the use of a little choreography where Charlie is concerned. Charlie has always been fairly stiff on stage, rarely looking comfortable except when he’s behind the piano, and so for the last few days he’s been taking lessons from a Mr. Jack Payne of Hollywood, who’s been teaching Charlie to *move*. “He came highly recommended,” Natalie says of Mr. Payne.

Charlie, however, still seems to treat the whole thing as a bit of a joke, and Natalie cracks up when at the end of the rehearsal he stands up from the piano and does a little jig around the studio. “That’s what my choreographer taught me,” he says defensively. As he saunters out of the studio Presley-style, beckoning his female vocal trio after him, the entire place dissolves. This is a new Charlie Rich, and they’re

seeing him for the first time, but somehow one gets the feeling that it's going to be a long time before anybody puts Charlie Rich in tights.

From deep in the country near Benton, Arkansas, the Riches have moved to a quiet subdivision overlooking a muddy lake a few miles from Memphis. Behind them is farmland, which in a few months will be full of corn, but all around the lake, new houses are going up. To a large extent the move is a concession to Charlie's burgeoning career, but in a sense it is also symbolic of what always tends to happen when commercial success strikes. The move to the subdivision, the arrival of the choreographer, they seem related. And as the rest of the relentless army flocks to his new success, one can only hope that Charlie is sufficient of an individualist to resist their inevitable encroachments on his style. For it is this that has made him what he is—an original.

In many ways he and Margaret Ann are very different from the rest of the mainstream country performers. They are vastly more versatile musicians for one thing. One writer once said that Margaret Ann always knew she was different from the time she first wrote away and subscribed to *Downbeat* in high school. Even the Riches' new house is essentially unlike the plastic rose, country-dream-living homes of most country performers. It is a modest, comfortable, split-level brown and yellow house, tastefully and funkily furnished with lots of faded leather, good wood, and easy chairs, the same kind of offhand good taste which the Riches express in their music. Downstairs is a pool room and a recording studio (the latter still being built), where photos of Charlie cover one wall, growing progressively greyer and more distinguished from the fifties to the seventies.

This evening Margaret Ann is in the kitchen, cooking supper for three of her four children; Renee the eldest, Allan who is 20 and already making a name for himself as a songwriter (he wrote "Pretty People" on Charlie's last album), and Jack, age six, the baby of the family, about whom Margaret Ann wrote the song "He Follows My Footsteps." (The other daughter, Laurie, is still finishing up her stud-

ies in Benton.) Charlie is exhausted after a hard day. He is slumped into an armchair, puffing hard on the ubiquitous cigarette. In the kitchen Margaret Ann admits that she, too, is struggling to cope with all the success. In a way, all the recognition for Charlie has brought recognition for some of her songs. She has her own publishing company called Makamillion. "Don't you dare print that," she tells me.

"I guess I'll still live like a loser," she laughs, "it's kind of hard to break the habit. You know, I'll never be able to order a maid

around. If I ever had one I'd start gossiping to her about husbands."

Charlie goes back to the piano again, but this evening it's without the avid concentration he showed earlier this morning. As he rolls out the introduction to a blues, he tells me: "I'm in a pretty good situation now. I can still do pretty much what I want to musically—jazz, country, rock, blues—you know, a little of everything. As for the rest, well, I'm undecided, but at least I'm a little more satisfied."

He grins a sly grin and lets the 12 bar roll. ■

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# Nashville's Biggest Weekend

## Farewell To The Ryman, Hello To Opryland

by Patrick Carr



It didn't feel like anything special that Friday night at the Ryman Auditorium. It was the same old scene—a hot, messy, relaxed, elbow-squeezing-free-for-all back on the scarred oak stage floorboards and in the cramped, seedy little dressing rooms where the Opry stars have been doing their best to get presentable for the folks for the past 33 years—but that Friday night was really very special indeed. The next day, Richard Nixon would arrive in Nashville for the first Presidential Opry visit ever. Nashville was already crawling with Secret Service agents. Nixon would be the star of the new Opry House's gala opening, and the Ryman would stand closed, deserted, and partially destroyed amid the scruffy patchwork of honky tonks, go-go-joints, tourist traps, massage parlors and blue movie houses that has grown up around its walls. Friday, March 15th, was the Ryman's last night.

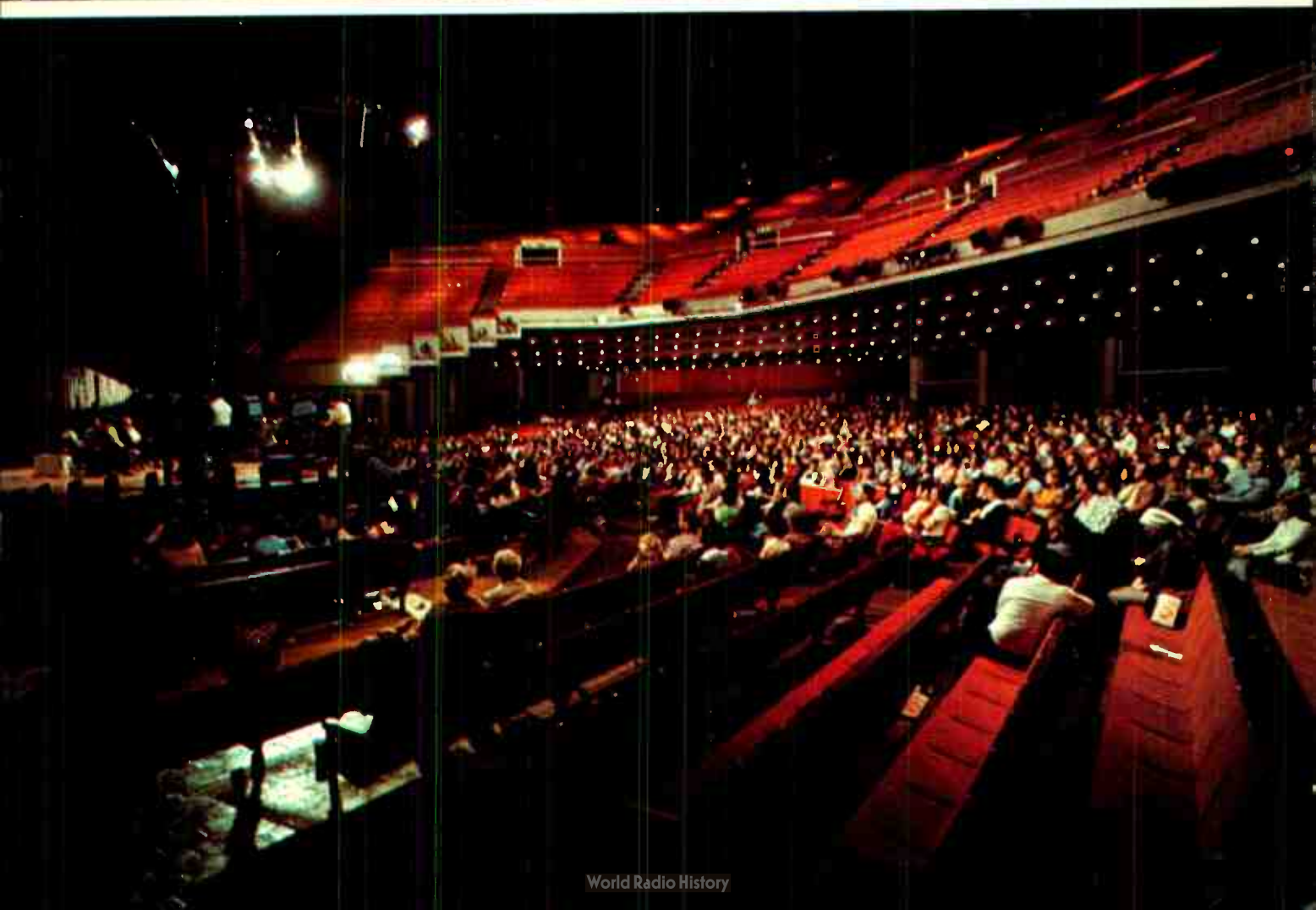
It was raining in Nashville that night, and rivers of rainwater were gushing down Broadway as Jeanne Pruett, Porter and Dolly, Jim Ed Brown, The Four Guys and other Opry performers proceeded with a



Minnie Pearl weeps on the Ryman's last Saturday night. Nixon rejoices at Opryland. At right, the new Opry House.

PHOTOS: MARSHALL FALLWELL





regular Friday night show.

Sure, the Reverend Jimmy Snow would stir up some feelings with his spirited recitation of the history of Captain Ryman's Tabernacle-turned country music auditorium, and there would be a strong finale to the night when Johnny Cash and June Carter and the Carter clan led the Grand Ole Gospel cast through "Will The Circle Be Unbroken," but all in all, the atmosphere was surprisingly subdued that night, more like business as usual than the final end of an era. When the show was over, nobody hung around. Opry employees began dismantling the stage trappings and ripping out pews for the new Opry House lobby, and that was it.

Part of the reason for that lack of drama was the fact that the last night at the Ryman had, in a sense, already happened the previous Saturday night. Friday night shows were added to the Opry schedule only seven years ago, to cope with the demand for seats, and "Saturday Night At The Grand Ole Opry" continued to be the big one. As Jeanne Pruett said, "the Saturday show is the one that really counts."

And count it did. Saturday, March 9th, was a big deal. Stars like Tanya Tucker and Jody Miller flew in specially for the occasion, even though they weren't scheduled to appear. Celebrities like Peter Bogdanovich and Barbi Benton showed up to mill around backstage and watch the Opry stars walk out onto that crowded, funky old stage and sing for the fans squirming on Captain Ryman's hard oak pews, fanning themselves with those little cardboard fans in an attempt to keep cool.

There was a conflict of emotions that night. As fans and stars have been saying ever since Roy Acuff turned the first sod of turf at the Opryland site, the Ryman was where Hank Williams sang. It was the scene of country music's growth from backwoods obscurity to the status of a major national industry. The Ryman was where it all happened. It wasn't the Opry's first home, but it was the most important. The Ryman was tradition, history, a place where you knew where you were coming from. It was going to be strange, *Uptown* at the new place.

There was, however, an interesting angle to that fear. In general, it was the youngsters and the "Nashville Underground" faction who feared Opryland the most—people with little business attachment to the Opry organization, but a strong feeling that what is old and historically valuable should be held onto, and to hell with modernization.

On the other hand, most of the Opry veterans and old-timers felt differently. There was a sadness about leaving the old place—the same kind of feeling you'd get from leaving your first little country home for bigger and brighter things in the suburbs—but most of them were sick and tired of squeezing into those Ryman dressing rooms, of sweating half to death all night, of not being able to park anywhere near the Ryman. They were anxious for the creature comforts of the 20th Century. Unlike the kids and Nashville funkies, they felt the soul of country music would travel with them out to Opryland.

Watching Minnie Pearl on Saturday night, you could see the conflict of bright new hopes and leaving sadness. On the Ryman stage, she was telling the folks about the new Opry House. "You wouldn't be-

lieve it!" she shrieked. "Why, they've even got places to *sit down!* And mirrors—with *lights* around them!"

A few minutes later, she was talking about her first Opry appearance when Judge Hay, "The Solemn Old Judge" who was the first Opry announcer, told her, "Don't you worry, honey. Just go out there and love 'em, and they'll love ya right back." She looked down into the audience, and said, "And I do love ya." The audience responded with a standing ovation, and as Minnie tried to leave the stage, you could see that she was crying.

Roy Acuff called her back, trying to comfort her. "This is a very special night for Minnie," she said into the mike between sobs. "This is the last show here and there are some pretty wonderful memories." And then, as the audience cheered her again, she managed to compose herself a little. "I'm all right," she whispered . . .

Then there was Marty Robbins. Marty's a clown from way back, and a real favorite of the Opry crowd.



PHOTO: JIM MCGUIRE

That Saturday night he outdid himself, working the audience with quips and cracks and all manner of strange antics. They loved it, couldn't get enough of it, and the show had already run over by an hour and a half by the time he was yelling, "No! They want more! They want more!" as the curtain closed on him.

It wasn't exactly a tear-jerking finale, even if there were a few private lumps in a few throats when that curtain closed: Marty saw to that. Like he said, sprawled across a pew amid a litter of fans, popcorn containers and paper cups in the deserted Ryman after the building had been cleared, "Well, well, the last night of the Opry. I can hardly stop laughing . . ."

The new Opry House stands like a tasteful fortress amid the clean, landscaped surroundings of Opryland, U.S.A.—just about as far as you can get from the tattered hillbilly funk of Captain Ryman's auditorium. It is the centerpiece of Opryland, the final destination after you park your car in the biggest parking lot you ever saw and head off for an afternoon with the kids among the rides and tourist attractions of the new vacation park. Opryland is designed for family entertainment: Opryland, and the new Opry, are

respectable. No more massage parlors. No more Tootsie's.

They are also very classy. Not classy in an Uptown, hifallutin' sense. It doesn't feel like the kind of place in which you'd have to wear a tie. It's big and new and high-class—the most sophisticated entertainment/broadcast/television studio in the world—but the architects have done their best to make it comfortable for the mind as well as the body. The shape of the place is very like that of the Ryman: the seats are bench-style, like the Ryman: the predominant colors are

dark and earthy. It's a clever building, much better than the usual overgrown concrete outhouse in which you find yourself having to listen to music these days.

You can still run down to the stage and take photographs at the new Opry House; people can still mill around when they want, and the sound system, a description of which reads like a manual for lunar orbit re-entry, achieves just exactly what a sound system should—which is to make the music sound like there is no sound system between you and the music. From any position in the auditorium, you can see and hear perfectly.

On Gala Opening night, the audience, except for those in the balcony, was by invitation *only*, which means that the place was packed with country music moguls, local business people and other bigwigs, Opry sponsors, journalists, and politicians (four Governors, two Senators, and thirteen Congressmen); not quite your average Opry crowd. They were dressed to the nines, and mostly sober. There is no booze in Opryland. Naturally, things won't always be like that. There won't always be a few hundred cops psyching themselves up for Presidential protection duty; nobody will be checking passes and invitations, and making sure you go where you are allowed and nowhere else: there won't be newsmen from all over the world asking questions and drawing conclusions about the Significance of Country Music in the Seventies and the impact of President Nixon's first attempt to get down home with the folks since Watergate hit the headlines. That's what was happening on March 16th, and it will probably never happen again.

For Nixon, it was a major coup, and he performed well. From the moment he entered the Opry House on the tail end of the Tennessee Congressional delegation to the moment he left, he was as funky as a Tootsie's



PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL



PHOTO: JIM MCGUIRE

Workmen take down the Opry sign from the Ryman (left): Marty Robbins displays his money for his last Ryman performance (top photo), and Johnny and June lead the singing for one last "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" from Captain Ryman's old Tabernacle.

regular could expect of a President. He joked about the Opry sponsors; he brought that now-famous yo-yo and even tried to make it work; he became, on that stage, a human being. And no matter what you may think of Richard Nixon, you would have to agree with Roy Acuff when he said that the man is "a trouper." On the stage of the new Grand Ole Opry, President Nixon got down and *performed*—none of the usual intense nervousness, no evasions or defenses or justifications of the peculiar position in which he finds himself; just plain, straight-forward performance. It was an event well worth watching.

The presence of Nixon did, however, overshadow a great deal. There was Governor Wallace, for instance,

who was wheeled up onto the stage after the President's early departure, and who stayed for the rest of the show that night, shaking hands and talking with Minnie and Ernest Tubb and Dolly and any other country star who came to visit with him. There was Vito Pelliceri, the 84-year-old Opry stage producer, beamingly happy to see his baby grown up into a high-class, beautiful new home. There was every Opry star in Nashville getting such a kick out of the new dressing rooms and recording facilities and magnificent amenities, you almost had to cry for them. There were the fans in the balcony who had bought tickets for this big event months ago, and now were watching the world come to country music right before their eyes. There was the pride of all those people who had endured and enjoyed the long, long, years of the Ryman and were now getting to perform on a stage that must rank among the best in the world. There was the knowledge that in a town where the local aristocracy has always looked down upon Music Row, preferring to think of Nashville as "the Athens of the South," the Opry people can now be free of the millstone of Ryman, massage parlors and general downtown seediness.

But mostly there was the fact that after Richard Nixon and the other politicians left the building, and the cops and Secret Service and Washington Press Corps and sundry dignitaries went with them, the Grand Ole Opry went on like it always has. Mr. J.D. Bell, the Man-At-The-Door, may have himself a fancy new office that looks like it belongs to the gatehouse of a chemical factory; each Opry star may have his or her very own, swanky dressing room; you may find yourself getting lost in the cavernous reaches backstage—but still, you know that all those people are still going to be into *acting natural*. That's how it was after Richard Nixon left, and hopefully, that's how it will always be. ■



PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL



PHOTO: JIM MCGUIRE

At the Opry Gala Opening, Governor George Wallace stayed, but Richard Nixon played.

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# Bobby Bare

## Thirteen Hours In Wichita, Kansas

by Dave Hickey

### **4:15 Feb. 28** **Municipal Airport** **Wichita, Kansas**

This airport is very new, very modern and clean and neat, and so is everybody in it. They all look like people you see sketched in architects' renderings. I am half hoping to see Bobby Bare, the man who released one of the best albums of the year, *Lullabys, Legends, And Lies*, but I don't.

I used to see Bare in airports all the time. In fact, that was how my curiosity got aroused. Most performers you see in airports are tucked away in the center of a tight little crowd that goes scuffling down the concourse like a fashionable, furry animal with twenty legs, ten pairs of French sunglasses and equipment in all directions.

Not so, Bare. No sir. I'd just see your basic Bobby loping along by himself, slouch hat back on his

head, carrying a leather flight bag and never in any particular hurry. Casual... like he'd just got off the bus on the way to the hardware store for some ten-penny nails. But not today. I'll find him at the Holiday Inn.

### **5:00 P.M. Feb. 28** **At Large** **Wichita, Kansas**

Beautiful day, blue skies, and Wichita is a very *clean* city. There is a street here called Hydraulic Avenue, which sort of sets the tone. The far-flung William Morris Agency is unsure just *where* Bobby is staying in Wichita, so I find a record store and this hippy behind the counter tells me who the promoters are. From the record store telephone, with David Bowie playing in the background, I manage to convince them that I am neither a crazed groupie nor a Mafia hit man,

and they tell me that Bobby is staying where I should have looked in the first place: at the Holiday Inn.

### **6:00 P.M. Feb. 28** **Room #106 Holiday Inn** **Wichita, Kansas**

Bobby Bare is relaxed—very much at home, stretched out on the bed, boots off, hat on, watching TV with the sound off and reading a biography of Janis Joplin. I am used to the buses, trucks, amplifiers, lights, instrument cases, managers, roadies and groupies which usually accompany American musicians on the road, so it is a little staggering to realize that I am in the presence of the entire Bobby Bare Show. Right there, with his hat over his eyes and a plug of tobacco in his cheek. "I don't even take my guitar anymore," he is saying. "I like it too much to trust the airlines with it. Besides, I never

yet played a place where there wasn't a guitar."

There is no denying the logic of that, so we go on to talk about the late Tex Ritter. For some reason Tex was the one member of the Nashville old guard who commanded the unqualified respect and affection of country music's more unorthodox cowboys, and Bare is no exception.

"If I ever get to be an old man," Bare says, "I want to be just like Tex. He really had the manner. I remember right after I started dating Jeanie, I took her up to Tex's hotel room in Dallas. I introduced them and right off Tex says, 'Well, son, are you gonna marry her?' I coulda strangled him! But then I thought about it and decided that I probably was gonna marry her, although I hadn't considered it at the time. Old Tex was pretty crafty . . ."

A phone call interrupts the story. Bobby doesn't slam the receiver down, but neither does he replace it lightly in its cradle, as he tells me that he is scheduled to open the show that night for Billy "Crash" Craddock, Barbara Mandrell, Johnny Rodriguez and Tom T. Hall.

"That's quite an honor," Bare says, deadpan. "I guess it's because I have such a flashy act." Bare launches himself up off the bed, "Let's get T. and go get some soup."

### 6:30 P.M. Feb. 28 Holiday Inn Restaurant Wichita, Kansas

Tom T. is just back from Florida and the St. Johns River, so I sip at the Holiday Inn vegetable soup while Tom and Bobby talk about fishing, or rather talk Fishing—it is a language as well as a religion, and since I have never fished for anything but compliments, I content myself with visual evidence. Tom T. is looking very trim, healthy and tanned. Only his eyes look like they've been up for three days, but Tom's eyes always look a lot older than the rest of him. Bare's eyes, on the other hand, are the youngest looking thing about him—they are a bright innocent, Paul Newman blue that is visible from the back of an auditorium—an important part of his humor; eyes wide: "Why, Ma'am, I never woulda said anything like that. You musta misunderstood."

Finally an extravagant Tom T. Hall story about gator wrestling is interrupted when Bare leans across the table and peers at Tom T.'s face.

**Bare:** "Is your *face* dirty, T? Or are you growing a beard?"

**Tom T.:** "It's a *beard*, Bare. I been writing this song about growing a beard, but it ain't long enough yet." (*Pained smile from Bare*)

**Bare:** "Well, you know T., when you grow a beard you stop being a *songwriter* and become a *Composer*."

**Tom T.:** "That's all right with me. *Composer's* a lot closer to the front of the *cyclopedia*."

**Bare:** "Yeah, Tom, but *Ass-hole* is right up front." (*Everyone is amused*)

Tom T. excuses himself and goes charging off to find his band, which is coming in by bus. Bare looks after him and, grinning, shakes his head a little wistfully.

"You know, sometimes it kills me . . . to see Tom T. expending all that time and energy keeping a band on the road when he could use it writing songs. I know it gives him pleasure. He loves to *arrange* things, but, Lord, the world needs good songs and Tom is one of the few

folks that can write them."

As we leave the restaurant, I am thinking that if our talk keeps up at this rate I'm going to learn a lot about everybody in Nashville but Bobby Bare.

### 7:30 P.M. Feb. 28: En Route: Wichita, Kansas

A disc jockey from the local radio station is driving Bobby to the Coliseum; and I am following in my rented car. We have been turning corners, going on and off freeways for nearly half an hour. The show is scheduled to start momentarily and I can think of only three possible explanations: (1) We are lost; (2) Bare is being kidnapped by a demented DJ for recording an eight-minute song; (3) As we drive we are spelling out the word WICHITA in enormous letters as a salute to Skylab.

I never learn which, because we finally drive up to the performer's entrance of the Coliseum and the DJ disappears. As we approach the door, we can hear the man on the P.A. system, saying . . . "a big welcome for RCA recording star, Bobby Bare!"



The Bares, senior and junior, onstage at The Ryman.

PHOTO: JIM MCGUIRE

The guard at the door is looking down the ramp toward the arena, and instinctively he stops us without looking. "Performer's entrance, you can't get in this way."

Bare, ever cool: "Excuse me, sir, my name is Bobby Bare and I have to go up there and sing."

The guard jumps out of the way and Bare strolls on down the ramp toward the arena, where there is a raised stage and a crowd of 12,000 Kansans. Bare is nearly stopped again at the entrance; it is dark here and the cop is reacting to the lack of urgency in his stride. Barbara Mandrell's band is riffing on the stage and the applause is still going on.

"Have you ever *played* with that band?" I ask as we near the entrance.

"Nah," he says, then as he walks out, "I hope they got an extra guitar up there."

**8:00 P.M. Feb. 28:  
Avery-Fisher Coliseum  
Wichita, Kansas**

Bare is on stage, performing now, although you couldn't tell it. He wanders around the stage until he

finds a guitar, then he tries several obscene ways of strapping it on. The audience is already laughing when he introduces himself and thanks everyone for coming early to see the opening act which isn't too important anyway, so they don't really have to listen if they don't want to. More laughter. Bare scratches his cheek and peers through the spotlights at the audience. "Say, y'all are okay." More laughter. At this point, he could read a phone book and bring down the house. Don't ask me how. It is a subtle kind of humor. He doesn't put himself or the audience down; merely takes the audience into his confidence, assuming that they are as cool as he is. His whole delivery seems to say: "*Now, you and I know it's kinda foolish for a grown man to be up here doing this, and that it's kinda foolish for you to be sitting out there watching me. But I ain't gonna tell if you don't. Hell, it's all in good fun.*"

Then when the audience is relaxed, he plants his foot, leans forward to the mike, strums his borrowed guitar, and clear as a bell:

"Last night I went to sleep in De-

troit City . . ." No matter how many times you see this happen, it's always the same. You don't think, "Bobby Bare, the singing star can sing," you think, "Why, hell that good old boy from Ironton, Ohio can sing like a sonofabitch." And somehow the force of his personality holds the funny patter and the sad songs together.

Tonight, he does a very good, but short set, singing his great down-beat hits: "Detroit City," "Streets of Baltimore," "Margie's at the Lincoln Park Inn," and "Ride Me Down Easy," laying down the rhythm and letting the band follow.

Later he would tell me, "What's wrong with Nashville recording now is the whole business of laying down rhythm and instrumental tracks without lead singing. When the singer follows the music rather than driving the band, it comes out dead. From now on, those old boys can follow me. Hell, it's my record."

Bobby closes, like any good opening act, with an up-tempo number—Shel Silverstein's "The Mermaid," a funny song rendered hilarious by Bare's hip, blue-eyed innocent delivery.

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- Forby London
- You Don't Know My Mind
- My Waller's Store
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- Cannonball Rag
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- Loggy Mountain
- Carle Breakdown
- George Blossom Special
- Hatch Cannonball
- Lost Highway
- Ray Down Low
- Down Under
- Pine And Peaches (In My Heart)
- Forby Lord Blues
- Gettin' Along In Hawaii
- Tom Linton's Lough Of My Blue Eyes

- Mother Maybelle Carter
- Earl Scruggs
- Doc Watson
- Roy Acuff
- Merle Travis
- Jimmy Martin
- Vassar Clements
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Music forms a new Circle

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After listening to the Dirt Band backing Scruggs on "You Are My Flower," Acuff said: "It ain't a thing in the world but country. It's as plain as the nose on your face. Hell, it's country. Even with Earl, it's as country as hell." A hard country friend of ours said that if he had to choose one album to take to a desert island, he'd take "Will the Circle Be Unbroken." This is the perfect gift item—for young and old alike!

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**10:30 P.M. Feb. 28:  
Tom T. Hall's Bus  
Wichita, Kansas**

The only good thing about going on first is that you get to go home first. But tonight there is an autograph session after the show. So as far as Bare is concerned, there is nothing good about it. We have been sitting in Tom T.'s bus playing *Pass The Bottle* with Tom and Johnny Rodriguez for a while now, and Bobby's spirits are visibly declining. The "star" treatment really unnerves him, as does the paraphernalia of touring; the buses, the band politics, the faces pressed to

*much* he wanted, and tried to decide just exactly *what* he wanted. And *what he wanted* was to be a country singer.

So in 1964, Bobby moved to Nashville and to RCA. Then, on the basis of a number of hits, he was sent on a European tour with a full band, his wife and his children. "You just can't imagine what kind of hell that was," Bobby says. "There I was a country boy from Ohio with a fair command of English, traveling through Europe with a band of displaced hillbillies and my family. I can remember standing in a train station somewhere in Germany with all this lug-

there was a time that I wanted everything—I mean *everything*."

A cop is knocking on the bus door, and telling us it is time to sign autographs. The police make a cordon through the crowd and the stars file back into the arena where they sit on the edge of the stage and sign autographs. Billy Craddock, Barbara Mandrell and Johnny Rodriguez seem to be enjoying themselves. Tom T. looks serious like an author signing novels. Bare looks self-conscious—which he never does on the stage. He takes a little too long with each person.

**2:00 A.M. Feb. 29:  
Room #106, Holiday Inn  
Wichita, Kansas**

If it's of interest to anyone, there are two country singers and one hillbilly journalist who are now *persona non grata* in the private club at the Holiday Inn in Wichita, Kansas, through no fault of their own. Due to an imperfect understanding of Kansas liquor laws, and a severe overestimation of a waitress's sense of humor, Bare and Hall and myself find ourselves in Bare's motel room with a little booze and no prospects. Bare is stretched out on the bed with his hat over his eyes. Tom T. is leaning over his guitar and strumming; I am sitting in a chair trying to be casually invisible.

Right now, Tom is trying to improve Bare's mood.

"Hey, Bare, here's a new song for you. When we get back to Nashville I'm gonna send you a demo," Tom T. says, then he plays a lovely, somber ballad called "You Love Everyone But You."

"That's a good song, Tom," Bare says. "It would make a great follow up for 'I Love.'"

"I thought you might like it," Tom says. It is kind of a touching scene. Tom is offering his old friend a song, and Bobby is either too embarrassed or too polite to acknowledge it. But Tom doesn't stop trying.

"Bobby," Tom says, "how'd you like to produce my next album? I mean it, I could have really used the Bare touch on this last one."

"Hell, Tom, I rather stay your friend. If I'd produced that last album I woulda released 'Drunken Annie' for a single, and it wouldn't have been a hit. I woulda never re-



PHOTO: MARSHALL FALLWELL

The Bare Family, at home: Shannon, Daddy, Jeannie, Cari Jean and Bobby Jr.

the glass looking in seem to embarrass him.

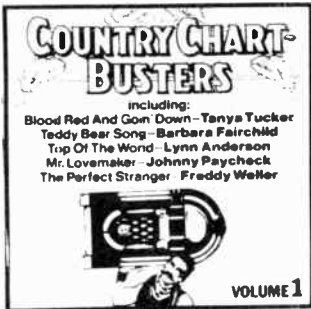
Bare has been playing country music for people since he was 16, when he organized a honky tonk band in his home town of Ironton, Ohio and then gradually migrated west to California. For many years before he was old enough to drink in them, Bobby played the "skull orchards" and lounges in Long Beach and the San Fernando Valley. Playing under conditions like this you learn to want one thing: *More*. And Bobby had gotten just that: better gigs; a club of his own in L.A.; a recording contract; and finally some acting jobs. Then, after a first-rate performance in "Distant Trumpet," and a number of good television offers, Bobby did something that few performers have the presence of mind to do. He stopped thinking about *how*

gauge; half the people are there and pissed off, the other half are lost somewhere, and I'm saying 'Dear Lord, if you will deliver me from this I will never be so presumptuous again.' Well, he did and I didn't.

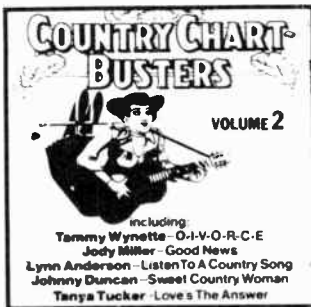
"It all comes down to this: I like songs—good songs—and I like to sing them for good people, and that's it. I don't care about bands, or TV, or production, or "crossing over" or anything. Right now, I've got a real decision to make. The new album's doing real well, and the logical thing to do is to really press, but I don't know if I can really get into a six-year ego trip, which is what it would mean. I really don't know. That "star" business will make you crazy, if that's all you want; you get so you can't tell the "star" from the person. I can speak with authority on that, because

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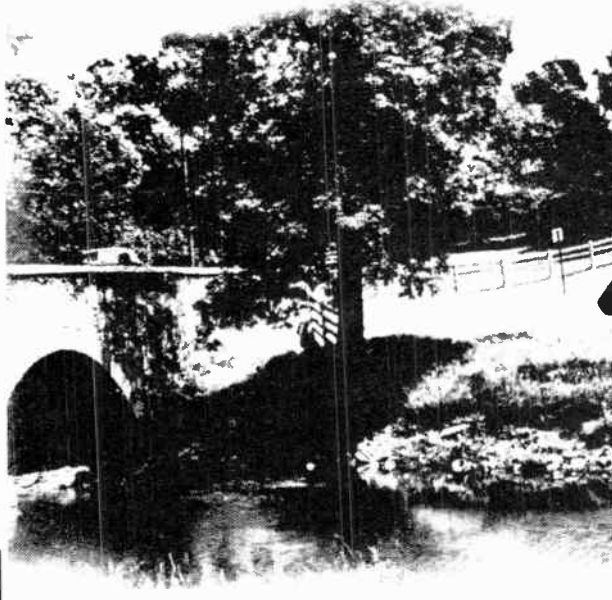
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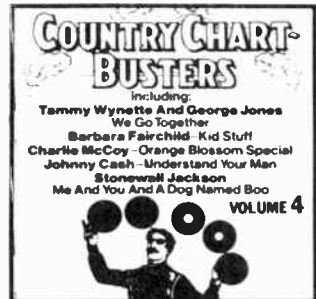
**1** You'll thrill to "Blood Red and Goin' Down" by Tanya Tucker, as well as "Dueling Banjos" and "Teddy Bear Song." You'll meet Johnny Cash's hit friend, "Oney," as well as "Mr. Lovemaker" by Johnny Paycheck, "The Perfect Stranger" by Freddy Weller, and more. This exciting tour concludes on "Top of the World," Lynn Anderson's great hit.



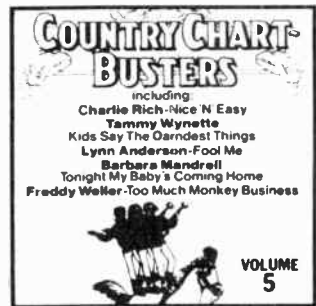
**2** "Shenandoah" is always beautiful, especially by Charlie McCoy, but on this musical journey you'll go with Johnny Cash and "Any Old Wind That Blows" and visit Earl Scruggs' "T for Texas," too. Along the way "Listen to a Country Song" by Lynn Anderson and Johnny Duncan's "Sweet Country Woman." There are tears and joy with Tammy Wynette's "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" and Jody Miller's "Good News," Tanya Tucker's "Love's the Answer" and Ray Price's "She's Got to Be a Saint," and still more.



**3** Take Tanya Tucker's "The Jamestown Ferry" and you're embarking on the way to musical heights including (among others) Tammy Wynette, David Houston, George Jones, Sonny James and Freddy Weller. There's a behind-the-scenes visit with Charlie Rich's "I Do My Swingin' at Home" and Lynn Anderson's "A Perfect Match."



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**5** This musical ramble through the hits has something for the whole family including Tammy Wynette's "Kids Say the Darndest Things," Jody Miller's "There's a Party Goin' On," Sonny James' "I Love You More and More Everyday" and David Houston's "She's All Woman." Charlie Rich is represented with "Nice 'N Easy" and Lynn Anderson offers her request, "Fool Me." You'll learn why Johnny Paycheck says he's looking for "Someone to Give My Love To," while Freddy Weller complains about "Too Much Monkey Business."

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leased 'I Love.' Because 'Drunken Annie' is a great song."

Bare gets Tom T. to play "Drunken Annie" and the quality of the song brightens his mood a little. While Tom is playing, Rodriguez comes into the room with Tom's road manager and a local girl. When the song is over Bobby says, "Hey, Johnny, have you heard Tom's new

song? Come on, Tom, play it again."

"I'll get the right key this time." Tom says, and he plays "You Love Everybody But You" again. Tom finishes singing, and Rodriguez, who has picked up Bare's mood, leans forward from his perch on the edge of the dresser and says, "Bare, you know who that song's about? That's you, Bare, it really is. You

love everyone but you, man."

"Crap," Bare says, embarrassed, and to cover the silence he takes the guitar from Tom T. "This is one of my favorite songs," he says, "I think everybody oughta cut it. I just got Don Williams to cut it."

He leans over the guitar and plays Mickey Newbury's "I Don't Think Much About Her No More." It is the perfect song for a man who is the master of saying one thing and meaning another, and it is also so damned sad that Rodriguez reaches over and flips off the glaring ceiling light. It's instinctive, a way of giving everyone his privacy.

When the song is finished, Rodriguez says, "Damn, Bobby," and everybody else just looks at the floor.

"Here you go, John," Bare says. "Play us a song."

"Thanks," Johnny says, like an act that gets to follow the Rolling Stones.

### 5:30 A.M. Feb. 29: Holiday Inn Parking Lot Wichita, Kansas

I have walked outside to say good night to Tom T. and Rodriguez who are making intricate logistical arrangements about buses, planes, gigs, schedules, before they retire for one hour's sleep. It is very clear and very cold in Wichita, Kansas at five in the morning.

When I shake hands with Rodriguez, he grabs my wrist in his left hand and says, "Hey man, do a really good piece on Bare. That son-of-a-bitch has helped so damn many people, you can't imagine. And everybody just figgers Bare can take care of himself. Tonight, I coulda told you a thousand things he's done for people, but it would have just embarrassed him, and he won't tell you in a million years. So do a good piece, huh?"

I tell Rodriguez I will do the best I can, and turn back to the room to say good night to Bare.

Bobby is sitting up. "Come on in, if you're still awake," he says, and we sit there talking about the vagaries of ambition for a while. We are out of cigarettes, so I pick up the guitar to have something to do with my hands.

"Hey, you know any songs?" Bare says. "Play me a good song." Bare leans back and puts his hands behind his head. "Songs," he says, "are where it's at."

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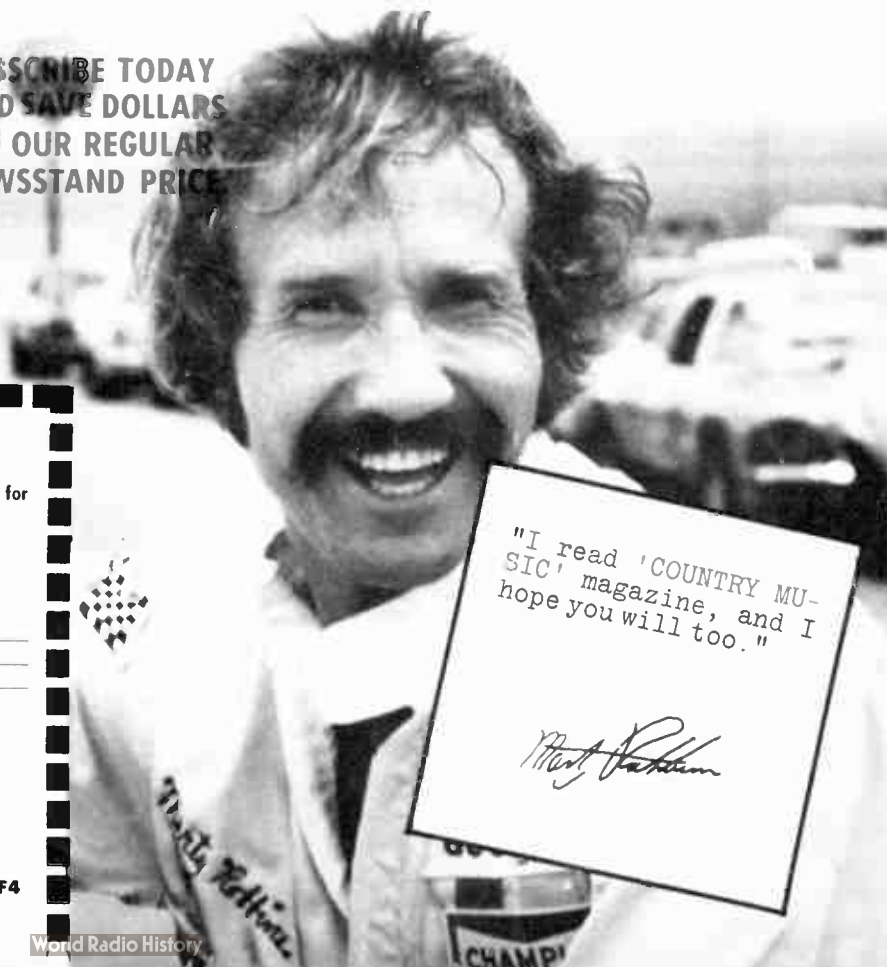
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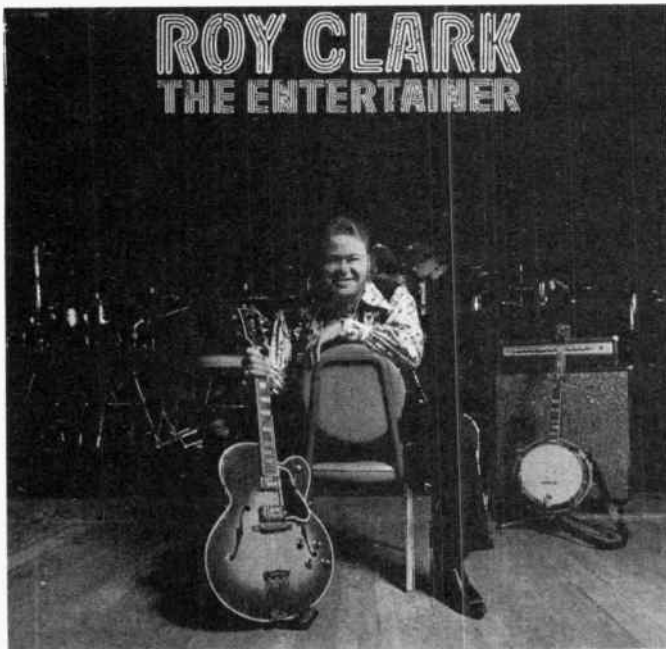


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# Records

Roy Clark . . . Melba Montgomery . . . Waylon Jennings . . .



**Roy Clark**  
The Entertainer  
Dot DOS-1-2001 (record)  
150-2001 (8-track tape)

*The Entertainer* is an album that will enhance rather than advance Roy Clark. It is very much Clark the Singer that is featured; only three cuts display his instrumental awareness and the Clark voice emerges throughout amid a swirl of strings (eat your heart out, Mantovani!) with a cutting back on the purer country sounds.

Surprisingly, the most country song is "It's All Over," written by Kris Kristofferson (with Rita Coolidge), who is not usually noted for convention in either lyric or approach. But "It's All Over" is a certain lachrymose smash on the juke boxes down at the Bar and Grill—"so much to lose and the rest of our lifetime to pay"—despite the fact that the pedal steel gets syruped on by the strings at the end.

But for the rest, Roy Clark is content to sing his collec-

tion of good, if not exceptional, songs, mainly with self-explanatory themes—"Honeymoon Feeling," "Love's All Around You," "(I Make The Living) She Makes the Living Worthwhile" and even "The Most Beautiful Girl."

The instrumental tracks are "Duelin' Banjos" (banjo duet with Bruce Trent, very competent but again adding nothing to the Weissberg original). "Chomp'n" (a throwaway jazz riff that has Clark on electric guitar) and the traditional "Drink To Me Only With Those Eyes" (guitars and strings).

IAN DOVE

**Melba Montgomery**  
No Charge  
Elektra EKS-75079 (record)  
ET85079 (8-track tape)

Some might think it risky business to call an album *No Charge*. It could cause some problems if somebody in the record store took it literally. But by now, everyone knows that the phrase belongs to one of the biggest hits of the

year, and stands for the priceless talents of Melba Montgomery.

For more than 16 years, Melba's been associated with some of the biggest male names in music—Roy Acuff, Charlie Louvin and George Jones. She's had some success as a solo artist before, but this second album for Elektra will be the one to really put her over the top.

Appropriately, many of the songs on the *No Charge* album bear on the economic realities of daily life. All, one way or another, stress the priceless situation of love, both for the family and the romantic variety. A common dilemma, the high cost of a child's pair of shoes, comes up on three different tunes alone.

All the ballads have something lyrically special to set them apart from one another; the uptempo songs really let producer Pete Drake show why his talents are so sought after in Nashville after years of success. But if you had to single out just one track oth-



er than the title, which is truly a classic, you'd probably be drawn to "How Are Things in Tulsa?" Here Melba writes to her domestically-AWOL husband with truthful tears in every honest, heart-tuggin' word.

Miss Montgomery proves to be a superstar throughout her latest album. She's clearly a *dues-paid-up* talent whose time has come.

ROBERT ADELS



**Waylon Jennings**  
This Time  
RCA APL1-0539 (record)  
APS1-0539 (8-track tape)

*This Time* is really a grown-up record. I mean Waylon has put together an album with *nothing* wrong with it, and a great many special things right. In his last two albums, he finally got enough control to communicate the energy and good times that the performances communicate. This time Waylon, with Willie Nelson co-producing, has given us an album with the kind of singing and the kind of feel you could *only* get from an album.

It is as easy and intimate as a bunch of good friends, and good whiskey, and the laid-back environment of Glaser Studios could make it. The songs, four by Willie Nelson, and one each by Waylon, Billy Joe Shaver, J.J. Cale, Lee Clayton, Dee Moeller, and Mirriam Eddy (in real life, Mrs. Waylon Jennings), all have temperamental similarities, which along with Waylon's most relaxed and personal delivery to date, gives the album a real sense of unity—for all the variety of material.

You have the feeling that Jennings has selected a group of songs that he likes, and has sung them the way he'd sing them for his friends. "Hey, listen to this one."

This is really an album to have around and play, and if for no other reason, worth

## Porter Wagoner . . . Earl Scruggs Revue . . .

buying to have J.J. Cale's "Louisiana Woman," Lee Clayton's "If You Can Touch Her At All" and Billy Joe Shaver's "Slow Rollin' Low"—three songs you are unlikely to hear on the radio. Excuse me, I'm going back and play the record again.

DAVE HICKEY



**Porter Wagoner**  
Tore Down  
RCA APL-1-0496 (record)  
APS1-0496 (8-track tape)

Often, it seems, the security brought on by longstanding star status tends to coax an artist into slackening the

reins on the creative energies that brought him or her to that status in the first place. Although his 20-year track record of hits surely offers no small degree of security, Porter Wagoner has never been one to lapse into a morass of corny string charts and tired, sound-alike songs.

Second only perhaps to his songwriting abilities ranks Porter's talent for distinguishing fiddles from violins. Though this might seem a trifling skill and the business of session arrangers, I think it accounts to some extent for what makes Porter's records so great. Take, for example, the Parton-penned "Cassie." Here you'll find both string section and choral accompaniment, but it fits in perfectly with the song's delicate moodiness. When, however, such orchestral finery would be nothing more than window dressing, you can be sure that there won't be anything coming

out of those grooves but Porter's voice, steel, fiddle, guitars, bass, and drums. You can hear this straight approach at work on Porter's gutbucket hangover wail, "Tore Down," and in his rendition of Dolly Parton's "Old Black Kettle" (from her album *My Tennessee Mountain Home*).

While there are one or two cuts on the LP that don't really curl my short hairs ("George Leroy Chickashea," for one, wears a little thin after a few listenings), *Tore Down* qualifies as one of the best albums I've heard so far this year. Which, I guess, shouldn't be such a surprise seeing as it comes from a man who knows when to keep the rhinestones, baubles and glitter on his suits and out of his records' grooves.

NICK TOSCHES

**The Earl Scruggs Revue**  
Where The Lilies Bloom  
Columbia KC 32806 (record)  
CA 32806 (8-track tape)

Earl and his boys have gone and recorded a soundtrack album that is more than capable of standing alone as a piece of music. A common difficulty with soundtracks is that the music can't hold up without a picture, but The Earl Scruggs Revue evokes images and moods enough to carry the sense of the Great



Smokey Mountains, and the idyllic aspects of life there, which is the subject of the movie. All the smooth, ageless calm of that setting is captured in a display of skillful, but soft as silk, picking.

The title song, among a few not written by Scruggs, car-

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ries a 1972 copyright, but it could conceivably have been played by court minstrels inspired by a stunning vista of the English highlands in another time, say about the 16th century. It's delicately sung by Tracy Nelson, who once had a band named Mother Earth, and her voice is pure and light. It's a classic ballad. It ain't *country*, it's older than that. But it sure is nice music.

There's plenty here for rabid pickers and Scruggs' devotees to chew on. A couple of high-steppin', smooth-assilk breakdowns are included, and the individual musicians involved deserve credit, but liner notes weren't available at press time. Nice fiddle on that last cut, especially, and was that a real dobro or Scruggs' magic tuning-peg slipping around there?

All in all, this is a nice little album that could make a pleasant introduction for hard country fans who may not be familiar with Elizabethan ballads and the like. I'm not very familiar with that kind of music, preferring hard country myself, but I sure like what Earl and the boys have done here.

RICHARD NUSSER



**Tex Williams**

*Those Lazy, Hazy Days*  
Granite GS-1001 (record)  
GRT 8180-1001 (8-track tape)

How many of Western swing's luminaries are still shining bright these days? How many, like Hank Thompson, have been able to sustain that wry exuberance that carried them into prominence in the forties? Not a hell of a lot. For every Hank Thompson there are a dozen vanished Al Dexters and Ted Daffans. Somewhere in between the two extremes, the burning bright and the snuffed

out, stands Tex Williams.

Tex first burst upon the scene in 1947 with his monster hit, "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)," and rode out the remaining years of that decade with the likes of "Never Trust a Woman" and "Bluebird on Your Windowsill" before fading from public view. After a 15-year hiatus, Tex came back in '65, no superstar but treading his own.

On *Those Lazy, Hazy Days* Tex has been reunited with Cliffie Stone, the man who produced his swing classics of the forties. A couple of the songs here are as stale as those old Capitol gems were fresh. The title cut, for instance; somewhere, a few notches down from Day-glo sealing wax, is yet another Easy Listening rendition of "Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer." On the

other hand, there are songs here that possess exactly what's been missing from most of the stuff Tex has cut for various labels during the last ten years. For a start, "The Place Marked M-E-N," a tale of barrooms and surly bladders, has it—that gruff effervescence that made "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke!" and the rest so irresistible. Also not to be missed is a droll tug at Merle's blue collar entitled "I'm Haggard Too."

In "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke!" Tex drawled, "I been smokin' all my life/ And I ain't dead yet." Well, I don't know if Tex has since kicked the habit, but one thing's for sure: he still "ain't dead yet." Hopefully, this album and subsequent Williams-Stone efforts will help nudge Tex back into the spotlight.

NICK TOSCHES



**Mentor Williams**

*Feelings*  
MCA-404 (record)  
MCAT-404 (8-track tape)

It's kind of nostalgic to be reviewing Mentor Williams' first album, because his music is associated with some good times in my past. Mentor grew up in Albuquerque and for the longest time fronted the only live band in Red River, New Mexico, where we used to go to pretend to ski and to hide from the everlasting flat of Texas. Several years ago Mentor moved to California but his songs stayed close to that kind of music he played in Red River—a relaxed blend of stone country and Buddy Holly rockabilly. But the music itself isn't what you'd call "country rock"—it's more like easy rocking country.

Mentor first came to Nashville to produce Dobie Gray, and out of his writing, tact, and good taste, the talented musicians he found at Quadrafonic studios, and the additional talents of a crop of good, young songwriters, he fashioned Dobie's two fine albums, *Drift Away* and *Loving Arms*.

Now he has taken essentially this same team to make his own statement, and it is an exceptionally personal one, combining all of Mentor's inherent good nature, originality and sense of control.

In fact, I can't imagine an album with more innovation and less aggressiveness; or a group effort which produces a more coherent statement.

The songs are all first-rate, but my favorites are Mentor's own "Drift Away," "Good Old Song," "Sunday Driver," which Mentor wrote with Troy Seals and Eddie Setzer, and "Out Of Hand"

**HAG'S FAVORITES**

Merle Haggard listed his favorite albums for us this month, noting that "anything by Don Gibson, Hank Williams, Red Foley, Ernest Tubb, Bill Monroe, Jimmie Rodgers and Bob Wills are my favorites." Merle said his "favorite album of all time is the duet that Dottie West and Don Gibson recorded for RCA." Unfortunately it's been discontinued, and is no longer listed in the manufacturer's catalog. His other favorites include:

Lefty Frizzell	The Legendary Lefty Frizzell	ABC ABCX-799
George Jones	My Country	Musicor M2S-3169
Porter and Dolly	Always, Always	RCA LSP-4186
Jeanne Pruett	Satin Sheets	MCA MCA-338
Jeannie C. Riley	The Best of Jeannie C. Riley	Plantation PL-13
Kaye Starr	The Best of Kaye Starr	Capitol (discontinued)
Patsy Cline	Greatest Hits	MCA MCA-12
Ernest Tubb	Greatest Hits	MCA DL7-5006

Merle's favorites among his own albums include *Just Between The Two Of Us* (Capitol ST-2453) which features his wife, Bonnie Owens. He also mentioned *Sing Me Back Home* (Capitol ST-2848) and *Mama Tried* (Capitol ST-2972). "I never listen to a complete album anymore," he told us, "just certain cuts, and then I tape them and make myself my own favorite album."

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	My Life	DEC	75142M						Tribute To Roy Acuff	COL	9870M
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	Thereby Hangs A Tale	RCA	2036M						I Love Charlie Brown	RCA	4002M
	Let's Make Memories	RCA	2337M	<b>JONES, GEORGE</b>	Golden Hits, Vol. III	UA	3566M		Connie's Country	RCA	4132M
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	Glory of Love	RCA	4179M		Golden Hits	UA	3532M				
	Lost Word in Lonesome	RCA	3622M		The Great	UA	3457M				
	Somebody Like Me	RCA	3715M		Wish Tonight Not End	UA	3270M				
	Lonely Again	RCA	3753M	<b>JIM AND JESSE</b>	We Like Trains	EPIC	26513M				
	Turn World Around	RCA	3869M					<b>SONS OF THE PIONEERS</b>	Down Memory Trail	RCA	2957M
	Everlovin' World	RCA	3931M						South of the Border	RCA	3964M
	Praise Him, Praise Him	RCA	1733M						Wagons West	CAM	413M
<b>ATKINS, CHET</b>	Hum & Strum Along	RCA	2025M					<b>STONEMANS</b>	Pop Stoneman Memorial	MGM	4588M
	Travelin'	RCA	2678M						In All Honesty	RCA	4343M
	My Favorite Guitar	RCA	3316M								
	Guitar Country	RCA	3429M					<b>SOVINE, RED</b>	Phantom 309	STAR	414M
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<b>JACKSON, STONEWALL</b>	Exciting	HAR	7387M		Time I Get To Phoenix	COL	11513M				
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## Ronnie Milsap . . . Diana Trask . . .

which is a Tom Jans-Jeff Barry production. But they're all good stuff and the album really hangs together.

P.S. If you're a steel guitar and dobro fan, Weldon Myrick will break your heart with this one. I've never heard better or more original work.

DAVE HICKEY



### Ronnie Milsap

Pure Love  
RCA APL1-0500 (record)  
APS1-0500 (8-track tape)

Blind musicians have always seemed special to me. Each one, from Doc Watson to Stevie Wonder, has that ability to get right to the heart

of his work. It's as if the fact of their blindness "focuses" them into a more intent musical sense. Ronnie Milsap is another addition to the list. His first album, last year, showed promise, but with the release of this one Milsap emerges, along with Johnny Rodriguez, as one of the very finest young artists in country music.

The thing I like most about Ronnie is a sense of spirit, a sense of life that he brings to his vocals. It's particularly evident on familiar songs like "Amazing Love" or "Four Walls." They offer an easy standard of comparison and Milsap comes out ahead. On "Amazing Love," for example, the arrangement and singing seem so much fuller, deeper and more expressive than the Charley Pride version. And I thought Charley's was great. Same thing on "Second Time Around." And on "Behind Closed Doors," well, you can't really say that anyone could do the song better than Charlie Rich (after all, there's no

arguing with perfection), but Milsap's version doesn't suffer the slightest by comparison.

The album opens with "My Love Is Deep, My Love Is Wide," a terrific song with a zesty fiddle arrangement. "Pure Love," the song that tells about the "99 and 44/100 percent, milk 'n honey Captain Crunch and you in the morning" is a down-home delight.

In general, this is a fine, fine record. It offers a true reflection of a very important new artist.

JERRY LEICHTLING

### Diana Trask

Lean It All On Me  
Dot DOS-1-26021 (record)  
8150-1-26021 (8-track tape)

There has been a distinct lack of country feeling to Diana Trask's previous Dot albums, a shortcoming which is uncorrected in *Lean It All on Me*.

The title tune is straightforward pop, the wispy coun-



try backing notwithstanding. This number is fine, as are "He Took Me for a Ride," a buoyant, good-timey rocker; "The King," a country lament in which the lady takes her leave, cutting "The King" down to mortal size, and Tom Jans' "Loving Arms," a nice ballad in which a woman's winds of freedom blow love away.

But the seven other songs destroy any claim Miss Trask might lay to being a country girl. "Behind Closed Doors" and "Let Me Be There" are downright disasters. "Doors" belongs to Charlie Rich, and all the rich



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## Osborne Brothers . . . Faron Young . . .

suggestiveness of his rendition. Miss Trask blithely launders the soul from the song. And it was foolhardy of her to try and compete with the zestful interpretations of "Let Me Be There" that have already been offered.

"Loneliness (Can Break a Good Girl Down)" really shows where Miss Trask is at. She creates a sleek, night club mood. You won't hear singing like this down country way.

And that is what points to this singer's salvation. "Lean It All on Me," the highlight of the set, is the kind of music to which she should stake a legitimate claim. (Miss Trask isn't country just because she drops her "g" 's.)

"An artist does her best to entertain and to give the audience what they want," she claims. Well, she should give the audience what she does best—piquant pop and jouncey jazz.

DAN BOTTSTEIN



**Osborne Brothers**  
Fastest Grass Alive  
MCA 374 (record)  
MCAT 374 (8-track tape)

The Osborne Brothers, Bobby and Sonny, are among the pioneers of what has become known as "progressive" bluegrass. They are still one of the few bluegrass bands to incorporate the rhythmic drive of a drummer, but the heart of their progressiveness has really been one of attitude toward the music. Unafraid to alter and experiment with musical ideas, their sets are consistently interesting and sometimes surprising. *Fastest Grass*

is no exception.

While the title might have you believe Sonny and Bobby just go through a succession of "hot licks" on their respective banjo and mandolin, that is far from the case. They get their share of breaks, especially on such self-penned instrumentals as "Side Saddle" (Sonny) and "M.A. Special" (Bobby). The title track sounds reminiscent of "Rolling In My Sweet Baby's Arms," and opens the record with all the energy of that standard. In contrast, there are tunes like "Walk Softly On The Bridges" and "High On A Hilltop," the former a love song with a gospel-like melody and vocal, the latter a true gospel number done gently and caringly.

There are a few standard Nashville country songs too, and some fine picking all around—including Dale Sledd's guitar, Hal Rugg's steel guitar, and Vassar Clements' ever-exciting fiddle. Listen especially to the way Clements hints at his pres-

ence on "Sledd Ridin'" and then suddenly breaks into his own solo. Rounding out the group, in addition to the brothers and Sledd, are Robby Osborne on drums and Dennis Digby on bass.

The balance the Osborne Brothers reach with this album is perfect—bluegrass with a little bit of everything else that's country, mixed together to form a sound that truly is unique to them. *Fastest Grass Alive* is not for the unadventurous bluegrass fan, but it's well worth the travelin'.

IRA MAYER

**Faron Young**  
Some Kind of Woman  
Mercury SRM 1 698 (record)  
MC8 1 698 (8-track tape)

Ah, Faron Young—he just keeps rolling along. *Some Kind of Woman* is a comfortable album, little experimentation, a cheerful, unassuming reworking of familiar thoughts and enough repetition of heartaches given, hurts still lingering and games that she is still play-

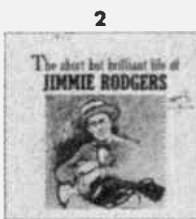
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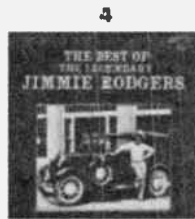
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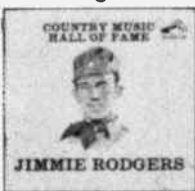
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R064

## Jerry Jeff Walker . . . Mickey Newbury



ing to win it a worthy place on the jukebox in the corner bar and grill. (Jukeboxes, incidentally, are responsible for around 40 per cent of sales of country music singles, so that's no bad thing.)

Apart from the toning down of steel guitars and the sweetening of the back-up group (including the Jordanaires), Faron Young could have brought out this album in the nineteen fifties, and repeated it in the sixties. It's proof, I suppose, that for all the crossovers country music makes into pop, folk, rock or whatever, the bedrock country singer—in Mr. Young's case, a singer in the Hank Williams tradi-

tion—is still a staple. There's always room for someone who can sing "my memories saved my life again" or reflect that it's almost "dawn in Denver and you're almost off my mind." This is broad stream country, untouched by anything but its own sincerity.

*Some Kind of Woman* might be instant sing along, prone to stock phrases, and it might contain no surprises musically ("Almost Dawn In Denver," for example, is kin to "By The Time I Get To Phoenix," traveling down the similar country highways), but it has its own integrity. In this case, familiarity doesn't necessarily breed contempt. Singers like Faron Young are still very much part of the country music scene today, hanging in and rolling along. IAN DOVE

**Jerry Jeff Walker**  
*Viva Terlingua*  
 MCA-382 (record)  
 MCAT-382 (8-track tape)

Jerry Jeff Walker is the guy who wrote "Mr. Bojangles,"



more a national institution than a song. A while ago he moved back to his native Texas, and his album, recorded live in Luckenbach, a bit outside Austin, is one of the results. The title refers to the annual Texas chili championship, and you don't get to be more Texas than that.

For this record he surrounded himself with a fine group of backing musicians, The Lost Gonzo Band, and for my money they are one of the most impressive aggregations I've heard in quite a while. And Jerry Jeff is more than equal to the task of providing appropriate musical vehicles for this undertaking. Five of the tunes here are Walker originals and he's a terrific writer.

"Little Bird," "Wheel" and "Gettin' By" are superb, as is "Sangria Wine" which proves that the stories about Walker being one of the great imbibers are not exaggerated. You have to really love what you're writing about to write a song this good. As a matter of fact the whole album seems a bit marinated, like a fruit-cake, sweet but potent. Jerry Jeff is a fine singer, well-lubricated, mel-low and powerful.

The album has a great relaxed feel to it, growing out of a distinct sense of place; dedicated to Hondo Crouch, a local hero, story teller and general larger-than-life character. But the finest moments on the record are in "London Homesick Blues," the finale, written and sung by Gary P. Nunn of the Gonzos.

An incredible song and performance. I sure hope this band gets a chance to do a record of their own

soon; they just knock me out. Jerry Jeff knocks me out also and, I hope he doesn't knock himself out in the process. This is a fine, warm, interesting and very entertaining record from one hell of a human being.

JERRY LEICHTLING

**Mickey Newbury**  
*I Came to Hear the Music*  
 Elektra EKS 75080 (record)  
 ET-85080 (8-track tape)

If "As Time Goes By" had never been written, if inebriation brought about sensitivity as easily as it does sentimentality, then every drunk in the world would be begging for one more song from Mickey Newbury's new album. The LP is elegantly soppy and properly brilliant "let's-hear-that-one-again" kind of music.

If you've heard Mickey Newbury, you've got to have one of his albums. And if you've got one, chances are you've got the whole lot of 'em. This new one is all new material—he has in the past tended to re-record some of his older tunes—and it's evocative stuff that deserves to be more than just a cultists dream. Like all of his work, it is esoteric, but this time around, it's all carefully meshed with commerciality.

Perhaps the best way to convince the uninitiated is to quote just a few of his pithy lines like: "Did God make time to keep it all from happening at once?" or "Shoeshines in the coal mine's just a waste of time." Mickey lives in Nashville, but the world is his musical oyster.

Newbury's voice is almost too sweet to be human, but it's more pleausrably angelic than sickeningly super-high caloric. It is the perfect vehicle for his completely unique lyrical style. And while many other performers have had and will continue to have hits with his songs, you truly haven't heard them until he's done them for you.

There isn't one tune on his *I Came to Hear the Music* album that isn't smash hit material for a whole bunch of people.

ROBERT ADELS

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Lynn Anderson	Smile For Me	Columbia KC 32941
Jim Reeves	I'd Fight the World	RCA APL1-0537
Dottie West	House of Love	RCA APL1-0543
Statler Brothers	Thank You World	Mercury SRM-1-707
Jerry Kennedy	Jerry Kennedy and Friends	Mercury SRM-1-692
Freddie Hart	Hang In There Girl	Capitol ST 11296
Tompall and the Glaser Brothers	Greatest Hits	MGM SE 4946
Charley Pride	Country Feelings	RCA APL1-0534
Loretta Lynn	Greatest Hits Vol. II	MCA 420
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# *Nothing's Been 'Slippin' Away' From Jean Shepard*

by Carol Offen



PHOTOS: MARSHALL FALLWELL





Despite her busy schedule, Jean spends much of her time with her growing family. She and her husband have five boys between them.

Two bicycles and a motor bike in the driveway, a basketball hoop nailed to a post; inside, the shrill sound of four yapping miniature poodles and a mynah bird. Three pajama-clad boys of various sizes scattered in different directions as a harried, motherly voice called out domestic orders:

"Donny, make sure your hair's dry before you come out of the bathroom... Harold, please go into the other room to watch TV... Corey, honey, go inside and help Daddy. Mama has company..."

"Mama" came into the living room and sank into a chair with a sigh. "Whew... everybody just had their baths," she explained. "I guess I look like something that was drug up and hit." She was barefoot, her hair pulled straight back in a ponytail, and she wore a casual shirt and slacks; she looked tired, but had an air of accomplishment about her. It was a typical family scene, being played out by young mothers all over the country at that very moment. But it wasn't quite what you'd expect of someone who'd been getting up on stage in

frilly, feminine gowns for over twenty years. This surely didn't look like someone who could have had her first hit in Eisenhower's first year or have been married to a country music legend—Hawkshaw Hawkins. But then, I'd never met Jean Shepard before.

The dogs had finally stopped

---

**"... I dare any 25-year-old woman to follow me around for a month and do everything I do..."**

---

barking and settled down, one of them in my lap. By the end of the evening, I had even learned to distinguish between them: Pepi, Cheri, Bon Bon and Michele. While Jean and I talked, Pepi—a white ball of fluff—rolled around joyfully on the red, velvety couch.

Suddenly, 4-year-old Corey came running into the room with a question for his mother. "Oh, my Lord," Jean said, shaking her head as she picked him up and hugged him tight. "I just can't afford to grow old for him." But even if it weren't for Corey, Jean Shepard just isn't

the type who'd allow herself to grow old. She has too many things to do and is having too much fun staying on top of them.

"Y'know, I mean this—I dare any 25-year-old woman to follow me around for a month and do everything I do. After a month she'd be in a hospital," Jean said matter-of-factly. Quinny Acuff, who heads the agency that used to book Jean's show, nodded knowingly. "Jeannie always amazes me... the things she does. Even on the road, she's got more energy than everybody else." Jean and her husband, Benny Birchfield—who's also her road manager and a member of her band—have five boys between them: two each from their former marriages, plus little Corey. But Jean still manages to be on the road over 200 days a year. She still works as hard as she did more than twenty years ago when she was starting out in Visalia, California.

Her career started in high school with an all-girl Western swing band that Jean formed when she was a sophomore. She enjoys telling the now-famous story of how she came

to play the bass fiddle in the "Melody Ranch Band."

"We had to have one and nobody else could play it, so I had to learn. Oh God..." She groaned, remembering how she used to have to stand on Coke boxes to play it. "But I wanted one real bad. Mother and Daddy put up all the furniture in our house as collateral just to buy me that bass fiddle. Bless their hearts, they did everything on earth to help me. They'd put me in their car and ride me all over the state of California, letting me sing here and letting me sing there. And my daddy was a farm laborer. We moved to California from Oklahoma when I was ten. Many times I'd seen him be out all night with me and get in at five in the morning, and have to go to work at six, driving a tractor all day long. When I look at those gray hairs on his head now, I think, 'oh daddy, I just wonder how many of them I put there' cause I know I done my share," she added softly. "We were very poor—there were ten of us kids—but we had a real happy family."

When Jean's group played on the same bill with Hank Thompson one



Corey already knows how to fish since their home fronts on a lake.

night, she had an opportunity to sing with his band. Afterwards, Thompson told her he could get her a recording contract. Jean was a bit skeptical. "Everybody startin' out has heard that," she said. "So I told him 'sure, I'd appreciate it.' I was very nice 'n' all, but kind of standoffish. He had me make an

acetate recording for him and he said he'd get it to Capitol Records. Of course, I never heard anything from them. But when Hank come through California again a few months later, he asked me if I'd heard from Capitol and I said no. He got real red in the face and said to me, 'I promise you, you will.' One month later, I had a Capitol recording contract."

Twenty-one years later, Jean left Capitol Records and signed with United Artists, a little more than a year ago. She began her association with United Artists by recording her first number-one single in 17 years, "Slippin' Away." A lot of things have changed since Jean had her very first number-one record, "Dear John," in 1953. The country music business has grown—from truck stops and honky tonks to sophisticated nightclubs—and Jean has matured along with it. While other stars have come and gone, Jean Shepard is still around and still making hit records. She's doing it with newer techniques and a new, more polished style. She prides herself on her ability to adapt to the times.

"I'm proud of the fact that I can still hold my own with all the new girls coming into the business," she says. "I enjoy competition. Most of the new vocalists are a good ten years younger than I am, y' know. Even though I didn't win a Grammy [she was nominated in '71 for "Then He Touched Me"], what's most important to me is that I'm

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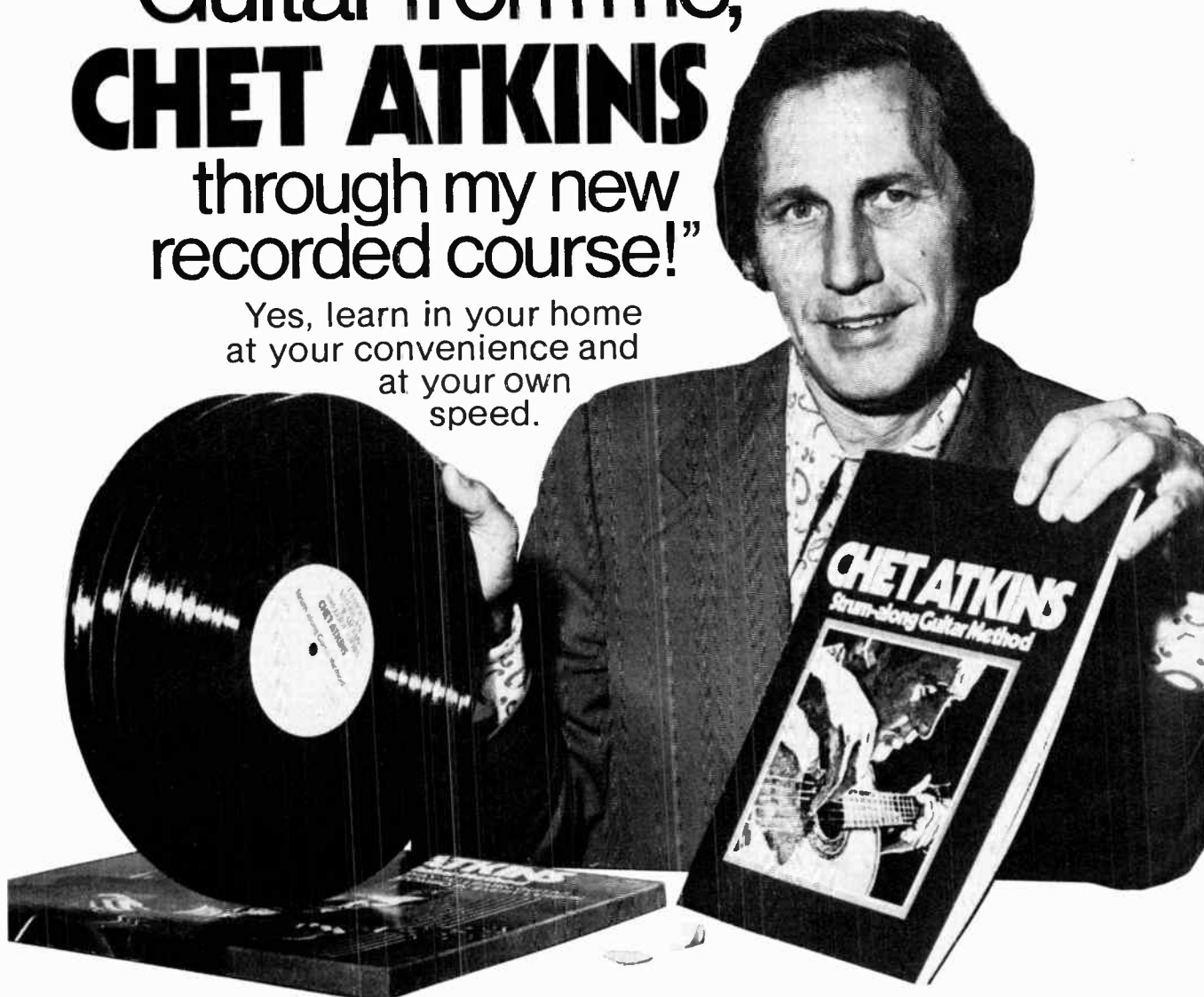
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my head back and sing. But everybody's using a hand mike nowadays and my husband's been after me to try it. I don't think he thought I'd be game enough to do it though. Boy, you shoulda seen how all the guys in the band looked at me. They were so shocked . . ."

Jean Shepard has been learning how to adapt all her life, ever since her first recording, "Crying Steel Guitar Waltz" made her somewhat of a celebrity among her fellow stu-

**" . . . I don't think I could ever travel on the road without my husband . . . "**

still in the running."

Jean's enthusiasm for her work is apparent and she's continually striving to try new things. "You know, I'd love to produce," she mentioned to me in passing, then looked a bit stunned. "I've never said that before where it was gonna be in print. I mean I've thought about it

and I've even talked about it with Hairl Hensley, the all-night DJ on WSM—but never for print." She seemed excited about the prospect.

"And I used a hand mike the other night," she added excitedly. "You see, I never use one. And I don't move around much on stage. Basically, I just stand there, throw

idents. Even though that first record didn't make it, shortly after she was graduated from high school, "Dear John Letter," a duet with Ferlin Husky, was number-one on the charts. It stayed there for 26 consecutive weeks. "My only regret, I think, about starting out so young," Jean says, "was that I didn't go to college. I literally couldn't afford to go 'cause with 'Dear John' I was making too much money to give up touring." There was only one problem; although Jean had a number-one record she was still under 21 and could not leave the state on her own to go on tour. The solution: Ferlin Husky was made her legal guardian so they could tour together. "Imagine having Ferlin Husky as your guardian!" Jean says now with a chuckle.

Jean became a member of the Grand Ole Opry in 1956, and a few years later she married Hawkshaw Hawkins. Their first boy was only 15 months old, and Jean was in her eighth month of pregnancy with their second, when Hawkins was killed in that famous plane crash in '63, which also took the lives of Patsy Cline and Cowboy Copas. "It's funny, but I still feel a little strange around this time every year," Jean said softly, absently stroking one of the dogs as she spoke. It was March 7, two days after the anniversary of the crash.

But it's not like Jean Shepard to dwell on the past, and she soon changed the subject. She looked down at the dog on her lap and smiled. "You know, Pepi goes on the road with us. And he really knows our show. We could go back and forth to the bus all evening without disturbing him, but when he hears

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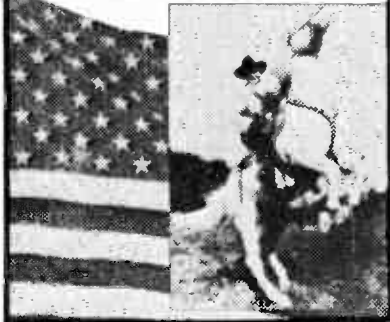
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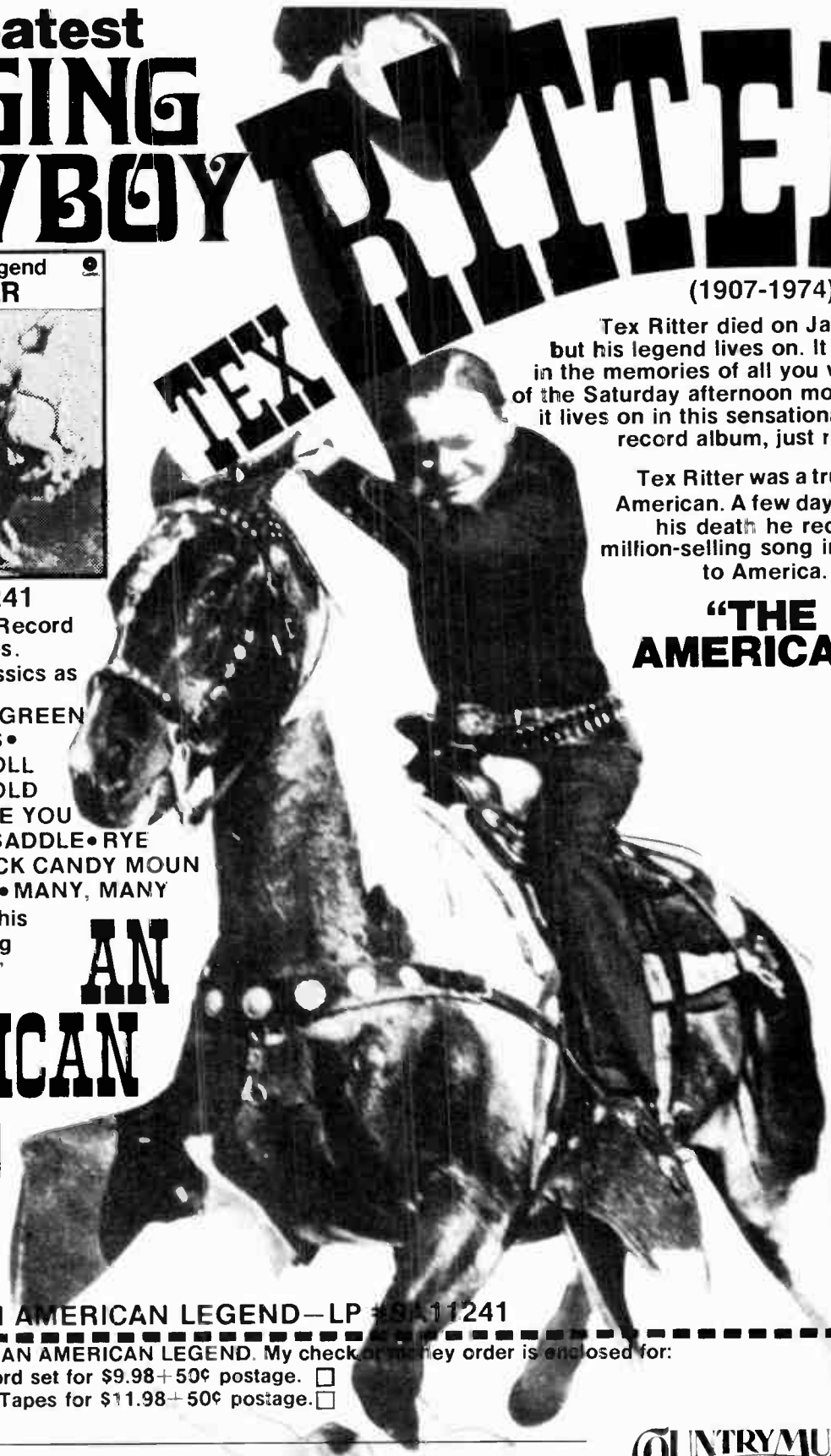
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R064

## FROM LAS VEGAS TO LONDON WITH DIANA TRASK.



Diana Trask is the country singer you can't keep down in the country. Hear what we mean on her newest album, "Lean It All On Me." Diana's just finished Las Vegas stints with Roy Clark and Danny Thomas, and a London tour with Glen Campbell. And now there are national TV shows and more personal appearances. Miss Country Soul has caught on, from Nashville, to Los Angeles, to Las Vegas to London.

### "Lean It All On Me"



Album: DOS-26022  
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our theme song, he knows we're finished. By the time we get to the bus, he's going crazy."

Pepi isn't the only member of the family who knows the road life. "We take the boys on the road with us during the summer and on their

and do less road work and more television. I guess if I ever had to give it up for my family, I could. I'd probably be lost for a while though. I just can't think of a thing I'd do if I wasn't performing. They'd probably have to put me away some

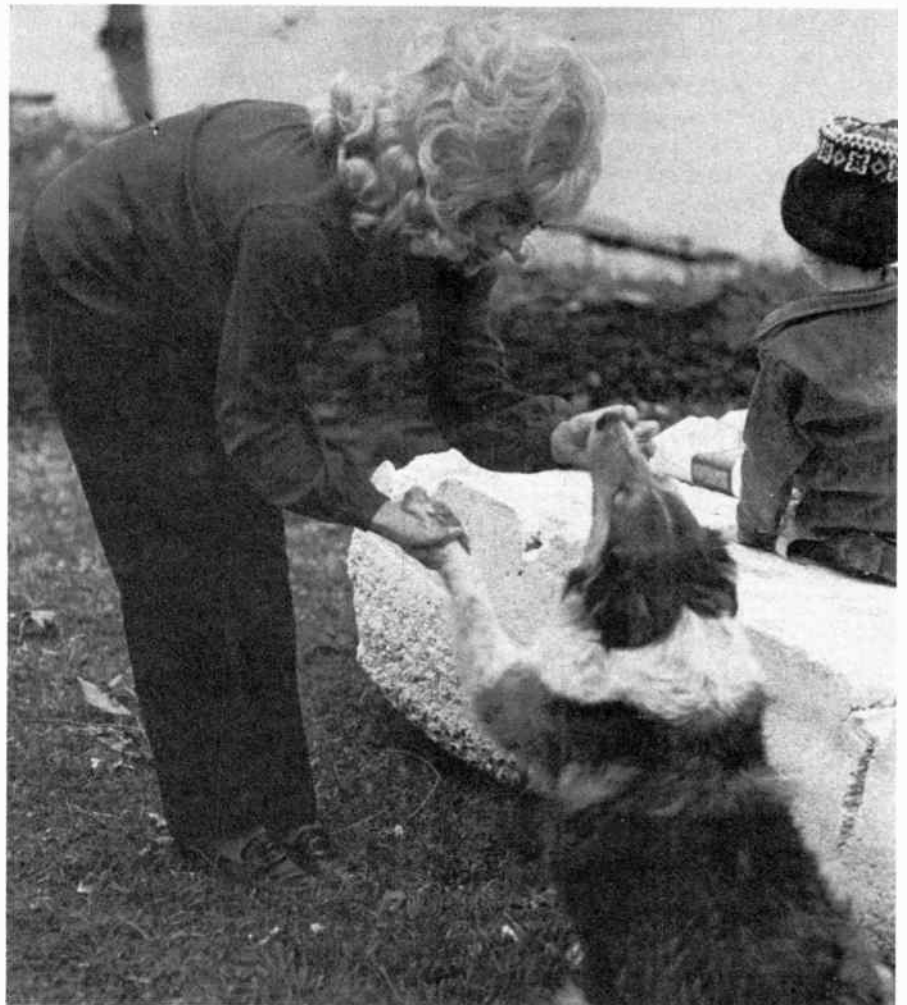
**"... Mother and Daddy put up all the furniture in our house as collateral just to buy me that bass fiddle ..."**

vacations. They have a ball." And of course Benny is actively involved in all aspects of Jean's career; besides playing guitar in her band and helping her revamp her act, he also takes care of the business end. He played guitar and sang harmony for the Osborne Brothers when Jean first met him about ten years ago. They married five and a half years ago. "I don't think I could ever travel on the road without my husband," Jean says. "I couldn't be happy leaving him behind." Would she give up her career if he couldn't travel with her?

"Oh, that's a hard one. I don't know," Jean admits. "I would definitely be more selective, though,

place for a few years 'til I learned how to cope."

Corey came running in again, still a bundle of energy, even though it was past 11 and his older brothers were already sleeping. "This kid never gets tired," Jean explained. A few times he got a little too mischievous and Jean jumped up and ran after him. Later we could hear Corey crying, "Mama's mad at me. She is, she spanked me," he was telling his father. But a few minutes later he was back, trying to sit in Jean's lap. "Are you gonna be quiet now, though?" Jean asked him. "No," Corey admitted. "He sure is truthful, at least," Jean laughed, squeezing him. That's a



Besides four miniature poodles inside, the family has a faithful watchdog, Freckles.

trait he no doubt picked up from his mother. Jean has acquired a reputation for being rather plain-spoken. ("Ol' loud-mouth me," she says. "I just have to say what's on my mind.")

And when Jean's unhappy about something she just has to act on it. When she didn't like the way Capitol was handling her career a few years ago—"I felt like I was being lost in the shuffle"—she had to speak up. "I told them I wanted a release from my contract because they'd just been neglecting me," she says. "I mean, I don't necessarily have to always be on top, but I have to feel that my record company is with me." When Capitol continued to deny her request for more than a year, Jean began to build up a court case.

"I did it very reluctantly, too," she says, "because Capitol had practically raised me. But I told them I'd bring a law suit for a million dollars if they wouldn't release me, 'cause I felt they'd actually hindered my career. I could hear a few chuckles when I first told them, but when I didn't call in for a few months, things got dead serious."

Capitol eventually agreed to give

**"... Basically I just stand there, throw my head back and sing ..."**

Jean her release. When Larry Butler, who'd produced Jean for two years before leaving Capitol, heard about it, he helped engineer her contract with United Artists. Butler is an independent producer and is now producing her sessions. They make such a good team that she wonders if she'll ever act on her ambition to produce. "Larry Butler is a genius," Jean says, "and we've had a lot of success together. Out of the eight singles he produced for me at Capitol, we had six in the top ten. And we have a terrific working relationship."

Corey came bounding into the room once again, the dogs rushing to get out of his path. "What show was Daddy talking about that you're going to do in a school, Mama? Can I come?" "If you're a good boy, you can," Jean promised and began to patiently answer all his questions about when, where, how and why. They seemed to have a pretty good working relationship too.

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C064

# Radio Forum

Bill Mack: Truckers' Favorite



WBAP's Bill Mack: Late Night America's homing beacon.

Out of the North American night radio sky comes the show's opening theme, familiar now right down to the scratches: Felix Slatkin and His Fantastic Fiddles, flailing away on "The Orange Blossom Special." Midnight rural America tunes in, and so do thousands of country music's city-dwelling fans. Long-haul truckers, rolling over the highways of the darkened continent, also set their radios precisely to 820 kilohertz, WBAP, Fort Worth, Texas, and settle into high gear, whistling along.

The instrumental fades and up comes the booming baritone voice heard occasionally as far away as Australia and Ireland, via the clear channel.

"Soooooooooie! Hi, everybody, everywhere! Welcome to the Bill Mack Open Road Show. Hey-eeee-aaaiii! Ride 'em on out, now. Gonna be around till 5:30 in the morning with the finest in hand-clappin', toe-tappin', ankle-bustin', knee-knockin' country and western, hill and folk favorites. Hello to Zora... Hello to Brenda from her sister, Jewel, in Dallas... To the nurses up Chicago way we'd like to say a special hello... Hello to Bill Simms driving his rig this very moment across snowy Nebraska. That's from his wife, Lucille. Hello, Lucille. Let's start things off tonight with a little Hank Snow..."

The telephone seldom stops jingling during Bill Mack's six-and-a-half-hour show. More than 200 calls come in nightly, better than a thousand a week.

Now in its fifth year on the air, the Bill Mack Open Road Show has become both a homing beacon and a communications link for a wide range of listeners in late night America: sheriff's deputies on patrol, milk deliverymen, night watchmen, waitresses in all-night diners...

"I find out about a guy's baby before he does, sometimes," says Mack, who is about 40 and has more than 20 years' experience in radio. "I'm sort of a midnight midwife. Some guy's wife will call me up and say 'Tell Homer it's a boy. He's driving through Tennessee.' We can't give out any personal messages on the air, of course. But I can say I just heard from Homer Johnson's wife and she said she sure does love him and that she's sitting up in the hospital right now with a brand new, bouncing baby boy that looks just like him..."

"Just before I started this show, WBAP was playing what they called 'good' music," Mack says as the record turns. "It was the typical midnight easy-listening sound, and they weren't doing any good with it financially. When they asked me if I'd be interested in doing an all-

night country show, I jumped right at it. I knew the power of the station (50,000 watts). The very first night we were on the air, truckers started calling in." WBAP is now country 24 hours a day.

While Mack's show is one of the nation's better-known country music radio programs, he doesn't limit his personal musical interests to one type. "I even like classical," he admits, cuing up a bluegrass record.

Despite his show's popularity with truckers, Mack has never driven a rig professionally. "I've had a lot of offers to go trucking if I ever want to get out of radio. But I kinda enjoy what I'm doing. Of course, my sleeping hours are kinda crazy."

Mack cues up another record, and says a few more hellos to listeners waiting to hear their names on the radio. Ten chairs are lined along a wall just beyond his operating cubicle. Some of these chairs are filled now with truck drivers who have stopped their rigs outside the studio just long enough to drink a cup of coffee and swap a few tales with their favorite deejay. A couple of country singers are sitting around, too, holding copies of their latest releases, and a few just plain folks have dropped in to watch "old Bill" do the show they listen to until almost dawn.

Mack slips off his old-fashioned single earphone while a record plays, and shares a new anecdote with these gathered fans. The night before, he tells them, a man somewhere in America got drunk, crashed his car into another car and was taken to jail. Immediately he demanded his right to make one telephone call. The police granted his request, thinking he would call an attorney or somebody else who could bail him out of jail.

"He called me," Mack says with a grin, "and asked to hear 'A Boy Named Sue' by Johnny Cash!"

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# Hi-Fi Corner

## Speakers Matter Most



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While receivers and tape decks, with their knobs and switches and dials and lights, might seem to be worth a lot of your time when picking out a hi-fi system, you'd better not neglect the speakers. More than any other component, it's these simple-looking boxes that really determine what your music is going to sound like.

If you're buying a complete sound system at one time, you can pretty much pick out any speakers you like, and then choose an amplifier or receiver with the right amount of power to play them as loud as you like with the kinds of music you prefer in your own listening room.

Most speakers sold today for home hi-fi systems use the relatively inefficient acoustic suspension (sometimes called air suspension) design, which was first used nearly 20 years ago by Acoustic Research, who still make some of the best ones around. Their AR-3 (around \$300) and LST models are regarded by many professional audio critics to be the industry standards against which all other speakers are to be judged. The company has recently come out with a smaller LST-2 at about \$400, and their compact AR-7, often discounted for as little as \$75 a pair, comes very close to speakers three times its size and price.

KLH, which was founded as an

offshoot of AR, makes a wide range of fine acoustic suspension speakers (and the best compact music systems on the market). Their traditional best-sellers are the KLH Model 23 and the KLH Model 17, usually discounted to about \$75 and \$55 respectively. If you're looking to save money and space, pay particular attention to their new Models 31, 32, and 38, all going for less than \$100 a pair.

Advent is another offshoot of Acoustic Research that specializes in acoustic suspension speaker systems. Their basic **Advent Speaker** goes for about \$120, and is one of my personal favorites for most kinds of music. Most professional audio critics feel it's one of the best values possible in a speaker. The **Smaller Advent** goes for about \$75, and sounds just as good, but won't play quite as loud in large rooms, and the new **Advent/2**, priced around \$55, comes in a sexy white molded plastic housing with a perforated metal grill. It sounds just a bit brighter and sharper, and could be just right for most country music.

While acoustic suspension models have been the best sellers for the last ten years or so, they are relatively inefficient (needing a lot of power to drive them), and so the recent trend to 4-channel sound has brought out a revival of some of the more efficient designs of past years, and has sent the engineers looking for even newer ways of squeezing out more sound for each dollar's worth of amplification.

A lot of companies are using the so-called *ducted-port* or *bass reflex* designs, that lets some of the sound generated by the back side of the woofer come out of the front to reinforce the sound. JBL, Altec, and Electro-Voice have traditionally made this kind of unit. Some models I particularly recommend are the Altec Segovia, and the JBL

L-100 and Prima, the latter a cute little number going for about \$125 and coming in a colorful plastic cabinet of modular design that stacks with other coordinated fixtures that can hold your receiver, records, books, and booze.

Pioneer's R Series speakers are also quite efficient, needing only a handful of watts in most living rooms, but capable of putting out really high sound levels should you wish to crank them up, and some newer designs from Electro-Voice and BIC-Venturi do quite nicely on miserly amounts of power. JBL is the leader in ducted-port speaker manufacture. The company got its reputation from its fine line of recording studio monitor speakers—the ultimate in accurate sound reproduction—and they are also leaders in the field of professional speakers for use in sound amplification onstage—guitars and PA systems.

Not all speakers look like walnut breadboxes. The Bose 901 (\$478 a pair) is pointed in the rear, and has eight separate speakers that reflect sound off the wall before hitting the listener. Very powerful and very clear sounding. EPI, JBL, and Hegeman make models shaped like rectangular pedestals that can hold a piece of sculpture if you like, and can be tucked neatly into some corner and still give you great sound. Empire makes some marble-topped round cylinders that work fine as end tables, as well as a modern plastic unit that goes inside the house or out. If you don't have room on the floor or shelf for your speakers, Fisher, Magnavox and Poly Planar have flat speakers that fit on your wall along with your pictures; and if you don't like wires running around the house, Magnavox and a couple of other companies have speakers that pick up the signal with a special built-in radio receiver. ■

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**Twist**  
Lemon Menthol 100's



Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

17 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette. FTC Report March '74.