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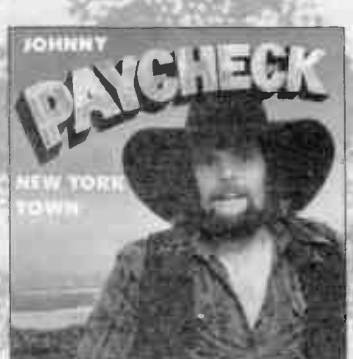

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CONTENTS

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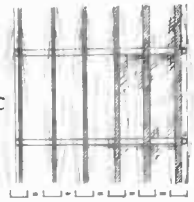

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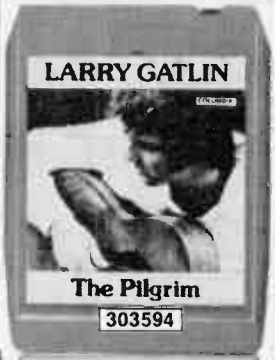

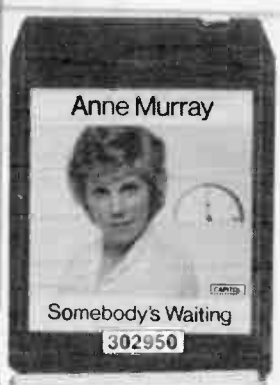

301952 LACY J. DALTON

304345 AL JARREAU — THIS TIME

303941 BEST COUNTRY DUETS

304220 HERB ALPERT — BEYOND

302786 CONWAY TWITTY — CROSS WINDS

293951 Rickie Lee Jones

301432 The Oak Ridge Boys — TOGETHER

293944 VAN HALEN — Van Halen II

301416 JANIE FRICKE — FROM THE HEART

293795 Osborne Brothers — Bluegrass Concerto

301408 BELLAMY BROTHERS — YOU CAN GET CRAZY

293696 ART GARFUNKEL — Fate For Breakfast

301390 Johnny Rodriguez — Through My Eyes

293654 THE KENDALLS — Just Like Real People

301366 CHUCK MANGIONE — FUN AND GAMES

294355 STATLER BROS. — THE ORIGINALS

301358 The Very Best Of FRANKIE VALLI

293647 ANDRE KOSTELANETZ PLAYS THE THEME FROM SUPERMAN

301317 CON HUNLEY — I Don't Want To Lose You

291211 Nicolette Larson — NICOLETTE

301184 JANE OLIVOR — The Best Side of Goodbye

294025 TOMMY OVERSTREET — I'll Never Let You Down

301515 BILLY JOEL — GLASS HOUSES

303123 PETE TOWNSHEND — EMPTY GLASS

303420 JERRY LEE LEWIS — When Two Worlds Collide

302471 Engelbert Humperdinck — Love's Only Love

303016 MERRY CHRISTMAS FELIZ NAVIDAD From FREDDY FENDER

302448 JUDY COLLINS — Running For My Life

301176 THE KENDALLS — Heart Of the Matter

292821 LYNN ANDERSON — OUTLAW IS JUST A STATE OF MIND

301150 GAIL DAVIES — THE GAME

293548 MOE BANDY — It's a Cheating Situation

301143 ANNE MURRAY — A Country Collection

292805 JANIE FRICKE — LOVE NOTES

301127 JERRY LEE LEWIS C. RICH C. PERKINS TRIO +

292151 NEIL DIAMOND — YOU DON'T BRING ME FLOWERS

300962 THE BEST OF THE STATLER BROTHERS RIDES AGAIN, VOL. II

291914 Frank Sinatra's Greatest Hits

300947 ORIGINAL SOUND TRACK — The Electric Horseman

300764 ROY CLARK — MY MUSIC

291278 The Doobie Brothers — Best Of The Doobies

291856 THE BEST OF CARLY SIMON

300707 ORIGINAL SOUND TRACK — THE ROSE

293662 TURNING UP AND TURNING ON BILLY CRASH CRADDOCK

300681 NEIL DIAMOND — SEPTEMBER MORN

304188 CHICAGO XIV

301531 FREDDY WELLER — Go For The Night

302042 LINDA RONSTADT — MAD LOVE

300046 WILLIE NELSON SINGS KRISTOFFERSON

300590 ABBA — GREATEST HITS, VOL. II

293530 MICKEY GILLEY — THE SONGS WE MADE LOVE TO

300525 THE BEST OF EDDIE RABBITT

290270 Don't Cry Out Loud — Melissa Manchester

300335 BROADWAY MAGIC: THE BEST OF THE GREAT BROADWAY MUSICALS

293266 Jerry Lee Lewis — DUETS

300293 DON WILLIAMS — PORTRAIT

291203 The Doobie Brothers — Minute By Minute

300111 JOHNNY PAYCHECK — EVERYBODY'S GOT A FAMILY—MEET MINE

287771 DON WILLIAMS — EXPRESSIONS

300095 Electric Light Orch. — Elo's Greatest Hits

293688 EMMY LOU HARRIS — Blue Kentucky Girl

300079 DAN FOGELBERG — PHOENIX

304329 DON WILLIAMS — I Believe in You

304246 BOB JAMES — "H"

302299 LORETTA LYNN — WE'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

301473 CHRISTOPHER CROSS

293902 CON HUNLEY

291195 LINDA RONSTADT — Living In The U.S.A.

299834 MEL TILLIS — ME AND PEPPER

291021 SUPERTRAMP — Breakfast In America

299735 LESTER FLATT & THE NASHVILLE GRASS

286732 LINDA RONSTADT — Hasten Down The Wind

299701 VARIOUS ARTISTS — DO WOP GOLD, VOL. II

288332 BILLY JOEL — 52ND STREET

299685 MOE BANDY — One Of A Kind

287003 EAGLES 1971-1975 — Their Greatest Hits

299669 MAC DAVIS — GREATEST HITS

287730 TAMMY WYNETTE — Greatest Hits

299552 STEVE FORBERT — JACKRABBIT SLIM

293670 OAK RIDGE BOYS — HAVE ARRIVED

304261 DIONNE WARWICK — No Night So Long

303743 The Blues Brothers

301564 DEBBY BOONE — Love Has No Reason

301572 Marshall Tucker Band — TENTH

299263 ANNE MURRAY — I'll Always Love You

288555 JOHNNY PAYCHECK — GREATEST HITS

286914 FLEETWOOD MAC — RUMOURS

299248 Captain & Tennille — MAKE YOUR MOVE

299222 GEORGE JONES — My Very Special Guests

290247 CAT STEVENS — BACK TO EARTH

299024 GENE WATSON — Should I Come Home

288740 LINDA RONSTADT'S GREATEST HITS

288951 LARRY GATLIN'S GREATEST HITS

298869 MAUREEN McGOVERN

298745 DONNA FARGO — JUST FOR YOU

285981 DAN FOGELBERG & TIM WEISBERG + TWIN SONS OF DIFFERENT MOTHERS

298737 NICOLETTE LARSON — IN THE NICK OF TIME

293027 TANYA TUCKER — TNT

298620 BARRY MANILOW — ONE VOICE

292904 ANNE MURRAY — New Kind of Feeling

298612 HERB ALPERT — RISE

292912 THE BEST OF BARBARA MANDRELL

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295170 295171 WILLIE NELSON & LEON RUSSELL — ONE FOR THE ROAD

294157 294158 GRANDPA JONES — FAMILY ALBUM

288670 288671 BARRY MANILOW — GREATEST HITS

297424 297425 The World's Greatest Bluegrass Bands #2

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Letters

Reviewer's Reviews Reviewed

I really hate to read reviews like Bob Allen's review of Waylon's new album, **Music Man.** Mr. Allen seems to be trying to find some sinister clues in Waylon's music. I've been watching Waylon and listening to his music for over 17 years now, and I cannot see either cynicism or boredom underlying his music on this album. Like all of his albums, it only gets better the more it is played. I certainly do not find this record "weary."

As Waylon has said before in interviews, he is not sending messages with his music, he is sending himself. Naturally he feels stronger about some songs than others, and like all of us he isn't always feeling 100% physically or emotionally. As to the song *Music Man*, I personally feel that he doesn't have the same feeling for the song as the author, Kenny Rogers. And though the song, according to Rogers, was based on Waylon and a conversation Rogers had with Jessi Colter, Waylon's wife, it is really a song for a girl to sing! But he does a good job on it.

It seems like every time Waylon sings someone else's songs, he gets criticized. Can't we just enjoy his music and his interpretations, and not look for flaws? He's just a super singer. His albums never get old—the first one is just as enjoyable now as when it was issued.

Artists who keep changing their styles trying to fit a media concept, or because some pseudo-intellectuals complain the performer isn't "growing," soon lose their fans as well as their credibility. It is absurd to put everyone in the same mold.

I admire Waylon for continuing to play his music his way, and hope he will not be swayed by others who do not have his welfare uppermost in their minds. Entertainers for the most part have fragile egos, so be kind! As Emmylou Harris admits in the September issue of *Country Music*, she does not read negative reviews. Good for her. Who needs negative reviews?

I feel sorry for recording artists who have to fight the record company personnel who insist on recording for "cross-over" sales. Only money counts to them, and the integrity of the music goes down the drain, sometimes *with* the singer!

Kenny Rogers especially turned me off when he stated in interviews his "formula" for making "cross-over" hits. It was much too calculating and cynical for me. I won't ever buy an album of his now, or pay to see a concert, though I have enjoyed his concerts in the past. As far as I can see he is just manipulating his audience. He is truly a media-made star. Waylon got where he is the hard way and still works just as hard on his music. He does not compromise on it.

Thanks for an otherwise wonderful magazine, from a long-time Waylon fan.

JEAN BUTLER
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

First of all, let my say *Country Music* is a great magazine and I have always enjoyed the sophistication and approach of the writing, and was delighted to find our current release, **Song of the American Trucker,** reviewed in your September issue.

But really Michael, poking fun at the title is a cheap shot! If indeed you had listened to the album three times, you might have noticed Ovation artist Max D. Barnes has three cuts rather than one. And I feel you did your readers a disservice leaving them with the impression the album quality was akin to "truckers singing over a CB radio," when in fact many of the cuts were recorded in some of Nashville's better studios by some of Nashville's best producers. You might have used the space knocking the title to say that former MCA recording artist Dan McCorison's cut was written by Peter McCann who wrote the big hit for Jennifer Warnes, *Right Time of the Night*, or that Dale Royal, who co-wrote the over three-million selling *Teddy Bear* is on the album.

And yes, there is a good deal of trucker's angst on the album. There is a great deal of angst in ALL country music, and I can't help but feel you missed the whole point of the album. Too many trucking songs on an album about trucking by truckers . . .? And what is, after all, the essence of country music? Is not angst, of one form or another, one of the primary contributions?

As for C.W. McCall influence, most of the artists on the album were writing and singing about trucks long before C.W. ever considered offering up his highly fanciful Madison Avenue clones of what country music or trucking are all about. The distinction is vast! Since you imply that you aren't too keen on truckers anyway, maybe the review should have been left to someone else. I'm sorry you've had some less than wonderful experiences driving, but then, as I am sure you are well aware, there are "arrogant, second-rate" individuals in all professions!

MICHAEL D. MORGAN
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER SONG OF THE AMERICAN TRUCKER
PRESIDENT, BIG WHEELS RECORDS INC.
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

Michael Bane replies: Regardless of where a record is produced, who produces it, who wrote it, who played on it, and how many hits they've had before, the ultimate proof is in the music itself and I stand by my review, cute remarks and all. As far as angst being an essential ingredient in country music, so are steel guitars, but I wouldn't want to be trapped in a room full of them going full blast. And yes Mr. Morgan, there are second-rate people in every profession.

Country Music Magazine Not Country?

We are subscribers of *Country Music Magazine* but are thinking of not renewing our subscription because it isn't country any more. That Charlie Daniels Band is as far from country as I am from being a movie star, and they are just something that clutters up the magazine. We are true country music lovers and there isn't hardly any of the good ones in it any more.

You can tell Marty Robbins that Larry Gatlin doesn't have to buy his awards. He'll have to get a hundred times better than he is to ever come half the way to where Larry should be, but you all just choose anybody whether they are country or not.

Wish you would get country if you are going to claim to be a country fan or have something that you call a country magazine. Hope to see something worthwhile in the magazine soon.

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Emmylou

I have just finished reading your September issue, and I immensely enjoyed the article on Emmylou Harris. The cover picture is one of the most beautiful I've ever seen on *any* magazine cover. I also loved the pictures that were included with the article.

However, there was a slight mistake in the article. The Grammy that Emmylou won for **Blue Kentucky Girl** was not her first, it is her second. In 1976 Emmylou won a Grammy for **Elite Hotel.**

I work for Tower Records and **Roses in the Snow** is one of our biggest selling country albums. When I played the album in our store, even people who don't like country music loved it. My thanks to Emmylou for sharing her music with us all. Many thanks to you for the article on this lovely lady.

JILL ADELSBERGER
BALDWIN PARK, CALIFORNIA 91706

A little checking confirmed that (Blue Kentucky Girl) *was in fact Emmylou's first Grammy award. She was nominated for* (Elite Hotel) *in 1976, but did not win. Ed.*

Margo Smith Wins New Fans

Please have more articles about one of the best in country music: Margo Smith. My husband and I saw her in concert at Uniontown, Pennsylvania and she put on a tremendous show. Her speaking voice was extremely hoarse, having played four previous shows in the rain, but she didn't let that stop her. Her enthusiasm and the rapport she established with the audience was fantastic, especially considering how badly she felt. She left us very anxious to see her again. And between acts she talked to people and signed autographs and seemed genuinely happy to be there.

In contrast, the headliner (Loretta Lynn) gave a show that could best be described as a poor version of the Talent Scouts. We were there to see her perform, not little girls, relatives, her band, and a very poor backup group. She gave us only 20 minutes of herself, and just seemed to be going through the motions. We were tremendously disappointed and would never attend her concert again.

So please, give Margo her due and let us have more of her!

CAROL HIGHT
CANONSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

Editor's Note

Correction: In the September issue of Country Music, *the review of Vernon Oxford's* America's Unknown Super Star *was incorrectly accompanied by a picture of the* His 'n Hers *album jacket. Hazel L. Daws is the president of the Vernon Oxford International Fan Club, Everett Corbin is the Tennessee representative.*

PEOPLE

By Bob Campbell

At least 85,000 people jammed the Navy Pier in Chicago, Illinois Aug. 5 to hear the **Charlie Daniels Band.** The concert was part of the annual week-long Chicagofest. "It's the Urban Cowboy Syndrome," a festival official said, explaining the huge turnout. Speaking of the Charlie Daniels Band, their operation looks like a huge circus train rolling down the road. Thirty seven people, plus equipment travel in a Winnebago, three Silver-Eagle buses and three, tractor-trailer rigs. Stretched out, the vehicles cover about 330 feet. The trailers are easy to recognize because murals depicting the cover graphics of six CDB albums are painted on the sides and rear. The band travels in style, but **Charlie Daniels** also insists on comfort for his fans. At each concert site, he requires a safely designed, elevated platform for the handicapped which must provide an unobstructed view. He also insists that the first five rows of seats be sold to the general public rather than guests, press and VIPs.

Cowboys are definitely in this year. Since the movie *Urban Cowboy* every city boy worth his salt, along with his girlfriend, is wearing jeans, boots and a big, flashy cowboy hat. Mechanical bulls are cropping up in half the bars and dancehalls in the country. One man who has a few thoughts on the subject of cowboys is **Ed Bruce,** who with his wife, Patsy, wrote *Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys.* He lives on a ranch outside Nashville and has been wearing boots and jeans for years. "Part of it is nostalgia," Bruce told **Laura Eipper** of The *Nashville Tennessean.* "The west was the last earth-bound frontier, after all. The next one is space, which is a little impractical for the average person. The literal cowboy era lasted only a short time, but it was a very romantic part of our heritage. What I keep going back to, though, is a kind of philosophy associated with cowboys—simple, basic, very hard."

Most rabid **Elvis Presley** fans are aware of the late singer's love for simple, downhome cooking, but the Presley family cook and Presley's uncle, **Vester Presley,** go into elaborate detail in their book, *The Presley Family Cookbook.* **Nancy Rooks,** who went to work for the Presley's in 1967 and still cooks at the Graceland mansion, offers recipes of Elvis' favorite foods. Vester Presley gives recipes used by the family in Tupelo, Mississippi when Elvis was growing up. A peanut butter and mashed banana sandwich was Presley's favorite snack, and he also loved pork chitterlings and oxtail stew. He also considered German chocolate cake, string beans with pimiento, lasagna and cottage cheese with peaches as favorite foods. According to Ms. Rooks, Elvis returned to Memphis about two weeks out of every two months and would often eat breakfast twice a day at Graceland. She said he would eat breakfast about 7 a.m. before he went to bed and again about four or five in the afternoon when he woke up. "Sometimes he would eat a half-pound of bacon and maybe three or four eggs," she said. Also noted in the book is the last meal Presley ate before he died—spaghetti and meatballs.

Dottie West is riding a high wave of happiness this year. She is totally pleased with her career success, her music and her relationship with **Kenny Rogers.** "I'm completely gung-ho about work, and I'm having a wonderful time. I am happier than I have ever been in my life," she says. "There are times when I can't believe all that has happened." Dottie had always been successful, but her career took off after she recorded *Every Time Two Fools Collide* with Rogers in 1978. She had already known Rogers and his wife, Marianne, but Dottie said they had never considered working together. And now they are closer than ever. "I have learned a lot from Kenny about a lot of things. He is incredible, and genuinely interested in me and my career. He is a beautiful person and I can honestly say he is my best friend." This fall, Dottie is branching out into more television and perhaps movies, but she is quick to insist Nashville will always remain her home. "I never want anyone to get the idea that I am moving to the west coast or deserting my roots. I am very happy right here in Nashville and always will be."

The success of the movie *Coal Miner's Daughter,* has brought a tremendous increase in fan mail for **Loretta Lynn.** According to her manager, **David Skepner,** Loretta is receiving three times as much mail now and fans write to her as if they were long lost friends, confiding personal stories to her. Some of the letters are addressed "Loretta Lynn, Nashville" and some are simply addressed, "The Queen of Country Music, Nashville." Skepner, however, says Loretta really doesn't care to be called the Queen of Country Music because she feels **Kitty Wells** deserves that honor.

Willie Nelson surely must be cloned. One minute he is over here making movies, the next minute he is on the road doing concerts, and it seems he is always in a recording studio. Among his other activities, Willie has been working on at least three recording projects this past few months. He has recorded a gospel, album for the MCA Lifesong Label. Called **Family Bible,** the album contains a bunch of basic church gospel songs and the only pickers are Nelson and his sister, Bobby, on piano. While in Texas late last summer, Willie also took a day out and cut a jazz-flavored album at Gilley's studio in Pasadena. The LP includes tunes like *Ain't Misbehavin', Who's Sorry Now* and *I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter.* "We wanted to get together and cut a jazz kind of album with what that old **Django Reinhardt** feel," Willie said. "We didn't have any idea how it would turn out. We just sat around in a semi-circle and picked and sang, just like a regular pickin' session." And if you happened to see the Democratic National Convention, yep, that was Willie up there singing the national anthem.

Chuck Howard is a name country-music fans will probably begin to hear more of in the coming months. Originally a songwriter, Chuck wrote *Come With Me* for **Waylon Jennings,** *I'm Always On A Mountain When I Fall,* recorded by **Merle Haggard** and *Happy Birthday, Darlin',* by **Conway Twitty.** A few years ago, **Ringo Starr** cut a bunch of his tunes in an album called **Beaucoup of Blues.** Chuck records now for Warner/Curb and his first release is the unusual *I've Come Back To Say I Love You One More Time.* The song is really about the return of Jesus, and Chuck said the words and music both came to him out of the blue while he was eating in a restaurant. "I found myself humming a tune and a friend of mine asked me what it was. I told him I didn't know. He went to the restroom and when he came back, I sang him the entire song."

Skeeter Davis Records Again

Country entertainer Skeeter Davis, who once had a million-seller with **The End Of The World** back in 1963 and is a regular performer on the Grand Ole Opry, is recording again and has written a book

which should hit the market within the next few months.

Ms. Davis has kept a relatively low profile the past few years, mostly staying on her farm outside Nashville and working on her memoirs, but she recorded **The Rose** this fall on a new label, Part II. It was the first record she had cut in five years.

Her book deals primarily with her life and career, which began in 1957. "I tell the truth with no intent to harm anyone," Ms. Davis said. "Why I even tell my age. I am 48, but going on 20. I've had much happiness, mixed in with heartaches and tragedy; many ups and downs."

Even though Ms. Davis has not recorded since 1975, she has maintained a moderate touring schedule. She does not smoke or drink and therefore will not play nightclubs, so she makes most of her appearances at state and county fairs.

"My old recordings still sell pretty good," she said. "I still get royalties, especially overseas. This year, for instance, I received checks from the company that amounted to more than $10,000.

Charley Pride's Plane Crashes

Charley Pride said he was "scared to death and felt lucky to be alive" following his mid-air collision with another plane late last summer in Texas. A flight instructor and student pilot were killed when their single-engined plane struck Pride's two-engine, Fairchild F-27 turbo-prop plane. None of the 16 people on Pride's plane were injured.

"The pilot was descending and all of a sudden we heard a whomp," Pride said. "The plane shimmied and the pilot came on and said 'we've got a problem, buckle up.' A few minutes later he brought it in. We didn't know what happened until we were on the ground."

Pride, 42, told reporters he would continue flying. "I have got too much to do on this earth," he said. "I am going to be around for awhile."

That night following the crash, Pride performed before 600 nuns at the Catholic Dallas University. He made no mention of the accident until the very end of the show, after he had sung several gospel songs. "Thanks to the almighty, we are here to do this for you," Pride told the nuns. "I hope and pray for the ones not so fortunate."

Pride's agent, Jim Prater, said pilot Bob Sowers worked "a miracle" in getting the plane down and he saved everyone's life. "We can't say enough for the pilot. He did something that was very hard to do. He had no rudder control which really means you just about can't steer the aircraft." Concerning his pilot, Pride said, "I used to think he was a good pilot. Now I *know* he is a *great* pilot."

How Mr. Fender's Strange Looking Guitar Became A Legend In Its Own Time

By Rich Kienzle

Leo Fender's first electric spanish guitar was *weird*. For that matter, *any* electric guitar consisting of a neck attached to a tiny, solid wood body only a few inches wide, two crude controls, no pickguard, no fancy inlay and a plain fretboard would be considered weird in 1944. Steel guitars were supposed to look like that. In fact, they always had, but standard electric guitars? *No way*. In those days, they were normally huge archtop behemoths, complete with F-holes, fancy pearl inlay, white celluloid binding and fancy pickup and controls. Could Fender's contraption even be called a guitar? The U.S. Patent Office apparently thought so, for on September 26, 1944, it issued him a patent.

Fender, born in 1909 in Orange County California just south of Los Angeles, always enjoyed music, though he never seriously took up an instrument. By the thirties, he had a small radio repair business, and in his spare time followed with new designs for electric pickups and public address systems. He continued this business through the war, at a time when Southern California was undergoing an unprecendented growth. With World War II still raging, the region became a center of war-related industries. New residents came to the area to find work, many from the South or Midwest. Defense plants ran 24 hours a day; thousands of soldiers flowed through the area going to and from the Pacific Theater. The club and dancehall business was booming, and with so many Texans, Oklahomans and other southerners around, country music began to rival the Big Bands in popularity. Bob Wills drew crowds that could rival the top big bands; Spade Cooley was beginning to make a name for himself. Merle Travis, fresh out of the Marines was settling there. And Leo Fender started designing steel guitars and electric pickups in his repair shop.

Leo Fender's first prototype on display at Roy Acuff's museum at Opryland.

It was little wonder that Fender would try a solidbody electric guitar. After all, electric steel guitars had been solidbody since the first ones were marketed in 1931. After Fender built his electric, he used his connections among western swing musicians to get guitartists to try it out. Their initial comments were favorable and as they spread the word to other players, Fender wound up renting it out. It became so popular that a two-week waiting list was kept to give everyone a chance at it.

By 1946, Fender was building steel guitars and amplifiers fulltime under the "K & F" brand ("K" being his equally talented partner "Doc" Kauffmann). As both Hawaiian and western music became more popular, the business grew and Kauffmann decided to leave. With 15 employees, Fender began marketing steels of all types, from small six-string models for students to larger two-neck models for pros. Herb Remington of Bob Wills' Texas Playboys tested out his first two-neck prototype. Fender also developed one of the first two-speaker amps, the "Super" model, which also became popular among western players. Fender, a western music fan, quickly made friends among local musicians giving them instruments to use in return for their comments and suggestions on how to improve them, and soon Fender steels became almost standard equipment among western swing bands.

But Fender hadn't forgotten the enthusiasm that first electric guitar had evoked, and began designing another model, a guitar that would have some of the same bright tone of the electric steel, a guitar so unconventional for that time that

its very appearance would turn heads. It, too, had a solid wood body, and a deep cutaway so that a guitarist could reach the highest notes on the neck with a minimum of problems. Unlike most guitars, it had a one-piece solid maple neck with all six tuning keys on one side of the headstock, an idea Fender took from ancient Croatian stringed instruments. But getting a steel guitarlike sound was foremost in his mind, and Fender knew he could do it. Yet he didn't do it with fancy electronic effects, but by copying one important part of its design. Most guitars anchored the strings to a hingelike "tailpiece" fastened to the guitar; electric steels anchored the strings through holes in the body itself, pulling them from back to front. By duplicating this, on his guitar, Fender got exactly what he wanted.

Dubbed the "Broadcaster," it was introduced in 1948 and found almost immediate acceptance among country guitarists in the Los Angeles area. The name, however, had to be changed when Fender discovered a drum set already had the Broadcaster name. Since TV was becoming popular, he renamed it the "Telecaster." Again, he distributed them among his country guitarist friends and got almost unanimous approval. Among the early Telecasters users were Jimmy Bryant and Arthur "Guitar Boogie" Smith. Though it was austere compared to the average hollowbody electric of that period, the Telecaster had other advantages. The construction was totally functional, no frills, just the basics. It could handle even the roughest treatment and still be ready to play (Telecasters have sustained many musicians through the roughest honkytonk brawls), so it soon became one of the most popular electric guitars among country pickers. Just as jazzmen had their archtops and bluegrass and folk artists their Martins, and Gibsons so the image of the country guitarist with his "Tele" came into being though it later was (and is) popular with rock players. And at a price of $189 it was a bargain as well. In 1951, Fender created another instrument that would find favor among country bands: the electric bass guitar, a four-string instrument that would give better bass sound along with greater portability than an upright bass. For groups that did traveling, and where space was at a premium, the Fender Precision Bass was a veritable godsend. It also made a difference in the sound of many country bands. Where many bassists simply stood and thumped an upright, they had to play a Precision carefully, for every mistake could be heard. Though it got some resistance at first, Little Jimmy Dickens' Country Boys became one of the first country bands to use a Precision onstage. Other bands followed, and by the early fifties, Fender's catalog featured a variety of artists endorsing their instruments, from pop musicians like steel guitarist Alvino Rey, to the entire Bob Wills and Spade Cooley groups, who aside from their drums, pianos and fiddles, boasted all-Fender equipment.

Roy Orbison's Fender looks ready for launch.

The success of Fender's solidbodies was a bit ironic, for Les Paul had invented a solidbody electric guitar in the late thirties, only to be regularly rebuffed by Gibson, to whom he proposed it. After the Telecaster's popularity was established, Gibson did an abrupt turnaround, resulting in the legendary "Les Paul" solidbody in mid-1952. Paul invented the solidbody but it was Fender who proved it could succeed in the marketplace.

After Fender built his electric, he used his connections among western swing musicians to get guitarists to try it out.

With the vision that has marked his career, Leo Fender was again looking ahead. Another Southern California guitar builder, Paul Bigsby, had perfected a design for a vibrato-equipped tailpiece for electric guitars, a device that would be used to create rippling, steel guitar-like effects. Fender and his associate, Hawaiian-born Freddie Tavares (who only played steel with Western groups like Foy Willing and his Riders of The Purple Sage) set to designing another, solidbody vibrato-equipped guitar. And again, they relied on country guitarists to help refine their designs. One L.A. guitarist, Rex Galleon, suggested that the body be contoured to make it easier to play. Another, Bill Carson, took the prototype in to the clubs he played, making constant suggestions to improve the design. Finally, in 1953, the guitar, known as the Fender "Stratocaster" was unveiled. Its fluid, space-age appearance was even more

radical than the Telecaster, and its three electric pickups were somewhat unusual for that time. The vibrato was different, and the guitar also became popular with country acts, though not as much as the Tele. Still, Fender was giving them to his western musician friends, and ex-Texas Playboy Eldon Shamblin still plays an early model that Fender gave him. Still, it's become more associated with rock players like Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix than with country, despite its country roots.

Throughout the fifties Fender's amps also gained considerable favor with country acts for their excellent tone and solid construction. The Bassman, Vibrolux and Twin amps were particularly popular. When pedal steels came into vogue, Fender began making them as well, and top players like Buddy Emmons and Curly Chalker both used them. Fender was probably the major manufacturer of pedal steels until manufacturers like MSA, Sho-Bud, ZB and Emmons came along to specialize in pedal steels alone. Speedy West, one of the top western steel players became a Fender employee in the fifties, running one of their warehouses and demonstrating their steels around the world.

In 1957, Fender built another final model, the Jazzmaster, a solidbody meant for the hollowbody market. The pickup, ironically was adapted from a Fender steel guitar pickup, and it, too, had some popularity with country artists. Roy Clark is pictured with one on his first album, and western bandleader/comedian Hank Penny still uses one Leo Fender gave him back in '57.

But of all Fender models it is the Telecaster that has made the deepest contribution to the sound of country music over the past twenty years. Johnny Cash's sound was dominated by Luther Perkins'

The Telecaster had many advantages. It could handle even the roughest treatment and still be ready to play.

Telecaster from 1955 until 1968. Had Perkins opted for another guitar, without the twang of the Telecaster, Cash's sound would have been very different. Bob Wooton continued that tradition for years. And in the early sixties, as the "Bakersfield Sound" grew in reaction to the excesses of the pop-oriented Nashville Sound (itself a reaction to the popularity of rock'n roll), the Telecaster helped define it. The Bakersfield musicians had reworked the classic honky tonk sound, dropping the fiddles and piano and concentrating on twanging leads and steel behind vocalists like Wynn Stewart, Buck Owens and Merle Haggard. And no guitar was used more than the Telecaster. The late

Luther Perkins (right) with his Telecaster. Johnny Cash is playing another famous guitar (a Gibson J 200), but that's another story.

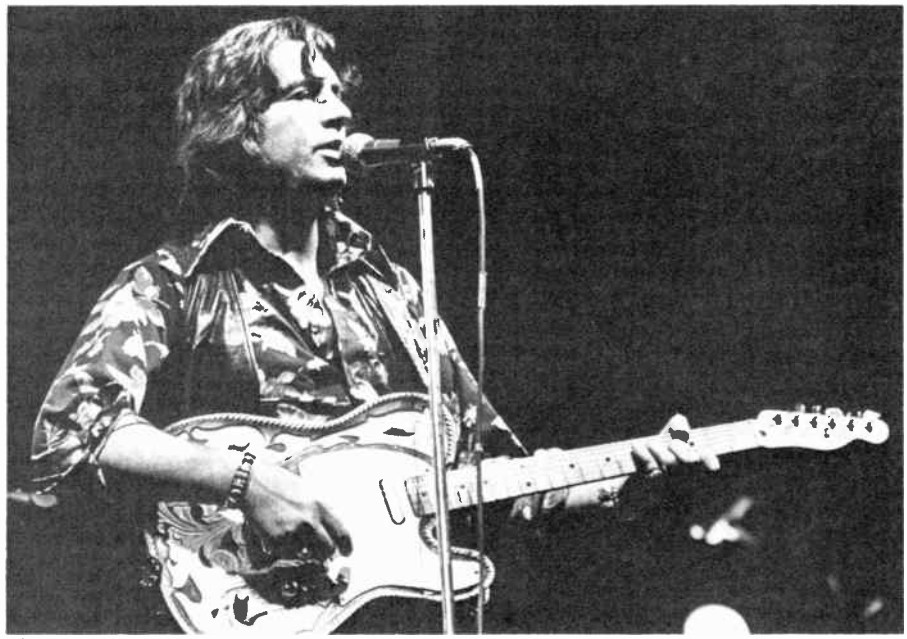
Don Rich used one through all the time he spent with Buck Owens, and both Phil Baugh and Roy Nichols used it with Merle Haggard (today both Haggard and Nichols use them onstage). Songs like Buck's *Tiger By The Tail* and Hag's *Swinging Doors* are good examples of the Tele's impact. James Burton, who's worked with Rick Nelson, Emmylou Harris and Elvis, has always used Telecasters, so much so he's become associated with them, as has Nashville studio picker Billy Sanford.

One artist heavily influenced by the Bakersfield players was Waylon Jennings, who's used a Telecaster for nearly 15 years. In 1964, while working at J.D.'s in Phoenix, one of the club's employees made the black and white tooled leather sheath that's set his model apart from any other, and of course even the most casual listen to any Waylon record shows the Telecaster dominating his instrumental sound.

What happened to Leo Fender, the down to earth, totally pragmatic genius who started all this was nothing short of incredible. In 1965, while temporarily in poor health, he sold Fender to CBS for around $13,000,000. After becoming bored with retirement, he's again building guitars and amps under the Music Man brand with many of his old associates.

But Fender has continued to thrive. Though rumors abounded in the early seventies that the quality of the guitars and amps had slipped those rumors were quickly put to rest, for it seems that the vast financial resources of CBS have actually improved the quality of Fender equipment. Countless new models, including hollowbody acoustic and electric guitars have been introduced, as well as the Fender-Rhodes electric piano, which has also become a standard in country and rock bands and was one of the last projects Leo Fender worked on. The once-small factory in Fullerton, California has given way to a massive complex of buildings.

Both Fender guitars and amps are popular in all fields today, yet one fact can't be ignored. The Telecaster and the Stratocaster have stood the test of time. Only a few changes have been made and both look virtually the same today as when they were introduced; and both were designed by Leo Fender (who, more than any other guitarmaker, deserves a place in the Country Music Hall of Fame someday) with the advice and help of *country* pickers. So the next time you hear somebody mention "Telecaster Cowboys," believe it. ■



Waylon, pre-beard, with Telecaster.

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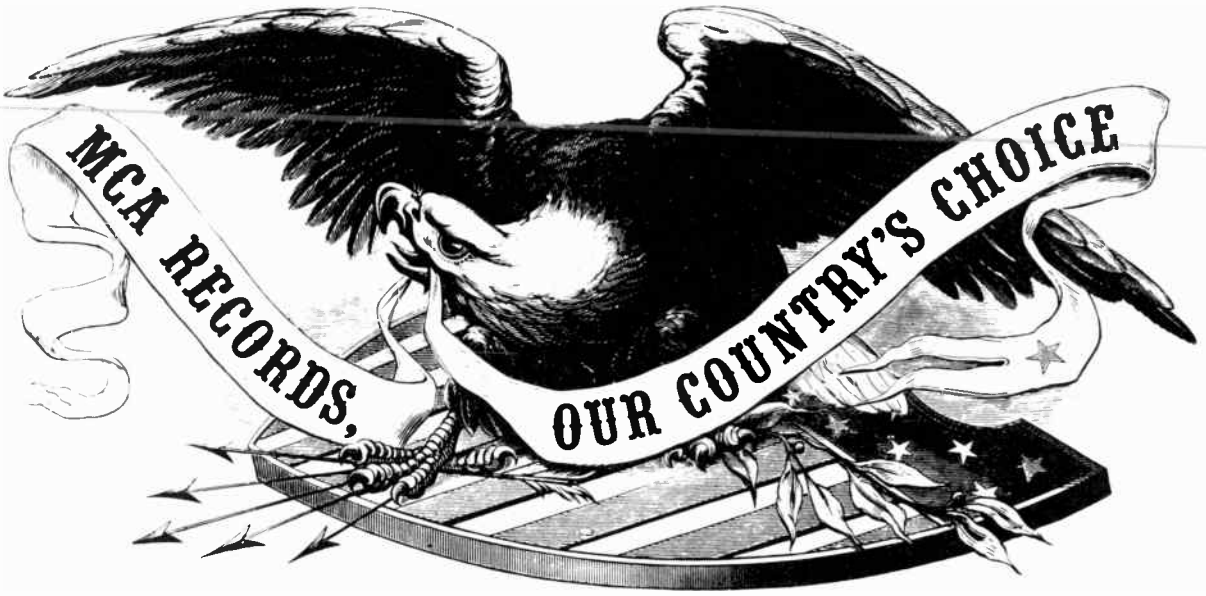


(MCA-3258)

Willie Nelson "Family Bible"
Featuring the single,
"Family Bible"

(MCA-3263)

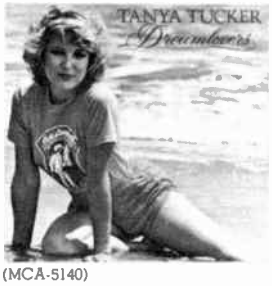
Patsy Cline "Always"
Featuring the single,
"Always"

(MCA-5139)

Merle Haggard "Back To The Barrooms"
Featuring the singles,
"I Just Want To Stay Here & Drink"
& **"Misery & Gin"**

(MCA-5143)

Brenda Lee "Take Me Back"
Featuring the single,
"Broken Trust"



(MCA-5140)

Tanya Tucker "Dreamlovers"
Featuring the single,
"Dreamlovers"

(MCA-5150)

Oak Ridge Boys "Greatest Hits"
Featuring the singles,
"Heart Of Mine," "Y'All Come Back Saloon" & "Trying To Love Two Women"

(MCA-5148)

Loretta Lynn "Lookin' Good"
Featuring the single,
"Cheatin' On A Cheater"

(MCA-5138)

Conway Twitty "Rest Your Love On Me"
Featuring the single,
"A Bridge That Just Won't Burn"

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Editor and Reporter:
Bob Campbell
Nashville, Tennessee

Country Gazette

Late Country Edition

All the news that fits the space we have.
Weather: Variable, Seasonal.

Country Music Beauty Pageant Set for Next Year

Country music will host its own beauty pageant next October during Country Music Month to elect the first "Miss Country USA." Participants from each state will compete for the chance to officially represent country music during 1981-82. The two-hour show, which will combine top country entertainment along with the actual pageant, is the brainchild of Sherry Sanders, a former singer and wife of Mack Sanders, who owns radio station WJRB in Nashville. Ms. Sanders, who is negotiating with television networks for a live broadcast, feels the idea is good because it will combine good music with pretty girls.

"I really think this will be attractive to viewers because everybody likes a beauty pageant and people like a sharp, classy country music show," Miss Sanders said. "This will be a combination of the two. The entertainers will participate in the pageant by escorting and presenting the girls as well as performing." But she also said this pageant will differ dramatically from other contests because contestants must demonstrate a working knowledge of country music.

"The winner must be someone who presents a beautiful picture of country music," she added. "She must be someone who can talk intelligently about it because she will be traveling all over the country. A lot of the points will be given on knowledge and not just beauty. Poise will also count more than beauty. A lot of people we have talked to in other parts of the country think it is a natural idea and incredible that no one has done it before. Also, every performer in the show will be a country music entertainer."

Ms. Sanders hopes to turn this pageant into an annual televised event, and in the future she plans to hold preliminary pageants in other states. For the first year she is contacting radio stations in every state and urging them to find a lady of their choice to represent the station. Each radio station will find a sponsor to send the girl to Nashville. The winner of "Miss Country USA" will travel across the country speaking to various groups and will appear at selected country music functions. The winner will also receive a scholarship, gifts and cash award.

Ms. Sanders said the pageant will be a black-tie affair and "probably will be held at The Grand Ole Opry House."

New Radio Show Set For January

A brand-new country music radio show, *The Silver Eagle*, will debut in January. Produced by the makers of the rock program, *The King Biscuit Flower Hour*, the show will air every other week for at least a year in 90-minute segments. Two country artists will appear in concert in each segment.

The show will feature artists from all areas of country music in concert and will be recorded on 24-track remote vehicles. "We have no axe to grind, no point of view," said Peter Kauff, executive vice president of the New York-based production company. "We will try to reflect what is happening in country music at the time —whoever is credible or looks like they are going to be."

Every concert may not be recorded in Nashville, but Kauff said he expects many of the segments to be recorded at Nashville's Exit/In Club. "A lot of musicians work with certain session people here and would like to work with them live. It is an opportunity they don't often get since a lot of musicians don't go on the road."

The format of *The Silver Eagle* show will basically correspond to the successful *King Biscuit Flower Hour* rock series, but *The Silver Eagle* will be 30 minutes longer and will feature two artists instead of one. The show will also be syndicated through the ABC Radio Network, which has 400 affiliates. *The King Biscuit Flower Hour* is syndicated on a 250-station network.

Kauff said the purpose of his show is "to try and find programming that is unique, that stations can't do for themselves. That is why we don't do things with recorded music. Any station could do it just as easily and probably better for their area. But most stations can't afford live recording."

Fame Affects Gilley's Club

Gilley's Club may never be the same again. The big ol' sprawling, loveable, tough Texas club, the main focus of the movie *Urban Cowboy*, has been invaded by all sorts of non-cowboy types since the movie's release. Some of the regulars at Gilley's, folks who had been coming to the club for years, have expressed some resentment at all the attention and alien attendance the club is receiving. But Gator Conley, the most famous regular, who played himself in *Urban Cowboy*, loves the crowds.

"I don't mind sharing Gilley's," Conley said. "I've made this place a home for the last six years, and I never minded company before. I'm having as much fun looking at the tourists as they are having looking at me."

Another regular, Bob Claypool, author of *Saturday Night At Gilley's*, is slightly more concerned about losing the character and individuality of Gilley's.

"A lot of us are worried about Gilley's now," Claypool said. "When TV cameras start rolling through the front door of your favorite bar, you figure things are going to change. And they have. At the very least, the bar's become a symbol for a certain way of life—the tastemakers are using it as an emblem for 'cowboy chic.' "

However, many of the regulars, mostly people who worked in the refinerics and factories in Pasadena, became a little swept up in the initial flush of excitement surrounding the filming of the movie.

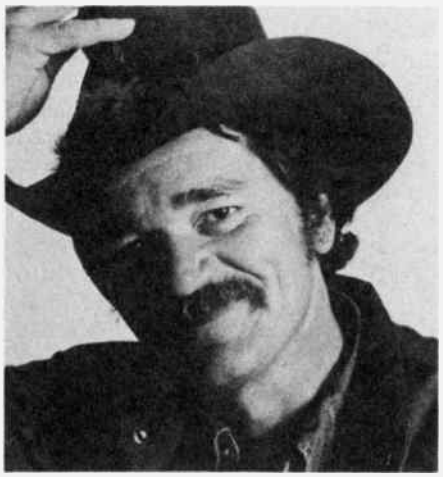
"People were going crazy," one person said. "Some of 'em quit their jobs so they could just hang around the set all day. The ones who didn't get parts wouldn't speak to the ones who did. And a lot of those who actually got in the movie started talking about going to Hollywood and hiring an agent when the movie was over."

Gilley's Club, complete with mechanical broncing bull, pinball machines, pool tables and a punching bag, has been well known in Texas for some time, but an article on Gilley's in *Esquire Magazine* in 1978 by Aaron Latham introduced the club to a national audience. *Urban Cowboy* was based on Latham's article.

Songwriter's Night Airs on Public Television

When a bunch of songwriters get together, sooner or later they will start dragging guitars out and playing each other their latest song. It is called a "guitar pullin' " in Nashville and has served as a center of social activity for songwriters since before Hank Williams' time. Public television viewers in Nashville caught a rare glimpse of a "guitar pullin' " one hot night last August when local Channel 8 broadcast a unique show called *Songwriters' Night,* which featured four solid hours of famous country songwriters sitting around talking and playing their songs with just guitar or piano.

The program was sponsored by the Nashville Songwriters' Association (NSA) and was hosted by Ed Bruce, who has written many hit songs, including *Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys,* and Nat Stucky, who has had hits with *Pop A Top* and *Sweet Thang.* It would be hard to imagine a more relaxed, natural program ever shown live on television. The set was designed as an informal, living room complete with couches and a bearskin rug on the floor. Writers wandered in and off the set with ease, and most of the guests seemed right at home before the cameras.



Ed Bruce

Bobby Braddock

The show was geared to raise money for the local public TV station, which operates in part on public funds, and viewers called in to request songs or even talk with the writers on the phone. A pledge of $50 usually persuaded a writer to play a request or answer the phone. A virtual who's who of country songwriters took part in the program and viewers heard some interesting anecdotes and conversation, as well as good songs.

At one point Stuckey, Don Wayne and Eddie Raven were sitting on camera, and Stuckey asked Wayne if he had a favorite song.

"Well, *Country Bumpkin* would really have to be my favorite because I was kind of down in the dumps. If I ever needed a hit, it was then," said Wayne, a quiet, white-haired man in his forties.

Following Wayne's soft version of *Country Bumpkin,* Stuckey turned to Raven, who is a recording artist as well as writer, and asked him which he preferred, writing or singing.

"Well, I have been lucky lately in that my singing career is going well, but I think writing is my first love. I always go back to that," said Raven, tall, slim and dressed in jeans.

"We have a guitar here," Stuckey said.

"I was noticing that sucker," Raven said. "I'll play *Talking In My Sleep,* which was a hit for a friend of mine, Randy Corner. Randy was almost killed in a car wreck this year, and I'll dedicate this to him."

Following the song, Stuckey talked about how the general public really did not know much about the songwriters who compose the hit songs. But Raven said he thought things were changing and mentioned former University of Texas football coach Darrell Royal as one strong supporter of songwriters and country music.

"I'd like to put in a word for one of the biggest country music fans I have ever had the pleasure of meeting," Raven said. "And that is Coach Darrell Royal in Austin. He came up to me after a performance in Austin and told me about all of the songs of mine that he liked. He really knew a lot of them. He is a walking dictionary and knows as much as anybody about country music. He knows who wrote what and when they wrote it. And he talks about country music wherever he goes."

"Hey, Bobby Braddock, come over here and sit down," Stuckey hollered off camera. "I just found out Harlan Howard pledged $100 to hear you sing *He Stopped Loving Her Today."*

Braddock, who wrote the song along with Curley Putnam, sat down at the piano and played the song, a somewhat different version than the hit by George Jones.

"Do you write for a particular artist?" Stuckey asked Braddock after he finished the song.

"No, not really," said Braddock in a slow drawl. Braddock is a slim, bearded man who almost always wears a leather cap. "Rafe Van Hoy and I did write *Golden Ring* just for George Jones, but that was unusual. I really never try to do that. I just write the song for myself."

Later on in the show when Bruce was back on-camera as host, Lee Clayton, writer of *Ladies Love Outlaws,* a big hit several years ago for Waylon Jennings, sat down and told an interesting story about the song.

"Lee, my wife Patsy pledged $50 to hear you sing her favorite cowboy song," Bruce said.

"You want me to do it?" Clayton grinned.

"I don't care," Bruce joked, "but Patsy paid $50."

"I'll tell you a true story about this song," Clayton said. "I wrote this on a bus. I threw it away in a basket, and this girl found it in a trash can and said 'you ought to keep this song.' So I played it for some friends and they liked it. I played it for Waylon Jennings two days later and he recorded it. So here it comes, Ed."

Songwriters are a colorful breed and Hank Cochran, an old friend of Willie Nelson's and an all-time great country songwriter, fits the mold. He walked on the show late that night, swearing that hanging around with Nelson was about to kill him.

"I just came off the bus with Willie," Cochran said. "Now I'm not name dropping, but that bunch is crazy. I haven't

slept in two days. We had a couple of days off and I was heading to bed when ya'll called me. I really wanted to come over here.

Cochran may have been tired, but he stayed long enough to play a beautiful version of *So You Think You're A Cowboy*, which he cowrote with Nelson.

By the time the show ended at midnight, with Marijohn Wilkins playing piano and everybody joining in on *Amazing Grace*, a great number of country songwriters had sat in and picked and traded stories during the evening. Bob Morrison sang *Looking For Love*, Red Lane performed a sensitive *I Must Have Done Something Wrong*, Paul Craft livened things up with his *Drop Kick Me Jesus Through The Goalposts Of Life* and John Schweers sang *She's Just An Old Love Turned Memory*. Other writers included Rory Bourke *(They Don't Make 'em Like That Anymore)*, Jerry Chestnut *(Four In The Morning)*, Linda Hargrove *(Memories)*, Bruce *(Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys)*, Harlan Howard *(Busted)*, and Marijohn Wilkins' singing *One Day At A Time* and *Long Black Veil*.

Early in the show, Ron Peterson, a songwriter and former president of the NSA, expressed the sentiments of Nashville songwriters when he explained that most writers supported public television and that a program like Songwriters' Night was one of the few times a TV audience could be exposed to an honest view of the country music business.

"Most of the writers I know love public TV," Peterson said. "We decided we could do something for the station as a group. And this is a rare, special thing that doesn't happen often. It is a treat for everybody. For years we have been upset because when TV shows come to town to present country music, they would bring in hay bales and standard western stuff. Programs like this can show a more realistic view of our music."

SMOKEY II PREVIEWED IN NASHVILLE—RCA Records held a private screening last August in Nashville for the movie, *Smokey And The Bandit II*. The movie stars Burt Reynolds, Jerry Reed and Sally Field and is a comic repeat of the original *Smokey And The Bandit*. Reed hosted the affair, which was attended by local press people and music industry representatives. In the photo at left, Reed shakes hands with Nashville patrolman Mike Garafola, who followed Reed to the screening to see if it was really him. In the right photo, Reed poses with Sylvia, who also records for RCA.

Presley Legend Grows Stronger

Thousands of rabid Elvis Presley fans swarmed Memphis, Tennessee August 16 in honor of the third anniversary of the singer's death. His legend, though seeming tarnished by the various books detailing his dependence on drugs and bizarre lifestyle, grows more powerful each year. Approaching a carnival atmosphere, the city of Memphis welcomed Presley fans this year with a week-long series of memorial festivals, the dedication of a memorial park and the unveiling of a bronze statue depicting Presley.

Graceland, Presley's estate located on Elvis Presley Boulevard, remained open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday through Sunday. Filing by in a steady stream, some openly weeping, fans gaped at the gravesites of Presley, his parents and his grandmother.

Memphis State University held a two-day seminar, *A Salute To Memphis Music: The Blues*, which included speeches and seminars by blues authorities and a host of Presley films. On Saturday, Aug. 16, the university honored Jerry Lee Lewis at a banquet and named him the recipient of the 1980 Distinguished Achievement Award.

Cooked up strictly for the fans was the four-day menagerie of music, exhibits, movies and remembrances called *Memphis Musical Festival '80: A Tribute To Elvis*. The festival was held at Cook Convention Center and Presley lovers had their pick of just about anything they wanted which touched on the life and career of Presley.

On Saturday, Memphis Mayor Wyeth Chandler dedicated Elvis Presley Plaza, a park on Beale Street, birthplace of the blues. The park is two blocks west of Handy Park, named in honor of W.C. Handy, the father of the blues. The highlight of the week was the unveiling by Chandler of the 1000-pound, 9 and ½-foot bronze statue of Presley clutching a guitar in one hand and the other hand outstretched. The statue was built by sculptor Eric Parks and was paid for through donations to the private Memphis Development Foundation, established to fund the statue.

August 16 was also declared Elvis Presley Day in Tennessee by Gov. Lamar Alexander. In addition, an organization called *Citizens for Elvis Presley National Holiday* is increasing its lobbying strength in pushing for a Presley national holiday on the anniversary of his death.

Country Music Serves As Valuable Teaching Aid

If Hank Williams were alive today, he would not only be surprised at the size and scope of country music, he would probably be downright shocked to discover his life and music was being used as a teaching aid in classrooms all over Nashville, and for children of all ages. But the education department of the Country Music Hall of Fame Museum has for six years utilized all facets of country music in programs designed to educate school children about country music while at the same time teaching a wide range of skills. Angelia Gacesa, director of the education department, simply says the program "tries to get children involved with liking to learn—showing them that education is fun."

A major part of the educational program is the "Traveling Suitcase Series," which is exactly what the name implies. Three programs, *From Tin Foil To Stereo*, *Nashville Sounds* and *Words and Music* have previously comprised the series, but a new *Country Music Masters* series debuted this fall in the Nashville Metropolitan School system. Each program is contained in an actual suitcase prepared for teachers. The suitcase contains films, audio cassettes, photographs, teacher's manuals, classroom displays and student worksheets—everything a teacher needs to incorporate the history and tradition of country music into the classroom as a teaching aid.

"The material is inter-disciplinary," Ms. Gacesa says. "It is a way of incorporating music into other areas. It expands the imagination and at the same time teaches skills."

The new series, *Country Music Masters*, deals with the biographical information and music of Hank Williams, Bill Monroe, Jimmie Rodgers and Bob Wills. Williams represents honky tonk music, Monroe represents bluegrass, Rodgers is synonomous with blues guitar and Wills represents western swing.

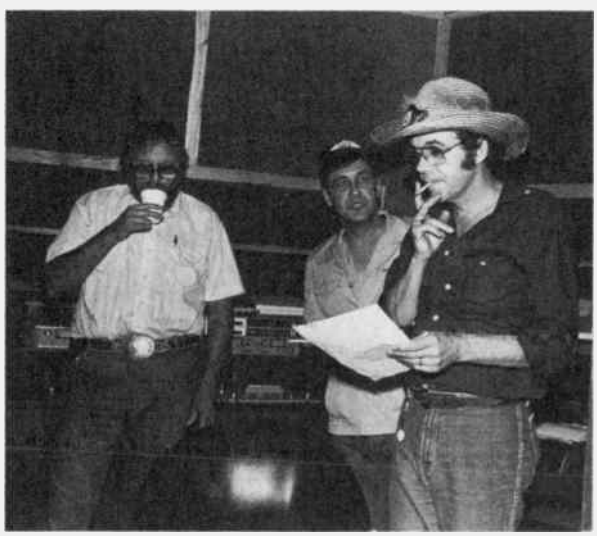
In the *Country Music Master series*, one method of learning is the analysis of each artist's music. Students listen to records, take songs apart and discuss what instruments are used. Students also study types of songs and learn why Wills or Rodgers wrote certain kinds of songs, in addition to studying the lives of the singers. Students will be drilled with questions such as, what person was the greatest influence on Hank Williams?

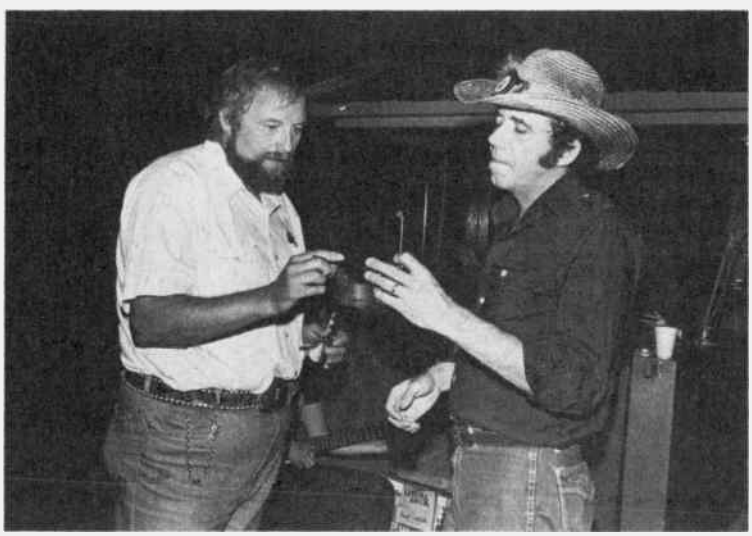
All considered, a wide variety of skills are being successfully taught through the medium of country music. The Nashville Metropolitan School Board has approved all the programs and teachers.

Three different phases actually comprise the suitcase series. Following a period of classroom study, Ms. Gacesa goes directly to the classroom and brings artifacts from the museum for children to see and touch. In the *From Tin Foil To Stereo* series, for instance, a replica of Thomas Edison's original phonograph is brought to the classroom and demonstrated. Or perhaps students are shown costumes of country music stars and permitted to try them on. The final stage is perhaps the most fun. Students take a field trip to the Hall of Fame and see examples of everything they have studied.

The education department was formed because Nashville teachers were requesting information about country music, and now country music has become an integral part of the learning process in Nashville metro schools. And almost all of the feedback from the children has been positive. Some 14,000 Nashville school children have benefitted from the program, thus far.

Says Ms. Garcia, "the country music education program is interesting and important because it is so much a part of the cultural heritage of this area."

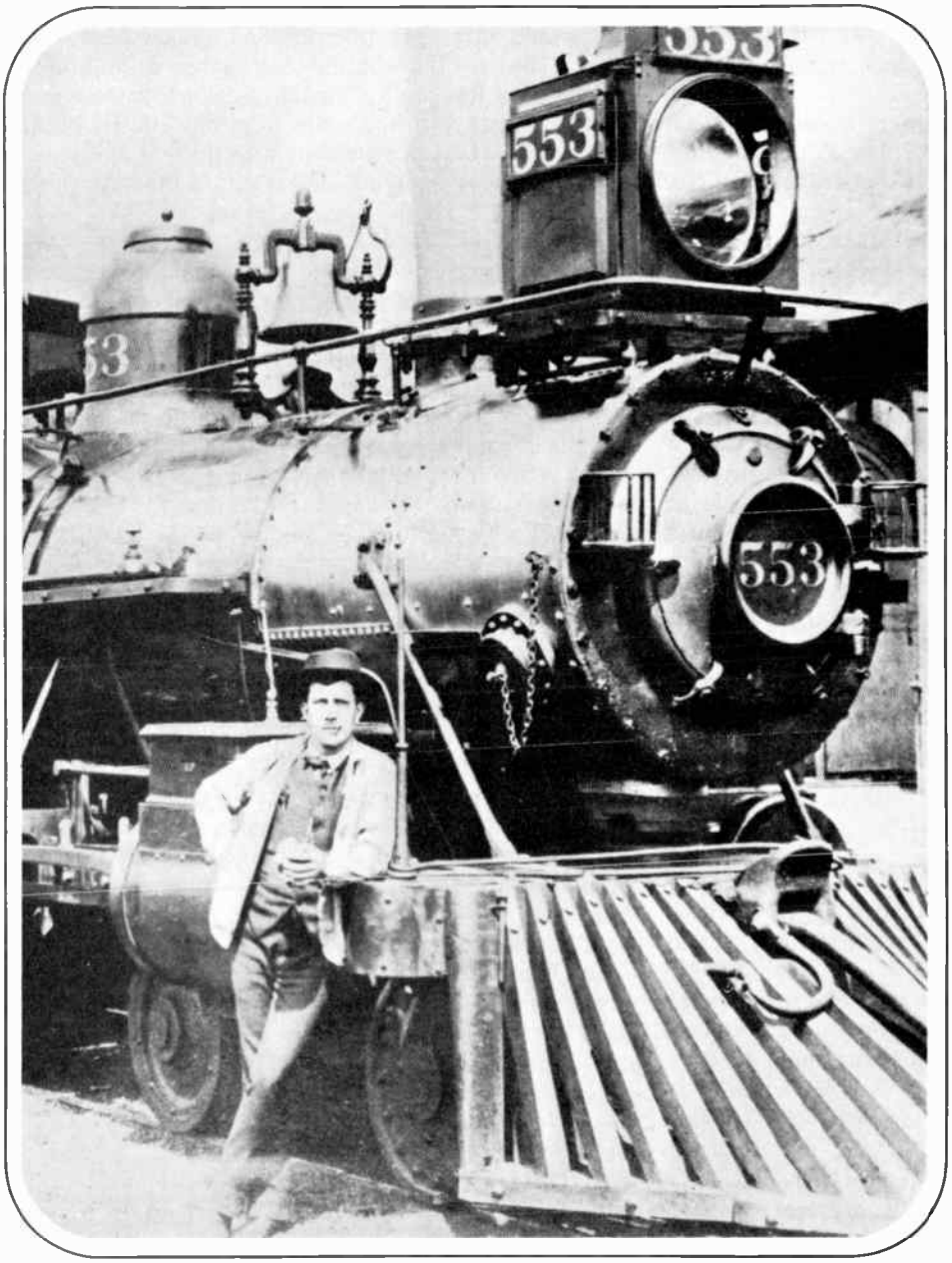




CHARLIE DANIELS JOINS BARE IN STUDIO—Following his "Down and Dirty" spring and summer tour, Bobby Bare jumped back into Nashville's Soundshop Studio and worked on tracks for his new Drunk and Crazy album. One of the songs he recorded was Charlie Daniels's *Willie Jones*, and Daniels sang harmony and played guitar on the song. Charlie also played fiddle on part of the LP. The infamous Shel Silverstein hung around the studio while Bare cut a couple of his songs. In the photo at left (l-r) Daniels, co-producer Bill Rice, Bare and Silverstein listen to a playback of one of the songs. In the far right photo, Charlie seems to be telling Bobby something about his glasses.

"We were stopped dead... 'cause Weed had traded all the railroad ties for 2 dozen oysters and a French piano."

Sean Sweeney, Gang Boss, Chicago & Ouray Railroad



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Jeremiah Weed. Bourbon Liqueur. 100 Proof ©1979 Heublein, Inc., Hartford, Conn.

An Editorial by Tom T. Hall

Taking On Politics and Religion

"I do know one thing for certain. If someone is elected president of the United States and you don't vote for or against him—that's your fault."

Politics and religion, being two of the most dangerous subjects with which a man can approach a typewriter, leave pauses in the rhythm of typing that are not visible on the edited page. That first sentence should really read like this: Politics and ah, er, well, re— or that is kinda like, let's face it, *religion*. See what I mean?

Well, a lady came up to me the other day and said, "Why is it that when we elect a good Christian man like Jimmy Carter to office, people always go tearing him down?" That's what she said.

That lady was not a public figure nor, as they say, a celebrity. And so it was all right for her to say that. My father would love to have lived in such a time. He was an old time preacher. No, he didn't have his own TV show and did not have a thirty million dollar empire of any sort, and so you probably never heard or saw him. But, he loved politics and religion both. He once complained about a man who preached against tobacco by saying, "The fella ought to stay with the book, he preaches tobacco, and chews the word." My father said that. Now there are these two gentlemen running for president, and both of them appear to be as straight as six o'clock. Now I'm talking about Carter and Reagan and not counting Anderson who has a lot of white hair worrying about something and I don't like a fella who worries so much; especially if I don't know what he's worried about.

I was sitting and whittling (I'm not very good) with some old timers the other day and one of them said, "A good war would brighten the economy, I'll tell you that." Now my mouth dried up to where I could hardly spit, and anybody knows you can't whittle if you can't spit. (I was brought up right.)

There are people in this country who think such thoughts. It makes you wonder how high up that kind of thinking goes. This fella I mentioned was about seventy.

Well, there it was on the front of *Newsweek;* BORN-AGAIN POLITICS. Any historian will tell you that politics went to hell in 1776.

Some people will tell you that entertainers have no business in politics. We are in a terrible political fix about this whole thing this year. There are a lot of entertainers who are for Carter for President. There are a lot of people who say we should stay out of it. Then there's Ronald Reagan who *is* an entertainer. He leaves us all looking at one another saying, "How's that?"

It would have been more fun had Reagan been a supermarket owner, they hardly ever agree with farmers. I heard one of Reagan's campaign aides say that Reagan intended to stick with the script from now on. He probably meant to say that he would stick to the text of his speech; but show biz is show biz, and it's hard to shake the shop talk.

I have worked for President Carter on several occasions, as have many other country music people. I have even been to the White House a few times and shook hands with some mighty powerful people. I do not wake up in the morning feeling guilty about the state of the union. I am simply impressed with the fact that we have a president who likes and understands country music. To understand the music you have to understand the people, because the music is about the people. I would rather have a president who understands me than one who doesn't. Some people get upset with me for this. I don't get the point. I would rather have a lion who understands me than one who doesn't. Lions have been known to attack people and so has government. Get it?

I take political advertising about the same way I take these ads that say they can grow hair on bald people. I read them and they are interesting, but let's be serious.

If I don't have a hit record and nobody shows up at my shows I'm going to start blaming whoever is president. I'll probably get a laugh out of that, but it seems to work for everybody else. Detroit can't make a car as cheaply as Japan, and it's the president's fault; it doesn't rain for six months and the crops are bad, and it's the president's fault; Reagan can't find China, and it's the president's fault, the list goes on.

I have many friends who disagree with me about politics, if they didn't it just wouldn't be any fun. I do know one thing for certain. If someone is elected president of the United States and you don't vote for or against him—that's your fault.

TOM T. HALL

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Jeannie Kendall's Greatest Hats

By Bob Millard

"I've always liked hats and always had some; but its really been in the last four or five years that I've been collecting so many," explained the cute, blonde female half of the father/daughter country duo, the Kendalls.

If you stop and think about it, when was the last time you saw Jeannie on a TV show, in a stage performance or on an album cover without a hat of some kind on her pretty little head? It certainly hasn't been in the past five years because . . . but that's getting ahead of the story. Try asking her how many hats she has in all sometime. Well, counting all the pink, yellow, red, tan, light blue, dark blue, black, brown, leather, straw, felt, beaded, bangled, spangled, rhinestone and feather studded hats, caps and fedoras, Jeannie has so many she had to give up counting.

"My hats are not in one area where you can view them," laughed the pert young singer, "'cause they're all stowed away in different places. Its hard to find places to put them, really. I know I have over a hundred though. I don't know the exact numbers."

"The big reason that I wear hats (she was wearing one the day she spoke to me, of course) is sort of a superstitious thing with me. When we got the pictures taken for the **Heaven's Just A Sin Away** album it was the first time I'd worn a hat on an album. The record did good and everything started doing good so I just kind of considered it a good omen. So I don't ever perform and I very seldom have a picture made without a hat on 'cause I feel like it'd be bad luck."

Jeannie Kendall shows off part of her collection of hats.

Father Royce and also singing partner, tops it off.

If the almost instant nationwide popularity of *Heaven* . . . felt like luck to Jeannie, the duo's continued success with tunes like *It Don't Feel Like Sinnin' To Me*, *The Pittsburgh Stealers*, *Just Like Real People*, *I Don't Do Like That No More*, and so on, proved otherwise. It was talent and hard work that paid off for Jeannie and Royce Kendall. Father Royce sings what has been referred to as the "straight line" harmony, the perfect foil for Jeannie's high register clarity. Her voice has been compared to everything from early Dolly Parton to the vocal equivalent to the phrasing of a Dixieland clarinet. Whatever else might be said about their voices, its a winning combination.

Lucky or not, Jeannie's hats are a permanent part of her image. When they are on tour, up to a dozen go with her in a box that resembles a bass drum case. The Kendalls spend upwards to 150-200 days per year touring, and when there is time to spare on road trips, Jeannie likes to shop for more hats.

"Instead of getting an outfit and then getting a hat to match it, I do it the opposite way. I buy a hat and then have an outfit made to go with it," she confessed.

Does she have any especially expensive hats or so-called "collectors items?"

"No, I'm not that kind of collector. I buy them strictly because of what I like, how I think they'll look on stage. I might be apt to wear a $10 hat more than I would an $80 one if I liked it better.

"I'm kind of funny, too. If I wear a hat for the first time for a show and people like us, like the show and everything, then I'd be apt to wear it again. But if the first time I wear one the show doesn't turn out the way I want it to, then I'd probably throw that hat on away."

That's probably why she has so many hats now that she can't keep an accurate count. The Kendalls hardly ever do anything but good shows. ■

THE PRIME OF MR. GEORGE JONES

"I Am What I Am" may be George Jones' very finest album. (And he's recorded a lot of albums.)

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Give the gift of music

John Conlee Reflects on the Emotional Roller Coaster Ride of Show Business

By Bob Campbell

The Tennessee foothills surrounding Nashville are flush with lush green foliage this hot, humid afternoon. A record-breaking heat wave earlier this summer had ruined a few crops, ruined fishing and raised tempers, but this countryside is in full summer-bloom today. Small farms lace in and out of the soft hills surrounding Hendersonville, some 20 miles north of Nashville. Packed away about 15 minutes from downtown Hendersonville is the new log home of John Conlee, sitting on 32 acres along with a barn, extra storage house and a fair-sized pond up on the other side of the hill from where the main house sits. A small apple orchard lies within throwing distance of the house. The place formerly belonged to songwriter Glenn Martin. After a divorce settlement, Martin's ex-wife put the house on the market and Conlee bought the house and property last February at a public auction. With the help of his producer and close friend Bud Logan, Conlee bid for the house himself. He acquired the house after placing his "absolute final bid. Another person was bidding against me, and they could have had the place if they had bid just $250 more."

Today is one of Conlee's rare chances to enjoy his new surroundings. He loves to fish his pond, work on plans for improving the property and just loaf around the spacious home. But these days, Conlee owns a Silver Eagle bus which carries him and his band up and down the highway, performing three or four nights a week. John Conlee, you understand, beginning with *Rose Colored Glasses* back in 1978, has collected a solid string of hit records, the kind that puts your name on people's lips and your feet on a stage. Three albums have sold consistently well, and singles like *Lady, Lay Down, Backside of 30, Baby, You're Something* and *Friday Night Blues* have hit the top of the charts or been near misses. Conlee is a plain-spoken Kentucky

farm boy, back home again. At 33, he has logged time as an undertaker and rock 'n' roll disk jockey, and he brings a down-to-earth practical maturity to his musical career. He remains his own man and would like to add a wife and family as icing on the cake to his financial and artistic success. "Marriage and family is my greatest goal in life," Conlee observes. "That is what I think we all breathe air for."

Conlee just got in off the road yesterday about noon, and today he is not interested in turning out a whole lot of work. However, this morning he has been dealing with a Hendersonville bank, trying to take delivery of the 1979 Ford Ranger, a big, sturdy, son-of-a-buck of a truck that Logan found at another auction. "Bud loves to deal," Conlee says. "If you want to find the best deal on anything, ask Bud. He hunts around all the time and probably goes to an auction once a week."

Conlee arrived home about 2 p.m and after taking care of some business with his press representative, he felt like testing his truck on the slope leading back to his pond. He had also intended to stock his pond with a few catfish today, but a bunch of catfish owned by a local fishery died last night. In between dealing with these little items, Conlee was also prepared to reflect on his short, but rapid rise in country music and his own straightforward philosophy of dealing with the emotional roller-coaster ride of show business. And for a man with a new toy, a guided truck-tour of his property beats a sitdown, inside-the-house interview anytime.

* * *

"Freedom, working for myself. That is what it is all about," says John, giving his truck a slight pounding going up a steep incline. "All I want is for people to see me as I am. Nothing contrived. All I want to do onstage is be myself and sing my songs. We don't feel forced to dress any certain way, and we don't have any stage outfits as such. The only thing I have really done in any way is wearing the glasses (rose colored glasses) when I first started. That is the closest we have come to any gimmick. I just thought it was a nifty idea, to tell the truth. The only reason I still wear them is that my eyes are very sensitive and I discovered they were a help on stage facing spotlights. I would really squint all the time without them."

"Last time I was up here, I jumped a deer right over here," Conlee interjects, as the truck follows a path about 100 feet from the edge of the pond. "This pond is not a big pond, but big enough to put a few fish in." The contour of the land is rugged and overgrown on this part of the property, but John claims he is going to clear all of his land, some by horse-drawn mowers. "The problem back here is that it is too steep. You can't get to it with a tractor. It is too dangerous. I am going to have to get a team of horses pulling a mower. I am in the market for a team now and just haven't found the right deal. It is going to be dynamite when I get it the way I want it. I got to get all these blackberry bushes out of here. There are three million bushes in here and most of them are still red. For some reason they never caught on this year.

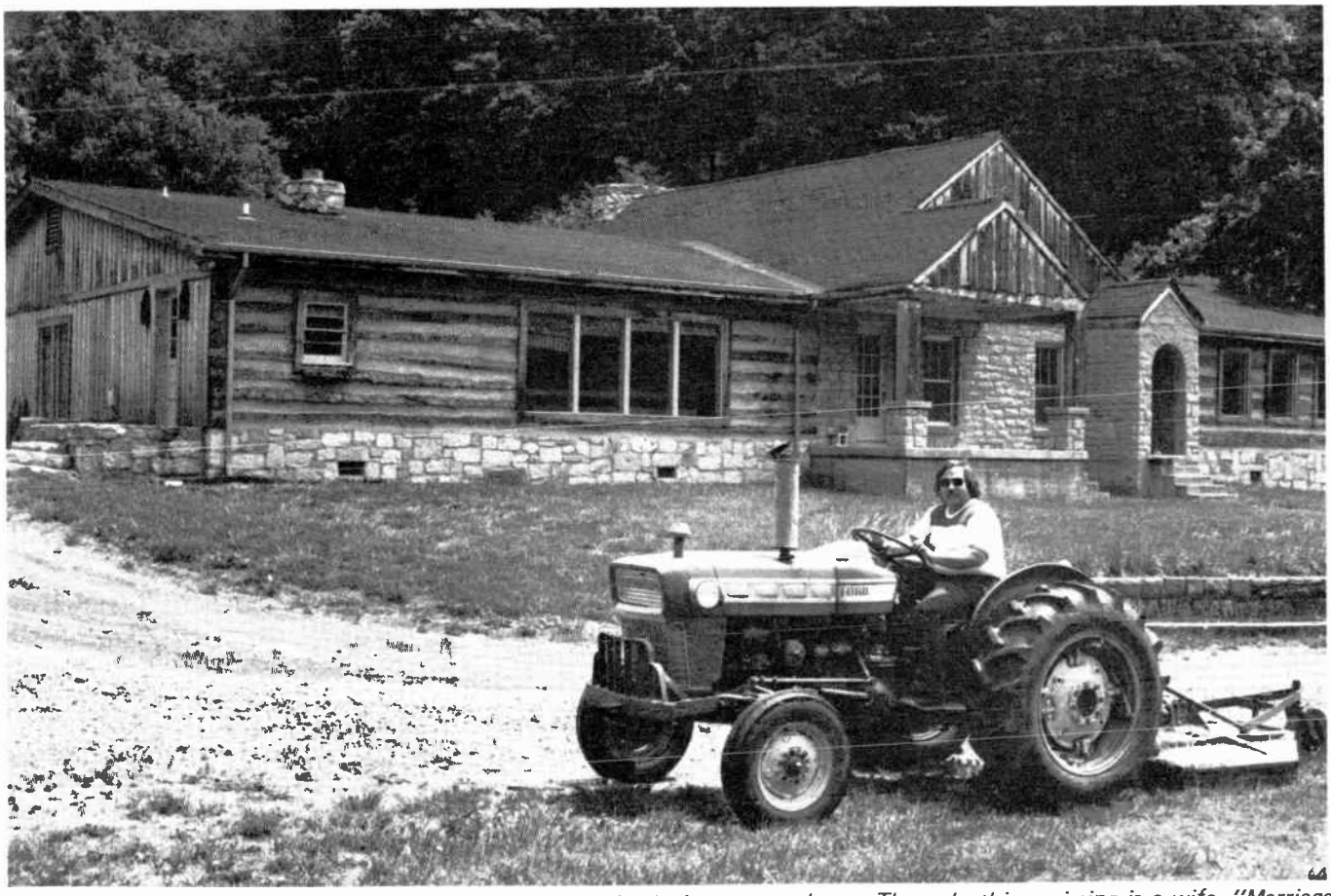
"But back to how I feel about things," Conlee says, pulling slowly on a can of Budweiser. "It has been a little over two years since *Rose Colored Glasses* hit the charts. The usual thing, I think, is for your first few records to peak in the 20's and 30's and grow from there. It took us a couple of years and three singles to get going, but since *Glasses* hit, everything we have had out has hit No. 1 or top five. So I am tickled to death. We have done it by our own standards. I have always said, 'if you are coming to a show to see razzle-dazzle, to see somebody dance and music secondary, then there is no sense in buying a John Conlee ticket.' "

This little scenic tour of the Conlee spread has reached the higher hill on the other side of the pond now, and a cool wind (for a Tennessee summer) is blowing through the cab. Looks like a little rain could be headed this way. Cruising on back toward the house, Conlee continues to discuss his career, honing in on the importance of controlling his career, stressing his insistence even from the beginning of maintaining a firm grip.

"There was a lot of pressure in the beginning to establish a certain dress, but I don't want to get locked into anything," Conlee explains. "I want the freedom and I am going to have the freedom that whatever feels good today is what I am going to wear onstage. For instance, I had a lot of pressure about my weight. I am the first to admit, for health reasons and other reasons, I probably need to lose some weight. I do need to lose some weight, there ain't no probably about it. At the same time, I used to hear suggestions like, 'Now you are in show business and you are gonna be onstage, things will go much better if you drop a bunch of weight.' Well, that is probably true too. But I don't guess it is reason enough, or I would have already done it. I don't want to do it just for the business. Several people had brought it up and I finally called a meeting. I said, 'all right, everybody say what is on your mind right now, and then I don't want to hear any more talk about it.' But then I decided it was kind of a challenge. I wanted to see if I could sell records without being thin and beautiful. I proved my point. As soon as I make up my mind to lose weight, that is when it will happen. I just decided early on to do things my way."

One thing it looks like Conlee is going to have to control is uninvited visitors to his property. A neighbor told him yesterday that a carload of people had driven on his land last week and picked apples. The neighbor thought they were John's friends. But what these 'friends' did was clean him dead out of apples. "Yep, I just wanted to see. They sure wiped me out," Conlee remarks, driving slowly through the orchard.

After considering the "audacity" of people who invade other's property and realizing the need for a gate at the entrance to his land, Conlee reflects on the years before he clicked as a singer. Taking guitar lessons at 8-years-old, browsing in the



A new log home and a Ford Ranger are two of John Conlee's new purchases. The only thing missing is a wife. "Marriage and family is my greatest goal in life," says Conlee.

town radio station ("I'd go through all the trash cans and take home old news copy and practice reading it all week"), earning his mortician's license and working in a funeral home for six years, and then changing directions and going back to radio. Following a move to Nashville, where he worked at station WKQB, Conlee decided to pitch his songs and voice around Nashville. He mainly looked for interest in his vocal ability, but if a song or two got cut, fine. Largely because of his radio experience, Conlee recognized the pitfalls in the music business and approached Music Row with a certain defensive nonchalance.

"I have never been afraid to gamble," John explains, guiding his Ranger back down the hill toward his house. "I have always studied something enough to know about what I'm getting into. Because this business is so crazy, I pitched songs totally as a hobby. If I felt like pitching songs one day, I would. If I wanted to take a nap one day, I would do that. I went at it very lackadaisical. So many people come here with such great expectations, and they try so hard. I had been guilty of trying too hard when I was learning radio and funeral work. When you try too hard, you just foul up. I found that out the hard way. Nine years in radio of watching artists come and go really helped determine my attiude toward the music business. What is supposed to happen is going to happen in its own due time. You can't force it."

* * *

Conlee's house is a country boy's dream, and the culmination of his six-year struggle in the music business. He has come full circle from the 400-acre farm in Versailles, Kentucky where he grew up helping his folks manage a working farm. Built sturdily of wood and stone, the rooms are large with high ceilings supported by 30-foot-long, thick beams. Three fireplaces are scattered throughout the 4200 square-foot house. At this point, Conlee has not found the time to furnish the place to his taste—one more thing he is trying to work into his busy schedule. "I know it is pretty bare right now, but when I get more time and money, I'm going to furnish it right. I want to go around to a lot of antique places and pick furniture I really like. But to me, even without a lot of furniture, it is still warm and comfortable. I fell in love with it the first time I saw it."

Walking into the kitchen, another spacious room with exposed beams lining the ceiling, Conlee sits down at a long table strewn with unopened newspapers, various contracts, and God knows what else. Any fool who looks in here can tell Conlee leads a hectic life. With a couple of fresh, cold Budweisers popped open, and in between telephone calls concerning one thing or another about his farm, John settles down and outlines, in more detail, his recipe for holding things together in this topsy-turvy business.

Several months ago, Conlee organized his first band. Like most beginning artists, he spent his first year on the road using house bands as a backup group ("I think I pleased audiences then, but maybe I didn't knock them out like we are doing some now.") Logan helped him put together his group, but Conlee looked hard at the person behind the instrument. He insists on harmony in his organization.

"Just as important to me in hiring a band was the type of people they were," Conlee says. "Nowhere in our organization do we have any bad people—people with ego problems or people who are into extremes. They are just good, decent human beings who I like being around. We don't have people running around saying 'I am better than you.' I'm not that way and I don't want that type of people around. I am also lucky to have a lot of old friends in my organization. My road manager is a guy I worked with in radio for 10 years. I have known my manager for seven or eight years. Bud (Logan) and I have known each other now for four or five years. My business manager is a cousin who worked with me in the funeral business. My mom even keeps my books.

"We operate as a team," Conlee adds. "Anyone has the feedom to convince me to do things a certain way, but I run the store. There is no majority rule. I am not trying to be hard-nosed or anything. My feeling is just that as long as I am the piece of meat, I get to say how I get cooked."

Earlier in the day, Conlee mentioned his penchant for observation, an ability to analyze a given situation or group of people. Basically a quiet, reserved man, Conlee assesses the front and back end of every facet of his life. He taught Sunday School at one point and considered entering the ministry. In the past few years, he has delved into the philosophy of reincarnation and has decided the idea of past and future lives explains part of his current success and is perfectly compatible with his

Christian beliefs. "Reincarnation, in my view, says everybody is shooting for perfection," Conlee explains. "You will keep coming back until you get it right. You can overcome mistakes made in previous lives. I think Christ was a living example of what perfection is. I believe his purpose was to show everybody here that here is what you are striving for."

This belief in reincarnation has also influenced his self-described "lackadaisical" approach to the music business. As a boy, he felt drawn to music. Conlee always figured, deep down in his soul, he would end up as a singer.

"I remember when Ed Sullivan was on and there was music," Conlee reminisces. "I would stand up and take a pencil and direct the music. My folks noticed it and got me a little baton to use. Shortly after, I zeroed in on guitar and just begged my folks to give me lessons. I feel maybe music has been a part of me in some past life. I have also always felt, for some reason, some inner confidence, that this thing would always work out—that I would end up singing. I even feel, and this may sound egotistical, that it may all end up bigger than I want it to be. If it got to the point where I couldn't go where I want to go, that would be too big. It ain't there yet now either."

What Conlee means, when he says things could get too big, is that he would unequivocally call it quits if singing lost the essence of fun. He lives and breathes by the philosophy of enjoying his livelihood, and he cannot understand why some people live out their lives in drudgery.

"If I am no longer happy doing this, I will quit singing," Conlee says. "There will always be guitars around, and I will go back to singing for myself. To me, one of the saddest mistakes in life is for people to feel forced to make a living at things they don't enjoy. Everybody has a hobby they love to do. I've heard people say, 'I work in a factory and hate every minute of it.' So I say, 'what do you like to do?' 'Oh, I like to fish.' Okay, why not fish for a living? 'Oh no, I could never do that.' Well, they are right. As soon as you say you can't do it, then for sure you can't do it. Maybe they have a family. But I guarantee you, if you want to do something bad enough, there is a way to work it out one step at a time and ease into it without making anybody do without something to eat. It depends on wanting it bad enough and believing you can do it."

* * *

By now, a quick shower has provided some welcome relief from the heat, and dusk is setting in, adding a grey, misty aura to the hills surrounding the house and barn. Conlee is also dying to show his truck to the Logan family, who live a few minutes away. Before taking off for the second time this afternoon, Conlee jokes about trying to fill up with gas this morning. He pumped gas in the opening just behind the driver's seat of the cab and immediately smelled gas fumes, and noticed gas coming out of the cab below the door. Thinking the tank leaked, he opened the door and gas just spilled out on the concrete. It turns out the previous owner had switched the gas tank to underneath the truck in the rear. The gas cap and opening was still on the cab-side of the truck, but gas just poured directly through a short, cut hose all over the floor of the cab. "It would have been nice for them to tell me about that," Conlee says, with a grimace.

Turning out of his gravel driveway onto the two-lane country road, some 300 yards from his house, Conlee looks back and reaffirms his love and commitment to a strong, stable, happy life. He has found the road home after all these years, and he understands this country life. "Whatever values I have or attitudes I have, the roots began on that farm in Kentucky. Growing up on a farm with the kind of family I had taught me life and death and values. Working at the funeral home taught me about death, and I happened to work for a guy who taught me how to think. He polished what I learned from Mother and Daddy. It is the only way to grow up as far as I am concerned. You can bet that if I have a family, they will grow up in the country. When I first moved out here, I had to think a bit to realize all I had to do to go fishing was to walk up over that hill back of my house instead of making a lot of elaborate plans." ■

When Dolly Parton picked up her skirts and headed for Hollywood a couple of years ago, she was already a country music Superstar. Envy, jealousy and purist criticism all contributed to the uproar that followed her from Nashville. Never a shrinking violet, Dolly stuck to her guns, pursuing simultaneously a pop music breakthrough and a motion picture debut. Now, with her new first movie, Nine to Five, *opening nationwide and her second,* The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, *with Burt Reynolds, going into production she can be called a Superstar...period. Still, even after some commercially succcessful albums,* Here You Come Again *and* Dolly, Dolly, Dolly, *she isn't satisfied with her music. So, for her next album she has returned to Nashville to record, picking half the songs from a great writer (name of Parton) and the rest from classic hits by other performers she admires. This should make everyone happy—certainly Dolly and her country fans and... maybe even the critics.*

DOLLY

By Gail Buchalter

Dolly Parton's roots may well be in East Tennessee, but she knows how to pronounce *filet mignon* when ordering in one of the more exclusive restaurants she now frequents.

She settled comfortably into the tastefully appointed two-bedroom duplex at the elegant Bel Aire Hotel, for her four-month stay in Los Angeles and remained underwhelmed by the sophistication of her surroundings while in town to film her first movie *Nine to Five*. In fact, she outglamoured glittertown as only the visually outrageous Dolly can do.

Her creamy white skin remains noticeably flawless, unwrinkled and untouched by the Southern California sun under her perfectly applied makeup. Her long red fingernails look as if they should never go through the rigors of dialing a phone, let alone pick a guitar. Yet Dolly's diamond-ringed fingers have wrapped themselves around a guitar's neck many a night until the sun has risen on a sleeping city and another newly Parton-penned song.

But for all her acquired creature comforts, the ultra-curvaceous, soft-spoken singer has gone through some harsh critical moments. The cry of 'sell-out' accompanied the release of her last two albums as her country audience bristled to the over-orchestrated sounds of **Here You Come Again** and **Dolly Dolly Dolly.**

Ironically, the former has been certified *platinum* while the latter is due to go *gold* within the next few months.

Yet Dolly doesn't look at these albums with the same pride she has for her simpler, more self-expressive earlier country records. But the "Iron Butterfly," as she is fondly referred to by some of her close associates, took her lumps and agreed with some of the criticisms leveled at her.

"We recorded both albums in Los Angeles which opened the door for a lot of complaints," says Dolly. "By the time I did **Dolly Dolly Dolly** I was involved in so many things out here I just didn't have time to sit down and put together the album I really wanted to do. I agreed to work with Gary Klein **(Here You Come Again),** who's a wonderful producer. We needed a quick album and he works fast and good."

The ringing phone cuts into the conversation and Dolly rises to answer it, smoothes her skin-tight knitted skirt across her ample hips in an almost unconscious gesture, and straightens the straps across her four-inch, high-heel sandals as she demurely crosses the room. Upon her return, room service is knocking on the door of her luxurious suite. When she opens it, the waiter stands there with a look of puppy dog adoration on his face. Dolly signs the check as graciously as she had autographed a menu for the same waiter the day before. She settles back into the over-stuffed arm chair, and returns to the subject at hand.

"I *never* left country music, though I was often accused of doing just that. I feel like I'm representing it in my own way. I realized it seemed doubtful in the minds of

PITMAN Center Country Tenn

people what I was doing, but I knew all along that nobody's words were going to stop me from going to Los Angeles, and nobody was going to prevent me from going back to Nashville.

Also, I figured I could take all the aspects of my new career and make it right for everybody concerned. Movies have opened a lot of doors for me and now the pressure is off my music. I can do other things and no longer have to worry about getting to the point where I'm popular enough to be let alone to do what I want. But I still take the music part of my life more seriously than I'll ever take movies. I'm just using them as another outlet." (Dolly has written and recorded the theme song for *Nine to Five*, which is also the title of her upcoming album.)

The considerable consternation felt among her fans pained Dolly but it didn't deter her from pursuing her goals. In order to earn something, she notes, you have to sacrifice something, so she wasn't devastated when she was passed over by the Country Music Association last year.

"It didn't really bother me," she says, " 'cause I felt they were justified. In fact, it probably got me a lot more attention by *not* being there. Everybody takes it for granted that things should be like they always are, but I don't think I've had any good country records out in a long time which doesn't mean I'm *not* country. There were too many people too deserving of an award for me to feel bad about not being considered. When I should get one, I'm sure I will. Besides, I don't work for awards anyway—I just work to achieve the things I want."

Dolly had set her sights high from her mountain home of Sevierville in East Tennesse's Great Smokies, where she was born fourth in a line of twelve children. As small a place as that town was, she was raised in an even more unpopulated area "way back in the holler." Though it was a tortuous trek to her schoolhouse, Dolly was the first in her family to put up with the neighborhood toughs and make her way to and through high school.

Dolly had already established her patterns of independence and individualism with her self-created bad-girl image of telling dirty jokes and wearing tight clothes. Her adolescent years set the stage for her flamboyant personal appearance, and time and money have only enhanced her love for gawdy clothes and glittering jewels. By the time Dolly was an international country star in the mid-'70s, she toned down the risque portion of her personality while her visual appearance got further and further out there, taking her right to Hollywood.

Says Dolly: "I signed a three-movie deal with 20th Century Fox, two or three years ago. *Nine to Five* isn't included in this deal. We were going to look for projects and if we found something we liked, we'd do it. The deal read I wouldn't have to do anything I didn't feel comfortable with. We went through hundreds of stories. I just didn't think they were right for me, and I didn't care nothing about being in the movies unless it was something I could enjoy."

Jane Fonda came up with the *Nine to Five* project and got in touch with Dolly's manager, who, in turn, contacted Lily Tomlin's people. The film depicts the lives of three secretaries and their fellow office workers. Three more diverse women than Parton, Fonda and Tomlin couldn't be found to chase around a desk. Yet, these women have several things in common—a strong sense of self, humor and a strict set of values they won't compromise.

"I absolutely loved working with Jane and Lily," says Parton, "and found them to be unique. I think Jane's one of the greatest people I've ever seen in the movies and I've loved Lily for years. It was a special project because I got to work with people I like, who are such strong personalities, and we all got to be really good

In a scene from Nine to Five, Dolly and Jane Fonda exchange some office gossip. The two, along with Lily Tomlin play secretaries in a large company. "I think Jane's one of the greatest people I've ever seen in the movies," says Dolly.

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This handsome old-time radio is actually a coaster set for country music fans. It carries the Grand Ole Opry name and includes 6 cork coasters trimmed in wood. The coaster holder stands 5 1/2" high and is made of wood. It will make a unique and practical accessory.

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It's brand new and something very special. She stands 10" tall and is dressed like a true flower of the Old South. Wind her base and she plays "The Tennessee Waltz." In addition, this sturdy high-impact plastic music box is also a bank. It is a wonderful gift idea, and carries the message "Miss Country Music" embroidered on her apron. A lovely gift for child or adult.

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Here is an entertaining look at the remarkable life of Gene Autry. Gene grew up on an Oklahoma ranch, made it big as a recording artist with his own radio show. Hollywood beckoned and he made his first of many singing cowboy movies. Then it was on to flying cargo in WW2, and then to founding his well publicized business empire. This is that American success story, complete with 40 rare photos.

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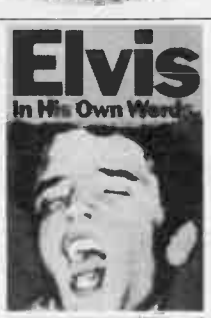

"People don't really know the true story," said Elvis in his last statement to the press. Here is your chance to know at least some of it. Through the words of his rare interviews, press statements and fan messages, Elvis speaks in this unique book. A rare photo album is included.

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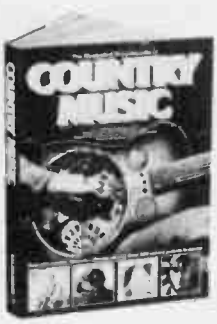

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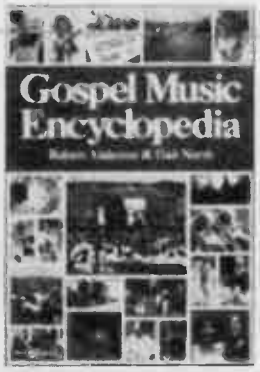

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Hank Williams Songbook

Here is the songbook that every country music fan should own. Soft bound, it contains words and music to all 129 of Hank's songs. Included are: I Heard You Crying In Your Sleep/Cold, Cold Heart/Alabama Waltz/Hey, Good Lookin'/Honky Tonk Blues/I Saw The Light/I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry/Me And My Broken Heart/Your Cheatin' Heart/You Win Again/On The Evening Train/Honky Tonkin', and many, many more.

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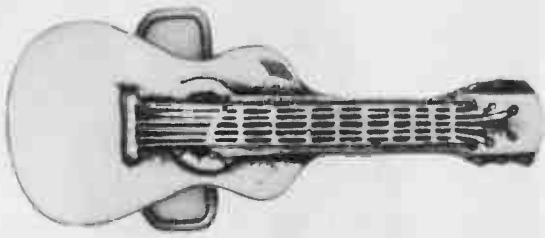

It is with great pride that we bring you this newly released blockbuster. Unlike the low-quality belt buckles we see more and more of lately, this beauty is 100% brass and finely detailed. The Guitar Buckle measures 4 1/2" X 1 3/4" and takes any belt up to 1 5/8" wide.

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If you liked the "Linda Ronstadt Scrapbook", you'll love this one. It tells you the superstar's complete story with scores of photos. It's a behind-the-scenes look at the making of her albums; her relationships with celebrities; her life on the road, in concert, and at home. A complete discography is included. It's a great bargain!

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Country Music Allstar Playing Cards

This is the most unique deck of cards anywhere. Each card carries a full-color photo of a different country music headliner. You'll find Loretta Lynn, Conway Twitty, Johnny Cash, Barbara Mandrell, Mickey Gilley, Roy Acuff—54 in all. A must for country fans.

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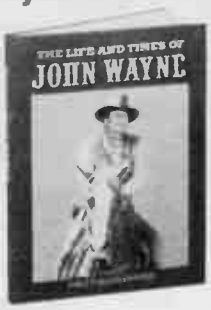

This handsome hardcover edition includes 80 pages of photos, plus an 8-page full color insert. Included in this photo-packed tribute are his films, marriages and children, early days in Hollywood, courageous fight against cancer and special coverage of the world's reactions to his recent death. It is must reading.

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CHRISTMAS SHOPPER

Dolly Parton Doll & Outfit

Plus Famous "Coat of Many Colors" Costume, Guitar, Platform Shoes And Record By Dolly's Lovin' Mama

Here is your favorite country music singer in a beautiful new doll, perfect for every fan. She's 12" tall, posable and exact from Dolly's famous hourglass figure and long blonde hair-do down to her beauty mark and red one-piece jumpsuit with silver lame trim. Now, this bestseller comes with another great outfit, complete with platform shoes and a record by Dolly's lovin' mama.

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Hank Williams: Country Music's Tragic King

Complete with memorable photos, this life story evokes not only the man, but the feeling for his era. From Alabama farmtown to the Grand Ole Opry and his subsequent plunge from the heights of glory, this privileged biography draws on eyewitness testimony from friends and associates laying bare more than has ever been told of Hank's personal and professional life.

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From the day his famous father died, Hank Jr. was pushed to fill his father's shoes. At the ripe old age of eight, he played his first show. His rise to fame was spectacular. But success took its toll—booze, broken marriages, hostile audiences. Then in 1975, after a serious fall in the Rockies, he had a powerful revelation that turned his life and career around. Now this great singer tells his extraordinary story.

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Elvis Color Playing Cards

If you liked the first deck of Elvis Playing Cards we offered, you'll love this new set. Each card carries a different full color picture of the "King" in action—54 in all. They're perfect for fans/collectors.

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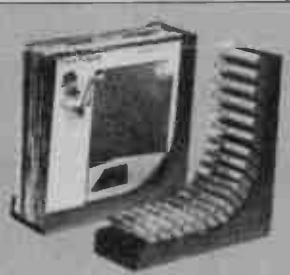

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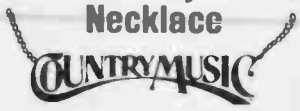

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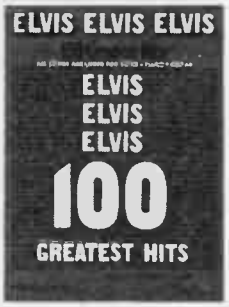

This is the only songbook an Elvis fan need ever order. It contains 100 hits arranged for voice, piano and guitar. Featured are: All Shook Up/Blue Suede Shoes/Can't Help Falling In Love/Crying In The Chapel/Don't Be Cruel/GI Blues/It's Now Or Never/I Want You, I Need You, I Love You/Hound Dog/Love Me Tender/We Call On Him/Return To Sender/Cindy, Cindy/Good Luck Charm, plus 85 more.

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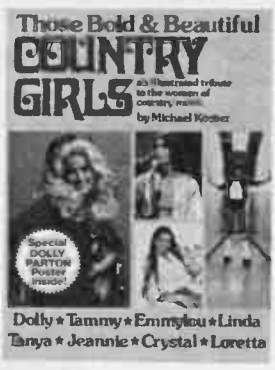

It's 124 new pages with over 100 black & white photos. Those captured in words and pictures include Minnie Pearl, Barbara Mandrell, Linda Ronstadt, Dolly Parton, Anne Murray, Tammy Wynette, Emmylou Harris, Tanya Tucker, Crystal Gayle and others. You'll find a chapter on how your favorites and their songs have changed, plus an over-sized pull-out color poster of Dolly.

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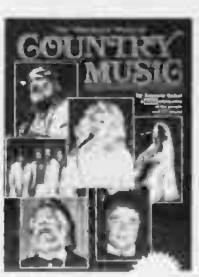

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LP No. R7F
8 TK No. T7G
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RONNIE MILSAP — 2-Record Set: Mr. Mailman/Never Had It So Good/Denver/If You Go Away/Maybe/1000 Miles From Nowhere/I Can't Tell A Lie/Kentucky Woman/What's Your Game/Traces/I Just Don't Maybe/House Of The Rising Sun/Need To Belong, and many more!
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8 TK No. T7I
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THE PATSY CLINE STORY — 2-Record Set: South Of The Border/Walking After Midnight/I Fall To Pieces/Heartaches/San Antonio Rose/Heartaches/A Poor Man's Rose/Your Cheatin' Heart/Crazy/I Love You So Much It Hurts/The Wayward Wind, and more!
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MARTY ROBBINS ALL AROUND COWBOY — 20 Hits On One Record: El Paso/The Hanging Tree/El Paso City/Red River Valley/Streets Of Laredo/The Fastest Gun Around/Cool Water/Tumbling Tumbleweeds/Ballad Of The Alamo/Big Iron/Old Red/Running Gun/5 Brothers/Mr. Shorty/They're Hanging Me Tonight/All Around Cowboy, more!
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personal friends.

"In fact, it's funny the type of friends we've become. We talked about personal stuff when we were working. We'd talk about girl stuff, not politics and never E.R.A. We don't have to get involved with each other's projects to be friends. I wish everybody the best, and I want everybody to do well. I'm not involved in the E.R.A. thing, though I think everyone should have the right to do what they want and what they're capable of doing. If I felt the necessity to join I would, but not because of Lily or Jane.

"It's the same with the things I'm involved in. I wouldn't try to preach to them or sway them one way or another. My own personal beliefs in religion and people are things that are meaningful to me. I wouldn't hit on them to do something for the things I'm interested in like the Kidney Foundation, helping crippled children or promoting tourism for Tennessee."

"Jane talked about coming to visit us in Tennessee because she wants to learn how to whittle so she can get a better understanding of her part in one of her next movies, *The Doll Maker*. She wants to learn about Appalachia, so I'm going to take her around and introduce her to some people who actually whittle pieces of furniture.

"I'm excited to death about her visit. She met Carl [Dean, Dolly's husband] and they had a real nice relationship. Her husband, Tom Hayden [one time radical leader of the '60s and politico of the '80s] might join us at the end of the trip. The four of us are thinking about going fishing.

"I would love Lily to come visit and stay forever if she wanted to because she's such a great person. Her folks are from the South and we laugh a lot 'cause we have so much in common.

"Carl stayed in Los Angeles almost the entire time I was working on the film. We spend more time together than the press would have you believe. Still, it's such a good thing to play on in the papers. You know: 'Dolly's been gone for six months and hasn't seen her husband in all that time.' But that's not true—we see a lot of each other."

Dolly's marriage has been an easy target for criticism and comics since it doesn't conform to the norm. But, then, neither does Dolly. "It means more to me to know I've struggled for my success and brought things on myself that I would have to overcome for my own personal sake. I need to overcome things. It makes my personality stronger and justifies my belief in what I'm doing.

"I feel like anybody can be the same and dress alike. It shows a little nerve and backbone to choose to be a little different. But it also means you're going to get attention whether it's favorable or not, though it will definitely be focused on you. I'm not insecure as a person, and that's one of the reasons I'm able to be different."

In keeping with her secure sense-of-self, Dolly is one of the few actresses who actually went to the daily rushes of the film and was "real happy" when she saw herself on the screen, though it was the first time she was captured on camera to such an extensive degree.

"I may never be a great actress, but I'll be a personality I think the people will like. I don't worry if I'm heavier than this one or that." Dolly laughingly confesses to having the appetite of a feeder pig and will always be a heavy weight contender.

"I got real skinny last summer but I have a real hearty appetite, and now that I'm older and not as active, I have a tendency to gain weight. I always have a good time gaining it and an awful time losing it. Fonda's exercise class is a great idea, except I don't like group things and I'm particular who I sweat with. Besides, I can't take my little fat thighs in with all those beautiful people."

Dolly, though, does delight in everybody's concern and comments about the continuing redistribution of her poundage. "When you're in the public's eye, if you lose weight one month, and if people don't see you when you've gained it back the next day, they're still talking about how thin you are. There was an article in the *Star* that had me on a special spaghetti diet, and I still have no idea what it was about. I was fat as a pig at the time, struggling to lose five pounds, and they were talking about how thin I had gotten. It was cute, but I don't know where they found the material for the story.

"I'd rather try not to harden myself to untrue stories that hurt," Dolly adds. "To do that would be to change my personality. So I'd rather suffer with it for two or three weeks until I get it all out of my system. At least that way I know I can still be touched or moved by things whether good or bad. I don't want to just say, 'I don't give a damn about that,' or 'the hell with them.' I'm more apt to cry and say, 'why would they do a thing like that? What have I ever done to them?'

"I've had a real good time in Los Angeles. I've made some good friends, but I could never live here, though I'll be spending a great deal of time in California in the next ten years. I almost bought a condominium, but I didn't even want to think I had a house out here. I'd rather live in a hotel. They're nice because you have room service, maid service, laundry and someone to take your calls, and I don't have to feel like I'm living in L.A. I know I really miss my band and the road, but this is all too new for me to know how I'll feel about making movies. If I never wanted to do another one, that's fine too. I don't feel like I have to, so if Hollywood bogs me down, I can just say, 'Farewell pal, I've got something else to do.' "

The life of a secretary is not always easy. On their way home from work, the "girls" get stopped by a police officer in a scene from Nine to Five.

Dolly and Carl spent a good portion of the 1980 summer at Tara, their 20 acre farm outside of Nashville. While there she devoted a lot of time to writing songs and recording them once again in Music City, while working on a novel.

Parton has signed a deal with Bantam Books which will publish *Wild Flowers*, her book dealing with her private, rather than professional life. What her songs have accomplished by telling bits and pieces of her life, she hopes her novel will do with unrhyming continuity. Through her remembrances of her past and its people, she hopes to show how she became the person she is today. Prose is not, however, a

new outlet for Dolly, who's been writing children's stories and books her entire life.

"That's something I want to hold onto and use as a separate career. It's a hobby for me, and it breaks the tension of other things. I've always written down my ideas, and some day I will even publish some of those stories."

As much as Dolly loves children and writing stories for them, she and Carl have no plans to have their own. "I grew up in a large family and pretty much raised five of my younger brothers and sisters. They have their own children now. We have the enjoyment of everybody's kids, and we take them on vacations with us and get to keep them as long as we want.

"My husband really doesn't want kids either. I'm 34, so we still have time in the next four or five years to change our minds, or we can always adopt later on down the line. I love children, but I don't have an empty spot. I guess my career fills that creative need."

After her summer of music and vacationing, Dolly plans to return to Hollywood to "shoot movies out like popcorn" which is her unique way of describing doing two films in one year. She is going to co-star with Burt Reynolds in *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas.*

"This will be a rare exception for me because it means I have to leave concerts and music for too long, but I couldn't miss the chance to do *Whorehouse.* Burt had wanted me in a movie of his for a long time —ever since he did *W.W. and the Dixie Dance Kings,* but I wasn't ready yet. I don't like to do anything before its time, but as my career progresses and I grow in many ways, I thought it was time to give it a try. Also, I wanted to see if it will be a good outlet for my music. I will be writing some material for the movie.

"The woman who runs the whorehouse has a similar personality to mine—she's funny, good-hearted and good-natured but she's also a very serious person. I know Burt didn't want to do the movie unless I did it, and I didn't want to do it unless he did. I worked with him before, but I don't know him extremely well. He's so friendly, down to earth and cute, and we communicate good. I think we are similar people. Carl loves him too, and he'll be there most of the time. I don't know how much the lighting and commotion will take away from the love scenes," Dolly grins, obviously willing to find out.

The one cloud that has dulled the brightness of her career has finally evaporated as she and Porter Wagoner have dissolved their differences. "We finalized the whole law suit and came to a sensible and reasonable solution without ever going to court. We've become fairly good friends again, and are able to talk to each other. In fact, my baby sister, Rachelle Dennison, who I raised, does the makeup on his show. It's always hard and tense when you're working out separating businesses. I wanted my copyrights, and he wanted the studio. Some money was exchanged, but not near the amounts everyone would have you believe. Another part of the settlement is a duet album that we recently released. We owned quite a few things together so it was like a business divorce.

"I'm not one to hold a grudge, and anything I've felt, I've forgiven him for," Dolly says with relief. "Hopefully he's forgiven me, and I think he has. I don't think we'll ever be involved as duet partners, but at least we'd have no problem working together if our record becomes a hit, and we were at the Grand Ole Opry at the same time. I would have no problem walking out on stage and singing with Porter. I've always been grateful for the things that had to do with him, and I always will. I'm sorry we had problems, but in a way that's the stuff that makes you grow and see things a little differently. It also helps you know how to deal with things that happen further down the line.

"I want it all to mean something. I want to make my own memories as well as leaving them for other people. And above all, I want them to be good ones." ■

In the film, Nine to Five it's not just all work and no play. Dolly, Jane and Lily take time out for some food and drinks, and Dolly tries to get a point across to boss, Dabney Coleman.

Johnny Gimble and the Texas Swing Pioneers

By Patrick Knight

Johnny Gimble is one of the world's great musicians. Constantly in demand by the biggest stars in country music for his prowess on fiddle and mandolin, Johnny has reached the point in his career where he can pick and choose his gigs. When you can play anything you want, knowing what you want is sometimes the hardest part. For Johnny the choice was easy. He picked the music he first heard and loved as a kid: Texas Swing. "When we got our first radio in 1936, the Lightcrust Doughboys became as much a part of our lives as Johnny Carson is today," he says. "They were on WBAP radio from Fort Worth 'live' at 12:30 and from our farm east of Tyler, we had 'em for dinner every day."

The music came roaring out of the Texas Panhandle with the duststorms of the Great Depression. As its popularity spread out across the Southwest to California, it became known as western swing and pushed country music beyond its fledgling hillbilly stage. Born out of 19th century frontier fiddle bands, it was married to German polka, Mexican conjunto, big band swing and black rhythm and blues.

For an appearance on *Austin City Limits*, one of PBS's hottest shows, Johnny decided to put together a little swing band composed of some of his musical heroes. Appropriately enough, he dubbed the group The Texas Swing Pioneers.

Joining Johnny on fiddle and vocals was Cliff Bruner of probably the first Texas Swing band, Milton Brown and his Musical Brownies. After Milton's tragic early death in 1936 Cliff formed his own band, The Texas Wanderers, and led them to a string of big hits, including *It Makes No Difference Now* and *Dragging the Bow*.

From the days of Burris Mills and the colorful Pappy Lee O'Daniel's Lightcrust Doughboys came guitarist Zeke Campbell, banjo virtuoso Marvin "Smokey" Montgomery and pianist Frank Reneau. Reneau also played with Oklahoma City's Hi-Flyers, a band that featured the first man to plug in the steel guitar, the late Bob Dunn. Deacon Anderson and his 1936 National lap steel were brought in to recreate Dunn's original steel sound.

J. R. Chatwell was the fiddle whiz for an incredibly popular and long-lived band, Adolph Hofner and the Tune Wranglers. A stroke in 1968 ended his fiddle playing, but J. R. showed he can still play piano and sing up a storm.

Jerry Gimble, stand-up bassist for the group, is no stranger to western swing bands. As a teenager he joined his brothers Johnny, Jack and Gene in the Blues Rustlers and the Rose City Swingsters. Jerry's slapping doghouse bass held down the bottom.

No representative swing session would be complete without some of the original Texas Playboys, so Johnny rounded out the group with drummer Bill Mounce and legendary guitarist Eldon Shamblin. Shamblin just happened to be the arranger and band manager of Bob Wills when a freshfaced young fiddle player named Johnny Gimble was hired in 1949.

Despite the fact that these men had never worked together on one stage, the band was tighter than a pair of pawnshop brogans. No small wonder. Johnny had put them through their paces in Dallas before coming to Austin. In less than three days The Texas Swing Pioneers managed to record a double album and perform live on KRLD radio. As Gimble put it, "These guys are getting old. They could only do 24 tracks in two days." Actually, they did six more takes as extras. Cliff Bruner recalled that on an early Milton Brown session, they had put down 48 tracks in one day. They would have done more, but they ran out of songs.

Some bands would tense up a bit before taping a national TV show, but several of the Swing Pioneers had been actors in the Hollywood of the 1940s. The singing cowboys came riding in on the heels of the western swing movement and musicians soon found themselves backing up the stars with guitars and six-guns in countless horse operas. Bob Wills himself made ten films between 1940 and 1942. Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Rex Allen, Tex Ritter—you name 'em—they had swing music in their films. Johnny was too young for the forties' movie experience, but he has become something of an actor in recent years, appearing in Robert Altman's *Nashville* and Willie Nelson's *Honeysuckle Rose*.

Taping time rolled around and when the lights went on The Texas Swing Pioneers rose to the occasion and played their boots off. The studio audience was hooked from the opening strains of *The Washington and Lee Swing*, after which Johnny stepped up to the mike and said, "Like Bob Wills used to say, 'This is all we do. You better get up and dance and get your money's worth.' " J. R. Chatwell got up to sing the Milton Brown standard, *Right or Wrong*, the

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The Swing Pioneers: Top row (left to right): Deacon Anderson, Cliff Bruner, Frank Reneau. Second row: Bill Mounce, Johnny Gimble, Smokey Montgomery, Gerry Gimble. Third row: Zeke Campbell, J. R. Chatwell and Eldon Shamblin.

dance floor filled, and a night of classic swing music was underway.

Western swing is, first and foremost, dance music. The waltz, two-step and polka are the steps, and that night young and old were having the time of their lives out there gliding to the fiddles and steel.

Despite all the great talent assembled onstage, the real star of the *Austin City Limits* taping was J. R. Chatwell. Frailest of the entire group, J. R. got a standing ovation after each number he did. The twinkle in his eyes and the little grin he flashed warmed up the whole studio. When J. R. sat down at the piano and played the bluesy *Jamming with J. R.*, the crowd went nuts, to the delight of the band.

These men all shared the spotlight gladly, for ensemble playing coupled with burning solos was, and is, the backbone of western swing. Not enough can be said of the talents of Johnny Gimble, both as musician and band leader. He took his solos modestly, but the intensity of his playing on anything with strings bore witness to the position he holds in modern country music.

For their keystone piece, they belted out *Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age*, and by God, if there was ever a group of men who weren't, it was the Swing Pioneers. "Smokey" Montgomery put the week into perspective by saying, "I wished I'd known then what I know now about what was happening in those days. I mean, we was making history with music and we were all so young. We just played the best we knew how on everything." They haven't changed a bit.

By the end of the evening, both band and audience had reached back into another time. For some it was a fond remembrance of things in their shared pasts, for others it was a glimpse into a period that now, for whatever reason, seems simpler and purer. Not that western swing belongs to the past. Far from it. With Asleep at the Wheel nominated for the Country Music Awards four years running and Gimble himself nominated for *Instrumentalist of the Year* award, and Alvin Crow and the Pleasant Valley Boys touring incessantly like a true swing band and the continued support of people like Merle, Willie and Waylon, western swing will continue making converts to its easy charm.

Wearing his ever-present grin and with his fiddle cradled under his arm, Johnny Gimble looked that night like the prototype swing band leader. The double album of the Swing Pioneers and the *Austin City Limits* show has undoubtedly prompted a lot of people to dig out the dance wax and swing records. It couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of folks or a smoother brand of music. Duke Ellington, no small swinger himself, said it best, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing." ■

Presidents, Pickers and Politics

Richard Nixon may have been the first president to yo-yo on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry, but Jimmy Carter is the first to actually make country music an integral part of his domestic programs, his foreign policy *and* his political strategy—and, in doing so, he may have done more to promote country music than any man alive.

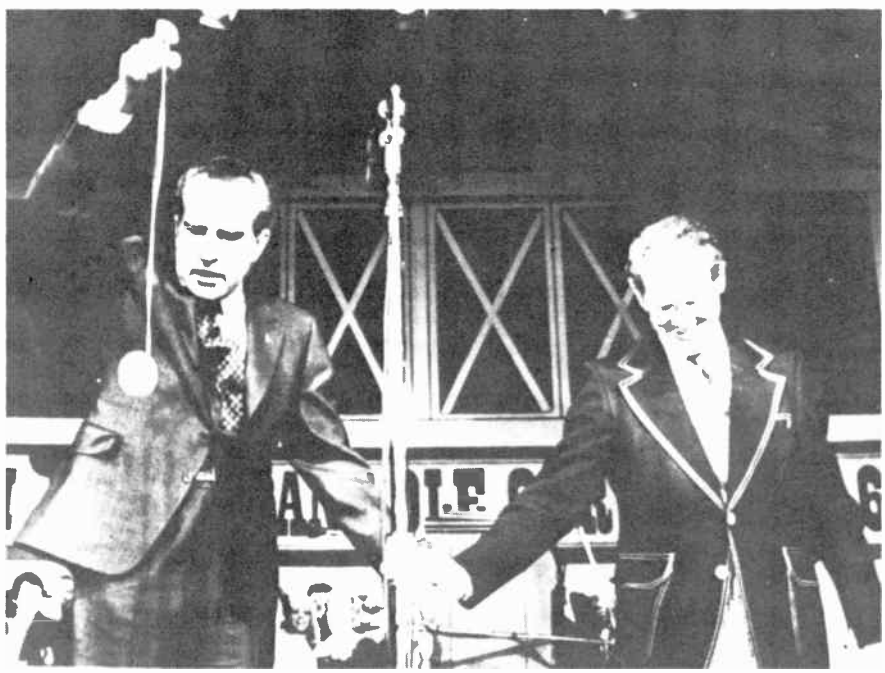
After the 1976 election, Carter allowed, "If it hadn't been for Charlie Daniels, I might not be President." What he meant, of course, was that Charlie Daniels had done a lot to promote *Carter for President* to country music fans and, not incidentally, raised a lot of money for the campaign coffers. Other country performers had also helped. Certainly Carter didn't invent the idea of recruiting show business celebrities for political purposes. That has probably been an effective technique for as long as there have been celebrities and candidates. It was made a prominent tool by F.D.R. and honed to perfection by J.F.K.

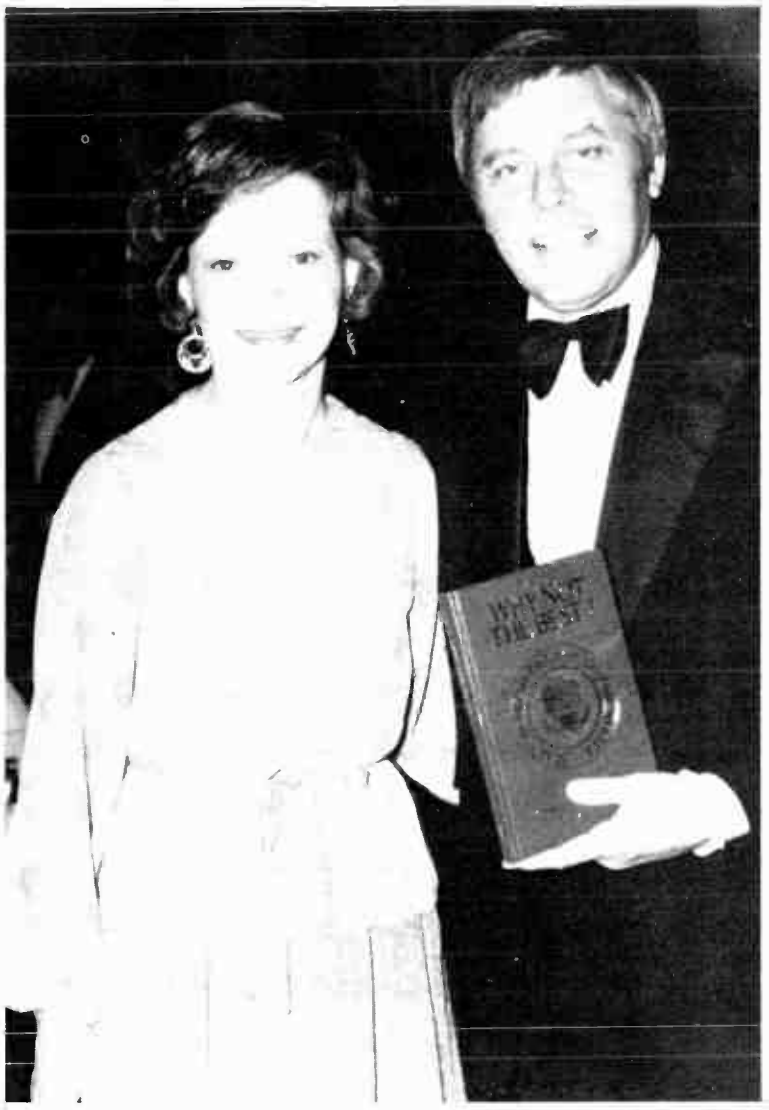
Lyndon Johnson, who certainly rubbed shoulders with celebrities, surprisingly didn't show any particular personal or political interest in country music. The notation "C.P." on his list of campaign fund raisers was more likely to mean "corporation president" than "country picker."

Richard Nixon generally knew a publicity opportunity when he saw it, and he knew the importance of country music to his middle American constituency. This, however, like many of Nixon's public relations ploys was simply superficial politics, without personal conviction. (It is difficult to picture Nixon with his arm around Willie Nelson saying, "Play me a tune, Will.") Nixon's superficiality backfired when he invited Johnny Cash to perform at the White House and requested in advance that Cash sing *Okie from Muskogee* and *Welfare Cadillac*. Cash declined on the basis that these songs were not in his repertoire, having been made famous by other performers. Although Cash denied it, the press widely interpreted this as a tactful sidestepping of songs whose political messages were in conflict with Cash's own views. Further, the press pointed out Nixon's clumsiness in not knowing either Cash's music or his philosophy.

But Jimmy Carter has shown no such lack of sensitivity or knowledge. His open, unreserved embrace of country music has been unprecedented and dramatic. There appear to be two reasons for this.

The first reason is political: since the reform of the campaign financing laws, political contributions have been limited to $2,000 for each individual. But there is no limit to the amount of time an individual can contribute. For example, you or I or Charlie Daniels can volunteer to lick envelopes or make phone calls at the campaign headquarters. Or, we can volunteer to perform at a concert. The only difference between you and me and Charlie is that the concert *he* performs at could raise $50,000. Believe me, *all* candidates for office know about this, so they are as interested in stars as astronomers are. That's just smart campaign management. But the stars can choose which candidate they want to





Far left: Nixon yo-yos with Roy Acuff on the Opry. Clockwise from near left: Johnny Cash, June Carter, with their son, John Carter and Cash's mother; the President gives Willie a hug; the Statler Bros. meet Carter and Anwar Sadat; Rosalynn with Tom T. Hall at a State Dinner; a kiss from Loretta; Hank Snow with the First Mother; Charlie Daniels shakes hands with Jo Walker looking on.

support, and in 1980 the one who seems the clear winner among country stars is Jimmy Carter. This may be due to what appears to be the second reason for Carter's association with country music: he seems to be a genuine, believable and knowledgeable fan.

Earlier this year, Carter invited Tom T. Hall to perform at a State Dinner honoring the Prime Minister of Italy. It was the first time a country artist had been invited to entertain at a State Dinner. The White House was decorated for the evening with a collection of antique, hand-made quilts and Fredrick Remington statuary. The printed program described the making of quilts, the life of the cowboy as illustrated by Remington and country music all as parts of American cultural history. The description of country music was academic and boring. On the other hand, Carter's introduction of Tom T. showed perception:

"When I was a boy and a young man on the farm, and we were going hunting and we said we were going hunting for birds, we didn't have to explain what kind of birds it was; it was always bob white quail. And when we said we were going to listen to music, we didn't have to explain what kind of music it was; it was what's known now as country music.

"A lot of people say that country music is Southern music, and as a Southerner I wouldn't deny that as a place of origin. But Southern country music has now transcended any border. Country music is known and loved, studied and enjoyed everywhere people love each other, everywhere people cry, everywhere people live and die. Country music has crossed state borders and international borders and has become in effect a universally enjoyed work of art.

"In many ways the history of country music is the history of America. Most of the basic tunes and instruments were brought here from throughout the world and have become a part of our indigenous society and have been used as a basis for the widest possible gamut of melodies, themes and lyrics expressing the heart-felt yearnings and successes and disap-

pointments of people who work—cowboys like the ones on my right beautifully executed by Remington; women who sit around at quilting bees among our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers and even since then and made beautiful works of art like the ones behind me.

"We have seen in recent years a growing interest in this form of life expressed in music. When we asked Prime Minister Cossiga what he would like to have as a form of entertainment, he said, 'I would like something truly American.' And it didn't take us long to decide what to offer this evening—country music, the history of it, the history of our Nation."

Many country stars have publically announced support for Carter's reelection: Charlie Daniels, Loretta Lynn, Willie Nelson, Hank Snow, Johnny Cash, Tammy Wynette, Faron Young, Jim Ed Brown, Jeannie Seely, June Carter, Jack Green, Helen Cornelius, Jerry Clower and many others.

We assume that the appearance of Tanya Tucker and Glen Campbell at the Republican convention indicates support for Ronald Reagan. But, in researching the question, Marty Robbins was the only other country star we could find who publicly supports Reagan. No doubt there are others.

Certainly, choosing who to campaign for or who to vote for should not be based on which candidate is the strongest country fan.

It's not likely, however, that Carter will find his love of country music to be a political liability.

RUSSELL D. BARNARD

Clockwise from far left: Ronnie Milsap and wife Joyce; the President seems pleased with Dolly, Rosalynn seems unsure; the Gatlin Bros.; Johnny Cash in the Oval Office with Nixon; Charley Pride with Carter; Nixon introducing Merle Haggard, Bonnie Owens looking on.

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Charlie Louvin: As True As An Involved Heartbeat

By Edward Morris

Insights are a dime a dozen—quickly glimpsed, quickly gone. But revelations—those rare and monumental discoveries—cling vividly in the mind as sharply as a child's Christmas. One such revelation came to many of us who had gathered at a West Virginia music hall one cold February night in 1974 for a show which featured a local bluegrass band and Charlie Louvin.

It was a toss-up as to which act was the bigger draw. Louvin was then on the United Artists label, but he had not ridden into town on the crest of a hit record—besides, the bluegrass band was damn good.

So when Louvin's rag-tag troupe came on stage, the bluegrass-sated crowd barely looked up from their hotdogs. When they did, they no doubt wondered if this was what Nashville had to offer the provinces—wrinkled costumes, feigned animation, and an intro of hits so warmed over that they had lost all of their original flavor.

Then, something started to happen—you never quite knew what it was or when it began. Maybe Louvin sensed the audience's rampant disinterest and decided to show them what a pro could do. Maybe he just began feeling the lyrics more. Whatever the stimulus, his voice slowly grew to an earnest, raspy intensity—now moaning, now whispering out over the audience with a rich nasal resonance. His phrasing kept perfect pace with the emotions he sang about, true as an involved heartbeat.

There was more to it, though, than the uncanny rightness of his voice. His selection of songs conveyed the whole texture and vitality of Southern white music: old ballads, hymns to a rural God overseeing a rural America, blues, bluegrass, honky-tonk, and slick country. He ranged from the mist-ridden *Mary of the Wild Moors*

to Dallas Frazier and A. L. Owens' sardonic valedictory to a marriage, *What Are Those Things (With Big Black Wings)*—from *Knoxville Girl* to Bill Anderson's hook-heavy, *I Don't Love You Anymore*.

It didn't seem to matter whether the lyrics were profound or perfunctory, for Louvin made them all sound like the most basic tales and testimonies of the human race.

When the concert was over, many of us were convinced that we had been privileged to hear one of the most sensitive stylists in country music—a performer who could stand in the rarefied company of a Willie Nelson and a George Jones.

Although it has been several years since Louvin has recorded for a major label, his voice can still work its wonders. But like many other stars who—during the 1950s and '60s—helped elevate country music from "hillbilly" status, Louvin no longer reaches the size of audience his versatility justifies. In more ways than one, his career struggles and strategies typify those of a whole generation of artists.

Louvin first came to national prominence in the late 1940s as the younger half of the gospel-oriented Louvin Brothers. (Their last name was really Loudermilk, but he and Ira changed it to Louvin in 1945, figuring it would be a simpler name for their fans to spell and pronounce.) The duet from Rainsville, Alabama, lost little time in adding their own distinctive sound

"Anytime I get a tenor singer and we go out and do some Louvin Brothers songs, all I hear is, 'He ain't no Ira Louvin.'"

to the long tradition of high, close harmonies popularized by the Monroe Brothers, the Blue Sky Boys, and the Delmore Brothers.

Songwriters as well as performers, the Louvins broke into the charts big in 1955 with their *When I Stop Dreaming*, followed by such other self-penned classics as *I Take the Chance, Cash on the Barrelhead*, and *If I Could Only Win Your Love*.

After Ira left the act in 1963 and after working successfully as a solo artist, Louvin was teamed with Melba Montgomery for a series of novelty hits. Today, he is probably best known—by newcomers to country music, anyway—as the surviving member of a team whose songs Emmylou Harris is resurrecting.

Whether being linked professionally with other performers will finally prove a net gain or loss for Louvin is something for country music historians to decide. Right now, it's an open question, even to Louvin. But it's one he's prepared to talk about.

Not a man for excessive ceremony, Charlie Louvin shows up at the motel near Nashville for this interview, unscheduled and unannounced. The motel, he explains, was on his way back home from a trip he's made that morning to take a car to his son at Tennessee Tech.

Cowboy-hatted and horn-rimmed, Louvin manages to look considerably younger than his 52 years. When he grins —as he often does—he resembles a leprechaun that's just been apprehended in a particularly imaginative indiscretion.

Before he settles in to describe for me the anatomy of his life and mixed times, Louvin has to get rid of some firewood. Novice woodcutters, he says, have dumped a rick of wood on him that won't burn right, and he wants it out of his yard and off his mind—by today, if possible. Toward the end, he borrows the phone for a couple of calls, then relaxes momentarily to reflect on the noble companionship between a man and his woodstove: "It seems more like living than sitting around and hearing a thermostat kick on."

As with any artist whose career is buffeted by forces that don't always make sense, Louvin is awash with strong opinions, deep resentments, and questions that won't go away.

Just why his songs don't interest more record executives, for example, is a matter he spends a lot of time thinking about. While it's no consolation, he knows that many other old-line country stars are in the same predicament. "There are 65 Opry artists," he says, "and I suppose maybe 15 of them record on major labels."

This is part of an unfolding pattern, he concludes. "Evidently, the push is on from the majors to just change teams. If you're a country boy, you know there comes a time when the mule can still plow pretty good, but you feel a pair of young mules might do you a better job. So you get rid of the old mule." With admirable mulishness, he adds, "I feel it in my bones that I can still record a hit song."

Since leaving United Artists Louvin has recorded on several small labels. He recently cut on an album on CMH with Jim and Jesse and has re-done *Weapon of Prayer*, a Louvin Brothers standard, with David Houston. He and Emmylou Harris have joined up for four cuts, only one of which, *Love Don't Care*, has been released. Louvin lays down the basic track in Nashville and then sends it to Harris in California for her vocal additions. On their latest effort, *Two of a Kind*, Harris added two harmony tracks instead of the one Louvin expected. "I wouldn't change it for the world," he grins. "It just made the record."

Harris stirred up new interest in the Louvin Brothers sound in 1975 with her beautifully mournful version of *If I Could Only Win Your Love*. But according to Louvin the interest has benefitted him more as a copyright holder than as a performer. So far, his efforts to revive the Louvins' high harmonic technique—which often involved the lead and tenor switching parts in mid-song—have failed.

"I haven't been successful with that," he says. "It's OK for Emmylou to do it, or Jim and Jesse, or the Osborne Brothers, or any number of others—and people tell them they're great. But anytime I get a tenor singer and we go out and do some Louvin Brothers songs, all I hear is, 'He ain't no Ira Louvin.' It's very frustrating."

Despite his impeccable credentials for it, Louvin has shied away from the lucrative bluegrass festival circuit. Mostly, he says, it's a matter of musical preference: "The reason I like country music is because it's different. You could come to one of my shows and catch 50 completely different stories if that's how many songs I sang. In bluegrass, it's a little too much 'little darlin', why do you break my heart.' The lyrics seem to be shallow. And I suppose because of the banjo everything sounds the same . . . country music don't bore me."

Louvin thinks he might have soared higher as a performer if his various producers had been more attentive in matching his style to the right songs. "I never had a producer who looked for material for me. I had to scrounge up my own, and I've been extremely fortunate in getting good material. But maybe I've picked songs that said something I liked to say. They might not have had a wide enough appeal for the general audience. Maybe it would be healthy if I had a producer who was strictly addressing me."

In his unending search to find the best audiences for his kind of music, Louvin has taken on—and then dropped—a whirl of booking agents who tried to sell him as something he is not. "I'm not a Dean Martin, and I don't want somebody saying I could be. Just sell me for what I am. I know that they [bookers] flower everything up, but I don't want them to lie."

He recalls, with more humor than dismay, one agent who tried too hard. "He would book me into places that had had dinner music for 10 years—he'd just send me in there—and I'd break out my country band, set up my PA system, and surprise the people so bad they didn't know what to do. Friends would say, 'You're playing *where?* God, there ain't never been no country music in that place.' So I'd get there and sure enough, even the waitresses would have tails on."

It would be criminally erroneous, though, to portray Louvin as a reincarna-

tion of Job. Besides being a member of the Songwriters Hall of Fame, the 25-year veteran of the Opry plays an enviable 150 to 200 road dates a year. And this year, he predicts, will be "much more profitable" than last. There's even been some ground work done on a syndicated television program that would have Louvin as its star.

On the road, Louvin travels in style in his own Silver Eagle bus. Style has its price, though, and the price keeps going up: "Everything is changed so that it's not like the same world," he contends. "I carry a five-piece band and myself. So I have to rent three rooms. There's not a guy in my outfit who will sleep with another guy in the bed. It's like taboo. In the old days, Ira and I carried three guys. We rented one room with two beds in it and a rollaway—and we all stayed in that room."

But even with the comfortable accommodations he currently offers, Louvin says he has a hard time finding dependable road musicians: "Say you're hunting a bass player and somebody says this guy is looking for work. So you call him. The first question he'll ask is, 'How do you travel?' If you travel in a bus, then he wants to pursue it. His next question is, 'How much do you work?' If you work 15 days a month, that's too much. If you work six days a month, that's too little. Usually 10 days is accepted as being perfect. Then after you establish how much you work, it's 'How much do you pay?' All these questions have got to be answered properly or he's 'waiting on another job' and it'll be a little while before he knows."

In 1964, the year before Ira died in a car wreck, Louvin broke out as a solo artist on Capitol with the Top 10 hit, *I Don't Love You Anymore*. He was a chart fixture for the rest of the decade. He scored with *See the Big Man Cry, Think I'll Go Somewhere and Cry Myself to Sleep, Will You Visit Me on Sunday*, and *Here's a Toast to Mama*, to name a few. Between 1964 and 1970, he was on the *Billboard* charts as a soloist a total of 18 times.

In 1970 he started recording with Melba Montgomery, another of Capitol's headliners. Artistically and financially, it was a winning combination, but Louvin still winces at its professional costs.

"There were so many boy-and-girl songs cropping up that you couldn't do by yourself," he says. "So I asked Melba if she would like to do some. Our only problem was that they [Capitol] tried to make us stay funny too long. We came first with *Something to Brag About*, which was cute, and *Did You Ever*, which was also cute. That's when we should have jumped on a ballad. But Capitol wouldn't have that. They wanted us to release *I'm Gonna Leave You*, which is taken from an old dirty joke and then one other. Four funny records in a row, and they became less funny each time."

He's pretty sure the joint effort damaged their separate artistic identities. "There's a huge danger that any artist might put himself into oblivion by recording with someone else. When Melba and I started recording, we both had good careers going. If a duet gets one hit with a label and then you want to bring out a solo record, they'll say, 'Man, what are you talking about! You've got a good thing going. Let's get out another duet right away.' And the first thing you know, your individual career is down the drain. You're only classified as a duet, and if the duet's not together on the road, you're hurtin'."

While Louvin has been made gun-shy by his connections with Montgomery and his brother, he doesn't seem the least worried about his growing identification with Emmylou Harris. It's apparent that he is bowled over by her talent and appreciative of what she has done to keep the Louvin name in the pop music limelight.

Almost all of Harris' albums contain at least one Louvin number. (*You're Learning* graces the current **Roses in the Snow.**) Moreover, she's been turning other young artists onto the Louvin Brothers. Jonathan Edwards has recorded *The Great Atomic Power*, Louvin says, and Nicolette Larson released *The Angels Rejoiced Tonight* on the B side of a recent single.

(Louvin reports that in six months the single earned him, Ira's estate, and their publisher, Acuff-Rose, a total of $25,000.) The Association of Country Entertainers was formed in 1974 in reaction to the Country Music Association's official recognition of young outsiders who were cutting into the country market, notably Olivia Newton-John and John Denver. Louvin became a member of ACE, not in reaction to the newcomers, he says, but in the hope that the group might encourage more cooperation among traditional country artists.

It didn't happen, he laments. But he nurses yet a dream of what it could have been: "Let's say you've got 10 artists in this room and nobody's recording—but everybody's got a little money left. Why not get the 10 people together and say that for $10,000 we can open up an office, get a recording license and have our own label? And we'll record. We'll have a crew of musicians who'll own stock in the company. They won't charge to record. That guy down there with a studio—he's going to be a charter member of this corporation, and he won't charge for studio time. And we're going to put out some good records. It would work.

"But you get 10 people together, and that one says, 'I'm not going to be an equal partner with no damn Louvin, because I'll sell twice as many records as he does and I demand twice as much promotion.' And the first thing you know, the whole thing is just busted up with jealousy. You can't organize country entertainers. We don't have the togetherness that rock people have." ■

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GENE WATSON

By Bill Oakey

It isn't hard for Gene Watson to be humble. If they booked him into the Star Suite, he would probably ask where the "star" was, so he could get an autograph. And although he lives in Houston, you couldn't call him an urban cowboy. Gene has seen numerous recording artists attempt to cross over from country to pop music and back again, but he refuses to play the odds. He won't even straddle the fence. The only way to describe Gene Watson is to say that he's pure country.

From his slicked back hair to the nasal twang in his speaking voice to the clear and simple arrangements in his songs, this Nashville rebel looks and sounds like he's fifteen years out of date in his field. And he's damned proud of it. Gene did not ever ask to be allowed independence in the recording studio. He has stuck by one demand, which he made in the very beginning. Just leave him alone.

The former body shop mechanic did not come upon the national scene with a lot of publicized controversy like the so-called outlaws and the progressive renegades from Austin. He hasn't attracted a great deal of attention from the press. But like a darkhorse on the political campaign trail, Watson has arrived on the forefront in today's back-to-the-basics country music movement.

Unbeknown to many of Watson's fans, his first national hit did pose a conflict, at least in his own mind. "I lived with the song, *Love in the Hot Afternoon* for a year before I recorded it," he recalled. It was the lyrics that bothered me. I was scared of that one phrase, 'We got high in the park.' I never took any kind of dope or nothin' like that. Something like seven people recorded it before I did, and they all changed the words. I can't remember what all they changed, because I think I only heard two of the other recordings. But I decided to do it just as it was written. That one line still worried me at first, but people told me it was possible to get high on love or high on life. The song made it to number four for the year 1975. I wish I had a whole sack of 'em."

For a man who comes across as though he's had little education, Gene has obviously learned the seemingly elusive technique of seeking out and putting together hit material. "I do pick all of my songs. Before I got this deep into it, I listened to records on the radio and picked them apart like a critic. I could tell that some of those singers were not doing what they wanted."

"That can be good, but a lot of times it's bad. I know it wouldn't be good for me. People don't come to my shows to hear strings and choirs and all them horns. They come to hear me. My philosophy on recording is get the story out there. Don't cover it up. I like backup singing because I love harmony and I sing harmony, but you can ruin a beautiful song with a big production."

"I'm thankful for the people who have had faith in me. I like to do things right. Now don't get me wrong. I don't know what's best for somebody else, but I'm the only one who knows what's best for me. I'm going into a new record contract with my manager and myself as producers. That's the only way I'd sign with anybody. If I had to do it somebody else's way, I'd get out my tools and go back to doing body work."

No doubt there are plenty of artists who would like to land a *Paper Rosie* or *Where Love Begins* from the stash that Gene acquired them. One of his early hits came from a crate full of rejects bought from a jukebox operator. Only three of his single releases in five years have missed the top ten on the national charts. His biggest seller, *Farewell Party*, rivals some of the great standards of the sixties.

I've thought about singing duets," Gene remarked. "But that's not one of my main goals. The ones I would really like to work with have been on a different label. What I see myself doing is producing other people as well as myself. But I don't care about running a studio. I'd rather have good engineers that know what they're doing. I know I won't be on the road forever. The body can only take so much.

"Missing shows is something I don't do unless something happens that is out of my control. One night the word got out that I was in a car wreck. It wasn't worth lying about, but it somehow got reported that way. A little ruckus broke out after the show and I tried to break it up. I fractured some ribs and the fans were worried about me being in a wreck."

Gene Watson comes from an extremely large family. He's got so many brothers, cousins, and uncles that it's hard for him to remember their names. Friends too. Like the one that just happened to be in town for this show. Camped outside his bus. Next to the best friend of another friend that sold a canary to his neighbor. And the friend with a purse full of post cards to be autographed for the other friends who couldn't come.

Gene doesn't seem to mind. "I'd sign an autograph for a six year old kid just as quick as I would for a sixty year old person. A few of them will stretch the truth about being raised with me or tell somebody that they're a relative. That doesn't bother me. I'd rather be out there shaking hands than hiding out backstage or on the bus. Of course I don't believe everything I hear on the road. There aren't any more tall tales from Texas than the other states.

"My wife and I don't own a ranch and we don't live in no fancy brick home. If it's comfortable, that's all I need. I've lived in Texas all my life, and I wouldn't move to Nashville. Since I'm not based up there, I don't get on as many TV shows, not as many as I would like. Right now we're keeping busy on the road. I did get a chance to make it out to the West Coast to record a song for the soundtrack of Clint Eastwood's movie, *Any Which Way You Can*, (scheduled for late December release.) The song is called *Any Way You Want Me.*

"Things are starting to fall into place. I'd be lyin' if I said they wasn't. But I'm not gonna put the cart before the horse. People who know me say I have struggled in the past. Well, the struggle has just begun. When you're small, they don't expect as much out of you. The bigger you get, the more they expect. All I know is I'm country and I'm gonna stay country. I would never make the mistake of trying to cut a crossover record. That's not what my fans want from me."

At the suggestion that Gene's proverbial time has finally come, he proverbially replied, "I hope you're right. But you know me. I don't care about bein' no superstar."

Did you hear the one about the ol' boy from Texas? There aren't really any tall tales from Texas. Not anymore. Just a few songs like *We Robbed Trains, Pick the Wildwood Flower*, and *Cowboys Don't Get Lucky All the Time.* ■

By Michael Bane

Country Music Really Will Drive You To Drink

Well folks, it's finally official—country music will drive you to drink. According to Dr. James Schaefer, the head of the drug and alcohol abuse program at the University of Minnesota, those slow, cryin'-in-your-beer songs may soon have you crawling into that self-same beer.

In a study released just in time for the serious year-end drinking binge, according to an Associated Press dispatch, Dr. Schaefer also found a correlation between heavy drinking and bars "with dim lights, macho decorations, a small dance floor, unequal distribution of the sexes, and a tolerance of disorderly behavior."

"WARNING! The Surgeon General has determined that country music is hazardous to your drinking health."

The macho bars with action pictures of calf-roping and champion cowboys seem to encourage men to act like hard-drinking cowboys," Dr. Schaefer said, adding that music with a fast beat and happy lyrics is generally "safer" than slow songs about people who feel they do not have control over their lives.

"Tonight the bottle let me down. . ."

Grim news for the upcoming holiday season which finds me lying in bed trying to figure out whether to get up or give up. While it has been some time since I've been in a bar with a calf-roping motif (Nowhere, Montana, about three years ago, I think), I have done no small amount of research on the subject myself, and I have reached a few modest conclusions that might illuminate Dr. Schaefer's study:

1) In honky-tonks, people tend to drink in direct proportion to their fear of not getting out in one piece. I recall one particularly intense research session with fellow scientist and sometimes writer Nick Tosches, where we visited a number of laboratories along South Broadway in Nashville. We were sitting in one with a wagon wheel motif, I believe, listening to the barkeep describe her recent stretch in the Atlanta jail for prostitution (sheer braggadocio, judging by her looks), when the door burst open and an entire army, complete with helmets, bullet-proof vests, and shotguns, came crashing in, shouting for nobody to move. The barkeep started cursing and slid a pistol under the bar, while one of the patrons gracefully kicked a six-inch switchblade into the center of the floor. The police spread out, until each and every one of us at the bar had our very own officer standing right behind us, the cavernous hole of a 12-gauge shotgun about six inches from the backs of our heads. Nick, taking a big slug of his beer, turned to me without even flinching and said, honestly, "Was it something I said?" They carried off one of the band members, while the band bravely kept on playing *Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way?*

"I've got $2 in the jukebox; $5 in a bottle. . ."

2) If you are ever in a bar where there are more women than men, exercise extreme caution and don't drink at all. It's true, as Mickey Gilley observed, that the girls all get prettier at closing time, but sometimes the girls turn out to be boys. When tomorrow comes, it's better to wake up with a number one record than an unemployed construction worker from White Plains. And whatever you do, when visiting New York City, *never* go into a bar with pictures of calf-roping and macho cowboys

on the wall, even if everybody inside is wearing leather chaps.

"From barrooms to bedrooms, that's where your love goes. . ."

3) Everyone drinks for their own reason. Me, I much prefer going to honky-tonks to actually drinking in them, but I'm in a minority. Bars are hopelessly romantic—just watch any television show—and always our image of the perfect bar, with its good liquor, good music, and good fellowship is a little bit brighter, a little bit cleaner than the real thing. I have been taken to so many people's favorite bars ("Listen, it's like no place you've ever been. . .") that turned out to be like the place I never go to down the street that it's downright scary. The reality of most bars nowadays is relentlessly depressing—red brocade walls, two electronic pong games,

"I have been taken to so many people's favorite bars... that turned out to be like the place I never go to down the street that it's downright scary."

an electronic pinball machine that plays five minutes of recorded music before it'll cough up a ball (the first one of *these* gems I ever ran across was at a Holiday Inn bar in Cleveland, Ohio, which figures, at three o'clock in the morning, standing there like some kind of idiot waiting for the music to stop), a barkeeper who learned how to mix drinks from a matchbook cover, and at least two guys who want to sell me insurance for my dog. No *wonder* people drink!

But that's the kind of bar Dr. Schaefer likes, or, rather, the kind of bar he thinks presents a lower risk for the problem drinker. Lots of mindless stuff to do; no George Jones on the jukebox. "It's conceivable to me," said the good doctor, "that with a better knowledge of what types of environments lead to alcohol abuse, bar owners might want to change some things."

Right—to make people stay longer and drink more, 'cause that's how bar owners pay the rent on the bars.

What it all comes down to is this—between me and you and Joe Bob, none of these studies ever amounts to anything good. It's like waking up one morning and discovering that 97 percent of all the things you like in the world causes cancer, and the other three percent is illegal in every state except Nevada. Studies like Dr. Schaefer's

"I ran across... a barkeeper who learned how to mix drinks from a match book cover, and at least two guys who wanted to sell me insurance for my dog. No *wonder* people drink!"

always start out for the best of reasons and end up forcing everybody to buy airbags for their cars, trucks, bicycles, and tractors.

Think I'm overreacting? Just watch what happens when the government gets hold of the Schaefer Study.

Mark my words. Pretty soon every single country record produced in the United States and Nashville will have to carry a sticker that reads, "WARNING! The Surgeon General has determined that country music is hazardous to your drinking health," and it'll be against the law to own a Willie Nelson album.

"A man can be a drunk sometimes, but a drunk can't be a man. . ." ■

AUDIO

By Cindy Morgan

Compact Stereos: Not Quite Hi-Fi, But Not High Finance Either

Zenith IS 4031

Compact stereo systems are the most common equipment sold for playing records and cassettes. Since most readers of *Country Music* spend a lot on records and tapes and are "serious" listeners, we usually try to cover equipment with "hi-fi" performance. This leaves out "compacts" because—even though they may look like "hi-fi"—they are not, mainly because the speakers are not good enough. However, compact systems today are *much* better than they were 10 or 15 years ago and well worth considering for a second system or for high school or college students whose budget may not permit a real hi-fi system.

With this in mind, I have reviewed several of the current crop of compact stereo systems from the major manufacturers. The units reviewed all had these features: automatic record changer, AM and FM stereo radio and a cassette deck for recording and playing cassettes. (With the cassette deck you can make your own tapes by recording off the radio, copying your friends' record albums, copying your own record on a cassette to use with your car stereo, or with optional microphones, you can record yourself pickin' and singin'.)

Compacts belong to what might be called the "crazy relative" school of hi-fi. Most writers in the audio business tend to exclude these worthy warhorses from any sort of serious evaluation. Few of us would admit to having one and if we did, we would hide them in a back bedroom should our hi-fi buff friends stop by for a little wine and Willie. To tell you the truth, the snobbism is not entirely justified.

This got me, the hi-fi hobbiest (of sorts . . . I haven't enough cash to be as "high end" as I would prefer) to thinking that surely compacts still have their usefulness. And surely, with all the improvements and advances in music technology these days, some of it would have worked its way into the dozens of compact music systems currently on the market. And as I investigated, I learned they most certainly have and many of the compacts on the market today sound better than the "first" hi-fi of a dozen years ago.

I learned, too, that *Consumer Reports* also looked into the compact music systems available, rating the Zenith model IS-4031-10 "best." Paired with Zenith Allegro MC-1500 speakers, this sturdy compact—and not a bad looking unit—you could pack off with a college bound son or daughter. Using the Zenith unit as a basis of comparison, *Country Music* examined the leaders in compact stereo. Not coincidentally, the winners we would add to a "Best Bets" list are those manufacturers who happen to have top reputations in the components end of the hi-fi business—among them Panasonic, Sanyo, Sony, Sharp, Hitachi and Fisher—who each make a selection of excellent compact stereos. The differences lie largely in styling preferences and features; in comparable price ranges we would say the units are fairly competitive in sound quality.

Picking Hitachi's model SDT-9610, or any of its other units, you'll find some of the features you should consider in any compact purchase. You'll find the arm fitted with an ADC brand magnetic cartridge (though some other compact makers have chosen equally good Shure magnetic cartridges) and a BSR automatic record changer with such features as anti-skating and a cueing lever which permits you to remove the tonearm from the record with less risk of scratching the surface. Special meters enable you to gauge recording levels and how clearly you are receiving your AM or FM signal. The cassette deck section has a removable door which means you can clean the tape heads regularly; the Hitachi speakers use passive radiators to increase the bass output.

There are many reasons to justify the purchase of a "best" rated unit like Zenith's or this Hitachi product. If you live in somewhat cramped quarters, or need an inexpensive choice for a guest room or game room, the compact hi-fi is easily the right choice. And if you are working with a limited budget, you will find compacts

Reco

Razzy Bailey
Razzy
RCA AHL1-3688

Most radio stations, at least the ones I've been to, have two turntables in the control room. One is for the record that's playing, and one is for cueing up the next record. Recently a lot of country stations have found it necessary to install a third turntable.

Somebody got a hold of Razzy Bailey and told him that in order for him to make it past the "new artist" stage, he would have to keep putting out records that stick. Once he did, the deejays had to either unglue them from their turntables or keep playing them.

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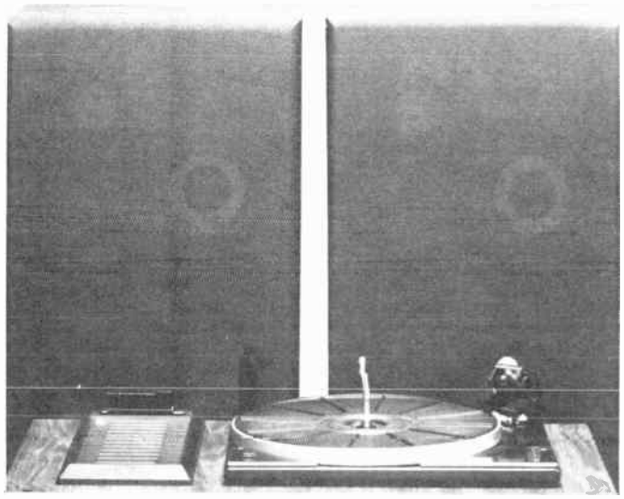
available in the $250 to $300 price range. True there are compacts available in the $750-and-up price category, but we respectfully submit that if you have that much money to spend you would be far wiser to go through the work necessary to choose a system of separate components. Such a choice enables you, at a later date, to upgrade and improve your hi-fi much more easily by replacing, one at a time, one or more component pieces.

But are compacts really worth the investment? They can be if you carefully consider the following caveats when you look over your potential purchase:

Don't buy a compact with "cardboard" speakers. Listen to the product; there should be no distracting bass note buzzes, caused by vibrating speaker enclosures, or tinny whines in the high notes. No, your compact may not sound as pure and full as an expensive component system but it should not sound totally unnatural either. Look for solidly built speaker boxes.



Hitachi 9415

Some compact music systems are fitted with inadequate cartridges. To be certain, no compact is fitted with "terrific" cartridges, but be certain the product you select at least is fitted with a magnetic cartridge. (Some are fitted with ceramic cartridges which do not play as well or sound as good.) Also be sure the cartridge can be replaced; a few compacts don't allow this change to be made and this means trouble for you later when the stylus starts to wear out.

Check the total harmonic distortion specification on your compact. Accept nothing over one per cent since you will probably be able to hear the difference. Compacts, as a rule, do not have good ratings in the distortion department, but a rating *too* far above one percent means music will get on your nerves rather than relieve them. Distortion is the number expressed in "percent" listed with the unit's power rating. Don't buy a system if printed specifications from the manufacturer are not available.

If you have a choice of units featuring both cassettes and eight-track, try to settle on a unit with only one tape option. You'll get better sound for your money as a rule. We suggest that you begin to consider cassette formats for better sound quality. (And that advice holds true in car stereos as well.)

Look for special features to get your money's worth. Important ones include headphone jacks, accommodations for extra speakers or Dolby noise reduction (certain Zenith models use Dolby).

Beware of discount store "house brands." Any unit selling for under $200 is not likely to be acceptable. There may be exceptions, but be careful. Generally, sticking to national name brands is a good rule. Even national brands are available at discounts. For example, the Zenith model we tried lists for $300, but we found it available in several stores for $250 or less.

Our greatest word of caution regarding compacts is that they seem deceptively easy to buy: After all, some manufacturer has done all the work matching cartridges, turntables and speakers. But, in reality, you can be just as wrong in choosing a compact as you can in matching up components. Although the brands we listed are among the best, there are dozens of other compacts that are shoddy and not as dependably produced. If you are really serious about your music, we suggest that you be cautious when you consider the compact. But if you make your purchase wisely, keeping our guidelines in mind, you should enjoy lots of good music at low cost. ■

Record Reviews

The Statler Brothers
10th Anniversary
Mercury SRMI-5027

Here they come again! Their 20th album in 10 years! The Statler Brothers! Have sold more than 10 million records, which, if laid side to side, would stretch from New York to Houston! Have written 125 of the 188 songs they have recorded! Played to over 7,000,000 people! Spent over 43,800 hours together! Gave over 1,500 interviews! Explained the origin of the name "Statler Brothers" over 1000 times! And this is their 10th Anniversary album!

It's good. You got their hit single, *Charlotte's Web*, Jimmy Davids' old country standard, *Nobody's Darlin' But Mine*, and my favorite, *The Kid's Last Fight*, a toe tappin', tear jerkin' boxing ballad I think was 60 years old when I first heard it 25 years ago. The Statler's version has go to be definitive.

Donna Fargo
FARGO
Warner Bros. BSK 3470

If the name Donna Fargo evokes knee-jerk fashion, the image of relentlessly cheerful ditties like *Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A.*, a listen to her latest Warner Brothers album **Fargo** should set you straight.

Not that there isn't a bit of the sprightly, good-natured pluckiness that marked her work for so long—too long, some say. But this time around Donna has chosen a collection of songs that give a picture of a deeper, more subtle side of her singing.

The material is sophisticated and contemporary with a straight pop ballad, *Change of Heart*, and one country-ish tune, *Land of Cotton*, (a strange re-working of *Dixie* into a girl-he-left-behind la-

Hank Thompson
Take Me Back To Tulsa
MCA-3250

For more than two decades, Hank Thompson has been a durable legend throughout the Southwestern U.S. Though he's never been a star in the national sense of the word, he has remained in great demand in that particular region of the country for years.

Thompson's music could be called "country dance music" or "Saturday night music." His boisterous, uncomplicated style has been much more heavily influenced by western swing and an earlier generation of Texas honky tonk singers like Ernest Tubb and Lefty Frizzell than it has by any of the more contemporary strains of Nashville music.

The song titles on **Take Me Back To Tulsa** pretty much let you know where Hank Thompson's coming from musically: *One Hell Of A Weekend, A Little More Country (In Them Country Songs), Poppin' Tops*, . . . Armed with his broad, twangy Oklahoma-tinged singing voice, he goes after those hardcore country, twin-fiddle, screaming steel guitar barroom songs with a gusto.

And even Larry Butler, who produced **Take Me Back To Tulsa** (and who also produces such current country-pop soft-touch masters like Kenny Rogers and Charlie Rich) hasn't done much to change that. The title song, *Take Me Back To Tulsa* isn't recorded or produced but a tad slicker than the original version of the song which was done years ago.

Hank Thompson has proven once again on **Take Me Back To Tulsa,** that he is a regional artist in the best sense of the word. When it comes to good Southwestern dance music, hardcore country and honky tonk, he's playing the real thing, just like he's been doing all along, for the last two decades. BOB ALLEN

Johnny and Dorsey Burnette
Together Again
Solid Smoke 8005

"She's my teenage pride and joy . . ."

What?

"Oh wo wo, I got to go wo wo, back to O wo wo hi o . . ."

What? What?

It's the late Dorsey Brothers, Memphis pioneers of rockabilly. Known for their hits, *Tall Oak Tree* and *Hey, Little One* (Dorsey) and *Dreamin'* and *You're Sixteen* (Johnny). Purveyors of tunes to Elvis, Ricky Nelson, and others.

The way you purvey tunes to others is you make a simple recording of the songs you want to sell. Now that's done on tape, but they used to be done on cheap records called reference demos, or acetates; these would wear out after a dozen or two playings. This entire record is culled from recently discovered acetates recorded in 1960.

What's mainly here is Johnny's acoustic guitar, Dorsey's standup bass and someone hitting the side of the guitar to keep the beat. The boys only sing together once, on a song called *I'm Happy*. It sounds like a lost Everly Brothers tune sung by a funkier version of the Everlys.

Sound pretty primitive? Rough? Crude? Yes. I can't stop playing it.

My first impression of the record before I played it was, this is strictly for rockabilly fans. Now I've played it about 15 times. It's not a specialty item. Just to check it out, I played it for some friends who were not rockabilly fans. They all loved it.

The approach is mid '50s rockabilly, the songs go from *Lovesick Blues* to early bubblegum. (What else would you call *You're Sixteen?*) The result is tappin' toes and goofy grins.

Pardon me. I wanna hear Johnny sing *Baby Doll Blue Eyes* again. PETER STAMPFEL

Record Reviews

Various Artists
Original Soundtrack
Smokey And The Bandit 2
MCA-6101

Smokey And The Bandit 2 is an hilariously empty-headed movie whose multi-million-dollar budget of colossal car wreck scenes and delightfully brainless plot are dedicated to nothing more than a string of good-hearted belly laughs.

Luckily for Nashville though, when they were painting the landscape with money, making *Smokey And The Bandit 2*, they spent a bundle hiring some good musicians to appear in the movie and sing on the soundtrack. And all this good company is what makes the soundtrack LP, **Smokey And The Bandit 2** such a treat.

First of all, you've got some great previously released material here, like Don Williams' *Tulsa Time*, Jerry Reed's *Texas Bound And Flyin'*, the Statler Brothers' *Do You Know You Are My Sunshine*, and Mel Tillis's *Here's Lookin' At You*.

Surprisingly though—and this is often not the case—the real gems on the **Smokey And The Bandit 2** soundtrack LP are the tracks that were produced by Snuff Garrett specifically for the film project. *Pecos Promenade* is a spirited number by Tanya Tucker. *Ride Concrete Cowboy, Ride* is an enchanting piece of nostalgia sung by Roy Rogers and The Sons Of The Pioneers. Garrett has simply worked *wonders* with Brenda Lee in the studio. Her rendition of *Again And Again* is by far the best thing she's done in years; and one hopes that it will eventually be released as a single.

Let's Do Something Cheap And Superficial (which is not heard in the film's actual soundtrack) is Burt Reynolds' tongue-in-cheek outing as a country singer. Burt can't really sing, mind you. But that's OK. The song is just a parody anyway; a humorous take-off on all those overly solicitous barroom pick-up songs. ("Let's do something cheap and superficial/ let's do something that we might regret/ let's do something shabby and insensitive/ this might be the only chance we get. . . .") The song, is of course, also a clever way for MCA to promote this movie over the radio.

Well, what more can I say about the soundtrack of a movie whose plot development is based on Burt Reynolds' and Jerry Reed's kidnapping of a pregnant elephant?

BOB ALLEN

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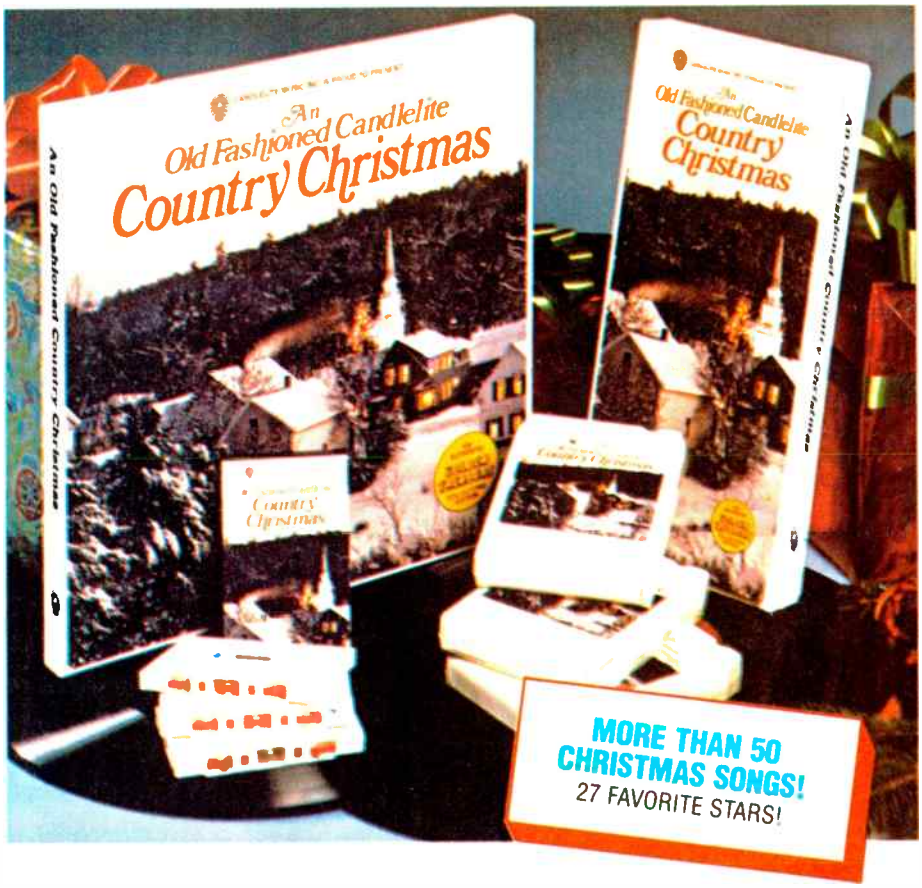

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Record Reviews

Elvis Presley
Elvis Aron Presley
RCA CPL 8-3699

Fans deluging record stores to reserve their copies; guards at the pressing plants; people gladly paying over $50 for a record at a time when gas prices and inflation are increasing. Yep, this eight-record package was a media event, and through all of it very few paid any real attention to the contents. But now it's out, and everyone's calmed down. Time for a critical look.

One strong point is the mere fact that RCA has, at least temporarily, quit re-releasing loads of previously issued material, concentrating instead on more obscure aspects of Elvis's recording career. It opens in May, 1956 with a surprisingly high quality recording of his first, unsuccessful Vegas appearance, billed below the geriatric big band of Freddy Martin. The audience is obviously Martin's and at best they receive Elvis politely. He, too, knew the engagement was wasted and turned on the hillbilly humor he'd used since his Louisiana Hayride days, offsetting Martin's patronizing attitude with well-aimed sarcasm ("Thank you, music lovers . . ."). Hearing him live in '56 *sans* screaming, with Scotty, Bill and D.J. outrocking any of today's punk rockers is a revelation. Side two features a far-ranging 1962 monologue revealing a more innocent Elvis, long before unhappiness and self-abuse set in. Record two, the 1961 Hawaii Benefit Show (his last concert for the next eight years) is hurt by poor sound quality, yet his energy, fired by a hot group (including Boots Randolph, Floyd Cramer and Hank Garland) shows through. *That's All Right (Mama)* has a new, menacing tone and *Swing Down Sweet Chariot*, one of the gospel tunes he loved, is downright *vicious*.

Record three brings together alternate takes of some of his movie soundtrack songs, varying between excellent and forgettable. The difference is many of these feature him breaking up, clowning and carrying on enough to support the stories that he couldn't stand some of the movie songs, and began to openly gripe about them. Listen to him fooling around with *Datin'*. Then listen to the inane lyrics. Who could blame him?

Record four compiles previously released tunes from his 1968, 1973 and 1977 TV shows. Record five is similar, bringing together 1970 rehearsal and performance tapes from his Vegas appearances, including a live *Kentucky Rain* nearly as good as the original. Record six unites a number of obscure flip sides of singles no longer available, including a gutty 1968 version of *Hi-Heel Sneakers*. There's some fine material on record seven, side one, featuring Elvis singing at the piano during a Nashville session in 1971 and the haunting, unissued *Beyond The Reef* from 1966, so strong one wonders why it wasn't released. Side two and all of record eight, comes from an unissued 1975 concert. And though it is entertaining, I frankly can't see the point of it. Much of this material is available on other live albums with minimal difference. *Surely* something else could have been included.

Still, all things considered these points are minor. There are rare insights into the Presley phenomenon here available nowhere else and some great music besides. I just hope the attention to historical detail here indicates the way future Elvis releases will be going.

RICH KIENZLE

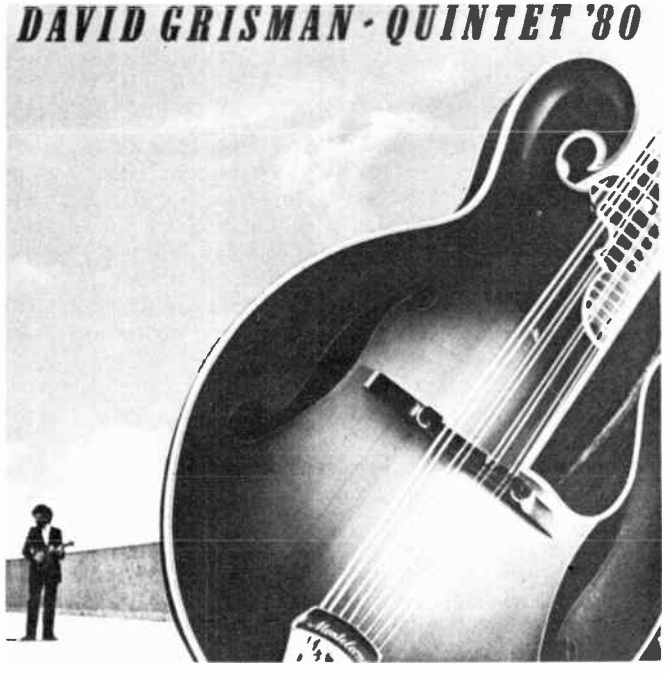
David Grisman
Quintet '80
Warner Brothers BSK 3469

Bill Monroe conceived bluegrass as an acoustic music based in mountain music with blues overtones, and for a long time that's what it was. Then the controversies began: first the Osborne Brothers added amplification, then Flatt and Scruggs split over Earl Scruggs' interest in electric music and playing pop material. And bluegrass fans have had a strong opinion about both, many feeling that anything that fails to fit the confines of Monroe's concept shouldn't bear the name. David Grisman's music isn't bluegrass; he calls it "Dawg" music, yet his unique blend of blues, modern jazz, classical, gypsy music and bluegrass has earned him critical praise across the board from country, rock and jazz critics.

Quintet '80 is another flawless Grisman effort. Though the lineup has changed, with Tony Rice being replaced by young Mark O'Connor on guitar, bassist Bill Amatneek and second mandolinist Todd Phillips replaced by Rob Wasserman and Mike Marshall respectively, the overall sound—and Grisman's far ranging musical vocabulary remains intact. His musical blends continue to make perfect sense. *Dawgma* is a unique fusion of bebop jazz phrasing over a hard, swinging rhythm. Bluegrass rhythms drive *Bow Wow* and the 11 minute *Thailand*, which is stunningly arranged, avoiding the monotony that can render long instrumentals unlistenable. *Sea Of Cortez* mixes Latin jazz with swing and *Mugavero* shows O'Connor, barely out of his teens, as a formidable guitarist as he duels with Grisman's mandolin. Fiddler Darol Anger is excellent throughout.

The Grisman sound has a life all its own and it's still developing, with the same sort of creativity and vision that led Monroe to his fusion nearly half a century ago.

RICH KIENZLE



Record Reviews

Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner
Porter & Dolly
RCA AHL1-3700

The photo on the cover of **Porter And Dolly** shows Porter in an ornately embroidered, snow-white leisure suit, and Dolly seemingly standing next to him in a flowing white gown, wearing one of her more contemporary and subdued wigs. Together, the two of them look odd and lifeless, like those little hard candy bride and groom figurines you sometimes see on top of a wedding cake. Standing nearly toe to toe, they look like they're about to dance a minuet.

Actually, the twin photo credits on the back of the album explain why they look so bizarre and lifeless; they never posed together for the photo at all; instead, individual pictures of each of them were pasted together to make it look that way.

Fortunately, on the ten tracks of **Porter & Dolly,** the two of them *do* actually sing together. This strong duet material was actually recorded four or five years ago, back when the two of them were still on speaking terms. The recent, long-delayed release of **Porter & Dolly** is, in fact, part of the out-of-court settlement of a long, bitter lawsuit that the two of them had against each other.

It's actually a credit to Porter, or whoever's responsible, that this album did finally see the light of day. It showcases some solid material from that now long-gone Parton/Wagoner era. For Parton fans, there are here some fine, previously unreleased Dolly Parton originals, like *Beneath The Sweet Magnolia Tree, Daddy Did His Best* and *Little David's Harp.* The most outstanding song on the LP, however, is *Singing On The Mountain,* a spirited gospel song that was written by Porter. There is also a revealing Parton/Wagoner composition called *If You Go I'll Follow,* which unfortunately is not sung with much energy—or conviction.

There's no getting around it. With **Porter & Dolly,** Porter Wagoner, who once made Dolly Parton famous, is now unabashedly riding on her coattails. But at least he's doing it with some sense of taste; and at least he's brought us **Porter & Dolly,** a good solid album of dated, but nonetheless good material that deserves to be heard.

BOB ALLEN

Asleep at the Wheel
Framed
MCA-5131

Swing is a term that commonly comes to mind with the music of Asleep at the Wheel. Lead vocalist, Ray Benson, favors the word "eclecticism," but whatever you want to call it, it cooks. Despite a number of personnel changes, the gang continues to roll forward, this time treading lightly on roadhouse funk in favor of some classy uptown swing.

The newest addition to the group, Maryann Price, comes from Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks. Maryann is primarily responsible for the uptown flair, and the influence spills over onto some of the tracks where she doesn't sing lead. On *Up, Up, Up* she and Ray collaborate on the album's snazziest boogie woogie number. I'm talking about boogie woogie from the great jazz era, rather than last year's disco.

Carrying the roots of western swing to the far horizons of jazz is an ambitious undertaking, but the Wheel has been at it for a long time. Learning to write, arrange, produce, and perform authentic Big Band style show tunes is no small accomplishment. By now the Wheel has established the concept of blending the steel guitar and fiddle into a format that is characteristic of their own style, while reflecting on a vast cultural heritage.

Cool As a Breeze, composed by Benson, presents a teasin' situation, rather than a cheatin' one, in an old fashioned catch-me-if-you-can duet with Maryann. Chris O'Connell, who has stayed with the group since the beginning, turns in one of her most powerful vocal efforts with *Midnight In Memphis,* a high flying rocker that could make a strong single.

If you can dig a tune about a chick who "bubbles like a sloe gin fizz," or a night on the town with a guy who acts like a "real gone clown," you can get into this. Asleep at the Wheel aren't hip, but they're neat; they're not far out, but they're cool. Chris even takes on Loretta with *You Wanna Give Me a Lift,* trailing off at the end with some ad libbed sassiness. The familiar Ray Benson drawl gets down to the basement on the bluesy *Lonely Avenue Revisited.*

Those old 78 rpm records that the Wheel has collected have inspired some nifty original tunes, and have steered the group into continued creativity and craziness. Don't reach for the beer and pop a top for this album. Untwist a cork and savor it with some fine wine.

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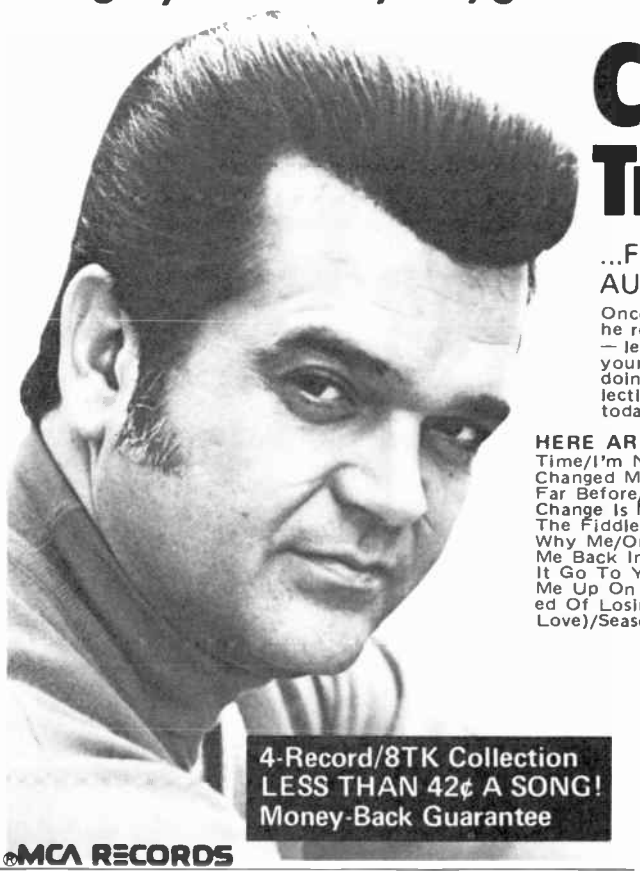

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Record Reviews

Sonny Curtis
Love Is All Around
Elektra 6E283

For years now Sonny Curtis has been known in some Nashville circles as the best-kept secret in town.

A songwriter to reckon with —*I Fought the Law* and *Walk Right Back* are among his compositions—Curtis is also possessed of a warm, easy and expressive voice and an offhand but precise vocal manner reminiscent of Roger Miller with a little Waylon Jennings added.

Unfortunately, he has run the gamut of record companies with no outstanding success—until now. Curtis' current Elektra album, **Love Is All Around,** may finally get him the recognition as a singer he deserves.

Ironically, the title cut may be Curtis' best known song, though until recently hardly anybody knew he wrote and recorded it. Puzzled? The song is the theme for the late great *Mary Tyler Moore Show*, this time pure country and a delight.

Curtis thrives on this kind of bouncy melodic tune and has picked several of them for the album. Among the best are *Eager for the Edge* and *Walk Right Back*, the song Anne Murray made famous a few years back.

Three songs in particular point out Curtis' versatility. Wedged in the middle of side one is probably the best cut on the album, *The Real Buddy Holly Story*, told from Curtis' point of view as one of the original three Crickets. It's an uptempo, talking rockabilly blues with a little of Holly's own vocal sound, and in its own way it's a love song.

In contrast there's a killer rendition of *Wild Side of Life*. One of two non-original songs on the album (the other is Paul Simon's *Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover*), Curtis' version is one delicious heartthrob. When he gets done with it, you know why the song is a classic.

His way with lyrics and his nonchalant cowboy style are a winning combination on *Cowboy Singer*, a kind of Frankie-and-Johnny-meet-Urban Cowboy story song that's hard not to play over and over again.

The album was produced by The Hit Men, a formidable group of star session pickers that includes Larrie Londin, Reggie Young, Bobby Thompson and Joe Osborne, all of whom play their brains out on the album. The production is crisp, tight and stylish, although a little more room could have been left for the occasional welcome rough edge in Curtis' own style.

LAURA EIPPER

BURIED TREASURES

by Rich Kienzle

You've gotta expect the unexpected in this business. This was supposed to be an all western swing *Buried Treasures*, but some of the records didn't make the deadline, so we'll do that next month. Happily, I always seem to have enough material around, so this month we'll just mix it up between new records and reissues.

Sometimes it seems there are so many bluegrass albums coming out that it's hard to know what's worthwhile and what isn't. One that leaves little question is **Hot Rize** (Flying Fish 206). This is an outstanding traditional band made up of the brilliant Peter "Dr. Banjo" Wernick, fiddler/mandolinist Tim O'Brien, Nick Forster on bass and guitarist Charles Sawtelle. These guys are solidly in the Flatt-Scruggs tradition and even their original material has the ring of authenticity, particularly O'Brien's *Nellie Kane*, which features his fine, pure voice. In a music where hot instrumentals are sometimes overemphasized, it's a joy to hear a truly integrated musical unit, balancing voices and instruments. I'd say they're one of the best standard bluegrass units around.

The Columbia recordings of Carl and Pearl Butler have long been considered hardcore C&W classics, especially *Don't Let Me Cross Over*. Now on CMH, their **Honky-Tonkitis** (CMH 6246) is a great extension of that tradition, with some modern instrumentation thrown in. *Motel Song* could be a great hit single; ditto for *Honky-Tonkitis*. There are also fine recreations of their best-known songs, *If Teardrops Were Pennies* and the aforementioned *Don't Let Me Cross Over*. Break out the beer when you listen to this one.

One of the most influential country acts of the last 40 years were Alton and Rabon, the Delmore Brothers. Starting out as old-time musicians on the Grand Ole Opry, they adopted blues and boogie-woogie tunes to their sound and with hits like *Hillbilly Boogie* set the stage for rockabilly, assisted by their able harmonica player Wayne Raney. Recently an album by each was reissued as it was originally released and both are as fine now as they were then. The Delmores' **Sixteen All-Time Favorites** (King 589) features their classic *Blues Stay Away From Me*, *Field Hand Man*, *Freight Train Boogie* the classic *Brown's Ferry Blues* and another rock ancestor, *Good Time Saturday Night*, most with Raney pumping away in the background. If you want to hear what set the stage for Presley, or the musicians who inspired Doc Watson, this is the one to get. Raney's **Songs of The Hills** is a magnificent LP featuring vocals, with fine country/blues harmonica (often with the Delmores accompanying). The material, particularly the haunting *Lonesome Wind Blues*, *Lost John Boogie* and *Jack And Jill Boogie* (with the Delmores) and *Gone With The Wind This Morning* are little-known but strong compositions. Raney never got the credit he should have, so it's good to see this available again.

For fans of 1950s country, a new German import set is one of the most comprehensive collections ever done. Better yet, all the recordings were cut live. **Country Oldies On The Air** (Castle 8001-8006) was taken from radio shows hosted by Red Foley. There is a staggering amount of talent here, all recorded at their prime. There's Ray Price, Jean Shepard, T. Texas Tyler, Goldie Hill, a *very* young Porter Wagoner, Pee Wee King, Billy Walker, Hank Locklin and Bobby Lord, among them. There are so many strong performances on these six records it's impossible to single them out.

And if you've been wanting to hear new recordings by Dick Curless, Wynn Stewart, Bill Phillips, Bill Carlisle, Justin Tubb and Charlie Louvin, **This Is Country Music** (Bear Family 15020) features recent material by all of them. It's $9.50. The Country Oldies are $9.98 each and the King LPs are $6.98, plus $2.00 postage from Down Home Music, 10341 San Pablo, El Cerrito, CA 94530. The Hot Rize and Carl & Pearl Butler are in most better record shops.

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2. How many times is Mexico mentioned on the label?_____

O.K. I'd like a chance to Giddy-Up to Gilley's. I've answered the 2 questions so please enter me in the Monte Alban Contest.

Name_____ Age_____
(Please print)
Address_____
City_____ State_____ Zip_____

My T-shirt size is ☐ Small ☐ Medium ☐ Large ☐ X-Large

To be eligible, you must be of legal drinking age under the laws of your home state.

Official Rules...No Purchase Required

1. To enter, complete the official entry form (print your name, address, zip code and your answers to the two questions (or use a 3" x 5" piece of plain paper, print the questions from the official form, your answers, name, address and zip code). Enter as often as you like, but each entry must be mailed in a separate envelope to Monte Alban Contest, P.O. Box 4919, Chicago, IL 60677.
2. All entries must be postmarked no later than midnight, December 31, 1980 and received no later than January 7, 1981.
3. Winners will be selected in random drawings from among all correctly answered and eligible entries received by H. Olsen & Co., an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. Barton Brands reserves the publicity rights to use names and pictures of winners without compensation. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of entries received.
4. Winners will be notified by mail. Prizes are non-transferable; only one prize to a family, and no substitution for prizes is permitted. Trip must be taken by July 31, 1981.
5. This contest is void where prohibited by law. Entrants must be of legal drinking age at time of entry. Employees and their families of Barton Brands, their affiliated companies and agencies, and wholesalers and retailers are not eligible.

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

9 mg. "tar", 0 .8 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Jan. '80.

Take the road to flavor in a low tar cigarette.

The low 'tar' with genuine tobacco flavor.

RALEIGH LIGHTS