

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1984/\$2.25

# COUNTRY MUSIC™

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**THE MONROE  
DOCTRINE**

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**Emmylou Harris**

**The Whites**

**The Judds**

**Delia Bell**

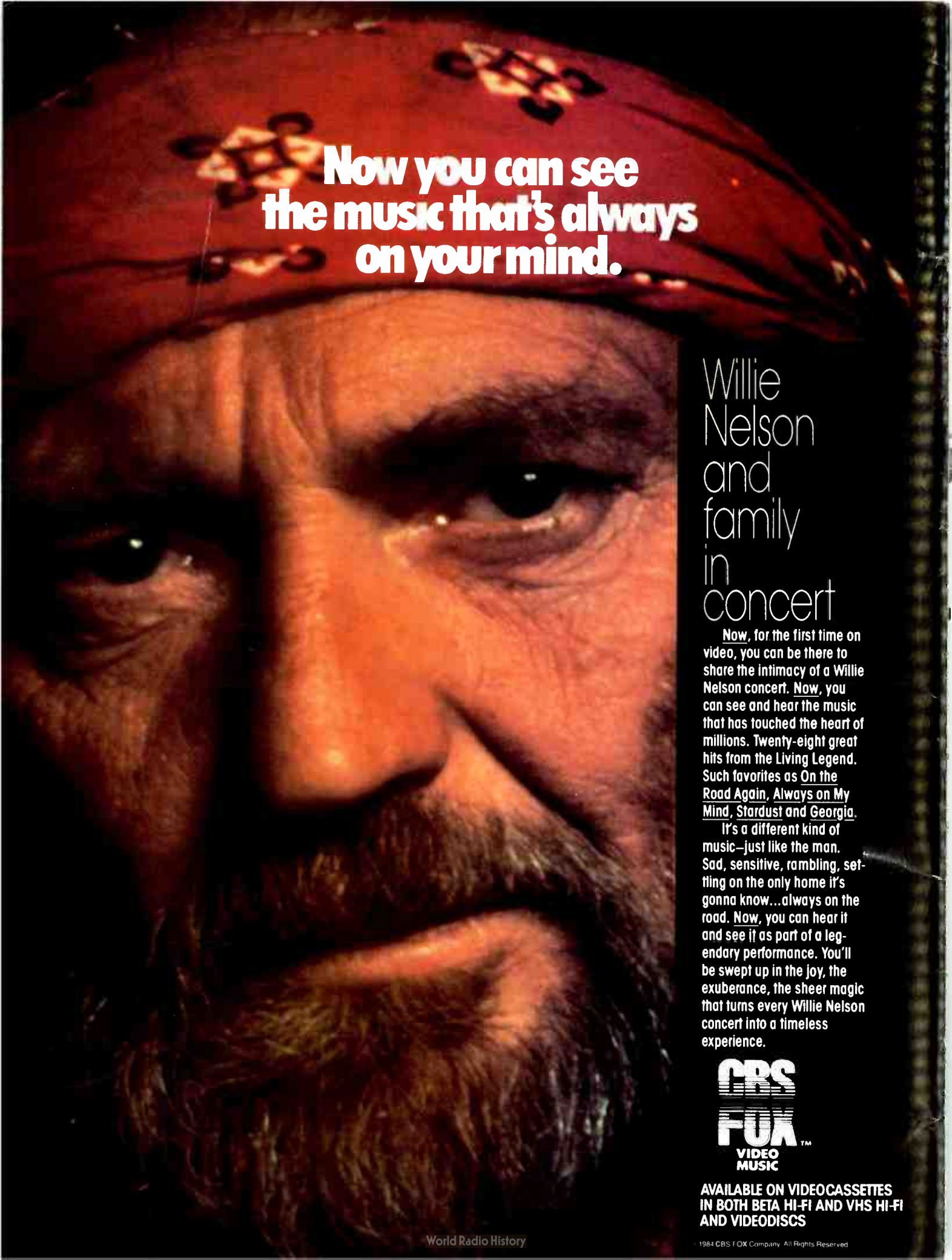
**World's Greatest  
Bluegrass Band**

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**RICKY  
SKAGGS**

**Singing His  
Own Song**

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Nelson  
and  
family  
in  
concert

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# *SOME PEOPLE QUIT*

## *WHILE THEY'RE AHEAD.*

### *GILLEY MOVES AHEAD*

## *WHILE HE'S AHEAD!*

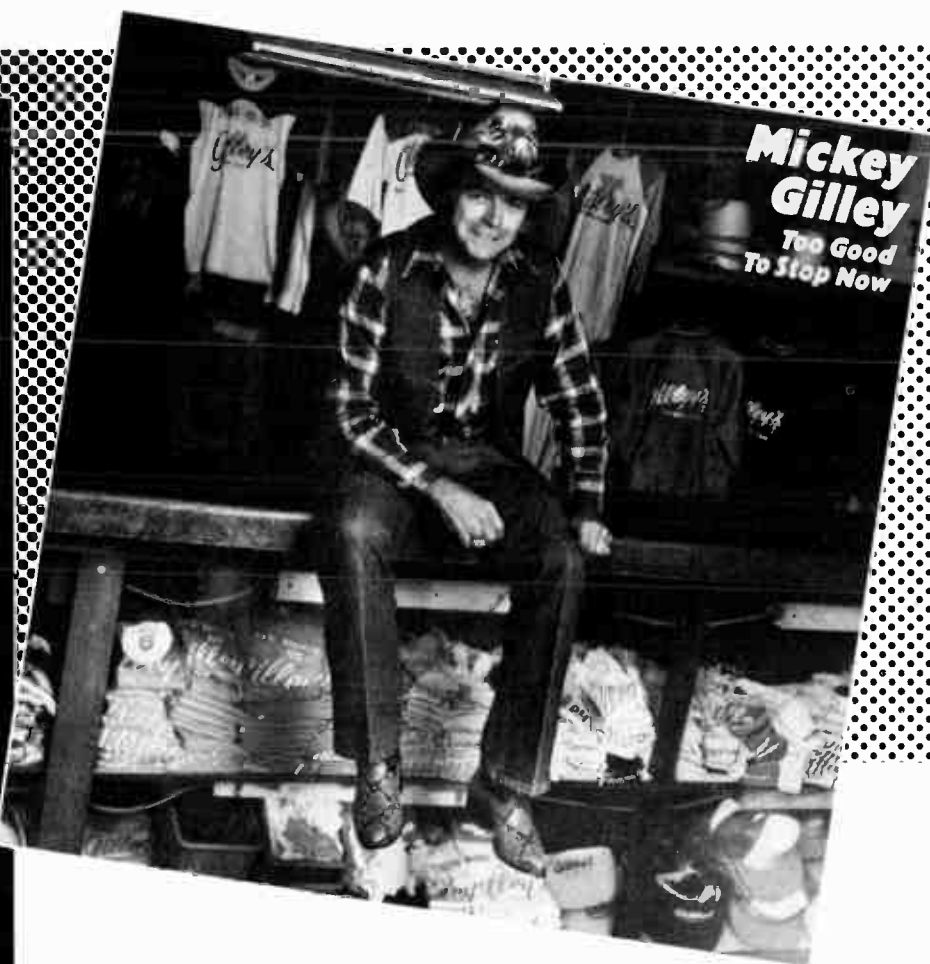
**M**ickey Gilley's new album continues his long-standing tradition of topping himself every time out!

Gilley's philosophy is to make every show better than the last... and every album his all-time finest.

On the new album, "Too Good To Stop Now," Mickey Gilley and his new producer, John Boylan, have selected ten solid songs you've never heard before. And if they all sound like they were written expressly for Gilley... you're right!

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"Too Good To Stop Now" the great new album by Mickey Gilley, featuring, "Right Side Of The Wrong Bed" and "Make It Like The First Time."



## *“TOO GOOD TO STOP NOW”*

### *The great new album by MICKEY GILLEY.*

Produced by John Boylan; On *Epic* Records and Cassettes.

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World Radio History

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*Dolly*

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Out Of My Bedroom, Woke Up In Love, God  
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Friends, Waltz Me To Heaven, Butterflies  
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Editor and Publisher  
Russell D. Barnard

Managing Editor  
Rochelle Friedman

Editors-at-large  
Michael Bane  
Patrick Carr

Art Director  
Joe Dizney

Associate Editor  
Helen Barnard

Art Associate  
Pat Stuppi

Contributing Editors  
Bob Allen, Peter Guralnick, Dave  
Hickey, Paula Lovell Hooker,  
Leonard Kamsler, Rich Kienzle, Kip  
Kirby, Mary Ellen Moore,  
John Morthland, John Pugh, Nick  
Tosches, J.R. Young

Vice-President,  
Circulation and Promotion  
Anthony Bunting

Vice-President, Marketing:  
Leonard Mendelson

Accounting Director  
George Mankes

Publisher's Assistant  
Annemarie Colbert

Office Assistants  
Bernadette Collins, James Glendon

## Editorial, Advertising and Executive Offices:

450 Park Avenue South, 10th Floor,  
New York, N.Y. 10016. Telephone  
(212) 889-4600.

## Advertising Offices:

**West Coast**, Leonard Mendelson,  
12077 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 762. West  
Los Angeles, California 90025.  
Telephone (213) 207-4948.

**Ohio/Michigan**, Pete Kelly, Peter  
Kelly Associates, 725 S. Adams Rd.,  
Birmingham, Michigan 48011.  
Telephone (313) 642-1228.

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## A Letter from the Publisher

*Readers, Writers and Pickers:*

*Our 12th Anniversary and The Monroe Doctrine  
as Interpreted by Emmylou Harris*

**T**his issue of *Country Music* marks our first, eleventh or twelfth anniversary...depending on how you look at it. *Country Music* was started by Jack Killion, Spencer Oettinger and I. Our first issue, September 1972, had Johnny Cash on the cover. So, for that reason, I think of this issue as the Twelfth Anniversary Issue. But, as long-time readers know, *Country Music* wasn't published in 1982 (all the gory details were reported in the September/October 1983 issue), so there have only been eleven publishing years. And, since we started over with the September/October 1983 issue, this is the first anniversary, second generation. We want to celebrate that, too.

There's plenty to celebrate: since last September, over 350,000 people have subscribed to *Country Music*; and the Country Music Society of America, which we started at the same time, now has more than 75,000 members, growing fast. And, since the average subscriber's copy is read by 4.3 people, we have over 1,500,000 readers...special readers.

In our Tenth Anniversary issue I wrote about you readers, our writers, and those who capture our mutual interests—the pickers. Even though that was three years ago, I'll stick with what I said:

About you readers, I said: "*Country Music Magazine* isn't for everyone. *Country Music* is for country music nuts!" I said that you are not average fans... "you are part of the cream of the crop — you are one of the elite, knowledgeable, intensely committed nuts who reads *Country Music*. We can talk this way about you and ourselves without fear of embarrassment or contradiction, since, obviously, no one else will read this except us nuts."

About our writers and editors, I said that even though they are generally skilled and experienced as writers and editors first, they are connected with *this* magazine because they are country music *fans*, too. They are still the best in the business, and re-starting the magazine with special help from Patrick Carr, Rochelle Friedman and Michael Bane and the stellar efforts of Bob Allen, Peter Guralnick, Rich Kienzle and John Morthland made the task fun, rewarding and possible.

About the pickers, I confessed that, "This magazine, its writers and editors, has always had a clear and consistent bias for tradition and rebellion, and against 'crossover pop'."

We were solidly behind "The Outlaws," Waylon and Willie and the boys "when Nashville wished they'd shave and get haircuts." We are still behind them even now that they are more like "in-laws," even if Willie sings with Julio Iglesias and plays Radio City Music Hall...because they still stand for tradition in country music. And I confessed that even though we constantly complain that country music is going to the "pop crossover" dogs and Nashville executives seem to have cornered the market on the world-wide supply of violins, there is always a new crop of "hard country" singers waiting in the wings. Then, peeking over the hill were the likes of John Anderson and Ricky Skaggs, who have proved our point and now stand on the top. I said that when the Urban Cowboy craze had blown over, which it has, we would still be left with people like Hank, Jr. and Moe and Joe and Charley Pride and Charlie Daniels and Merle and Cash and Dolly and Loretta and Conway and Tammy and George...*Country Music* nuts know I don't mean George Burns or George Washington...and Bill Monroe and Emmylou...

Speaking of Bill Monroe and Emmylou Harris, this whole issue can be viewed as a tribute to them. Just as the Outlaw Movement dominated country music of the 1970s, the contemporary force of bluegrass-influenced country music dominates the present. Whatever we end up calling it...perhaps The Monroe Doctrine, this movement, exemplified by performers like Ricky Skaggs, The Whites, The Judds and The Kendalls, owes its solid foundations to the 50 year example of Bill Monroe and the 10 year leadership of Emmylou Harris. More words will add nothing to The Bill Monroe Legend — the musicians' musician. As for Emmylou, her career stands for the quiet, consistent, powerful demonstration, through her own music and through her support of other musicians, that all traditional country music forms can be made fresh and contemporary and commercially successful without "crossing over" ...the same point The Outlaws made. She eloquently reveals her thoughts to Michael Bane in this issue's Twenty Questions. No one in country music, man or woman, has proved these points more clearly or more influentially over the last ten years than Emmylou Harris. So, I'll just close by encouraging everyone, readers, writers and pickers alike, to read what she has to say.

—RUSS BARNARD

RAY CHARLES & WILLIE NELSON

RAY CHARLES & MERLE HAGGARD

RAY CHARLES & GEORGE JONES

RAY CHARLES & JANIE FRICKE

RAY CHARLES & JOHNNY CASH

RAY CHARLES & RICKY SKAGGS

RAY CHARLES & MICKEY GILLEY

RAY CHARLES & OAK RIDGE BOYS

RAY CHARLES & HANK WILLIAMS, JR.

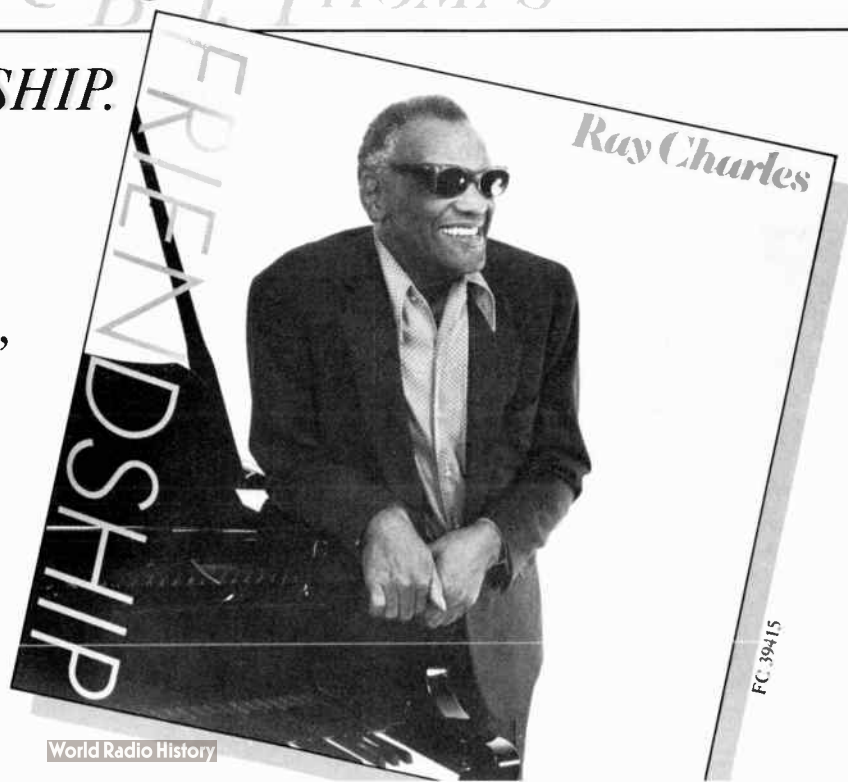
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**THAT'S FRIENDSHIP.**

*The new Ray Charles album with everybody, featuring the single "Rock And Roll Shoes" with B.J. Thomas.*

On  Columbia Records and Cassettes.

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# Letters

## Correction, Please

Dear Russ,

I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight about certain errors of fact in the article about Floyd Tillman in your May/June issue.

The biographical sketch for Jimmy Dickens was 129 words long. The one for Floyd was 150 words long. And it *correctly* states (contrary to what Floyd recalls and Mr. Morthland reports) that Floyd joined, not formed, the Blue Ridge Playboys and that he was born in Oklahoma but grew up in Texas.

Red Foley, Jimmie Davis, Pee Wee King, Merle Travis, the Sons of the Pioneers, Tex Ritter, and Vernon Dalhart (post humously) were all elected to the Hall of Fame while living outside Nashville—not just Bob Wills and Gene Autry.

On the current slate of nominees for the Hall of Fame, eleven out of fifteen artists are from outside the greater Nashville area.

Since Nashville is the capitol of Country Music and the primary center of Country Music business, it seems only natural that somewhere around 50 percent of the Panel of Electors would live in the Nashville area.

Floyd Tillman has been a finalist in the nominations for the past few years. Others have also been in and out of the top five before becoming the honoree. In the history of the Hall of Fame, no one has ever failed to be elected once he or she has been among the five finalists.

I have been personal friends with Floyd and Frances for many years, and I feel they know how the election process works. I also know Mr. Morthland is very knowledgeable and an excellent writer. I am sure there was no intention on anyone's part to give inaccurate information.

Jo Walker-Meador  
Executive Director  
Country Music Association

*John Morthland replies: I stand corrected on the facts, which I should have double-checked with a second source. However, I stand by the point Floyd and I were trying to make, which is that the awards seem biased towards artists identified with Nashville, even though for many*



Floyd Tillman

*years the city was no more important as a business center of country music than were Chicago, Cincinnati, Atlanta, or the states of Texas or California. —J.M.*

## When the Dust Has Settled

Would like to thank you for the article about Floyd Tillman. I knew him when he was at Robbins Air Force Base in Georgia. I had not seen him for over thirty years. Then when I was at Gilley's on July 4th, 1983, it was announced he would be next on stage. I couldn't believe it was the same Floyd Tillman. After the show I was able to talk to him and took his picture.

Dixie G. Callaway  
Macon, Georgia

## Return Mail for Roadhog

Dear Mr. Roadhog,

I can't find the words to express how your article made me fill. I am a big fan of the Cadillac Cowboys, and when I say big, I mean big ...5'2" and 250 lbs.

Thank you mity much for the advice about becomin' a Country Star! I new there was somethin' wrong, but I thought I was a holdin' my mouth wrong!

I know you will be thrilled to know that my favorite color is "stripes" and fish my favorite food. Fish is a "brain food," ya know. Some folk say I don't eat enough of it. But what do they know. Whi, look at you. Those sardines you like sure has done a lot for you.

My greatest ambition is to be just like you, except for one little problem. You are male and I am female, and I like it that way. So guess I could never be just like you. But I will always be your fan.

Tennessee Hillbilly

## Hot Tip for Tillis

I read the article on Mel Tillis in your March/April magazine. I know that that's what's happening to older stars in general. Our local radio stations are not playing their music either. But I hope Mel gets the word that the jukeboxes keep his latest, "New Patches," playing constantly: two good songs on one record.

Catherine Lorantos  
Lexington, Missouri

## Hanging in With Hank

As Dave Hickey points out in his "Glass Bottomed Cadillac" in the March/April issue, everyone has his or her own Hank Williams. But, in my opinion, there are too many people who would like to speak for Hank. They speak for or against him, but they all have one thing in common...they never really knew Hank Williams. Hank never got close enough for anyone to know him, much less his thoughts. Hank was a loner, he liked it that way.

Although I may not agree with everything said or written about Hank, I am proud of one thing: the name Hank Williams is just as alive today as it was 31 years ago.

Hank spoke to all of us through the recordings that he made. These recordings stand on their own merit.

Rick Owens  
Montgomery, Alabama

*Rick is the founder and organizer of the Hank Williams Memorial and a Chapter President of the CMSA. The cover photo of Hank on the March/April issue was from Rick's collection. —Ed.*



# CHARLY'S COMIN' ON STRONG!



## CHARLY McCLAIN

*...is comin' on strong...in concert, in her hit duets with Mickey Gilley, and now on her strong new album, "Charly"!*

*Charly's musical talents have never had a better showcase than this. "Some Hearts Get All The Breaks," "When I Get Home To You," "Hearts Like Mine," "I Know A Good Thing When I Feel It," "Come Back (When You Can Stay Forever)," and much more.*

*There's only one "Charly."*

*The new Charly McClain album on **Epic** Records and Cassettes.  
Produced by Norro Wilson for Chucko Productions.*

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I am carving a statue of Hank Sr. He is solid pine and stubborn as a mule, but I intend to make a lasting tribute to this great man. I started out carving with an axe, hammer and chisel. Then a friend felt sorry for me and gave me a chain saw. I burned out the clutch on the saw and had to resort back to the chisel. In all, I have burned up three saws and one sander, broken one wood chisel, and suffered severe cuts on my hands, but I keep on resurrecting old Hank. I have a lot of work to do, but your magazine helped me immensely.

Sam Massey  
Page, West Virginia

*Keep on chippin', Sam.—Ed.*

### Digging Al Dexter

Thanks for the article on Al Dexter in the May/June issue. I feel you should have written more about his life. You played down his "other 63 recordings." Besides "Pistol Packin' Mama," he had five other No. One songs, according to *Billboard Magazine*: "So Long, Pal" and "Too Late to Cry" (1944), "I'm Losing My Mind Over You" (1945), and "Guitar Polka" and "Wine, Women and Song" (1946). And shouldn't it also be noted that most, if not all, his band members were black?

Thanks for a great magazine, and let's see more on what the old timers are doing while they're still alive.

Gordy Brown  
Lynn, Massachusetts

*We hear you, we hear you.—Ed.*

### Friendly with Freddie

I am seventy-eight years of age: born in the Indian Nation, now Oklahoma, and raised up in Wills' and Guthrie's Oklahoma Hills. I played harmonica at ranch gatherings and dances all across the Okie state while Bob Wills was making one-night stands and playing picnics and rodeos. My oldest daughter went to school with one Freddie Hart. We have lost track of him. Can you fill us in?

Clarence Chief Parker  
Yuba City, California

*You're in luck. Check the People section for an update on Freddie Hart.—Ed.*

### Lingering Lefty

The letter from Junior Cox about his cousin, Lefty Frizzell, in your March/April issue brought back a flood of memories for me. In the days before Lefty was truly famous, Junior Cox and I were part of a gang of teenagers who

hung around the front of the City Cafe in Dexter, New Mexico to listen to Lefty play. We'd also all run home from whatever we were doing to catch the *Lefty Frizzell Show* on KGFL from Roswell at 2 P.M. We knew he was great, but I don't think any of us realized then that he would become a legend.

John Gaylon Barton  
Ajo, Arizona

My picking partner, Joe Knight, played on the Lefty Frizzell re-issues, soon to be released by Bear Family Records. He also played on the *Marty Robbins Files* series, both mentioned by Rich Kienzle in Buried Treasures in the May/June issue. Bear Family Records has asked Joe for copies of the photos he took during those early 50's sessions with Lefty; they plan to use them on the re-issue jackets. No one else took pictures at those sessions, 1949-1956 at Beck's



Studios in Dallas, not Ft. Worth, as Rich states.

Joe and I are touring now with Jerry Clower.

Beverly King  
Madill, Oklahoma

### Elvis Lives, Hickey Dies

I am deeply unhappy with the record review of *Elvis: The First Live Recordings* by Dave Hickey. Why would you let this man write this? I am really appalled and my husband is also. Oh, I don't deny Elvis was very sexy, but that isn't the reason I have been a fan since 1956. Elvis was very special, and it was the voice, not the body or movements.

June Kline  
North Lewisburg, Ohio

I have been fuming for two weeks over Dave Hickey's review of *Elvis: The First Live Recordings*. To begin with, before he even considers the record, he admits that he dislikes Elvis. He's as biased as I am—but I don't do record reviews. Second, maybe there were a lot of males who couldn't handle Elvis' very sexy, seductive style, but they aren't stupid enough to discuss it in print.

It bothers me that he couldn't just stick to the record. I have this record — and 60 other Elvis Presley albums — and it is rock 'n roll history at its best. Even my eleven-year old daughters were amazed to hear how he sounded then.

Sue Myers  
Little Rock, Arkansas

Elvis did not *end up* playing Vegas, he *chose* to play there and drew all kinds of people from all over, not just thrill seekers and groupies. Even though Mr. Hickey does not like Elvis, he should give him the credit he deserves.

Millie Tropf  
Bell City, Missouri

Well, Mr. Hickey, I hope you know how much of a fool you have made of *yourself*! You sound like a very jealous man! I love Elvis Presley, mostly because he was not the way *you* said he was! There's a lot more to Elvis than what you call "sexual appeal"! He was a very loving and generous man! He loved his fans and he showed it! I still can't believe *Country Music* printed such an offbeat article!

Anna Emory  
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

### Last Word Department

I just finished reading Dave Hickey's review of Elvis in the May/June issue.

Cancel my subscription at once!

Beverly Martin  
Joplin, Missouri

### Fair Warning

I would like to respond to the letter in your May/June issue about the George Jones Fan Club in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. I was George Jones' personal manager in 1982. Before that, in 1981, I was given a five-year contract as president of the fan club. Now George will not give information about himself for the newsletter, as the contract calls for him to do. His attorney is negotiating to purchase the fan club from me at the present time.

Gerald Murray  
Muscle Shoals, Alabama

In October 1983 I joined the Graceland Fan Club in Memphis. I was to receive photos of Elvis and a newsletter. So far, I haven't received anything. I've written to them several times. The last letter came back stamped "Moved: no forwarding address." Please inform other readers of your magazine, so they won't lose their money.

Glenda Ewing  
Powell, Ohio

*We'll let you tell them.—Ed.*

## Too Many Top Stars

Just finished reading Letters. You're doing a great job, but I wish you'd give some of the little known singers a break. I get tired of so many letters about the top stars. You read about them in everything you pick up, and it's like old news.

Hayes McDowell  
Desert Hot Springs, California

*We know. We're working on it. —Ed.*

## One More on Willie Anyhow

Anytime Willie comes to our neck of the woods, there are three generations of us there to see him, and my three-year old granddaughter, Star, enjoys it just as much as we do. Here is a snapshot of her with Willie at his '84 concert in Charlotte. She says he is her Willie and she is his Star.

Alwynne Young  
Gastonia, North Carolina



## Bravo B.J.

Thank you for a great story about B.J. Thomas in your May/June issue. I think he is the best singer of all time. I have seen two of his concerts, in Dwight and in Joliet. Both times he had great shows.

Lorraine DuBois  
Wilmington, Illinois

B.J. has always been a favorite; his voice is unique. I appreciate the depth and feeling Bob Allen expressed for his subject.

Katie O'Kelly  
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

I think B.J.'s long hair and tight jeans are A-OK!

Sue Mitchell  
Eaton, Indiana

B.J. Thomas is as nice as he seems in all his interviews. I am enclosing a photo of us taken at a recent concert. Several women managed to get up on stage, giving B.J. roses and getting a kiss



before the security guards were able to shoo them away.

Sandie Bateman  
Hudson, Massachusetts

## The Ft. Payne Foursome

Thanks so much for the feature article on Alabama in the May/June issue. The cover photo was great too. I have attended four of Alabama's concerts. One was a two-hour drive from my home: yes, it was well worth it! I don't care how many studio musicians these four guys use or have used on their recordings; when they're in concert, their talent and their love for their music and their fans come shining through.

Diane Housley  
Russellville, Arkansas

It appeared to me that Bob Allen not only dislikes Alabama, but did his best to try and insult them and put them down. If the man were a critic or the article were a review, I could almost understand printing it, but it was supposed to be a story-interview, not a six-page opinion.

Robin Howard  
Kennesville, North Carolina

You must want to alienate the hordes of Alabama fans who, like me, will probably never pick up another issue. Bob Allen is so lacking in journalistic talents that he resorts to petty name-calling, i.e. "Frog Prince" and "Goldilocks Herndon." Believe me, Alabama fans are not interested in Mr. Allen's personal critiques of the appearances of the members. His talents (or lack thereof) are more suited to some of the grocery store check-out rags, as I've never encountered a less professional article in any magazine, anywhere, of any type. He sounds like a frustrated sourgrapes hack.

Anita J. Gallion

*Bob Allen replies: At least when I called them names, it was in good-natured fun.*

*However, I do not detect the same tone in your remarks about me. —B.A.*

I would like to point out several inaccuracies in your article on Alabama. First of all, Myrtle Beach is *not* in North Carolina; it is in *South Carolina*. South Carolina is proud of Myrtle Beach and the fact that Alabama started there. You also said that Randy and Teddy grew up in the country "shucking" peas. Here in the South, you *do not* "shuck" peas, you "shell" peas. "Shucking" refers to corn. I just thought I would enlighten you Northerners to the ways of the South!

Daisy Hodge  
Sumter, South Carolina

*Bob Allen, a Southerner, replies: Alabama knows full well where Myrtle Beach is, and I do too. I must have been dreaming about the Smoky Mountains, and while typing away at 60 miles an hour, South inexplicably came out as North. Thanks for your comments on "shell" and "shuck." I'll have to take this one under advisement. Where I'm from, in Maryland (just a few miles south of the Mason-Dixon line), we sometimes do say "shuck" when we shell the peas from our garden. —B.A.*

My cousin, Roger Murray, is from Athens, Alabama and wrote a couple of songs for the group. This is something I'm very proud of. I wish Alabama all happiness and good luck and hope they keep recording a long time.

Jimmy D. Brooks  
Clinton, Maryland

I just want to say to Alabama, "You do the South justice. I wish you the best of luck in the future, and ain't it great to be 'Southern Born and Southern Bred.'" Woo-ha.

Susan M. Schomp  
Moncks Corner, South Carolina

## And in Conclusion

I just finished my first reading of the May/June issue. It was pretty good, although I must say I've heard enough about Alabama. Every time I open any publication devoted to country music, there's Alabama. I never was a very big fan of theirs, and now I'm even less so.

How about doing an interview with Reba McEntire? My sister and I prefer the real country singers, like Reba, George Strait, George Jones, and, of course, Hank Williams.

Dena Kay Warren  
Blair, Oklahoma

*Which brings us right back where we started from. Look for Reba McEntire in our next issue. —Ed.*

# People



Tammy Wynette also shared some marital bliss when her daughter Gwen was married to Zachary Nicholas recently. Tammy was coheadlining with Eddie Rabbitt at the Harrah's Marina in Atlantic City where the ceremony took place.

## WEDDING BELLS

Who says that people aren't getting married anymore? Wedding bells rang for a happy couple at this year's Fan Fair when **B.W. Sipes** and **Edith Newsome** of Albuquerque, New Mexico were married at booth #431. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev. **Jimmie Snow**; the booth was singer **Billy Blanton's**. Of course the couple love each other; they also share a love of country music, so they decided to tie the knot at Fan Fair. This was the first wedding in Fan Fair's history.

It seems that love was in the air at Fan Fair this year. During the Fair **Charly McClain** announced plans to marry soap star **Wayne Massey**. They met while filming a video for Charly's single "Fly Into Love." And, apparently that's exactly what happened. There was a kissing scene in the video, and by the time the video was finished, the two had become "close friends."

**Ed Bruce** and **Eddie Rabbitt** are already happily married (not to each other), but that didn't stop them from helping out at some of their friends' weddings. Ed came up with the perfect wedding gift for his friends **Sis Wolaver** and **Grady Osborne**: his hit tune "Love's Found You and Me," which he sang for them as they tied the knot in Tennessee. Meanwhile Eddie Rabbitt gave his physical fitness trainer the gift of a honeymoon trip to Las Vegas during Eddie's headlining engagement at the MGM Grand Hotel there. Another member of Eddie's organization, his lead guitarist **Tom Kozić**, decided to get married during Eddie's stint there. Eddie attended that wedding and threw a surprise reception for the couple in his hotel suite.

## ODD COUPLES

Remember when country stars and pop stars seemed to come from two different worlds? Remember when coun-

try music singers couldn't get to first base with pop audiences? Remember when country stars couldn't get on TV or into the movies? Remember when 95% of pop audiences didn't even know who **Willie Nelson** was? Well, all that's a thing of the past now. We don't know if it's due to Willie's bridging the gap between country and pop music, or if it's because country music has become a billion dollar industry; we prefer to think that all these people have finally come to their senses. In any case it seems that everyone is getting into the act these days, from pop and rock singers appearing on country stars' albums and in their videos, to movie actors recording country albums.

For example: **Ronnie Milsap** has finished his new video "She Loves My Car." Ronnie got some help on this project from the likes of **Britt Ekland**, **Rebecca Holden** (of *Night Rider*) and **Tattoo** (from *Fantasy Island*.) Also included in the film is the guitar player/ lead singer from the group **X**.

**T.G. Sheppard**, who has gone the way of unlikely duets before (remember "Make My Day" with **Clint Eastwood**), has now teamed up with folk/pop singer **Judy Collins**. Their song, "They Say You Can't Go Home Again," was released in late summer and appears on both T.G.'s and Judy's current albums.

And, **Robert Duvall**, the Oscar-winning star of *Tender Mercies*, has just completed his first country album, produced in Nashville by none other than **Chips Moman** (Willie's producer). Duvall recorded with some of Nashville's most famous pickers and even got **Waylon Jennings** to lend his voice on some harmonies. The album will appear on Triad Records, the label owned by Moman, **Buddy Killen** and **Phil Walden**. Although Duvall wrote several of the songs for *Tender Mercies*, none of his original material will be included on this album. But don't fret, Duvall's already preparing for his next one and says he might include some original songs there.

by *Rochelle Friedman*

# People Pix

Many people guest starred at Willie Nelson's 4th of July Picnic this year, including his favorite songwriter, Kris Kristofferson.



# People

## LEGENDS REAP MORE AWARDS



**Jimmie Davis has received all kinds of awards, but the Doctor of Music Degree from Louisiana State University was a special honor.**

Even with all the awards shows on TV and polls in fan magazines, the legendary stars of country music are sometimes overlooked. But this year, Hank Snow and Jimmie Davis, two of the great ones, got their due from two prestigious organizations.

Hank Snow received The Tree of Life Award from the Jewish National Fund this year. The award was presented during a testimonial dinner concert at the Opryland Hotel. Hank was the first recipient from the entertainment world. A spokesperson from the fund said "The award given by the Jewish National Fund to Mr. Snow stems from his long-time service to the music industry and his efforts on behalf of humanity with regard to his foundation for the prevention of child abuse."

No stranger to awards, Mr. Snow is already a member of the Nashville Songwriter's Association, the Songwriter's Hall of Fame, the Canadian Hall of Fame and the Country Music Hall of Fame. Nine years ago he received the Silver Cup Award in honor of his 25th anniversary with the Grand Ole Opry.

There are honors and then there are honors. Former Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis was recently awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Music from Louisiana State University.

Always a lover of country and gospel music, Davis worked his way through college playing guitar on street corners. He says, "I'd pass a hat and play until a

cop would chase me off, and then I'd go to another corner." While attending LSU, he played in a quartet, The Tiger Four, and literally sang for his supper. While teaching at Dodd College he began composing country music and shortly thereafter became a full-time professional country and gospel singer, with his first release on Victor in 1929.

"Nobody's Darling But Mine," "Sweethearts or Strangers," "Mansion Over the Hilltop," and the Louisiana state song, "You Are My Sunshine," all were penned by Davis.

This award wasn't the first for the former governor. He was named Gospel Singer of the Year in 1958 and elected to the Songwriter's Hall of Fame in 1971 and the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1974.

Davis has recorded over 50 albums throughout his career, and has just completed his debut release on the RiverSong label entitled "Mem'ries."

Legend in her own time, Dolly Parton, along with her *Rhinestone* co-star Sylvester Stallone, were honored with stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Hollywood Blvd. This event marked the first time that two stars have ever been awarded during the same ceremony.

## KIDS, KIDS, KIDS

When Crystal Gayle co-hosted the Academy of Country Music Awards

Show, her five month old daughter Catherine Claire Gatzimos made her national television debut. Escorted by Mr. T., little Catherine Claire watched while Mom presented the honors.

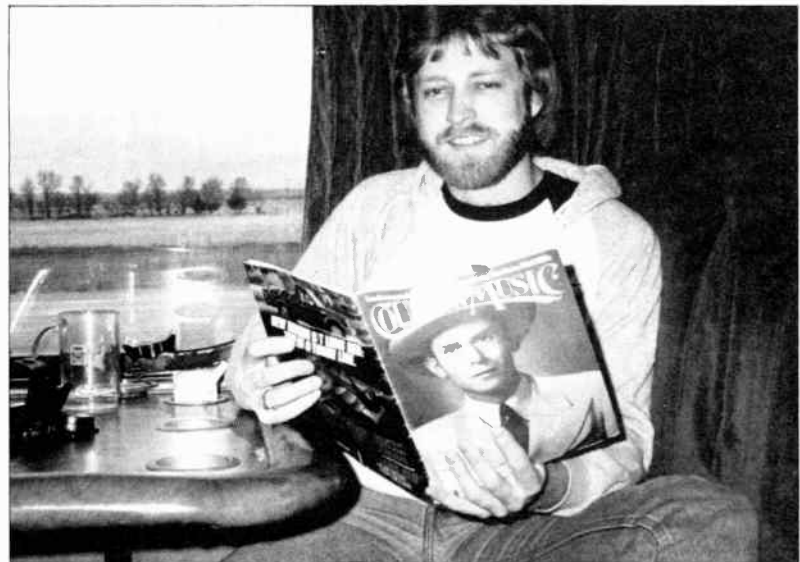
Another daughter of a famous singer, Barbara Mandrell's Jaime, was on hand to give her viewpoint on life on the road during a guest lecture on country music by Ricky Skaggs. Ricky and his wife Sharon White drove his tour bus to the Goodpasture Elementary School and invited the 75 students to hop aboard for an hour of show and tell.

## MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC

Which song would you think has been played more than any other in 1983? According to BMI, Broadcast Music Inc., the most played song of this past year was "Islands in the Stream," written by Robin, Maurice and Barry Gibb, also known as the Bee Gees. "Islands in the Stream," recorded by Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers, was the only country single to sell more than a million copies last year and was a big hit on the country, pop, easy listening and nostalgia radio stations.

Another song, one which Waylon Jennings thinks is very special, is "Cowboys Don't Cry." Waylon says that the legendary Hank Williams had a shoebox that he put things in, including the words to that song. Waylon recently

## GOOD READING



**Ever wonder how artists pass the time on the road? Well, Bandana's lead vocalist Lon Wilson catches up on the latest in country music by reading America's favorite Country Music Magazine.**

# People

## MIRROR IMAGES



Can you pick out the real Hank Williams, Jr.? The one in the middle looks awfully like him. But then again, it could be the second one from the left. Or maybe it's the last one on the right. Wrong, Hank, Jr. isn't in the picture at all. From left to right are fifth to first prize winners in the Annual Hank Williams, Jr. Look Alike Contest in Alabama.

performed the song at the Ryman (home of the original Opry) for the TV program *Country Comes Home*.

Speaking of the Opry, bet ole Hank never imagined that just anyone could go there and make a recording. Well, it's true. Opryland now has a recording studio, where for \$9.95 you can walk away with a cassette of yourself singing along with pre-recorded instruments on any one of 92 country, pop, rock or Christmas standards. So, if you've ever wondered what you would sound like on tape, here's your chance.

## TRAVELING WOES

You think it's easy traveling all over the world? Just ask some of your favorite artists. They'll tell you that they aren't exempt from the hassles of airline and driving problems.

When Exile flew into the San Diego airport recently for their concert date at nearby Del Mar, they found that their equipment hadn't made the same plane. They decided to wait for the next flight which was carrying their luggage. But, as showtime neared and the equipment still hadn't showed, headliner Lee Greenwood sent a helicopter to pick the boys up. They left the airport without the equipment and used Lee's for their show. Yes, they did finally get word from an airline representative who said the equipment was en route.

Tammy Wynette suffered similar

problems when she flew into Nashville from an engagement in Dallas to appear on the *Music City News Cover Awards* TV show. Her luggage was lost, including her new designer gowns which were packed away in the bags. All Tammy had was the jeans she was wearing. So the designer was called. He quickly finished a new dress, had it flown in from the West Coast the afternoon of the show and taken to the Opry House by police escort. It arrived exactly 14 minutes before Tammy was to take the stage.

Well, now Hank Williams, Jr. owns his own Lear jet, which carries him from one concert date to another. But before the purchase he and his Bama band landed in Tokyo at the start of a two week tour minus *both* luggage *and* instruments. They were routed to another part of the world. During the opening night performance, Hank, Jr. and band had to wear other people's clothes and use borrowed instruments and stage equipment. They did receive their baggage the next day.

Wonder if all these artists traveled the same airline. Well, it probably wasn't TWA because Hank, Jr. is set to tape a one-hour program for their in-flight entertainment selections. Hank's not the first one to do this; Pinkard & Bowden are also featured in a one-hour comedy program on United Airlines. These programs are featured on flights worldwide.

Traveling problems do not always happen in the air. Larry Gatlin was

another artist who had some difficulties before the *Music City News Cover Awards* show. Larry was driving to the final rehearsals for his co-hosting duties when his car simply gave out on the highway. Luckily he was able to push it to a nearby 7-11 store where he first asked a woman mail carrier if she would give him a lift to the Grand Ole Opry. She couldn't because the truck she was driving was a federal vehicle and only federal employees were allowed to ride in it. Just as he was calling for help, a fellow pulled up in an exterminator truck. Larry explained his problem and the driver said he was glad to oblige. So Larry got to the Opry House on time, driven in a truck with a "big bug" on top.

## FANS ACROSS THE WATERS

When the Osmond Brothers landed at London's Heathrow airport for their appearance at this year's Wembley Festival, they were greeted by over 500 screaming fans. The crowd created such chaos that airport authorities ushered both crowd and Osmonds to a private room where they wouldn't interfere with other travelers. When the Brothers finally reached their hotel, police were forced to rope off the sidewalk in front because the volume of people spilled onto the street.

This really shouldn't surprise anyone because the Osmonds have a huge following in Europe. Not too long ago, the

Osmond Family European Fan Club came to Utah for their seventh annual three-day visit with the family. The Osmond Wondertour provided movies and slide presentations of the family, tours of their studios and a barbecue hosted by The Osmonds themselves.

Country music in Bulgaria? Well, according to *Rock & Roll Confidential*, writer Terry Todd was there doing a story for *Sports Illustrated* and found out that country music is an integral part of that country's weight-lifting training. The lifters listen to it both during and between their 38 weekly training sessions, and are particularly fond of **Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson**.

**Lee Greenwood** seems to be a hit in the United Kingdom. "The Wind Beneath My Wings" has risen to the 40s on the British Top 200 music chart. The cut is included on his British MCA album, *Somebody's Gonna Love You*.

## MILESTONES

**Tammy Wynette** has been selected as one of only five female performers to be profiled on the upcoming PBS-TV special, *Women in Song*. The two-hour film will be directed by Academy Award winner Peter Werner, with 20 minutes devoted to each artist. Tammy shares the spotlight with **Donna Summer, Melissa Manchester, Roberta Flack and Christine McVie**.

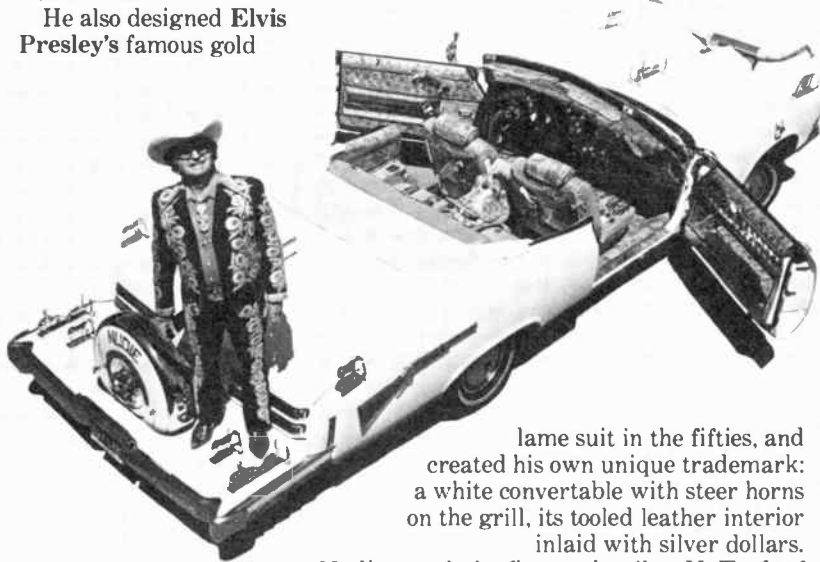
**Eddie Rabbitt** celebrated his 10th anniversary as a recording artist recently. Eddie's just finishing up his eleventh album, *The Best Year of My Life*. Eddie says his continued success is due to the fact that he issues only one album per year, and takes five months off to write, record, mix and master it. He remembers that when he was a kid he was continually disappointed by the number of filler songs found on albums. So he won't put out one himself now that just has a couple of hits. Eddie's current single, "B-B-B-Burnin' Up With Love," was only recorded as a demo in his Nashville studio, The Garage. However, Eddie and Warner Bros. Records were so pleased with the results that they mastered the demo (it was never re-recorded) and issued it as the first single from his upcoming album.

**Ricky Skaggs** was honored by two magazines recently. He was voted one of 500 outstanding Americans under the age of 40 by *Esquire Magazine*, and will be featured in the special year-end issue "The Esquire Register." In addition *Performance Magazine* voted Ricky "Country Breakout Artist of the Year" in

## NUDIE: 1902-1984

**Nudie Cohen** didn't write the song "Rhinestone Cowboy," but he certainly helped create the image. A former boxer, the Hollywood-based Cohen was America's premier western tailor from the late forties until he died at age 82 on May 11, 1984. The name Nudie conjured up images of elaborately tailored suits, garnished with rhinestones and sequins, in eyeball-blasting color combinations. Some artists said the older suits weren't particularly comfortable to wear, yet artists like **Hank Williams, Sr., Hank Snow, Little Jimmy Dickens, Freddie Hart, Hank Thompson, Ernest Tubb** and **Bill Anderson** paid small fortunes for Nudie wardrobes.

He also designed **Elvis Presley's** famous gold



lame suit in the fifties, and created his own unique trademark: a white convertible with steer horns on the grill, its tooled leather interior inlaid with silver dollars.

Nudie wasn't the first such tailor; **N. Turk** of Hollywood was there first. But those garish outfits were so identified with Nudie's Rodeo Tailors that they became generically known as "Nudie suits." Though they lost favor in the seventies, when business suits and outlaw denim took center stage, they gradually regained popularity as artists like **David Allan Coe** found reassurance in the traditional Nudie suit. Some ridiculed Nudie's wares, but he gave country performers a style and identity that will keep his memory alive. Regardless of who makes it in the future, the Nudie suit will endure. —RICH KIENZLE

an industry poll. The award is based on readers' votes for the hottest new country act.

**Lee Greenwood's** new single "God Bless the U.S.A." has garnered the attention of several groups around the country; even the White House called to inquire about Lee's availability to perform the patriotic tune (Lee wrote the song) for **President and Mrs. Reagan**.

## TIDBITS

- After performing together in concert a great deal and recording a duet together this year, **Barbara Mandrell** and **Steve Wariner** have become good friends: such good friends that she asked Steve to donate some clothing for her

museum. Steve obliged with a full tuxedo from his wardrobe, which Barbara now has on display in her Nashville museum, **Barbara Mandrell's Country**.

- **Mickey Gilley** is moving on. Nineteen years ago Mickey purchased a home for \$15,000. Today he's waiting for his new \$2.3 million mansion to be built on 19 acres — about five minutes from his famous club, Gilley's. The estate includes a lake, a five-car garage, tennis courts and a jogging track. Gilley says that he and his wife will keep the \$75 Sears record player he bought when he got married. He says it still works.

- Country music and politics have been mingling for some time now. Recently Presidential hopeful **Gary Hart** spent a



## CMM Update

### Freddie Hart

whirlwind day in Music City prior to the Tennessee primary. His guide was **John McEuen** of **The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band**. Both from Colorado, John made sure that Mr. Hart saw all of the sights including a guest appearance on *Nashville Now* and a trip backstage at the Opry to meet **Roy Acuff**.

• **Jane Fonda**, move over. Aerobics is the new craze now, so how about aerobics to country music? The *Good Morning Houston* TV show reports that their exercise segment has been keyed to **Conway Twitty** tunes since February and that over 200,000 viewers are working out with him. They've used such Twitty hits as "Tight Fittin' Jeans," "We Had It All," and "Slow Hand."

• Grand Ole Opry veteran **Paul Howard**, leader of the western-swing oriented **Arkansas Cotton Pickers** and one of the pioneers in bringing electric instruments and drums to the Opry, died of a heart attack in Little Rock, Arkansas. Howard was 75, and had long suffered from congestive heart failure. Born in 1908, Howard first came to the Opry in the early forties, and along with **Pee Wee King**, pioneered western music on the show. In the process he also discovered legendary instrumentalists, including guitarist **Hank Garland**, and steel guitarist **Billy Bowman**. Howard left the Opry in 1948 to join Shreveport's **KWKH Louisiana Hayride**, where he worked with **Hank Williams**. In recent years he had been a regular on the *Old Timers* show, sponsored by the **Country Music Foundation**.

### TRIBUTES

In early June **Merle Haggard** performed a special tribute to his heroes, **Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys**, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the group's live daily **KVOO** Radio show in Tulsa. Haggard and his band drew a standing-room-only crowd at the legendary **Cain's Ballroom** in Tulsa where he played an hour of Bob Wills tunes that were broadcast live on **KVOO** in the same time slot as the famous shows of yesteryear.

The shoe is on the other foot in California. We don't know if Merle knows about it, but the **California Country Music Association** is campaigning for Merle to be inducted into the **Country Music Association's Hall of Fame**. Their newsletter has a petition form with room for twenty names and addresses. They intend to gather completed forms and submit them to the **CMA** in Nashville.



In 1971 **Freddie Hart** was riding high on the charts with "Easy Lovin'," his first number one hit record. He enjoyed more top ten hits and two Grammy Award nominations for his songwriting, through the mid-seventies. It seemed that Freddie had hit on a winning formula.

The success he enjoyed was well deserved. No flash in the pan, Freddie had come up the hard way, born one of fifteen children to a sharecropping family in Alabama. His childhood wasn't what you would call "comfortable." He ran away from home more times than he can count, sleeping in ditches and city jails for shelter. He held a number of jobs before the age of twelve, and at fourteen enlisted in the Marines, where he played in various NCO clubs. After his discharge, life still wasn't all peaches and cream. He worked as a bouncer in a rough nightclub, washed dishes and worked in a small band with **Bud Wilson**, playing school houses and waiting to break into the big time.

It wasn't until Freddie met **Lefty Frizzell**, in 1951, and sold him couple of songs that Freddie's career finally took off. At that point, he signed with **Capitol Records**, but it took him twenty years to reach the number one spot. All the while, Freddie kept on plugging, writing songs for other stars, **Porter Wagoner**, **Carl Smith** and **Patsy Cline** among them.

Finally, "Easy Lovin'" was discovered. It was one of those twists of fate that happens often in the music business. Freddie was about to be let go from his contract with **Capitol Records** when a DJ in Atlanta started playing "Easy Lovin'" from an

album just released by **Capitol**. The word spread, and soon the song was a favorite among radio stations across the nation.

It seemed like the good days were here to stay, and Freddie became a major star. But, nothing lasts forever (especially in the music business). During the late seventies Freddie was just barely hitting the charts. He had some moderate success on independent labels, but really wasn't sure that they were 100% behind him.

Today, though, he couldn't be happier. Freddie has hooked up with **Buddy Killen** and the new **Triad Records** label, and as of this writing is waiting for the release of his new single, "My Favorite Entertainer." Freddie is very pleased to be associated with a music business veteran like Killen. "He's one of the finest producers anywhere. One of the most creative and knowledgeable people in the business," Freddie says.

He's equally proud of his new band, **The Heartbeats**, whom he calls "real pros; each one plays two or three instruments." They've put together a brand new show and tried out "My Favorite Entertainer" on stage. "We played it before it came out to kind of preview it, and it got standing ovations. We played it on the *Ralph Emery Show* not too long ago, and we got great response to it."

The follow-up single is ready too, and an album is soon to be released. Freddie wrote "My Favorite Entertainer" and a few of the other cuts on the album but says that some songs on the album will be by other writers. "The song's where it's at. I try to look around in Nashville and find the best writers there."

About his absence from the studio, Freddie says, "I was just kind of waiting until we got the right producer and the right song and getting everything all put together."

Well, now that that's happened Freddie, who still lives in California, is looking forward to buying a home in Nashville, too, where his band and his bus, **The Easy Lovin' Express**, are already in residence. He's also getting ready to take his band, and his show, and his songs out on the road and back into the music halls.

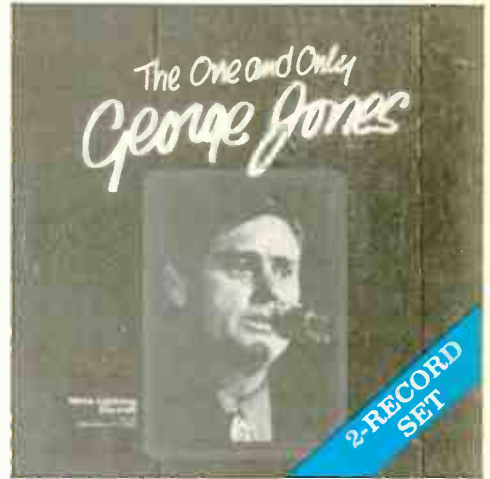
—R. F.

Nashville Warehouse  
presents their

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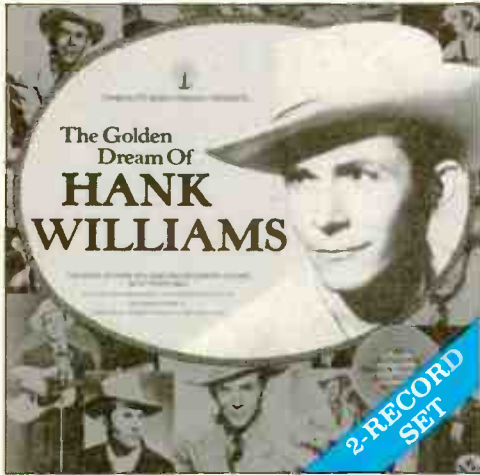
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White Lightning/The Treasure Of Love/Nobody's Lonesome For Me/Why Baby Why/Oh Lonesome Me/When Two Worlds Collide/Honky Tonkin/Aching, Breaking Heart/If You've Got The Money/Heartaches By The Number/Accidentally On Purpose/Singing The Blues/I Love You Because/Sparkling Brown Eyes. LP No. R3K (No Tapes Available)...A \$9.98 Value...Now Only \$6.98



### THE GOLDEN DREAM OF HANK WILLIAMS

Hey Good Lookin'/You Win Agin'/Cold, Cold Heart/Hulf As Much/Crazy Heart/Take These Chains From My Heart/Your Cheating Heart/Kaw-Liga/No One Will Ever Know/Jambalaya/I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry/I Saw The Light/Mansion On The Hill/Lovesick Blues/I Can't Help It/My Buckets Got A Hole In It. LP No. R3A (No Tapes Available)...Only \$7.98



### JERRY LEE LEWIS

Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On/Great Balls Of Fire/Chantilly Lace/Drinking Wine Spo-Dee O'Dee/Me And Bobby McGee/Another Place Another Time/One Has My Name/To Make Love Sweeter For You/Sometimes A Memory Ain't Enough/There Must Be More To Love Than This. LP No. R4H (No Tapes Available)...Originally \$6.98...Now Only \$4.98



### THE GRANDPA JONES STORY

Sweet Dreams Of Kentucky/My Carolina Sunshine Girl/Eight More Miles To Louisville/Old Rattler/Mountain Laurel/I'm On My Way Back Home/There's A Hand That's A-Waiting/Old Camp Meeting Time/Closer To God Than Ever Before/You'll Make Our Shack A Mansion/I'm, On My Way Somewhere/Rosalee/Gone Home. LP No. R1E (No Tapes Available)...Originally \$11.98...Now Only \$9.98.



### THE BEST OF LORETTA LYNN

To Make A Man/Take Me Home Country Roads/Here I Am Again/Satin Sheets/Blueberry Hill/I Walk Alone/Once A Day/If Teardrops Were Pennies/Woman Of The World/Delta Dawn/I Wanna Be Free/Legend In My Mind/Why Me Lord/Oh Lonesome Me/Johnny One Time/Just A Closer Walk With Thee. LP No. R5A 8 TK No. T5B (No Cass.)...Originally \$6.98...Now Only \$4.98 Ea.



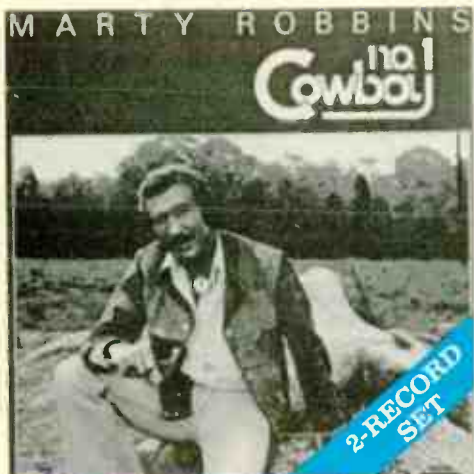
### THE BEST OF ROY CLARK

Thank God And Greshound/I Never Picked Cotton/When I Was Young/On The Tips Of My Fingers/Somewhere Between Love And Tomorrow/Make The World Go Away/I Miss Someone/September Song/Roy's Guitar Boogie/Ghost Riders In The Sky/Somewhere, My Love/Sweet Georgia Brown. LP No. R4K (No Tapes Available)...A \$6.98 Value...Now Only \$4.98



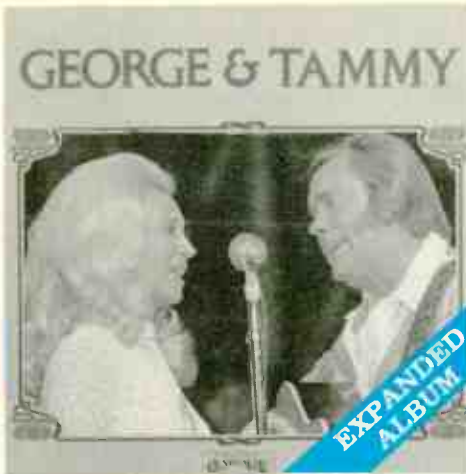
### THE BEACH BOYS SUMMER FUN

Fun Fun Fun/I Get Around/Little Honda/Then I Kissed Her/California Girls/Help Me Rhonda/Barbara Ann/Don't Worry Baby/Dance Dance Dance/409/Hushabye/Do You Wanna Dance/Surfin' U.S.A./Summertime Blues/Louie Louie/Surfer Girl/Tell Me Why/Surfin' Safari. LP No. R3B (No Tapes Available)...Originally \$6.98...Now Only \$4.98.



**MARTY ROBBINS NO. 1 COWBOY**

El Paso/El Paso City/The Hanging Tree/Red River Valley/ Streets Of Laredo/San Angelo/All Around Cowboy/Tumbling Tumbleweeds/The Fastest Gun Around/Meet Me Tonight In Laredo/Mr. Shorts/They're Hanging Me Tonight/Cool Water/Strawberry Roan/Ballad Of The Alamo/Big Iron/Running Gun/Five Brothers/Old Red. LP No. R21/Cass. No. C2J (No 8TK)...Only \$9.98 Ea.



**GEORGE AND TAMMY**

George Jones And Tammy Wynette: Golden Ring/We Loved It Away/We're Not The Jet Set/We're Gonna Hold On/The Ceremony/George Jones: The Grand Tour/Her Name Is .../Tammy Wynette: D-I-V-O-R-C-E/Bedtime Story/Stand By Your Man. LP No. R2D/BTK No. T2E (No Cass.) ...Originally \$6.98...Now Only \$3.98



**WAYLON JENNINGS:**

Are You Ready For The Country/Them Old Love Songs/So Good Woman/Jack Of Diamonds/MacArthur Park (Revisited)/I'll Go Back To Her/A Couple More Years/Old Friend/The Same Old Lover Man/One Of My Bad Habits/Willie And Laura Mae Jones/It Should Be Easier Now/Do No Good Woman/Unsatisfied/Sweet Dream Woman LP No. R1N/Cass. No. C10 (No 8TK)...Only \$9.98 Ea.



**STARS OF THE GRAND OLE OPRY 1926-1974**

Pee Wee King: San Antonio Rose/Bill Monroe: Orange Blossom Special/Hank Snow: I Don't Hurt Anymore/The Carter Family: I'm Thinking Tonight Of My Blue Eyes/Grandpa Jones: Old Blue/Kitty Wells: How Far Is Heaven/Jim Reeves: Four Walls/Porter Wagoner: Carroll County Accident/Dolly Parton: Mule Skinner Blues. LP No. R3F (No Tapes Available)...Originally \$8.98...Now Only \$5.98



**DOLLY PARTON & PORTER WAGONER**

Together Always/Love's All Over/ Christina/Poor Folks Town/Ten Four - Over And Out/Lost Forever In Your Kiss/Anyplace You Want To Go/Looking Down/Forty Miles From Poplar Bluff/Tomorrow Is Forever/ Just Someone I Used To Know/Each Season Changes You/Silver Sandals/No Love Left/It Might As Well Be Me. LP No. R2A/Cass. No. C2B (No 8TK)...Only 9.98 Ea.



**DOLLY PARTON: JUST THE WAY I AM**

Just The Way I Am/Little Bird/But You Loved Me Then/My Blue Ridge Mountain Boy/In The Ghetto/Daddy Come And Get Me/The Carroll County Accident/Gypsy, Joe And Me/ Mine/Chas/When Possession Gets Too Strong/I'm Doing This For Your Sake/Don't Let It Trouble Your Mind/More Than Their Share/Mama Say A Prayer/Down From Dover. LP No. R1Y/Cass. No. C1Z (No 8TK)...Only 9.98 Ea.



**GOOD OLD BOYS**

Freddy Fender: Before The Next Teardrop Falls/David Allen Coe: You Never Even Called Me By Name/Joe Stampley: All These Things/Ray Price: You're The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me/Moe Bandy: Hank Williams: You Wrote My Life/B.J. Thomas: Hey Won't You Play Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song. LP No. R5C (No Tapes Available) ...Originally \$6.98...Now Only \$3.98



**SURF AND DRAG**

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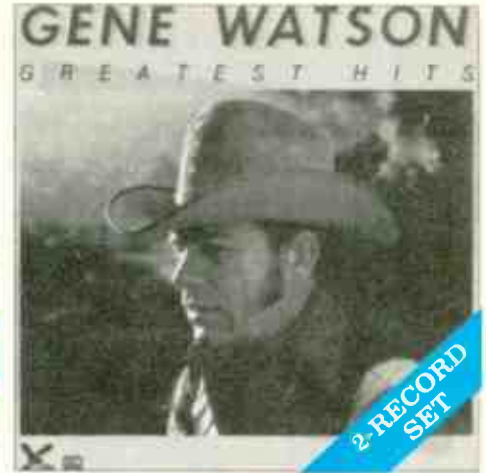
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# THE MONROE

**B**ill Monroe invented bluegrass music, literally. He took from traditional string band music and black blues, added dazzling instrumental work, driving rhythm, precise vocal harmony...and fire. Thousands and thousands of musicians, professionals and amateurs over the last 40 years have studied, copied and performed Bill Monroe's music. Literally thousands of bluegrass bands exist. No other specific popular music form can claim influence as wide-spread over such a long time. But for all its influence on musicians, it never achieved major commercial impact until...the new ambassadors re-interpreted The Monroe Doctrine.

Emmylou Harris, may be called Secretary of State for the new am-

bassadors of The Monroe Doctrine. Her steadfast example shows how bluegrass and other forms of traditional country music can be made contemporary and commercially successful without compromising its roots. Her generous encouragement of musicians like Ricky Skaggs, The Whites, Delia Bell, Rodney Crowell, James Burton and others deserves high praise. On the following pages we present a closer look at Emmylou and some of Bill Monroe's other ambassador's new and old.

First, Michael Bane asks Emmylou 20 Questions which she answers frankly, with high intellect. Next, Patrick Carr meets The Phenomenon: Ricky Skaggs. Not since The Outlaw Explosion ten years ago has anyone knocked Nashville on its

## The Boss with...Emmylou



## ...Ricky Skaggs



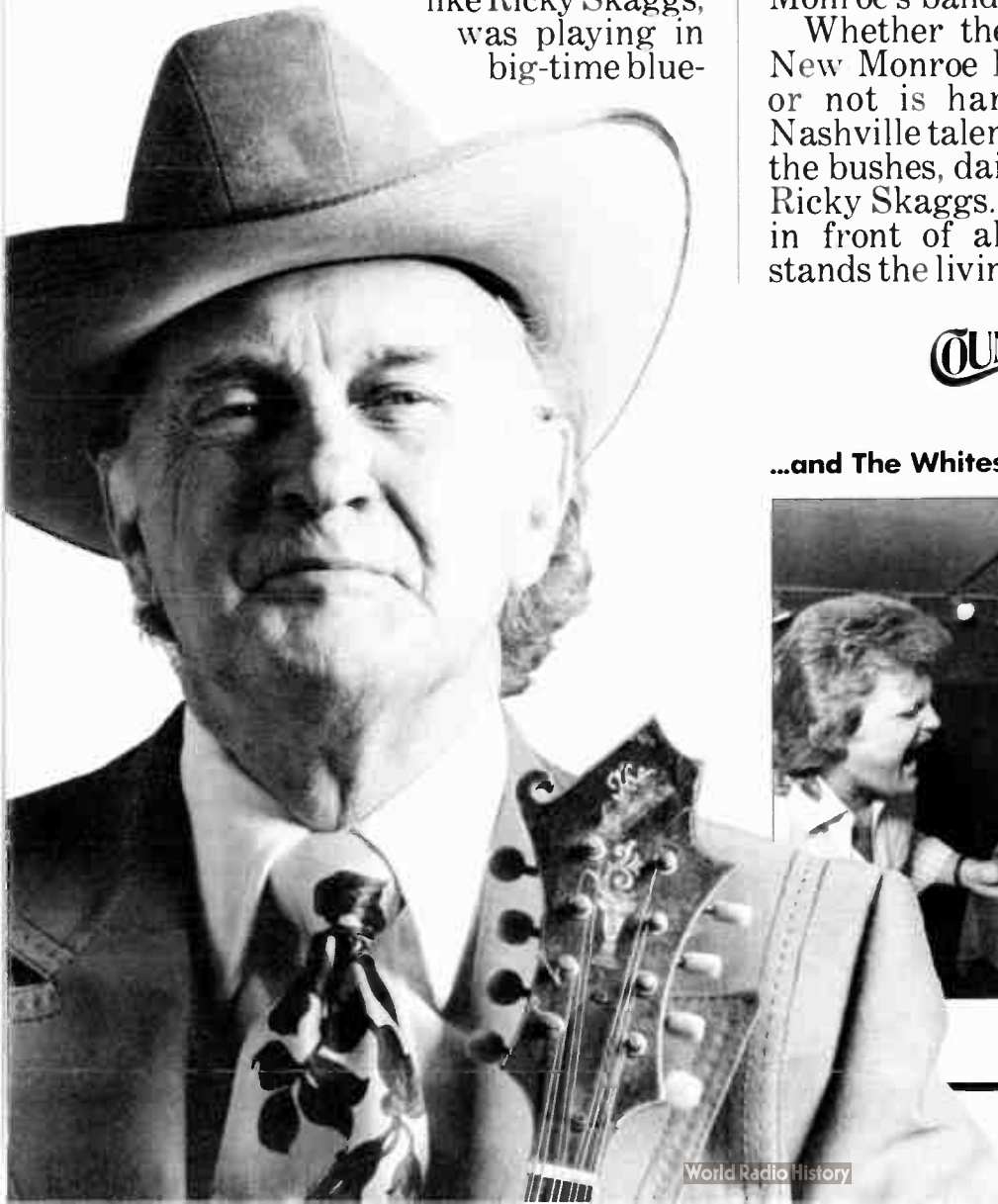
# THE MONROE DOCTRINE

collective bottom the way Ricky has. Patrick also tells us about The Whites' rise from just down home folks to still down home folks. Bob Allen traces the reverse pilgrimage of The Judds from the canyons of Los Angeles to the mountains of Kentucky. John Morthland examines Delia Bell's struggle for stardom. And, Marty Stuart, who, like Ricky Skaggs, was playing in big-time blue-

grass by the time he was a teenager, identifies The World's Greatest Bluegrass Band.

Cowboy Jack Clement, who sat in the control room during the birth of both the Rockabillies and the Outlaws says, "Bluegrass is it. Listen to the pickers." And, Tom T. Hall once said, "My only ambition is to pick in Bill Monroe's band."

Whether the apparent trend, The New Monroe Doctrine, will continue or not is hard to say. Certainly, Nashville talent scouts are out beating the bushes, daily, looking for the next Ricky Skaggs. What is certain is that, in front of all the commotion, still stands the living legend...Bill Monroe.



COUNTRY MUSIC

...and The Whites.



**1** When you first began performing on your own, did you always see yourself as a country music singer?

No, I did not. I was basically a folk singer. I did a little bit of original material and almost any song I took a fancy to lyrically. I didn't think much about musical style. Basically it was the lyrics I was drawn to. I got into country music later on, although I always did like bluegrass, the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers. Basically, I'd say I had absolutely no style at all in the beginning.

**2** When did you realize that country music might be heading for a much bigger audience?

I never really think about that. When I first embraced country music, as far as I was concerned, that was it. I never really thought about whether it would be accepted on a wide scale. I felt there was a large audience for country music and a younger audience because of working with Gram Parsons. People came out to see him when I was on the road with him as a background singer. I saw a fanatical group of people come out of the woodwork, so to speak, and they were responding not to . . . Gram did not play rock and roll, he really played country music with an incredible edge to it, perhaps a rock and roll attitude, but the music was very pure. So I think I've always been aware there was an underground audience for it.

**3** You produced Delia Bell's first album, which is as country as a country record can be. How did you become involved with Delia Bell?

Well, I appreciate the compliment about Delia Bell's album being a country record. Obviously that's what I wanted to do. I heard a wonderful natural country bluegrass voice in Delia Bell. I just came across her album in a bin of bluegrass albums . . . when I was thinking I was going to do a bluegrass album, and I wanted to hear what other women were doing in bluegrass because I really hadn't heard that many except for, perhaps, Rose Maddox and Wilma Lee Cooper and perhaps The Whites too, but I didn't really think of them as being really *hard* bluegrass as far as the sound. I just lucked into her album and heard her voice, contacted her first . . . to sing on my record, which she did. But I found the best blend was for Delia to sing lead and me to sing harmony. That's when I approached Andrew Wickham who was then at Warner Bros., and he got excited about the idea and gave me

# Twenty Questions with EMMYLOU HARRIS



*In addition to making her own special music, Emmylou Harris has been instrumental in finding and nurturing new talent. Ricky Skaggs, Delia Bell, Rodney Crowell and others worked with or were discovered by Ms. Harris. She's recently been traveling more or less incognito, locked away working on a very special album. We persuaded her, however, to take time out to answer 20 questions.*

by Michael Bane

a budget. She said yes, she would do the album so that's how that came about.

**4** When did you first meet The Whites? What attracted you to their music?

I met The Whites in a club that was near my apartment in Washington, D.C. I used to go down there and check out who was playing. I also played there a lot. The Whites were

quite downhome folks, and I had no idea who they were. It was one of the loveliest sounds I've ever heard. It sounds like it just comes straight from heaven. I was an instant fan and just sort of kept in touch with them. I got to do some work with them later on, which has always been a very pleasant experience for me. What attracted me to The Whites' music was the simplicity of it. Good material just sung with that wonderful blend that I suppose people can get if they're not related to each other, but if you've

got a family, people with the same blood running through their throat, it's just a wonderful, wonderful blend they have. The combination of the two girls and Buck, then, of course, their arrangements and the simplicity of their approach to the music and their harmony is so wonderful. It's just got everything that I really like in music.

**5** Talk a little about bluegrass music. Have you always been a fan of bluegrass?

I've pretty much always been a fan of bluegrass music from the time I started getting into music in my teens, because my brother was the one in the family who owned the record player and he loved country and bluegrass music. He turned me on to Loretta Lynn and Hank Williams and Buck Owens and he loved bluegrass music, too. Then, when I went to New York as a folk singer, there were a lot of bluegrass musicians in New York, it was a real pocket of bluegrass music. When I found myself in Washington, D.C., there was quite a lot of really good bluegrass music there.

**6** Ricky Skaggs was originally offered the slot in the Hot Band that went to Rodney Crowell. Why did he turn it down?

I believe that's true. Y'know, you forget these things. Obviously, when I first heard Ricky, I wanted to work with him. I loved his singing and playing. He was obviously a great talent. I believe at that point he wasn't ready to play country music . . . it's very vague in my mind and Ricky might have another story. As the years go by, things get a bit foggy. But the point was: it wasn't the right time for us to work together, and as it turned out Rodney took the job in the Hot Band and that was a wonderful association for me. Rodney and I sang great together. He had wonderful tunes. Rodney was a real driving spirit behind the Hot Band. So I was fortunate that I got to work with both of them.

**7** When did you first hear Ricky Skaggs?

Ricky, at the time I heard him, which was in the early seventies, was playing with the Country Gentlemen. I had heard about him before through John Starling of Seldom Scene I believe I met Ricky at John's house in Bethesda, Maryland, one night after they'd played the Red Fox Inn. We would usually get together and drink coffee and stay up till all hours and play music. I learned a great deal of music from John Starling and Seldom





Emmylou's backup band once consisted of Ricky Skaggs and The Whites. Now they are major stars.

Scene and met Ricky Skaggs through that association.

**8** Artistically, what did the inclusion of Ricky Skaggs bring to the music of Emmylou Harris?

Well, obviously, we got more into bluegrass. As much as I loved it, we concentrated . . . basically, what the original Hot Band and I do is borrow from country music. I longed to do some bluegrass music, but not exclusively. Obviously, I've always had a love for bluegrass, even on my records . . . things like *Satan's Jeweled Crown* on the early records . . . my wanting to use instruments like the dobro and the mandolin. I've always had this sonic vision of having more bluegrass instruments in country music—the combination of mandolin and pedal steel is an irresistible combination. But with Ricky Skaggs, we brought the fiddle into it, which before was something I just couldn't afford. Before Ricky, we concentrated more on steel and electric guitar. With Ricky, we had real, high-powered vocals and the bluegrass edge. We were able to do bluegrass tunes, and we would play a lot of bluegrass music before and after the shows which culminated in us doing the bluegrass album [*Roses in the Snow*].

**9** Why do you think the success of people like Ricky and The Whites has created such a furor in Nashville?

Furor always seems like it's kind of a bad word to me. I'm assuming that's not what you mean. I think it's incredible, wonderful excitement over something that . . . you can't really call their music new, but in a sense it is new. It's being accepted in the

mainstream of country music, and to me it is country music. It's bringing the wonderful tradition of song and sound and approach but with all the modern technology of recording we have in Nashville to make just wonderful records, really good songs, wonderful clear harmonies—the three parts and the voices are distinctive, and you get a lovely blend. Well, I just think it's good, clean wonderfully exciting music, and if it's creating a furor, it's creating a good furor which means there will be more people like Ricky and The Whites, which I think is a very healthy thing for country music.

**10** Do you think country music is ever really in danger of losing its roots?

Well, no, I don't think it is. If it does, I don't think it's going to be country music anymore. One thing cancels out the other. If one goes, the other goes.

**11** To what extent has the Hot Band, in its various incarnations, shaped your music?

Well, I have always been inspired by the musicians who have worked with me. I think we play off each other. Having James Burton in the Hot Band and having the sound of his guitar obviously shaped the sound of my records and the arrangements. It's hard to say, to be objective on this question. I've just always felt that I was fortunate to work with incredible musicians who were sensitive to the fact that the vocal in the song was first. However, I think everyone in the band also realized that we were a *band*, that I've always thought of myself as being part of the band and that we worked together as a team.

So, I think we did have a real unified sound and a sensitivity to each other.

**12** Do you think more established artists have a responsibility to help newcomers in the business?

I don't know if it's a responsibility. I think it's terribly exciting to find somebody that's new and really good, and I think most artists do. I think it's a natural reaction. I don't know any artists who wouldn't go out of their way or do whatever they could to help a new artist who excited them with his music, with the same kind of chills that we're all looking for.

**13** Do you have your eye on any newcomers now, maybe hiding a new Ricky Skaggs or Delia Bell somewhere?

Actually, no, I've really been working on my own stuff now. I'm sure they're out there, and I'll be really excited to hear them.

**14** What do you think of the present state of country music right now?

I think it's incredibly healthy. I think there's more real country music now on the radio than there was a few years ago, the kind of country music that's *my* taste. You've got Ricky and The Whites, John Anderson, The Judds, The Kendalls are still going strong. I'm sure I'm leaving out some people. Reba McEntire, George Strait . . . young people with talent who are realizing they can do real straightforward country music and are commercially successful and artistically satisfied. And that's the perfect culmination.

**15** Are there any new directions that you as an artist would like to try?

No.

**16** Of all the various music you've done, do you have a personal favorite?

Country music. I'm a country music singer first, last and always. And I don't think that's ever going to change.

**17** Do you plan to continue producing yourself?

Co-producing myself, yes. I think I reached a point where I have that much say in what I'm doing, and it's working out.

**18** Has living in Nashville as opposed to Los Angeles changed you either personally or professionally?

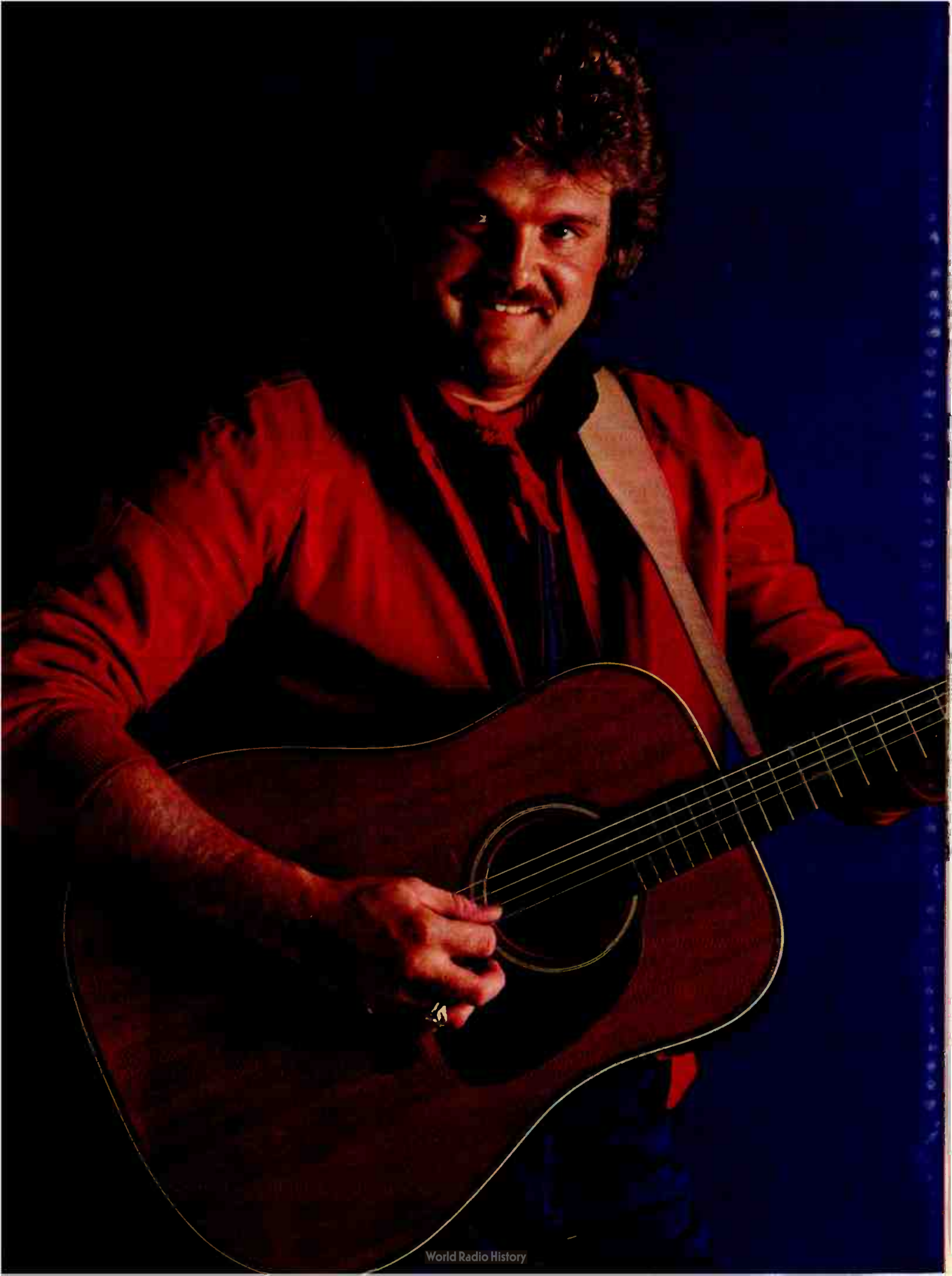
That's a question that I really don't know if I can answer. It very probably has. I think anytime you make a change in your life, adjust your place of residence, I think you change. I feel a little more organized in the way I work. I feel a bit more productive, although I think I was very, very productive for quite a long period of time. So I think the changes are probably too subtle for me to perhaps realize.

**19** When you did *Roses In The Snow*, bluegrass was still not as big a part of country as it is now. Would you like to do another bluegrass-styled album?

Probably not. I still absorb . . . there's still a lot of bluegrass influence in just about everything I do, but as far as doing another straightforward bluegrass album again, I don't really see that in the near future. I don't have plans for it. I just enjoy listening.

**20** Do you think the present bluegrass phenomenon has staying power?


I think it's always going to be around. It certainly has survived being sort of completely ignored by the music industry. Bluegrass artists have always relied on selling their albums from the back of station wagons and done incredibly well. It's worldwide, it has an acceptance. If you go anywhere overseas, you'll find that bluegrass is incredibly popular. I would like to see better distribution through major companies. I think that that's happening, I know there are people in Nashville, various record executives who are looking into that. There is a genuine effort being made to give bluegrass its proper place in the business end of music, and I think that's all very healthy. ■



# SINGING HIS OWN SONG RICKY SKAGGS

*Step by step, the boy with the bluegrass background has crept up the hill of Nashville success.*

*A hitmaker with a traditional sound, Ricky knows what he would like to do with the power he wields right now, in his music and in his personal life as well.* **BY PATRICK CARR**



**D**rifting out of sleep at the Hall of Fame Motor Inn in Music City, a reel of Hall of Fame memory footage flashes up on my screen. The night Waylon called down lightning on Nashville, after what he thought was a particularly ludicrous CMA awards show, is there in all its incandescent lunacy, of course — he stood wired in electric crucifixion against a window just like this one, facing east like a pilgrim towards the empty Ryman Auditorium while his wrath forked into the downtown heart of Tennessee. Then there is the day in '76, which turned into three days, when we journalists played the Waiting-For-George-Jones Game one more time. George never showed, but by the end of the second fifth, we *knew* we were with him in spirit. And, finally, there's the night we all swore we saw white rabbits from Memphis and the ghost of Johnny Horton.

Between these extremes of hillbilly high tension all kinds of incidents, major and minor, of hard-core fun and stone country geekdom, flicker on my memory screen. For this is a special place. It has been such

**I** hope and pray that this success lasts a long time, but if it doesn't, I'll get off the road and start producing some albums that I really want to do."

a hotbed of passionate sleaze and inspiration, such a cockpit for the wildly energetic bouts with sin and remorse of country music's finest, that when the place finally wears out (make it be soon!), the Country Music Association's new Polish the Buckle of the Bible Belt Committee is going to have to install Hank's powder-blue Cadillac in the parking lot, declare the zone a health hazard, and bronze the whole deal. Just waking up in the Hall of Fame is an adventure on Life's Other Side.

Naturally, then, I start to pick my equipment for this Hall of Fame day...dark, stain-resistant, high-impact clothing, cash for a week, blood-type I.D. bracelet, penicillin, passport, knee braces, spare pair of spectacles, hollow leg...until just as naturally it dawns on me that this is not one of those days. This is not even one of those *times*, for God's sake. Outside the Hall of Fame the sun is shining on Nashville, banners are snapping in the breeze, the boulevards are broad and tranquil, the people healthy and sober and serene. An air of peace prevails. From the country music industry, just one block west up the hill from this scrofulous hotel and traditionally just as efficient in its service of excess and unseemliness, comes the quiet murmur of labor in a righteous common cause.

Verily, this is a time of grace in country music, its keynote the confirming, prettily-picked echo of far-away hills, its tone tranquility. Today I need not fear that the execution of my journalistic duties will chop yet another year off the remnant of my life. I am to interview Mr. Ricky Skaggs, the architect of the new country comeliness, and it will be good.

**R**emember when Ricky Skaggs won his first CMA award? Remember the applause, how heartfelt it sounded, how nobody seemed to be grinning through their teeth? And wasn't there ample reason for that? Wasn't Ricky a young man of classic taste and excellent credentials, a student on his way to becoming a master in a form of music — Bill Monroe's music — shared by everyone in the crowd but practiced professionally by almost none of them? This was no difficult or dubious step forward or sideways, no endorsement of a rush toward Willie's doper country or Olivia Newton-John's foreign pop; it was simply a blessing on a young man, seemingly pleasant and humble enough, who was sweetly in touch with

the collective past and doing very nicely for both himself and the music. If what he was doing turned into a trend, one supposed, he would hardly be an impossible act to follow; nobody in "country music" would look foolish featuring hot picking and covering stylish country-country tunes from the Twenties, Thirties, Forties, and Fifties, and who didn't know that stuff back to front in their heart of hearts, anyway? So yes, this was a nice new twist. Apart from being no great threat to anybody's livelihood, it sounded good and felt right.

Around the music industry, then, there was a "good buzz" about Ricky's success. Personally the boy represented no past griefs, and his ascension to the majors both proved that a hill-country sound could sell and went some way towards assuaging a minor but nagging collective guilt that had been bothering Nashville for at least a couple of decades: out there somewhere, definitely not in Nashville and therefore not in the money, every country star knew that there existed a veritable legion of country-er-than-thou musicians old and young who, if it ever came to it, could simply blow them away in a picking contest. These musicians, some of them the founding fathers of the music and others teenage prodigies burning with an almost holy dedication, operated in a netherworld of small record labels and bookish fans; lacking showmanship and therefore sex appeal, they were a constant reminder of how much these particular virtues controlled a musician's access to large amounts of money. When Ricky, a top-flight low-glitzy Bluegrass College graduate if there ever was one, finally blew through to the top with that classic hot-picked pretty high and lonesome sound (all pickin', no grinnin'), it was a relief to see some bucks going thataway at last, nice to think that maybe showbiz wasn't all jive and no juice. Country music people had been needing that kind of fix for a while, and now here was Ricky, rich and congratulated, safely in the bosom of the Nashville family.

Once he was accepted, Ricky's hits just kept on coming. Songs like "Crying My Heart Out Over You" and "You May See Me Walking," Number One hits, were not straight bluegrass tunes — very little of Ricky's music is — but they were close enough to that traditional hill-country funnybone to prompt no less a keeper of the flame than Merle Haggard to declare that Ricky was "the brightest thing that has happened to country music, and the brightest star on the horizon."

Basically, Ricky was (and is) a stylist, a lover of traditional bits and pieces which fit his tastes and talents. His most important talent is his ability to select particularly effective material, twist it up or touch it up to something approaching perfection, and, as is said in the music biz, "make it his own." Thus he will accelerate the rhythm of a Ralph Stanley song from the Forties, add a touch of Fender guitar and perhaps an extra harmony vocal, and end up with something that impacts like some sort of neo-rockabilly of his own creation but still sounds right. Like the Rolling Stones in the early Sixties, he has found an incredibly rich but underexposed musical form, dressed it up in new clothes without messing with its mainspring, and run with it to wild applause. Like the Stones' versions of the blues, his take on Appalachian country plays a whole lot more effectively in drive time than the original, and like the Stones themselves he is a consummate and caring fan of the form.

A difference, though, is that while the Stones could never be Mississippi blacks — much as they might (or might not) want to, Ricky is the real thing. Born and raised in rural Kentucky, he was playing in the Stanley Brothers' band by the time he was seventeen. Only after several years on the road in this heart of the bluegrass mainstream did he gravitate towards the Washington, D.C.-centered folk/rock/"newgrass" circuit and begin picking up his electric chops with the likes of Linda Ronstadt, Lowell George, Rodney Crowell and of course Emmylou Harris. He worked with the most respected outfits of the eminently respectable newgrass movement — The Country Gentlemen, J.D. Crowe and the New South, his own Boone Creek — until Emmylou invited him into her aptly titled Hot Band, the country-rock equivalent of signing with the Yankees. Now the boy could boast of having picked with both Ralph Stanley and James Burton.

Along the way he learned about all he needed to know — more than proficient on mandolin, fiddle, guitar and banjo, he was also a fine singer, producer and arranger — for effective exploitation of his Big Moment, the magical Signing on Epic which waits at the end of every country boy's rainbow. Sign on Epic he did, and you know the rest: hand-crafted, personally-produced, solid-gold country-country revved-up *hits*. You'd better be ready when you plug into Epic's machine, and Ricky was; after a slew of small-

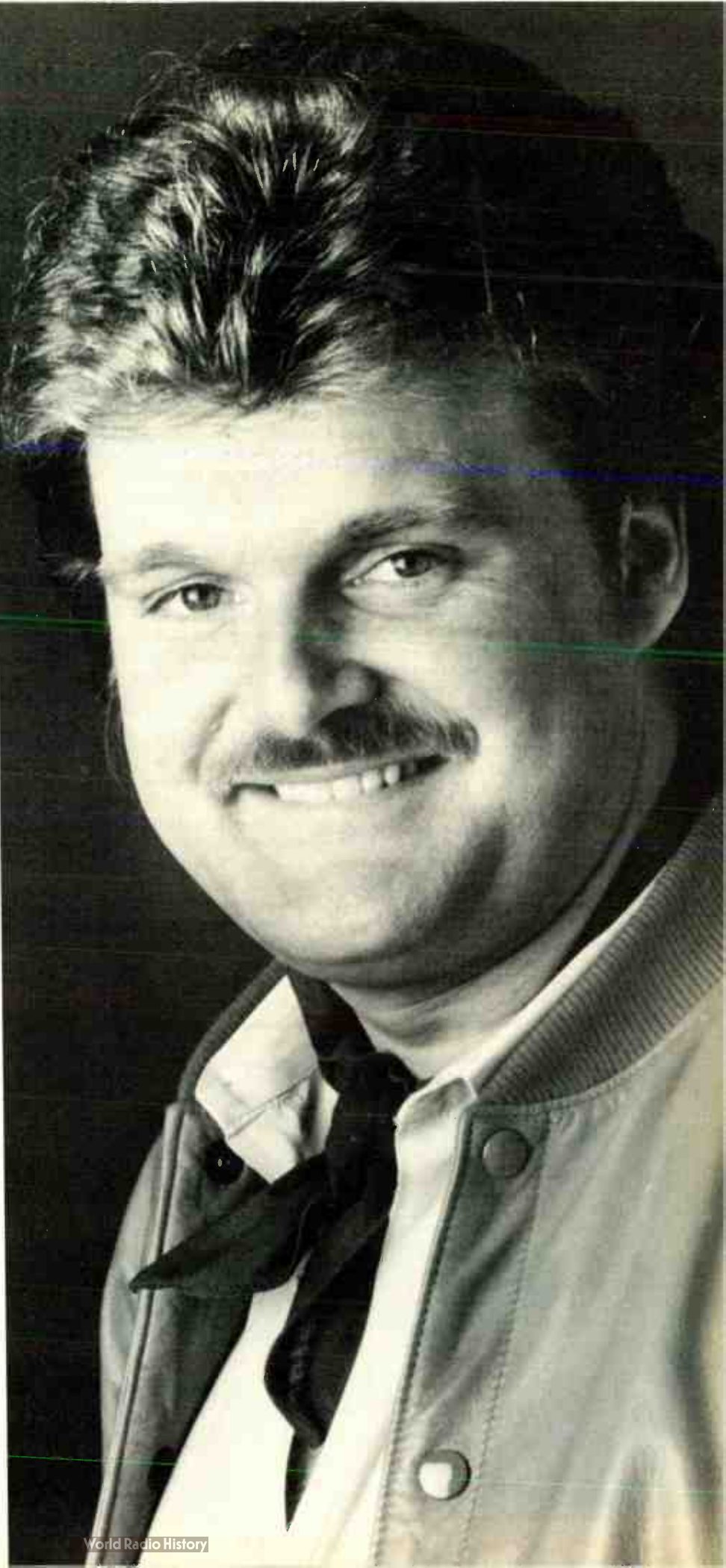
label records (and of course Emmylou's wonderful major-league *Roses in the Snow* album), his intuitions about material were straight down the beam and his recording skills were far more advanced than those of the average major-label neophyte. His first two self-produced Epic albums for instance, cost a very efficient \$50,000 apiece — by no means a fortune in modern Nashville — while producing zillions in income on the strength of individual hit songs. For Epic, it was a low-cost, high-yield, no-problem deal. They had bought a pro.

They had also bought a revelation. They knew already that Emmylou had always sold respectable numbers of records, and they knew that classic George Jones type honky tonk was a big seller, but they had no idea that the hill-country sound was going to be such an attractive item on the mass market place. When signing Ricky to Epic, senior vice president Rick Blackburn predicted first album sales of about 50,000, a solid but unspectacular figure on which further promotion could slowly build. "They had a real nice surprise when I got all those hits," says Ricky, "but it *was* a surprise."

Now, with ultimate success under his belt, Ricky notes that "I'm really in a good position, 'cause I get credited with pioneering this new country thing, paving the way, being the first one to go out there against all odds, so to speak." He is obviously proud of his accomplishments, and pleased by what he has been able to do for the music. And no, he does not suffer a guilty conscience about vamping up his musical roots. "As long as I can please Ralph Stanley and Bill Monroe," he says, "I think I've pleased just about everybody I need to please." This he has done: both men have given public expression to their high opinion of the boy. Ricky picks and sings real good, departs himself well in Christian fashion, and has opened the door for other Bluegrass College graduates. Bingo.

**Y**ou would expect an air of calm in the Ricky Skaggs organization, and an air of calm is indeed what prevails. When you call them to do an interview, you don't get any of the old "Why don't you just show up and we'll see how he feels that day?" so popular among Nashville's many cases of drug dependence and/or the big head. When you show up, he shows up too, ready and willing to talk. In my case this occurs at ten p.m. after a busy day, and it happens in an office, not a bar or some dim and

PHOTO BY LEONARD KAMSLER



# Tried and True THE WHITES

**A** float on the tide of the current interest in traditional music, The Whites are as easy-going as ever. Playing in new places, they nonetheless sound and are the same: a family group, harmonious in every sense of the word.

It used to be that when The Whites played New York City, a unique and satisfying buzz would settle over Bleeker Street, home of the rad/lib/folkie honky tonks in which they performed. Traditionally, the patrons of Bleeker Street have been none too attracted to the products of the Nashville mainstream — for them the equivalent of hell on earth, in fact, was watching more than five minutes of any old Barbara Mandrell TV special — but The Whites were different. The Whites were neither musty, bluegrass-fixated graduate students searching for escape in studied ruralism nor stage-struck banshees churning up the country on their long hard road to Vegas. They were, instead, the incarnation of an extremely elusive ideal: wonderfully skilled and graceful on stage, traditional but not all het-up about it, they were also easy, polite, humorous, and utterly charming, totally unaffected. They didn't want to tell everybody how little a brace of Mercedes 450 SLs would mean to simple country folks like themselves, or share the wonder of how the South was rising again, or preach you back to the Ramada Inn to do your bit for a lonely Country Star For Jesus; they just wanted to play you their stuff, sing you back home, and bring a little joy into your life.

And they did. The entertainment was just swell, and as maudlin and potentially sickening as it sounds (heard many campaign speeches lately?), The Whites really did make people feel good about things like God, home, family, and the country.

Any explanation of who The Whites are has to begin with the fact that they are a family—father Buck, daughters Sharon and Cheryl and sometimes youngest daughter Rosanna—who have been playing together in public for seventeen years. Back in the old days, when the band was called The Down Home Folks and before Mrs. Pat White

left the road to take care of business at home base, the whole family would take off from Buck's construction work in Arkansas to go play bluegrass festivals hither and yon. It was paying work and lots of fun, and ol' Buck, a rockabilly Volcano and Zeke Williams sideman in his misspent youth, remembers those outings with special pleasure. So do Sharon and Cheryl.

Things moved along nicely for the Whites. Buck and the construction business went their separate ways shortly after the family's move to Nashville in 1971. Five well-respected albums on small labels were made; the band played the bluegrass hotbeds of Tokyo and Dublin and Amsterdam; the sisters sang with Emmylou Harris on the *Blue Kentucky Girl* album; a deal was struck with Capitol in 1979; Sharon and Ricky Skaggs fell for each other and married in '81; another deal was struck, this time with Mike Curb; Ricky produced the first Warner/Curb Whites album; the first Warner/Curb album had hits, and The Whites were on the radio. They are now on the MCA label, and needless to say, success has not spoiled them.

Musically, The Whites are a very nice, smooth blend. Operating in the classic country/bluegrass/gospel/blues range, they add a kind of easy bop to everything they do, a loose little "we're just pickin' this" feel that slides the stuff across. A lot of this feel springs from Buck's easygoing personality — a wry old hand, he has supreme cool and friendliness—but it's also a function of Sharon's open lead contralto and, of course, the 17-year ease with which the musicians communicate. Tight is a word often used to describe this communion, but it seems totally inappropriate to such a mellifluous and mild-mannered trio (who are not in fact just a trio; their band reflects their competence and includes moreover the wondrous Dobro of Jerry Douglas). The

**BY PATRICK CARR**



Whites just swing: you name it, if it's in their basic roots-music area, and they'll swing it.

Personally, they are your basic easy-access kind of people. I particularly remember one night not long ago in the Lone Star Cafe in New York, between sets, just chatting with a quite pregnant Sharon about babies and an amusingly professional Buck about New York City building codes, then hearing Cheryl's confession that while she thinks that maybe she *should* switch from stand-up to electric bass, she's

afraid to emerge from behind the stand-up's sheltering bulk on stage...easy, open chat as the honky tonk life swirls around us, remarkable because I had just met them that morning.

I was two-thirds crocked and therefore relaxed as the dickens, but the Whites, naturally relaxed and also committed Christian tee-totalers, hardly batted an eye. Which of course reminded me of things like true Christian brotherhood and how much Jesus dug Mary Magdalen and how impressive is the virtue of tolerance when it comes in tandem with a sense of fun.

Buck's basic attitude comes across in his response to a question that night about the awkward sides of the current back-to-the-country country movement. "We never wanted to say that some things weren't country," he says. "We're just happy that there's such a wide range of listeners in country now that people are accepting the traditional again."

Buck never did drive himself or the girls crazy trying to hit the big time, either. "We never really did try that hard," he remembers. "We just wanted to be comfortable. Make a living at it, and play the music we wanted to without adding a bunch of stuff to it. We thought, well, we'd keep the band small, keep the expenses down, play good music and be happy with it."

"Adding stuff?" I ask.

Sharon replies. "We had people wanting to do something different with us, to make some money by having a hit song faster," she says.

Like more glitz, more sex, more

*"We thought we'd keep the band small,  
keep the expenses down,  
play good music and be happy with it."*



oompah overall? I ask.

Right, she tells me, and then Cheryl speaks. "Well, we are Christians, and proud of it. We like to play in churches and we play our gospel music wherever we go; that's just part of what we do. So when we moved to Nashville, we had people tell us that if we'd 'go gospel' we'd be driving a big new Silver Eagle bus within six months."

They didn't enter the gospel field — a big-oompah business if there ever was one — because they did not feel called to a gospel singing ministry. "We just told them that to us, that was no reason to go into a gospel ministry," says Cheryl. "It had to be what the Lord was leading you to do. To do it for the money—well, 'no thanks, mister.' That's *not* what we are about."

Buck adds that "we're not about to do things just for a fast buck. Music is sort of like a religion to us. It's a way of life, and we live it. We have to do whatever we do two hundred nights a year in front of an audience, and if it were something that didn't *feel* right, having the money just wouldn't be worth *that* kind of work."

So night after night The Whites travel out there, putting on warm, varied, tastefully-picked shows for all the folks who have only just heard of them, and naturally it's working well. It's a different kind of circuit from what they've been used to all these years—they're playing opening sets for various headliners, indoors, to people who know them only by their songs on the radio; there's very little of the well-worn, open-ended picking of the bluegrass circuit—and while

all the Whites miss the opportunity to play more or less whatever they feel like whenever they feel like it, Buck notes that "it's always a thrill to have people applaud on the opening bars of one of your songs," and "besides, we can always play all the other stuff at home."

Oh, yes: home. Along with Ricky Skaggs and baby Molly, the Whites are part of the congregation of the Holiday Heights Baptist church, and tickled pink about it. When they first joined, people looked at them kind of oddly

when they brought their instruments to pick in church, but as Buck says, "They did us that way for a while, but then they got into the music and liked it so well that it got to be a habit."

That got them "really loving country music and gospel music, all the old fast gospel songs and the harmony songs we used to do that came out of the old vocal groups and family acts—you know, Mama on guitar—and then Bill Monroe came over and picked with us one time, and other people...and you know, you can go over there in your overalls if you want to. That's just fine with them."

Cheryl is likewise impressed. "That's the key to being able to worship, you know," she says. "Just feeling comfortable. Nobody sets any limits; we just accept people for what they are, that kind of stuff."

That sets me to thinking that there might be worse places to be than in church with Bill Monroe and The Whites on harmonies; furthermore, it occurs to me that if *this* is the Big New Thing, a significant component of country music's future as well as its past, we fans might be in for a good time. There is no possibility—none whatever—that The Whites, at least, will ever be anything but graceful.

And ol' Buck, bless him, just rolls along...he's having fun. "They have suppers at the church Wednesday nights, and they had one last night," he says. "Chicken, green beans, gravy, hot biscuits, iced tea or coffee, and—oh, ho—chocolate pie!"



# Newsletter

## SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

### The Complete Tammy

Dear CMSA,

In the July/August issue, one of my favorites, Tammy Wynette, one of the "Roses" of country singing, is hidden by a "dandelion," the Newsletter. Why did you allow this to happen? The centerfold of Tammy looks like two halves of a picture.

**Henry E. Lloyd  
Napa, California**

*The Newsletter is in the middle of the magazine so that you can take it out. Unbend the staples and remove it. Bend the staples back. Then you will have Tammy uninterrupted, and the Newsletter too. —Ed.*

### New Society Benefits

*We are happy to tell you about several new arrangements CMSA has been able to make, enabling members to receive special discounts or, in one case, to acquire some rare, out-of-print records before they are available to the general public.*

• **New Car Discounts** CMSA members can now save money on new car purchases in two ways.

First, once you decide what make and model car you want, you can order, through CMSA, a computer printout that shows you, side-by-side, the dealer cost and the list price of the model you want and the dealer cost and list price of every option available on that model. You can then select the options you want, add up the cost and see how much that car costs your dealer. Then go to your local dealer and see how good a deal you can make. When you get the best deal you can compare it to the dealer cost figures on your print-out. The dealer's profit is the difference between the cost on your print-out and the price the dealer charges you. If you think the profit the dealer is making is fair, you buy the car. If you think the dealer's profit is too high, you may be able to order the car through CMSA at a better price.

This is the second way you can save. Through a special arrangement with a nationwide automobile broker, CMSA

members can order a new car at substantial savings off the window sticker price. Generally, you can buy American cars for \$50 to \$150 over dealer cost this way. Your car is delivered through a regular authorized dealer and is covered by the manufacturer's regular warrantee.

If you are planning to buy a car and want to try out the first step, getting a computer print-out of dealer cost for the car and options you want, you may order the print-out at the special CMSA discount price of \$12 (the general public pays \$18 for this print-out). Just send a check to CMSA Car Price Print-Out, Country Music Society of America, 10th Floor, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. You will also receive a special *New Car Buyer's Guide: How to Negotiate the Lowest Cost for Your New Car*.

Afterwards, if you want to order your car through CMSA's broker, you may be able to save \$1000 or more depending on the make, model and options you want. Write to me, Russ Barnard, directly if you're interested.

• **CMSA Auto Club** You will receive a special mailing soon describing the CMSA Auto Club. It will include a chance to enter a \$500,000 sweepstakes whether you are interested in the Club or not, so be sure to read it. The Auto Club is administered and guaranteed for us by Montgomery Ward. If you decide to join, you'll get: up to \$60 for emergency road and towing service, up to \$500 for emergency travel expenses, \$5,000 auto theft insurance and \$5,000 hit-and-run rewards, up to \$500 for legal action against uninsured motorist, free emergency phone service, personalized trip routing, service, plus discounts on hotels, motels, car rentals and much more.

Remember, you'll get a chance at the \$500,000 sweepstakes, whether you decide to join or not.

Let us know if you win!

• **Electronic Home Shopping: Big Savings** CMSA has negotiated a special arrangement with Comp-U-Card of America, through which CMSA members can buy name-brand merchandise, up to 40% off list prices: everything from watches and

cameras to musical instruments and stereo systems, from furniture and appliances to pens and pencils. You call a special toll-free number and get price quotes on almost any name-brand merchandise. Compare that to prices in stores in your area. Then, if you like the CMSA member price better, order by toll-free phone, and your order will be shipped promptly from the manufacturer's distributor nearest your home. Some examples: **Panasonic** Model CTF 1359R Color TV, list price \$419.94, CMSA price \$299; **Sony** Walkman Stereo FM Cassette Player, list price \$160.00, CMSA price \$96; **Toshiba** Countertop Microwave Oven, list price \$300.00, CMSA price \$197; **Eureka** Canister Vacuum Cleaner, list price \$149.95, CMSA price \$88. Over 60,000 items available from major brands like **Amana**, **Atari**, **General Electric**, **Black & Decker**, **Broyhill**, **Fedders**, **Frigidaire**, **Gibson**, **Hammond**, **ITT**, **Kodak**, **La-Z-Boy**, **Mattel**, **Radio Shack**, **RCA**, **Samsonite**, **Stanley**, **Sylvania**, **Whirlpool** and **Zenith**.

At today's store prices, anyone who has to buy any name-brand products can save considerable money with this service, either by buying through the service or by getting price quotes to make sure local store prices are as low as possible.

The general public has to pay \$25 to join Com-U-Card, but CMSA members can become a special CMSA/Comp-U-Card member for just \$6, provided there are 2,000 members who wish to use the service. This rate will be in effect for CMSA Charter members through the end of 1984. Later it will be around \$10. You don't have to send any money now, but if you are interested, let us know by writing to CMSA, Comp-U-Card, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016.

• **Down Home Music** One of the best places to find hard-to-get records is Down Home Music in El Cerrito, California. Many of the items featured in the Buried Treasures and Essential Collector sections of *Country Music* are available from Down Home when no one else has them. CMSA has arranged for members to receive 10% discount on everything Down Home carries, which, in addition to an excellent

## SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

country music list, includes an excellent selection of blues, jazz and early rock and roll. If you would like a list of some of their best country offerings, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Frank Scott, Down Home Music, 10341 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, California 94530. Include a note telling Frank that you are a CMSA member so that he will know you qualify for the 10% discount.

● **The Record Depot** CMSA has also arranged a 10% discount through Nashville Warehouse on everything carried by The Record Depot, a Roanoke, Virginia distributor which specializes in old-time country music with special emphasis on string band music and bluegrass. For example, they carry all bluegrass classics mentioned by Charles Wolfe in the Essential Collector: Basic Bluegrass. (See page 67 in the March/ April *Country Music* for more details.) These were not available by mail then, but you can order them now at 10% off: **Flatt & Scruggs, *The Golden Years* (CCS-101); Bill Monroe, *The Best of Bill Monroe* (MCA-4090); Bobby and Sonny Osborne, *The Best of the Osborne Brothers*, (MCA-4086); **The Country Gentlemen and The Seldom Scene** (mentioned by Emmylou Harris in the September/October *Country Music*), **Bluegrass: The Greatest Show on Earth**, a two-record set (Sugar Hill SH-2201); **Bill Keith, Vassar Clements, Tony Rice and Dave Grisman, *Something Bluegrass* (Rounder 0084); Larry Sparks, *The Best of Larry Sparks* (Rebel 1609).****

All these are \$8.98 except Bill Monroe, Osborne Brothers and *Bluegrass: The Greatest Show on Earth* which are two-record sets for \$13.95. Send your check to Nashville Warehouse, Box 536, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37075. (If you just want a catalog, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.)

● **Out-of-Print Rare Records** Want a copy of *Webb Pierce's Greatest Hits*? Including "In the Jailhouse Now," "There Stands the Glass," "Wondering"? Try to find one in your record store! Not on your life, unless they happen to have one left over from 1968. Or, how about *Jack Greene's Greatest Hits*, including "There Goes My Everything"? Or, Patsy Cline's *Let the Teardrops Fall*? Or, *The Best of Donna Fargo*? They are hard to find.

Well, now they are easy for CMSA members to find...while they last. Nashville Warehouse has a limited supply of all these, plus several more hard-to-get records, which are being made available to CMSA members exclusively. Later, if any are left, they are going to be auctioned to the highest bidders by mail in *Country Music*. But, before the regular subscribers

get to see these, you will have at least a month to order any you want. The complete list is shown in the For Members Only section of the September/October issue of *Country Music*. A Members Only order form is provided.

● **Guitars at Wholesale Plus 10%** If you are planning to buy a new guitar, CMSA can get most major brands for you at approximately wholesale cost plus 10%. Write the price on the make and model you want to: Guitars, Country Music Society of America, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. Available brands include **Martin, Gibson, Ovation, Guild, Yamaha, Fender, Alvarez** and others.

### Ready to Go

*More members have indicated their interest in starting Chapters. They are: (alphabetically by state)*

**Bobby C. Heffner**  
Sacramento, California

**Annette Haggard**  
Thousand Oaks, California

**Lee Schmalbach**  
Washington, District of Columbia

**Tucky and Teresa Johnston**  
Boise, Idaho

**Susie Gelling**  
Centerville, Indiana

**June DeSpain**  
Hartsville, Indiana

**Charles T. Hall**  
Sudbury, Massachusetts

**Kate Naomi Smith**  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

**Ted Nellen**  
New York, New York

**Tina Claudette McMackin**  
Lancaster, Ohio

**Gail Terrie Brancheau**  
**Susan Ellis Bowerman**  
Nashville, Tennessee

**Vicki Langdon**  
Denison, Texas

*Start-up packets will be out to these and all other potential Chapter Presidents as soon as possible.*

### State and Regional Directors Needed

*In addition to local Chapter Presidents, we need individuals to serve as State and Regional directors in order to pass along plans for nationwide projects or promotions to the local Chapters. Write to Russ and Helen Barnard if interested.*

### Thinking Advances on How to Start Chapters

*Here's what you will need: a bank, a group of officers, a plan for a specific project, a meeting place, new member sign-up sheets, and application blanks for yourself and the other officers: we are preparing the start-up packet for you. When we receive it back, your chapter bank account gets seed money from us, based partly on a percentage of every new subscription/membership you sign up, and you're on your way.*

*We start work on the packets as soon as this issue goes to press. You be thinking of the bank you would like to use and the other officers you would like to have serve with you. At least one, who will be specially titled "the guarantor," must be a recognized public figure in the community.*

### Commission Refused

*Allan Coy signed up six new members and we sent him a commission. Here he is again.*

Dear CMSA,

Thanks for the check, but I can't accept. My only real goal was to share the magazine with others and get people interested in the Society. So here's the commission back, which was appreciated. Put it back into the magazine and Newsletter.

I like the new style of the Newsletter—the heading and also the way each article, names and city and state are highlighted. Different color every issue? Fantastic.

**Allan Coy**  
Milwaukie, Oregon

### Vote for Your Favorites

In January, CMSA members were asked to vote for their ten all-time favorite country songs and country singers. The top vote getters, 200 songs and 100 singers, are presented on page 48 of the September/October *Country Music*, along with a ballot for the final vote. Over 9,000 votes went into determining the nominations, but we have nearly 80,000 members. Did you vote? Your vote counts. The list of nominations has been turned over to record companies, radio stations and performers...this is one way we let them know your opinion. Fill out the ballot on page 49 of the September/October *Country Music* and mail it today. Thanks.

Also, there is a new Members Poll on page 34G of this *Newsletter* where you can let us know your opinion on some important questions. Please help us there, too. Thanks.

## REVIEWS & FEATURES

### Family Music

Dear CMSA,

I have enjoyed country music all my life, back to listening to the Grand Ole Opry on the battery radio when I was a child. My brothers had a band playing on the Alexandria radio station KALB the year I was born, 1938. It was made up of my four brothers, my father, my uncles and sometimes my aunts. My oldest brother (by the way, his name is George Jones) still plays a lot. He made his own fiddle when he was sixteen years old. I believe it's fifty years old now. Since he is retired, he's started to make more instruments. He has made two mandolins and is planning to make a guitar soon. Most of the family either plays some instrument or loves to listen to country music, so when we have our annual family reunion, we eat and play music all day.

**Dorothy Jones Tunnell  
Dry Prong, Louisiana**

### A Special Fan

Dear CMSA,

I've been a country music fan all my life. I love reading about my favorite stars. My mother is 76 years old. She and I sit up sometimes just listening to music until very late at night or early in the morning. I'm handicapped and have been all my life, but I'm happy, and country music helps make me happy and brightens my day.

Thanks for caring enough for *Country Music Magazine* and us fans to bring the magazine back to us.

**Evelyn R. Brock  
Santee, Georgia**



**Mel Tillis: photo by member Sue Barnhart.**

*Like David Sanford in our May/June Newsletter, Evelyn Brock has cerebral palsy. So does J. Randall Collier of Orlando, Florida who publishes his own newsletter, Florida Country Music News.*

*We are still working on the meeting with Ricky Skaggs for David Sanford.*

### A Special Band

I love the Alabama Band for more than just their singing. They helped me through a very difficult time in my life.

I was six months pregnant, unwed and feeling very sorry for myself. After one of their concerts that I attended, the members of the band were standing in the crowd giving autographs and posing for pictures. Along with a friend, I went up to Randy for an autograph and snapshot. Randy asked how far along I was, and I said, "Not very far. I'm just fat." He reached out, ruffled my hair, and said, "You're not fat. You look real cute." That brought a big smile to my face.

Then we went up to Teddy, and my girlfriend posed with him while I took their photo. Teddy then asked if I'd like to pose with him. I said no, I was too ugly. He got me in a big hug and told my girlfriend to take the picture. I felt like a million dollars.

My father's name is Ted, and my stepfather's name is Teddy. My parents had been nagging me to name the baby I was carrying Teddy. I had refused. But that night, after the concert, I told my parents that if the baby was a boy, its name would be Randy, and Teddi if it were a girl. Teddi Lynn is now three years old.

**Dee Cantrell  
Bedford, Indiana**

### Two for George Jones

Dear CMSA,

What could be a bigger thrill than attending a George Jones show? Well, maybe attending two in one week—or maybe being backstage at both of these shows. That was my privilege recently when George and his band made a tour through California.

Since my uncle Murrel Counts is the fiddle player in The Jones Boys Band, whenever he is near enough he spends a few days between shows visiting my parents. This year we picked him up in San Carlos and took him back to meet the band in Fresno.

We were so happy to see both the San Carlos and the Fresno shows. Both were sold out. We stood in the wings and watched the George Jones magic. I wish everyone could stand backstage just once and see not just George but also the audience and their reaction to him.

We met George's son Brian. As George sang the last song at the Fresno show, Brian turned to someone next to him and said, "Dad just gets better with each show, doesn't he?"—no one would disagree.

**Sue Barnhart  
Ceres, California**



**The Great George Jones and  
Johnny Paycheck.**

Dear CMSA,

I have been a George Jones admirer for years. He is my idol, the greatest pure Country Music Artist yet. There are a lot of good Country Artists out there, Moe Bandy, George Strait, Gene Watson, Merle Haggard, John Anderson, Conway, and Vern Gosdin. But no one will ever beat George Jones.

We've been to George's new park, and talk about a show...it was a great one.

There were thousands of people—young, old, middle-aged and teenagers—there. George's guests were Benny Barnes, Connie Cato, Faron Young, Johnny Paycheck and Little Jimmy Dickens. George and Johnny Paycheck did a couple of songs together, which was great. George was having problems with his throat because of another show two nights before, but when he came out he got about three standing, screaming ovations.

The next shows are September 16th and October 28th. Go see for yourself:—

George is a Country Music giant.

He is our Country Music idol.

He is not a sex symbol.

He is only human.

He is a legend in his own time.

All the problems he's been through haven't affected the voice of The Great George Jones.

**Betty Wheat  
Corsicana, Texas**

# ROSE MADDOX



*The Maddox Brothers and Rose: A Country Music Powerhouse in the Forties and Fifties.*

Before Kitty Wells ever had a hit, when Loretta Lynn was still in Butcher Holler and Barbara Mandrell was teething, Rose Maddox was one of the top female vocalists in the business. Her 1947 recording of Woody Guthrie's "Philadelphia Lawyer" was a classic of the period that brought praise from Guthrie himself. Her grainy,

razor-edged voice and fluent phrasing had a punch and a raw sassiness that no other female vocalist could match. More importantly, The Maddox Brothers and Rose, where she first gained attention, was one of the first groups to experiment with what would later be "rockabilly" music. Rose has not been as visible nationwide,

## LEGENDS OF COUNTRY MUSIC

since The Maddox Brothers disbanded in the late 1950s, but, contrary to rumors in the press and elsewhere, of retirement in Oregon and bad health, she has remained quite active.

According to Rose herself, about the only accurate part of those stories is the fact that she resides in Oregon.

"Most people think that I retired several years ago," she says from her home in Ashland, a small town in southern Oregon. "I never have retired. I work twelve months out of the year." However today, she plays most of her shows up and down the west coast, including folk and bluegrass festivals as well as country music shows. Much of the time she appears with Vern Williams' Bluegrass Band, with whom she has recorded two albums for Chris Strachwitz's Arhoolie label.

Her musical roots, however, were far from bluegrass. Born in Boaz, Alabama in 1926, Rose, her parents and five of her brothers moved to Modesto, California in 1933 in hopes of escaping the depression. The Maddoxes originally worked as fruit pickers in the San Joaquin valley. Dissatisfied with that lifestyle, they decided to try music, forming the original Maddox Brothers and Rose in 1937. They had gained a modest but growing following, broadcasting over KTRB in Modesto, when World War II suddenly swept all the brothers into the service.

Following the group's reorganization in 1946, their momentum built rapidly. What had been a basic hillbilly string band now found itself playing dance halls. They added slashing, stabbing electric guitar and steel, Fred Maddox's driving slap-bass and a slew of jivey boogie-bass songs that they recorded for Don Pierce's Four-Star label, focusing on their crazy, primitive but undeniably rocking music.

The screams, shouts, wisecracks and uninhibited falsetto giggling (wrongly attributed to Rose—it was actually her brother Cal) made them unique and highly entertaining. "We knew that we were different," Rose says today. "But the more polished musicians said we couldn't play. We just did what came naturally; that's what people liked."

By 1949 they'd moved to Hollywood, where their rainbow-hued western costumes, designed by N. Turk, earned them the distinction of being "The Most Colorful Hillbilly Band in America" (representative samples now reside in the Country Music Hall of Fame). After leaving Four-Star they began a five-year association with Columbia Records and producer Don Law.

It was somewhat strange that rock and roll, the music they'd helped pave the way for, ended the act in the late Fifties. "We could see the change was coming," she

says now. "The big dance halls were going out. The nightclubs were not hiring groups. They would pay a single artist as much as they would pay a full group." So the Brothers, now settled with families of their own, left the business.

Rose persevered. She began recording for Capitol in the late 1950s under Ken Nelson's guidance and had a number of impressive hits, including a two-sided duet recording of "Mental Cruelty" and "Loose Talk" in 1961 with a then-unknown Buck Owens. "Sing a Little Song of Heartache,"



Rose Maddox today, says she has no plans to retire.

a solo recording, hit Number 3 in 1962. That same year her musical direction took an abrupt turn when Bill Monroe suggested she cut a bluegrass album.

"I kept telling him, 'Bill, I don't sing bluegrass; I'm country.' He said 'what I hear is bluegrass' so I finally consented to do it...I did it and he was on it." Monroe himself played mandolin on several tracks. "I couldn't say that he was on it, because he was with another company, Decca." The album, *Rose Maddox Sings Bluegrass*, marked a major change for her.

Through the rest of the Sixties she recorded and toured with Johnny Cash and Buck Owens, and maintained her recording career with a variety of smaller record labels. She also began performing on the folk music and bluegrass circuits, which she continues today.

Country music from the Forties to the Eighties has "changed 100%" in Rose's eyes. The hot-shot P.R. and "artist development" activities of today are something totally different than she remembers. "We did it all ourselves," she says firmly. "We didn't have nobody else to do it for us. We did the bookings and everything else." But she is enthusiastic about the return of the traditional sounds through the likes of Ricky Skaggs and others. "The market was there. It was just a matter of having the right people and the right promotion behind it."

The health problems and tragedies Rose has endured recently, including the death of her only son, have cut deeply. However, Rose Maddox at age 58 doesn't plan to quit.

"I appreciate my singing and music more than ever, due to the fact that no matter what happens and what tragedies befall me, I can revert to my singing and music, and that's how I get it out of my system. All of my problems and troubles—I sing 'em out. That's the only way I can get 'em out. That's my release."

"That sounds like the essence of country music," I reply.

"Yes," she says quietly. "I guess it is."

Rich Kienzle

### Available Albums

Renewed interest in Rose Maddox and in the Maddox Brothers and Rose has produced a number of vintage re-issues and new albums. Arhoolie Records' Chris Strachwitz, a Maddox fan, has produced *On the Air!*, which includes some of the group's prewar and 1945 radio shows (a second volume of this material is forthcoming from Arhoolie). *The Maddox Brothers and Rose: 1946-1951 Volume I and Volume II* bring together most of their finest material from Four-Star.

Richard Weize's Bear Family Records of Germany has re-issued two volumes of the 1950s Columbia sides including *Rockin', Rollin' Maddox Brothers and Rose and Family Folks*, a more country-oriented collection. Both feature tracks never before released. Virtually none of the Capitol material is available, though the bluegrass album was re-released in Japan a few years ago.

As for Rose's more recent work, Arhoolie has also released two albums of material with the Vern Williams Band: *This is Rose Maddox*, a secular bluegrass collection and *Beautiful Bouquet*, a bluegrass gospel set. She has also recorded a new album in L.A. with a bluegrass band, The Constables, augmented by fiddler Byron Berline and Albert Lee on electric guitar, yet to be released.

These albums are available from Nashville Warehouse, Box 1226, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37075 at \$9.98 each (CMSA members deduct 10%), add \$1.95 for postage and handling for one album, \$.95 for each additional. (*The Maddox Brothers and Rose: 1946-1951 Volumes I & II* are \$9.98 each.)

## REVIEWS & FEATURES



Merle Haggard and Tiny Moore at Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

### Merle "Bob Wills" Haggard

Dear CMSA,

On June 4, 1984 Merle Haggard played at Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa—one of the places Bob Wills made famous. Cain's was the setting for the *Bob Wills Radio Show*: "12:00 noon — Live on KV00" from Tulsa.

Before the show Merle told everyone to forget the name "Merle Haggard." For over an hour he and the rest of the musicians would become Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys.

It was an honor to be present at such a Memory Maker Show. You could see the delight in Merle's eyes as he "re-did" some of Bob's best. With originals Tiny Moore and Eldon Shamblin and the rest of the best, The Strangers, Cain's was alive once more. Being there was almost like intruding on a personal meeting between the past and the present. I think it was one of the best shows Merle has ever done. Enclosed is a photo.

Marcia Littlebear  
Kellyville, Oklahoma

### Elvis and Others

Dear CMSA,

Thanks for letting me know about *Elvis: The 1st Live Recordings*. Very interesting and the sound wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. Great introduction to one of the guys who started it all (not to mention Carl Perkins and Bill Haley).

After seeing David Wills on *New*

*Country*, I had to buy his new mini cassette, *New Beginnings*. This guy has got a voice. Very strong and distinctive. I liked every song on the tape. I'd like to thank Kip Kirby for her favorable review in the May/June issue.

I looked all over town for this one: Marshall Chapman, *Take It On Home*. I like it. A bluesy, jazz, rock style. I especially like "The Island Song," "The Girl Can't Stand to Lose" and "Guitar Song."

I gave Mark Gray's *Magic* to my wife. She likes this kind of music.

### The Immortal Hank Williams

Right now, CMSA has a supply of *The Immortal Hank Williams*. When Rich Kienzle reviewed this set in the October 1980 issue of *Country Music*, he said it was "a breathtaking eleven-record boxed set that brings together everything Hank Williams ever recorded for MGM." It includes an amazing 147 different songs. This incredible collection is imported from Japan, (surprisingly, only the Japanese seem to think it's worth offering *all* of Hank's recordings), so it is expensive. The list price is \$110, but CMSA members can order it for \$99.95 from Nashville Warehouse, Box 536, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37075. Add \$2.95 for postage and handling. The thing weighs *five pounds!*

I also have to mention The Judds' single, "Mama, He's Crazy." This song is perfect, a perfect country song. I saw the video on *Country Clips*. Could do without Shotgun Reel, but the song is flawless.

And last, which I think is important, I totally agree with what Marie Sigler said about country music today in the July/August *Newsletter*. It's not the same, but let it grow. I for one like what I hear on these country stations nowadays.

Allan Coy  
Milwaukie, Oregon

More on this last subject in an upcoming issue. —Ed.

### The Price is Right

I am not rich so I buy the cheaper albums which I can afford. I just bought an album of "easy listening music" called *Music of America, No. 43*. Never heard of the singers or the songs, but they were good. John Muir is excellent on some and Kay Carpenter good on others. Us old folks on fixed incomes have to buy albums put out by small companies like Columbine or Nashco. I got a Nashco album by Ramsey Kearney two or three years ago. Haven't seen any more like these since, but play these two over and over.

Hayes McDowell  
Desert Hot Springs, California

For fine country records at special low members' prices, see p.19 in the September/October *Country Music*. —Ed.

### May I Have This Dance?

A singer may observe strange things from his or her vantage point as a performer. On a particular evening in a small club in Massachusetts, Glee Derosier played a unique part in a lovers' quarrel.

They weren't speaking when they came in. While he busied himself with his coat, she pulled her own off and flung it in the corner of the booth. Usually he would help her with it, and they'd smile so sweetly at each other. The trouble had started last night when he'd flirted with that new little brunette at the bar. While he fiddled around, his lady burned and the fire wasn't out yet. She smoldered in silence, but her eyes were saying she'd like to give him hell, all right, but darned if she'd speak to the likes of him. He, on the other hand, wore his injured innocence with sorrowful dignity.

I shook my head as I set up and ran a sound check. They were nice people. Too bad.

They ate dinner in silence, but during my second set, while he went to the men's room, she came up to me and made a

## REVIEWS & FEATURES

request. "Almost Persuaded." This was going to be interesting. She sat down with a little smile just as he got back. I could see his ears turn red as I sang. He looked at her and she nodded. He politely excused himself and came up and made a request of his own. "Stand by Your Man." This time she was the one looking a little flushed. She scribbled "Nobody" on a napkin and had the waitress bring it on up. Then he had the bartender send me a fresh coke with a note reading "Oh, Lonesome Me."

That's when things really started getting heavy. She requested "You're a Hard Dog to Keep Under the Porch." He count-



A quiet moment off-stage for Glee Derosier.

ered with "Suspicious Minds." She hit him with "Your Cheatin' Heart." He slammed back with "Cold, Cold Heart." She thought she'd won with "You Won't Matter Anymore," but he scored the final point. "Please Release Me" did it.

In triumph he picked up his beer and moved to the bar. She seemed glad to see him go. But as the night wore on, the sadness set in. She kept glancing at the clock and over to him, but the minutes and hours passed and still he sat with his back set hard against her. She couldn't see, as I did, the little glances he gave her from the corners of his eyes, or the nervous way he kept lighting and stamping out his chain-smoked cigarettes. They'd gotten themselves into this without saying a word, and now neither of them knew how to talk their way back out. The evening was coming to an end, and still they sat alone and apart and miserable. Finally she raised desperate eyes to me, and I saw her

mouthed the words, "Do something!"

I thought hard and something happened to me I'd only heard about but never experienced. An honest-to-goodness *light-bulb* went off in my mind, and I grinned from ear to ear.

Softly, so softly, I began singing, "Are you lonesome tonight, do you miss me tonight, are you sorry we drifted apart...."

I saw their eyes meet and a million words passed soundlessly between them. He rose and came to her and held out his arms, and she stepped right into them. They danced, moving closer and holding tighter with every line.

"...Is your heart filled with pain, shall I come back again, tell me, dear, are you lonesome tonight..."

They stood still together and hugged and kissed, then he bent and picked up her coat and put it around her, and they left.

And the smile they flashed me as they went out the door was the best tip I ever got.

Glee Derosier  
North Attleboro, Massachusetts

*Glee Derosier has recently started keeping track of her impressions in a notebook entitled "Behind the Mike."*

### MEMBERS POLL/SEPTEMBER 1984

#### WANTED: YOUR OPINION

Your opinions can help influence record companies, radio stations, record stores, concert promoters and performers. As a CMSA member, you have an organized way of making your opinion known and felt. But you must let us know what you like or don't like, what you want or don't want. One way to do that is to vote for your all-time favorite songs and singers with the ballot on page 49 of the September/October *Country Music*. Another way is to fill out both sides of this Members Poll (there will be one in each issue from now on). You can cut this form out without losing any of your *Newsletter* contents, but if you would rather not cut your *Newsletter*, you may send a photocopy or just write the question number and your answer on plain paper.

#### Bought Any Good Records Lately?

1. How many record albums did you or anyone else in your household buy in the last month? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many eight-track tapes? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many cassettes? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Which ones did you like best?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_
5. If you didn't buy any last month, about how many did you buy in the last 12 months?
  - a. records \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. 8-Tracks \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. cassettes \_\_\_\_\_

#### Pick Your Choice for Record of the Month

6. Which are your five favorites out of the Top 25 on page 64 of the September/October issue of *Country Music*? (Just write in the number from the chart of your favorite albums and singles.)

Albums	Singles
a. _____	f. _____
b. _____	g. _____
c. _____	h. _____
d. _____	i. _____
e. _____	j. _____

Winners will receive awards from CMSA and results will be published.

FILL OUT BOTH SIDES OF THIS FORM

# TRAVEL & COLLECTIONS



This year's Statler Brothers 4th of July celebration: were you there?

## MEMBERS POLL/SEPTEMBER 1984

### Video Cassette Records

7. Do you or anyone in your household have a video cassette recorder (VCR) for taping TV shows and playing video tapes? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_, (If no, do you plan to buy one in the next 12 months? (Yes or No) \_\_\_\_\_
8. If so, how many blank cassettes (tapes) did you or anyone in your household buy in the (a) last month? \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) last 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many pre-recorded video cassette tapes with movies or other programs did you or anyone in your household buy in the (a) last month? \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) last 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How many were rented? (a) last month? \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) last 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

### What Else Should the CMSA Do?

Which of the following would you like to see CMSA try to arrange for members? (Check if you are very interested, maybe interested or definitely not.)

	VERY INTERESTED	MAYBE	DEFINITELY NOT
11. Group Health Insurance	_____	_____	_____
12. Group Life Insurance	_____	_____	_____
13. Musical Instrument Discounts	_____	_____	_____
14. Travel Discounts to Country Music Events	_____	_____	_____
15. Concert Ticket Discounts	_____	_____	_____
16. Stereo Equipment Discounts	_____	_____	_____
17. Special Record Offers	_____	_____	_____
18. CMSA Chapter in Your Area	_____	_____	_____
19. Discounts on other Magazines	_____	_____	_____
20. New Car Discounts	_____	_____	_____
21. Discounts on Name-Brand Products	_____	_____	_____
22. Camping, Hunting, Fishing Equipment Discounts	_____	_____	_____
23. Discounts on Books	_____	_____	_____
24. Other (write in your idea) _____	_____	_____	_____
25. What are your hobbies? _____	_____	_____	_____

Fill out this form or a photocopy (or write your answers on plain paper) and send to: September Poll, Country Music Society of America, 10th Floor, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016.

• FILL OUT BOTH SIDES OF THIS FORM •

### Upcoming Events

**October 8** The CMA Awards Show  
Grand Ole Opry  
Nashville, Tennessee

*Watch it on CBS/TV live that evening.*

### Information, Please

*If you have the information or the item these members are looking for, write to them directly.*

• Anyone have a copy of an old 78 r.p.m. called "Down At the Roadside Inn"? I believe it was recorded by Al Dexter. It has a fantastic little mandolin break in it. I would do most anything to get it copied on tape. **David Gray, 3552 Jane Lane, Ft. Worth, Texas 76117.**

• Am looking for a recording of a song from the late 50s-early 60s called "Bar With No Beer," sung by an American singer. Any information would be appreciated. **Maxine Sidebottom, 1225 Faith Drive #11, Salina, Kansas 67401.**

• How can I get a copy of Ray Stevens recording of "Sunday Morning Coming Down"? No one believes that he sang it, but he did. It came out in 1970 or 1971. **Dorothy Tunnell, Rt. 2 Box 175, Dry Prong, Louisiana 71423.**

• Can anyone tell me about a group called The Shoppe? They toured this area about two summers ago and made a lot of fans. I have two of their albums and wondered if they are still in business. **Sue Barnhart, P.O. Box 44, Ceres, California 95307.**

• Any information on Wayne Kemp? He was a great country artist, but you no longer hear anything about him. **Sue Robison, R. Rt. 1, Macomb, Oklahoma 74852.**

• Any information on an early family group called the Collins Family? What records they made? Where they are available? **John Broyles, 1240 W. Ajo Way 312, Tuscon, Arizona 85713.**

• Anyone have a copy of *Country Music Magazine's* November 1979 issue? It's the one with the story of Hank Williams Jr. falling off the mountain. I'm desperate. **Daryl Roadcap, Rt. 1 Box 74, Lyndhurst, Virginia 22952.**

• Who is "Leonard" in Merle Haggard's song, "The Saga of Leonard"? We've been looking for the answer to this question for a long time. **Lucille Garrison, Millville, New Jersey.**

*Rich Kienzle answers this one right in the September/October issue of Country Music. See Buried Treasures. —Ed.*

### Coming Soon

*You ask the questions and Barbara Mandrell gives the answers: coming soon in Wish Upon a Star.*



# THE JUDDS

*So different, yet so traditional, so close as to be spine-chilling — like voices out of the past yet tuned to the present, Naomi and Wynonna Judd have cut a successful path through the complexities of the current Nashville music world, to launch a record and a touring career based on music that evolved under kerosene lamps around a dining table.* **BY BOB ALLEN**

**I**n 1968, Naomi Judd, an unusually adventurous soul who'd recently divorced, took her two young daughters, Wynonna and Ashley, left the slow-moving, rooted life they'd known in rural Kentucky and set out for sunny Southern California. They spent the next seven years in Hollywood where they quickly learned big city ways. Wynonna was enrolled in public school and quickly grew into "a typical Hollywood kid, coming home from school every day and eating Ding Dongs and watching *The Brady Bunch* on TV." Mother Naomi worked, at various times, as a model, a girl Friday for an Oriental millionaire, a partner in a video company, and a secretary for the pop-soul group The Fifth Dimension. She quickly soaked up a sharp sense of the music



**W**hen we're  
singing  
together,  
I can raise my  
eyebrows when I  
look at Wynonna  
and she knows  
to go up. We're  
that close. In fact,  
we're almost  
telepathic in that  
regard."

business that would serve her well later when she struggled to put together a singing career for herself and her daughter in Nashville.

But at the time, she claims, she had not a clue that she might someday be singing professionally. "I never sang at all. My parents didn't even have a record player when I was a kid," she admits. "I'd even lip-synch it in church!"

For Naomi Judd, 36, and her daughter Wynonna, 18, the road to their present status as one of Nashville's most promising new tradition-minded groups, and perhaps country music's only commercially successful mother-daughter duet team, has been a long one. Even so, to listen to them tell it, the ride seems to have been an exciting and enjoyable one for them, nearly every step of the way. Their various moves in search of artistic and professional fulfillment, which ultimately led them to Nashville, took them from their native Eastern Kentucky to Hollywood, then back to Kentucky, and then back again to California. Along this circuitous, cross-continental route they gradually discovered their own innate musical talents and reacquainted themselves with the more down-home cultural and musical traditions of their East Kentucky heritage.

"I didn't even listen to country music when I was growing up in Hollywood," says Wynonna. In Los Angeles, she became more cosmopolitan by the day and grew ever more infatuated with white blues and pop singers like Bonnie Raitt, Joni Mitchell, and Delbert McClinton. "We just weren't involved in country music at all. I think if I had heard somebody like Ricky Skaggs back then, I would have said, 'Ugghh!!! Spare me! That sounds like *twang* to me!'"

Eventually the Judds tired of California. In hopes of following in her grandfather's footsteps and becoming a country doctor, Naomi and her two daughters returned to Morrill, Kentucky ("pronounced 'moral'," Naomi smiles. "A population of about fifty, and most of them cousins.").

"Back in Kentucky, we lived in a house with no television, no telephone, and we got no newspaper," she explains. "We just had a radio, and on Saturday nights, we'd do our wash on our old Maytag wringer washer and listen to the *Grand Ole Opry*. It was a very conscious decision on my part to live that way. I wanted my daughters to be close to our family and our heritage. I wanted them to learn where they came from, and be free to develop their imaginations."

It was around this time, after listening to her daughter sing around the house and in the tiny one-room church they attended, that it dawned on Naomi what a lovely voice Wynonna had. (It is Wynonna's powerful and remarkably mature voice that is the driving force

behind The Judds' sound.)

"As the years went by, I'd teach Wynonna the words to songs," Naomi recalls. "Because my voice is a shade lower than hers, I'd naturally go into a harmony instead of singing with her. But the more we sang together, just as a home entertainment thing, the more fun we had. And we just kept doing it more and more and getting better and better.

"We learned songs by the Delmore Brothers—who were really the predecessors of the Everly Brothers (also from Kentucky). We especially related to them, because they were two brothers singing together, and we loved their harmonies. We loved the Everly Brothers' harmonies too. And we also learned a lot of old 'bluegrass-gospel' songs off the Stanley Brothers albums."

Wynonna and Naomi discovered the music of other homespun duet teams as well: the Appalachian singers Hazel & Alice, and The Boswell Sisters (who recorded for the Ace Record label, back in the 1930s). They also listened to records of the Andrews Sisters. Throughout these years, Wynonna continued listening to her Joni Mitchell and Bonnie Raitt albums, soaking up their more urbane stylizations too.

As they sang, mother and daughter continued to sharpen and fine-tune their harmonies. "We became fascinated with some unusual variations that you can get with four-part harmonies," Wynonna remembers. "So we went out and bought these two thirty-dollar K-Mart 'blue light special' tape recorders. We'd sing our duets into one tape recorder, and then play it back and sing harmonies against ourselves into the other recorder."

The end result of all these free-form practice sessions are the spookily tight yet fluid harmonies that the two of them so easily achieve when they sing together these days. "When we're singing together, I can raise my eyebrows when I look at Wynonna and she knows to go up," says Naomi. "We're that close. In fact, we're almost telepathic in that regard."

The decision to pursue a recording career had not yet taken shape in their minds. Instead Naomi, in search of a nursing degree, loaded her two kids and all their belongings into a big U-Haul truck and set out cross-country again, this time for Marin County in Northern California. There she enrolled in school, and came away with a nursing degree which, by that time, she decided she might use to "try and make some money and come to Nashville."

So it was that in May, 1979, the Judds entered Nashville, rolling along in a 1957 Chevy. Naomi found permanent lodging for herself and her two daughters in a comfortable old white frame house in the nearby town of Franklin, Tennessee. Wynonna and Ashley (who is now a successful fashion model) continued with



high school, and Naomi went to work in a local hospital. Often, Naomi and Wynonna would rise at 3:30 a.m. to sing on *The Ralph Emery Show*. "Ralph just couldn't believe that we were mother and daughter," says the attractive and youthful looking Naomi. "He thought we *had* to be sisters. We finally had to show him our driver's licenses."

Always the undauntedly independent and confident one, Naomi wasted no time in figuring out the commercial music scene in Nashville. It pleased her no end when she sensed that the emergence of more tradition-minded artists like Ricky Skaggs and The Whites was beginning to create a stronger demand for the type of music she and Wynonna sang. When she began passing around a cassette that they had recorded together on one of their K-Mart tape recorders ("just a funky little homemade tape with acoustic guitar and our two voices"), she got an overwhelmingly favorable response from the various Nashville producers who listened to it.

She continued to shop around. "I was looking for a producer who could develop the unique sound that we had in our hearts and minds, not to mention some-

one I could leave my daughter alone with in the room," she explains. "We were determined to keep control of the situation, as far as maintaining the integrity of our music. We wanted to make sure that nobody messed with our sound. We needed somebody who realized that our voices were the main instruments, and that all the rest was just decoration."

They found the producer they were looking for in Brent Maher, whose past production credits included Kenny Rogers, Dottie West and Michael Johnson; Naomi first met him when his daughter was in a car wreck and was bedridden in the Franklin hospital where she worked.

Eventually they landed a record deal with RCA. (In a highly unusual move, The Judds introduced their sound to the hardboiled RCA execs at a live audition in the record company boardroom: they passed with flying colors.) Then Maher threw himself tirelessly into pre-production rehearsal of the songs that they chose for inclusion on their debut mini-LP, *The Judds*. Weeks before they even got near the studio, Maher, Naomi, Wynonna and a selection of hand-picked studio musicians (some of them playing

such exotic instruments as the washboard, the autoharp, and dobro) spent many a long evening sitting around the dining room in the Judds' house, under the light of kerosene lamps, practicing and practicing.

Following the wave of enthusiastic critical acclaim which *The Judds* received, Naomi and Wynonna began rehearsing their new band, preparing to hit the road, both of them obviously excited and confident about their good fortune.

"Our music has just evolved naturally from the very beginning," says Naomi. "We never did make a conscious decision to sit down and start singing together. It just happened. Each and every step on this journey since then has been spontaneous and natural."

"It's just amazing how accepted our kind of music and the music of people like Ricky Skaggs or The Whites has become, even in New York and places like that," says Wynonna, who is still a bit wide-eyed about it all. "It freaks me out! And I think in the next few years, more and more kids are going to get interested in the really old music. And I think traditional type country music is going to be accepted even more." ■

Don't talk to Delia Bell about the recent commercial upsurge for tradition-based country music. Sure, Ricky Skaggs is cleaning up, and the Whites and the Judds are enjoying significant success as well. But Delia Bell, perhaps the purest country voice of the bunch, is living proof that trends don't always work to the advantage of everyone.

On paper, it looked like Delia had everything going for her. After nearly a dozen albums (solo or with her Oklahoma singing partner Bill Grant) on small bluegrass labels, she was "discovered" by Emmylou Harris, who found the title song for her own *Roses in the Snow* newgrass album on Delia's 1978 *Bluer Than Midnight* set on County Records. Soon Emmylou was producing Delia's major-label debut—on Warner Bros.—and singing harmony on all the cuts but one—"Flame in My Heart," which was a duet with John Anderson. The material and the arrangements were a tantalizing mix of bluegrass and country, electric and acoustic. Emmylou described Delia as sounding like the offspring of an imaginary mating between Hank Williams and Kitty Wells, and for once the hyperbole rang true.

Released in the spring of 1983, *Delia Bell* got uniformly good reviews and immediate airplay. It moved quickly up the charts to No. 35 before stalling. "Flame in My Heart," the first single, peaked at No. 45.

Within several months, Delia had been dropped by Warners.

What went wrong? Well, you might say that Delia got the business.

"They just said it was several factors, it wasn't any one thing," Delia says. "I felt from the very start that I was just too country; we were even told by some radio stations that they couldn't play the album because it was too country. But we never did find out what really happened."

Today, Delia is back with Bill Grant on the bluegrass circuit she came from, waiting for Emmylou to find her another label deal. That circuit is a decidedly mixed blessing. It does offer a certain kind of security; as Delia remarks, "We've had fans over the years that have really stuck with us, and they are faithful. They'll come hundreds of miles to see me." But it's also a very small audience. As Delia adds, "There's not very much money in bluegrass, so it's just something that we enjoy doing."

She's been doing it for a little over a decade. She was born in Bonham, Texas, but her family moved across the Red River to Hugo, Oklahoma, when she was two. Her father was an itinerant worker who did whatever he could get to make a living. There was always music in the family. Her brother and two of her three sisters sang and played; so did her uncles and her brother-in-law, a crack fiddler

# Uncertain Future DELIA BELL



*A flash in the pan or a straw in the wind of the future...which is Delia Bell?*

*Her work with Emmylou Harris seems to have led nowhere. Back with long-time partner Bill Grant, Delia graces the bluegrass circuit once more and wonders whether traditional music really is what's new.* **BY JOHN MORTHLAND**

*“When the single came out and did well, it really scared me. It seemed like everything was happening too fast.”*

who encouraged Delia to take up guitar when she was twelve. Gospel was especially popular within the family, though bluegrass and old-time country weren't far behind.

Delia married a local ironworker named Bobby Bell, and they had a son named Keith, now 23. She didn't begin singing professionally until 1971. By then, she had been singing informally with Grant for several years—at parties, on local radio and TV, and the like. Inspired by a visit to Bill Monroe's bluegrass festival in Bean Blossom, Indiana, Grant organized his own festival in Hugo in 1971. He and Delia, backed by a group they called the Kiamichi Mountain Boys, formalized their singing partnership for the occasion. Over the next decade, they recorded albums for their own Kiamichi label, and for County and Rebel, in addition to one solo album for Delia. They worked every weekend during “bluegrass season,” which runs from late April to October and consists mainly of outdoor festivals; they also toured England in 1978 and 1980. During the latter tour, they first met Emmylou, who'd already told the Whites (then backing Emmy) that she'd be interested in recording with Delia. Delia went backstage before Emmylou's set at the Wembley Festival in London, and it was agreed that when the time was right, they would cut an album together. For the next two years, they stayed in touch by phone and mail.

“I was *so* country,” Delia laughs, “See, Ricky Skaggs had just got started then, and I think Emmylou was waiting for the music to swing back around to more of a country sound. She saw that coming, thanks to Ricky, and she figured that we'd have a good chance once that kind of music got popular.”

Emmylou made her move late in 1982, playing *Bluer Than Midnight* for an exec at Warners (her own label) and saying she wanted Delia to sing with her on her next album. He countered by suggesting instead that Emmylou produce a new solo album for Delia. In November, the two women started sifting material. By the time Delia returned to Los Angeles to cut the album in 1983, Emmylou had already chosen the songs and the pickers. She wound up working out the arrangements, too, so all Delia did was sit back and sing, a job made more difficult by the fact that she'd recently lost her voice.

“I just figured Emmylou knew what she was doing, so I let her do it. She really did do it all, too” says Delia, who was nonetheless pleased with the results.

“I thought maybe we should have done a new song or two on the album; I would have liked that, but otherwise it was fine.”

Still, the experience required her to make adjustments. For one thing, she'd never worked without Grant, who was around to help even on her prior solo album. For another, she was intimidated by big-time recording studios and recording techniques, to say nothing of big-time record companies.

“Bill didn't sing because Emmylou wanted someone who was already established, to help the album sales. She told me from the start that Bill wouldn't be part of the album. Bill's always thought I could do something like that, so he was behind it 100 percent.

“I was nervous and scared when I went out there. Just the idea of a record label that big, it scared me. And then when the single came out and did well, it *really* scared me. I had a lot of interviews and radio play and a lot of people talking about it, and I didn't know *what* was gonna happen. But it seemed like everything was happening too fast.”

Not that she had any real complaints. Her contract with Warners allowed her to continue cutting an album a year with Grant for small bluegrass labels. Grant was still functioning as her manager. And when she told a Nashville booking agency that she wouldn't appear solo because she and Grant had been performing together for too long to quit now, the agency readily agreed. But then it came time for a followup single with Warners. Delia wanted her version of “Don't Cheat in Our Hometown.” But Skaggs had also cut the tune, and was planning to release it himself in a couple of months so Warners went with Delia's “Coyote Song” instead.

“It didn't get too far, and we had told them it wouldn't; it was too bluegrass. It kinda upset us that they went ahead anyhow instead of coming out with a song that we thought would be really good,” she recalls. “Because I think ‘Don't Cheat in Our Hometown’ could have really done something. I think that would have made all the difference in the world.”

There was still no reason to think anything was amiss. Emmylou was down in Nashville, confidently waiting for the phone call from Warners that would give the go-ahead for album number two. But word came down from the record company that there would be no album number two.

Though it is against Warner Brothers' policy to explain why artists are

dropped, discussions with several company officials suggest there were two key factors. First, sales were disappointing; Delia achieved her chart position by virtue of radio play that didn't translate into action in the stores. Second, she was caught in high-level corporate politics. Because she was sponsored by Los Angeles-identified Emmylou, she was signed to the label's head office in Burbank, and had few dealings with the Nashville branch, which would seem to be the logical place for her. On top of that, she was signed while one regime was handling the label's country division though her album wasn't released until a new regime had taken over. Delia got lost in that shuffle.

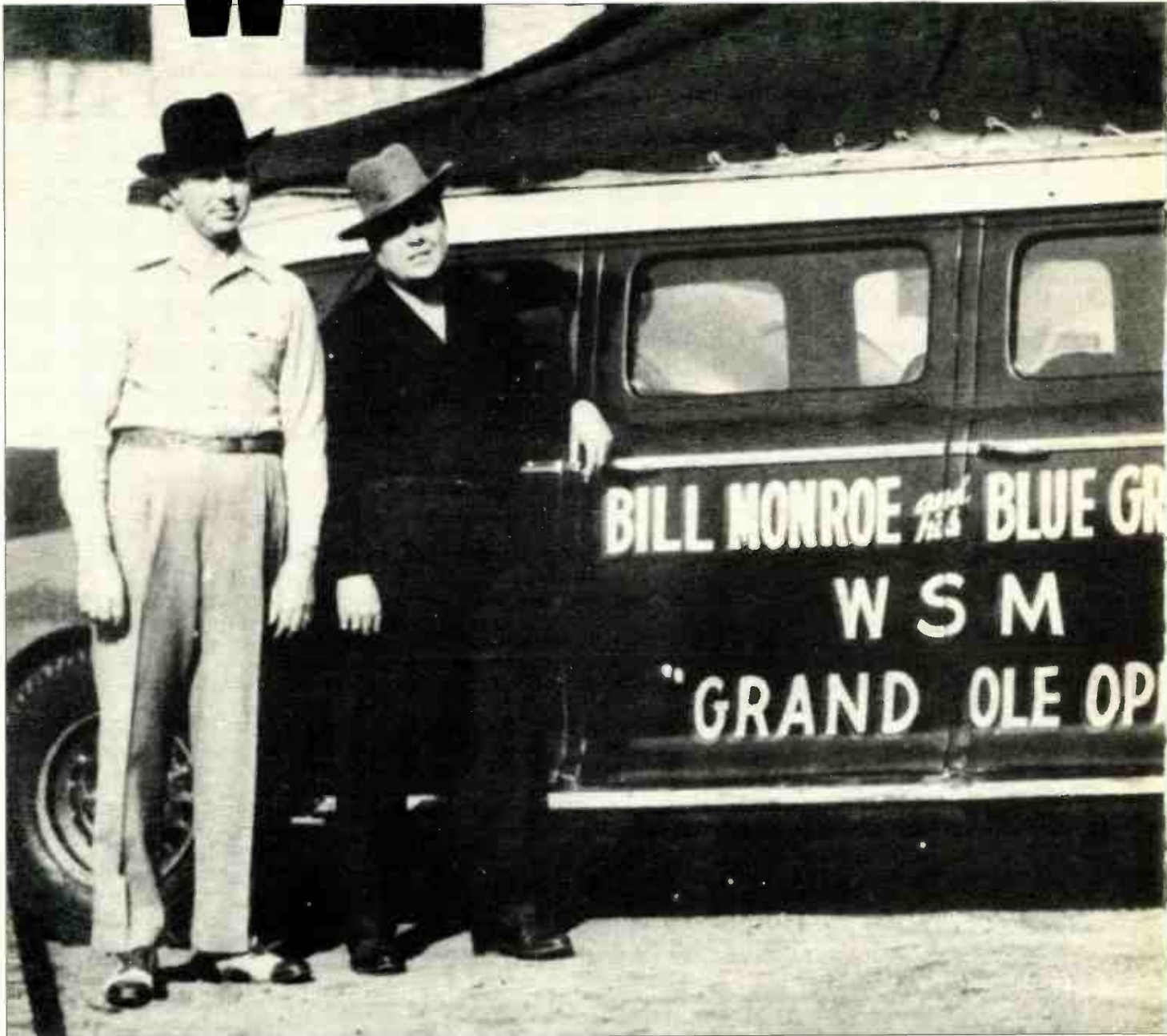
“Emmylou told me later there was a bunch of them got the ax at the same time, some established artists even, so there's no use being mad or upset. But I felt that I had failed, that maybe I wasn't good enough,” Delia sighs. “They had kept telling us, right up to the last week, that the first album was doing fine. Even when we were in Nashville, we asked them if there was anything we could do to help it, because we thought maybe we weren't doing enough to promote it. And all they would ever tell us, in Los Angeles or Nashville, was just to sit tight, stay out of the way, and let them do it. So that's what really hit us in the face.”

Though she says she'd like to try a major label again—all her remarks are made more in sorrow and confusion than in anger—Delia is quick to admit, “I had hopes that maybe there *was* a swing back to the more traditional sound. And of course Ricky Skaggs has done great, and the Whites are doing good. But there's very few that's doing it. I know one writer called Ricky a fluke. That means it happened by accident. I don't know if people just got on his bandwagon and it's a trend that won't last, or what. You know the music business is funny, and it's hard to tell—you can be on top of the world one day and on the bottom the next. You really don't know what's gonna happen from one day to the next, so I sure can't predict where it's going.”

Meanwhile, she and Grant have cut an album for Rounder backed by the Johnson Mountain Boys. As Delia puts it, “We're still kinda doing the same thing we were doing. It's good to have something to fall back on.”

But Delia Bell has more than just the bluegrass circuit itself to fall back on. She also has that earthy, haunting, crystal-clear voice. Even if it is “too country.” ■

# *The* **WORLD'S GREATE**



**BY MARTY STUART** *Travelling down the road in 'The Blue Goose,' rehearsing as they went, sparking each other and spelling each other, the world's greatest bluegrass band made its mark—and set standards for a style and a sound.*

**M**y first love is bluegrass music. I grew up with it, and that means I grew up with Bill Monroe. There's a good reason why we call Bill "Daddy Bluegrass": He invented the music, and to this day he is its leading performer. With his band, the Bluegrass Boys, Bill sets the standard by which all other bluegrass bands are measured.

The list of Bluegrass Boys down the years is staggering; many of the grad-

# ST BLUEGRASS BAND



**Almost The World's Greatest Bluegrass Band, pictured above, around 1946; left to right: Birch Monroe (substituting for the elusive Cedric Rainwater), Chubby Wise, Bill Monroe, Lester Flatt and a boyish Earl Scruggs in front of the legendary Blue Goose.**

uates are now considered legends in their own right, and time and time again, one particular vocal by one of Bill's singers, or one unforgettable instrumental by one of his pickers, has been imitated by generations of bluegrass musicians, myself among them. And while each man's talents will always be his own, there was one particular combination of Bluegrass Boys which, in my

opinion and that of many other fans and pickers, is yet to be surpassed. This is the story of that band.

When Bill Monroe joined the Opry in 1939, he brought with him a new style. In a sense, his brand of souped-up old-time music had an effect similar to that of rockabilly music in the 1950s. Bill was playing things and presenting vocals which had never been heard on the Opry

stage before, and many of the old-timers considered it a bit wild—but nothing

*Marty Stuart, now a member of Johnny Cash's band, began his professional career in music playing with Lester Flatt at the age of thirteen. Since then he has worked with Bob Dylan and Doc and Merle Watson, among others, and has played on countless recording sessions.*

could stop the energy which came across on the stage and out into radioland. It caught on fast.

"It was something new for them," Bill recalls. "They didn't know how to take it. They would stand and watch me and listen. But it was the fans across the country who started hearing it and liking it and requesting more of it. The rhythm and the melodies seemed to move them. People really listened to the Grand Ole Opry then; they looked forward to Saturday night so they could tune in and hear their favorites. It was a 50,000-watt station, and it reached a lot of folks."

The band Bill brought with him to the Opry consisted of Stringbean on the banjo, Big Howdy Forester on fiddle, Howdy's wife Sally Ann on accordion, a fine singer/guitarist named Clyde Moody, and Cousin Wilbur on bass. The first change in the lineup happened when the Navy called for Big Howdy Forester, and a fiddler named Chubby Wise came in to replace him.

"I was living in Florida, and I heard Bill on the radio from time to time," Chubby remembers. "I believe it was February 1, 1943 when I went to work for Bill. Cedric Rainwater and I caught a train to Nashville. I walked into the dressing room and introduced myself and told Bill, 'I would like to try out for a job.' He asked me to play a breakdown, so I played 'Katy Hill.' He asked if I was familiar with his songs, so I told him 'some of them.' So we did 'Footprints in the Snow.' He never said, 'Chubby, do you want the job?' He simply said, 'Do you have your clothes with you? We'll be leaving in an hour.'"

That left Bill with Stringbean, Sally Ann on accordion, Clyde Moody, Cousin Wilbur—and Chubby Wise.

"I believe in giving credit where credit is due," says Chubby. "When I first started with Bill, I was not a bluegrass fiddler. I played more of a swing and blues style, and Bill spent many hours along the way teaching me to play bluegrass. He would say, 'Chubby, try this here,' or 'Chubby, do it this way,' and I'm grateful to him for that. I worked with Bill for a while, then I left for a year to work with the Georgia Peach Pickers. A North Carolina fellow named Jimmy Shumate came to fill my spot."

Chubby didn't know it at the time, but his initial visit with the Bluegrass Boys, set in place the first element of a sound which, when added to by other young fellows over the next few years, would become the standard for bluegrass music to this day. When Chubby left, the personnel started turning over. Clyde Moody felt strong enough to go his own way with his style, and Sally Ann stopped touring. That created the situation in which the world's greatest bluegrass band came to be, and here's how it happened.

**F**irst, there was Lester Flatt. Lester was working in a Virginia silk mill and getting his start in music on weekends playing with a local fellow named Charlie Scott, when Bill's brother Charlie Monroe heard him while passing through the area. Charlie asked Lester if he'd be interested in an audition, and Lester agreed; it looked like a good chance at a full-time musical career. Charlie and Lester sounded good together, so Lester became a full-time member of Charlie's Dixie Partners.

Charlie was a popular act, especially in the Carolinas, where his radio show drew sacks of mail, but Lester, an independent soul, didn't agree with all of Charlie's rules. He quit the band and moved with his wife Gladys back to his home town of Sparta, Tennessee. There he bought a truck, hired men, and went into the lumber business. He soon grew restless, however, and went to Burlington, North Carolina, to try to get on the radio. While he was there, a telegram arrived at his home in Sparta. It was from Bill Monroe, asking if he'd be interested in an audition. Gladys called Lester with the news, Lester came home and met with Bill, and Bill hired him. He also hired Gladys to take care of the band's concessions.

The blend of Bill Monroe's and Lester Flatt's voices was uncanny, almost brotherly. Perhaps that was because while Lester had been working with Charlie Monroe, he had been required to pull off some of Bill's vocal tricks as well as play guitar and mandolin. Charlie and Bill had recorded a number of songs together for the Bluebird label before competitively going their separate ways, and part of Lester's job with Charlie had been to keep the Monroe Brothers' sound alive. That made him a natural to work with Bill.

Along with his vocals, Lester brought a strong songwriting talent and a unique guitar style to the Bluegrass Boys. The band played a variety of fast tunes, and Lester lucked into a guitar lick, now referred to as "the Flatt G-run," which is one of those constantly copied bluegrass patterns.

Lester once told me that the band "worked hard on the road, but we enjoyed each other, it was fun. I learned a lot about show business working with Bill. He was in a good position. We did the Opry on Saturday nights, and during the week we did personal appearances. It was hard training. We would get in that old 'Blue Goose' and burn the roads up. I remember we travelled three days once without having time to take off our shoes. We made \$60 a week, and \$10 extra if we worked Sundays. We were all good troopers. We'd play poker to pass the time. I was pretty sharp, and I would usually go home with more than my salary in my pocket at the end of the

week. It was a matter of survival.

"We rehearsed quite a bit going down the road. Bill and I would sing, work on duets, or we'd rehearse quartet numbers or new songs. Bill would get his mandolin out and write new songs. I enjoyed that, but getting out in front of people was what I enjoyed most."

The band was strong: Bill, Lester, Jimmy Shumate, Stringbean, and Cousin Wilbur.

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*"From the first days that I had a band, there was a style and a drive waiting for any man that could play it. I knew the banjo was an instrument fast tunes would promote, and Earl Scruggs was a good man to do that."*

*—Bill Monroe*

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**T**hen Stringbean left to go his own way. Jimmy Shumate, a North Carolinian who was himself considering going home at the time, knew of a young man from those parts who had come to Nashville to play with Lost John Miller, and was encouraging him to try out for the banjo spot in the Bluegrass Boys. The young man's name was Earl Scruggs.

At first, Earl resisted the offer and stayed with Miller, but then Miller's show closed down, and Earl was faced with a choice: go home, or try out for Bill Monroe. Earl was familiar with Bill's music—"I pretty much knew what Bill was doing before I came to Nashville. I'd heard him on the radio," he says—and he decided against going home.

When Lester Flatt heard that Bill was



hiring another banjo player, he didn't have much good to say about it. Stringbean's style had an old-time drag to it, and Lester thought that it held the band back. To his mind, the band sounded just fine without a banjo. But when Earl Scruggs walked into the dressing room and started playing, and the dressing room filled up in a hurry, he changed his mind.

"I looked at Bill and nodded," Lester

my banjo and play along with him. We'd play around with different tempos. He especially enjoyed playing 'Molly and Tenbrooks'—you know, numbers we could both bear down on, the uptempo songs like that one. And it blended great with the style I was playing on the banjo."

Bill Monroe states that Earl Scruggs simply perfected a style started by an old radiostar, Snuffy Jenkins. Maybe so,

**J**immy Shumate made up his mind. He moved back home to North Carolina, and Chubby Wise returned to the band. Now we have a picture of four great stylists playing together: Bill Monroe on mandolin, Lester Flatt on guitar, Earl Scruggs on banjo, and Chubby Wise on fiddle, with Cedric Rainwater backing them up on bass.

After making a few records together, the band's confidence grew and their



recalls. "From the first time Earl played with us, I knew he couldn't be held back. He played with a drive. I liked Earl right away."

Earl remembers that he felt "like a freak at a side show because I had this different style going on, and people would drop in and just stare."

Earl fit in well. "Uncle Dave Macon and I hit it off good," he says. "He called me 'Ernest'—never would call me 'Earl.' He would kid me and say, 'Ah, you play pretty good, but I bet you can't sing worth a damn.' Everybody treated me nice.

"I started feeling at home, and the music blended pretty well right from the start. We just worked on arrangements. Bill would start playing and singing old songs while we were travelling, so I'd get

but I don't believe that anyone will contest the fact that the day Earl got it together sitting on the front porch, he had himself something totally different. And to this day, what he had is yet to be out-done. It's true that down through the years there have been great stylists like Don Reno and especially Brad Keith, but nobody has ever set a style like Earl Scruggs has. Earl Scruggs made the rules.

Bill Monroe says, "From the first days that I had a band, there was a style and a drive waiting for any man that could play it. I knew that the banjo was an instrument that the fast tunes would promote, and Earl Scruggs was a good man to do that. That's what was different about this music: Not just anyone could play it."

ability to compete with each other tastefully fell into gear. Chubby pulled that Long Lonesome Bow and fed in his natural jazzy influence; nobody had ever thought of playing the banjo like Earl—he had no competition anywhere; Lester had his unique voice—you knew it was him the moment you heard him; and Cedric played good moving bass lines underneath it all. They were a rhythm machine. They were hot and they knew it. This was the combination of Bluegrass Boys that has proven to be the greatest bluegrass band ever.

They were fresh, clean, and powerful. I have a tape of a 1946 Opry performance in which the band was at its full stride. Bill sang "Blue Yodel Number 4," and from every instrumental break by a band member to Bill's outrageously high

yodel at the end of the song, the crowd was wild. They were *screaming*.

Judge Hay seemed to favor Earl, and he promoted him. I believe that the Judge knew Earl for the great stylist he was. He introduced the song "White House Blues" by saying "Here's Bill with Earl Scruggs and his fancy banjo to play for us now. Are you ready, Earl?" A sly voice answered, "I'm ready, Judge." It was special.

The band recorded from early 1946 to late 1947—numbers like "Blue Moon of Kentucky," "Heavy Traffic Up Ahead," "Little Community Church," "Wicked Path of Sin," "Little Cabin Home on the Hill," "Mighty Dark to Travel," "Molly and Tenbrooks," "Bluegrass Break-down" and other classics. They recorded more songs with Bill than any other combination of Bluegrass Boys—28 songs in all, every one of them a treasure to the traditional bluegrass music lover. They had it all: powerful singing, duets, quartets, and unique instrumentals. They could sing a nice easy song for you, and they had the power to drive a song home. There wasn't a weak talent in the band.

Bill had a special attitude towards the boys in the band. As Chubby Wise once said, "No one was ever considered a sideman. Even though we were a band, we were featured performers. If one of us happened to luck into a hot night, Bill would give us room to stretch in."

As Earl Scruggs said, "I never felt like a sideman. Bill hardly ever acted as if he were the star of the show. If you had something to offer, he would certainly let you do it. I respected Bill as my boss man, but he gave me all the freedom in the world, and that only made me try harder."

**A**fter Earl had been with the band for five months, Bill turned the duty of ticket sales over to him. Earl recalls that "I can still see those long lines of people waiting to get in during tent season. They would stand for a long time in the hot sun. I remember folks holding on to their dollar bills for so long that when they did step up to pay, their dollar bills would be wringing with sweat."

The "tent season" to which Earl refers was the summer months during which an artist would take his own act and others, usually from the Opry, out on the road in a caravan consisting of a semi to haul the three-pole tent and bleachers, a sleeper truck for the ten-man crew, a cook truck, and a generator for their own electricity. Bill even had a baseball team, "The Bluegrass All-Stars." Sometimes the front man would arrange for the team, Bill included, to play the local team. Anything for a little extra advertisement. Quite an event for a usually quiet town.

*"I believe in giving credit where credit is due... No one was ever considered a sideman. Even though we were a band, we were featured performers. If one of us happened to luck into a hot night, Bill would give us room to stretch in."*

*—Chubby Wise*

The five men who travelled in "The Blue Goose" got along well together. Earl Scruggs recalls that "we had a competitive spirit, but at the same time, if one of us saw another one having an off night or playing himself into a corner, we would jump in and cover. There was good morale among us."

Success, however, usually takes its toll on a band, and the Bluegrass Boys were no exception. By the latter part of 1947, the crowds were growing and growing but the salaries weren't—and \$60 per week to support a family and pay road expenses just didn't seem enough for all that travelling and physical wear and tear. The boys had grown tired.

Chubby and Cedric were the first to leave; they went to Washington, D.C. to work with Clyde Moody, leaving on good terms with Bill and other members of the band. Earl, meanwhile, was playing, driving, selling tickets and rolling and counting money, sometimes until two or three o'clock in the morning, and he felt that the band had lost a lot of its punch along with Chubby and Cedric. He turned in his two-week notice to Bill, but agreed to stay on as long as Bill did not have a replacement for him. As Earl was walking out the door after talking to Bill, Lester also turned in his notice.

Earl was replaced by Don Reno.

The idea of working together had not occurred to either Lester or Earl, but as Lester's notice was running out, Bill and the Bluegrass Boys played a date close to Earl's home in North Carolina. Earl went to the show to see his friends, and he and Lester talked about how different things were going to be when they were working hard back at the mill or whatever they did to replace music as a source of income. Perhaps, they thought, they could try their luck with their own band, or maybe a radio show close to Earl's home. When Lester's notice was up, they called Cedric (who was out of a job), and that's when the team of Flatt and Scruggs was born. They were to become another great bluegrass band in their own right, and Cedric would go on to achieve fame as a member of Hank Williams' Drifting Cowboys—but the greatest bluegrass band ever had come to an end.

**T**he greatest bluegrass band ever was led by a man who remains one of the most unique talents the recording industry has ever known. He has proven himself time after time as a genuine leader.

Bill says that he doesn't know where country music is going, but he's glad that bluegrass is spreading into foreign countries. "I hope that the people here will help me keep it pure and simple, and move it along through the future," he says. "When my generation has gone, I hope that the young people will think about the people who played the music before them, and keep it simple."

Last year, Bill fought off major surgery to come back and play and sing with more vigor and conviction than he's had in years. He toured the Holy Land, and was thrilled to see the River Jordan. He hosts about 60,000 people at a bluegrass festival in Bean Blossom, Indiana, each summer, keeps writing songs, and has a recent album on which folks like the Oaks, Johnny Cash, Larry Gatlin, Ricky Skaggs, John Hartford, Waylon, Willie, Mel Tillis and Barbara Mandrell came to visit—and even more people wanted to. Not too long ago, the White House called. Two men sang for Mr. Reagan that evening: Frank Sinatra and Bill Monroe.

As for the Bluegrass Boys, Bill says, "They all meant a lot to bluegrass music. It's hard to say that one man was better than another. Each man had his day, and I give them praise for what they contributed."

But I believe that if you could talk to the entire roster of Bluegrass Boys past and present, the majority of them would agree that Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, Chubby Wise, and Cedric Rainwater were the world's greatest bluegrass band: Gentlemen, thank you. ■

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## RAGGED BUT RIGHT: THE LIFE & TIMES OF GEORGE JONES

Dolly Carlisle, CMS's 1983 Journalist of the Year, first saw George Jones staggering down Nashville's Music Row one bleak wintry day in 1979. He was gaunt, unshaven, ragged... the ghost of a man barely able to stand. How, she asked herself, could Country Music's greatest singer sink to such a sorry state? During the next four years Dolly spent hundreds of hours talking with Jones, his family, friends, and associates. The result is this fascinating profile of a superbly talented country boy searching for love, trust, and God in a frenzied world for which his humble beginnings had ill prepared him. RAGGED BUT RIGHT is published in a hardcover, 272-page book that also includes 16 pages of photographs. This bestseller is a must for every country music fan. So, order your copy today. Book No. B2C...\$14.95



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It is an Elvis fan's delight...from cover to cover...a frank and entertaining look at the "King." It's the life of Elvis in an exciting photobiography...from truckdriver to international legend...in over 250 exciting photographs. This big 10" x 8" volume...with 160 pages...even includes a descriptive filmography and discography. Every period of Elvis' infamous life has been captured in pictures...some you are not likely to find anywhere else. When this great volume was first offered some years back, thousands hurried to the bookshelves to buy a copy. Now, it is almost impossible to find anywhere. However, we have uncovered 500 copies...perhaps the last copies around. And now, for a limited time only, we are offering them at the lowest price ever. Book No. B3L...Was \$7.95...NOW ONLY \$3.95.



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**Continued on the next page...**

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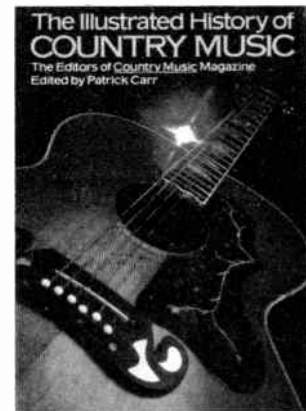
## GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN effectively details the triumphs and tragedies of some of the most famous. These celebrated individuals have constantly dazzled the public with the drama and glamour of their everyday lives. This great hardcover book is a loving tribute to those whose stars have burned brightest and who have attained immortality through fame. Included are the biographies of such interesting individuals as: Alfred Hitchcock, John Wayne, Betty Grable, Bing Crosby, Mae West, and many more. Each biography is lavishly enhanced with photographs that provide a fascinating footnote to the already-extraordinary text. Written in a style similar to TOO YOUNG TO DIE, author Patricia Fox-Sheinwold offers an absorbing look at those luminaries who were adored by millions. Book No. B3S... \$9.95 Value... NOW ONLY \$7.95.



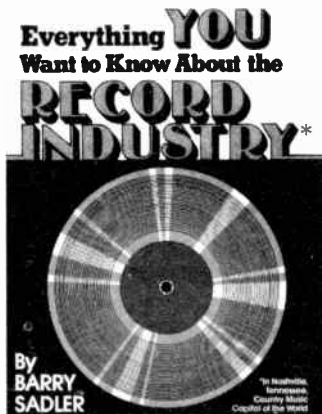
## MANDRELL FAMILY ALBUM

No family has captured the fancy of the public quite like the Mandrell family. Now, at last, there is a book that presents a heart-warming look at this talented group. Barbara's story and also Irby's and Louise's and Irlene's. One story can't be told without the others, because their idea of a family forms the foundation for each individual's success. It is the Mandrell story from the Mandrell point of view—an upbeat story that sparkles with hard-working, clean-living people who made it in the world of entertainment. It is replete with inside stories of laughter, tears, and an ambition to be the best. Hardcover... 9 1/4" x 9 1/4"... 192 pages... Over 100 Photos from Mandrell Family Collection... Record Discology... .45 RPM... 16" x 24" Color Poster of Louise Mandrell. Book No. B1E... \$14.95.



## HISTORY OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Here, from the editors of Country Music magazine, is the most complete and totally authoritative book to ever trace the development of country music. Illustrated with more than 100 rare photographs, this giant volume pays tribute to all the legendary greats of country music... stars like Jimmie Rodgers, the Carter Family, Hank Williams... as well as the contemporary headliners like Waylon, Willie, and Dolly. THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY is a rare look beyond the Nashville image of sequined shirts and cowboy boots into the tastes, trends and talents of a major music industry. It is truly the most definitive book of its kind to ever hit the market. But you must order right away. It is not likely that you will be able to still find this book in stores, and we have just a few left, so write today. Book No. B4I... Was \$14.95... NOW ONLY \$10.95.



## THE RECORD INDUSTRY

This isn't a scholarly, pompous, self-conscious book. It's a simple, blunt, practical collection of the facts, knowledge, tips, names, addresses, telephone numbers, and some other things that you will want (and need) to know when you try to make it in Nashville as a performer, musician or songwriter. It's down-to-earth, easy-to-read, and heavily-illustrated. Read it, and you'll get the feel of what it's like to walk down Music Row with your dreams in your heart and the lead sheets for what you hope will be a big hit in your hand. Use it, and if you have the talent, you may find the road to fame shorter than it would have been otherwise. Selling yourself, cutting a record, pitching your songs, managers, agents, unions, how to avoid rip-off artists, and more... it's all here. We have only a few copies left, so order now. Book No. B4F... \$4.95



## WATERMELON WINE

WATERMELON WINE looks at the depth of compassion in today's country music and reflects a preoccupation with the past... with roots, traditions, and things that are old... that is unique to country music. It presents an inside look at the lives and music of Nashville's finest... Waylon Jennings, Loretta Lynn, Charlie Daniels, Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Hank Williams. Writes Michael Bane, editor Country Music Magazine, "Watermelon Wine is, plainly and simply, and incredible good book." Says Bill Anderson, "I've often said you can't describe music with words. However, Frye Gaillard comes awfully close..." Songwriter Mickey Newbury writes, "... one of the best books I've ever read on country music..." This book is in limited supply, so order now and save. Book No. B3R... Was \$10.00... NOW ONLY \$6.95



## ELVIS THE FINAL YEARS

Jerry Hopkins, author of the acclaimed "Elvis: A Biography," presents the most comprehensive account of Elvis' later life... from his triumphant Vegas performance in 1969, to the poignant final days following his death. Based on exclusive interviews with Dee Presley, Colonel Tom, Dr. George Nichopoulos and others who knew Elvis intimately, this behind-the-scenes book tells the real story of Elvis' secret White House meeting with Nixon, his relationship with Col. Parker, his breakup with Priscilla, the women and drugs he turned to for solace, the dizzying spiral that led to his death. Neither a whitewash nor a hatchet job, this revealing first-hand documentary is "must" reading for Elvis fans. And, if you order right away, while our limited inventory lasts, we'll cut over 25% OFF the regular price. Book No. B3E... Was \$12.95... NOW ONLY \$9.95.

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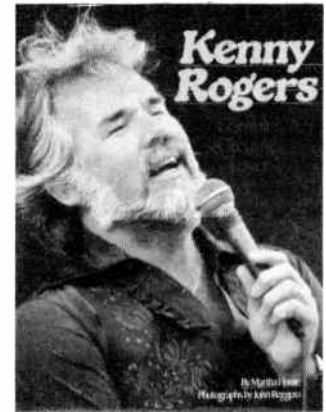
## DOLLY

Author Alanna Nash makes us part of Dolly's dazzling success story in this intimate biography. Based on interviews with Dolly herself, and with others who have known her all her life, DOLLY reads like a Cinderella story...one of 12 children growing up in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, to one of the leading female vocalists in America today. But above all, Ms. Nash takes us beyond the flashy exterior to reveal the true Dolly...a bright, articulate woman who knows exactly what she wants and where she is going. Dolly is currently music's most visible songstress...also with great successes in the movies. Will Dolly's staying power be as strong as it has proven in the past? Once you read DOLLY, you know she will be around for a long time to come. Hardcover, 200 pages, 45 b/w and 12 color photos. Book No. B3V...Was \$9.95...NOW ONLY \$4.95.



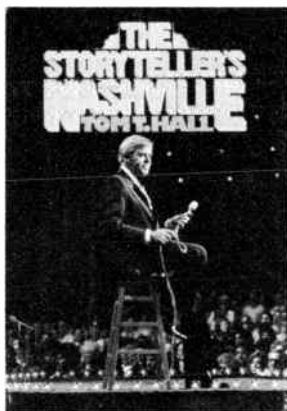
## THE BEST OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Here is truly a handsome book...complete with over 90 full color photographs. THE BEST OF COUNTRY MUSIC reflects the excitement of the music...taking you on trips to Nashville and Texas, remembering old-time, gospel, western swing and bluegrass music and also including the up-to-the minute sounds of the outlaws and the singers who nudge country records high into the popular music charts of today. Just some of the chapters include: Golden Age Heros, Country Girls, The Country Music Hall Of Fame, Today's Mainstream, Railroad Blues And Truckstop Dues, Nashville And The Grand Ole Opry, Rock And Country, Deep In The Heart Of Texas, and more. Only one hundred and twenty five copies of this book remain in our warehouse, so order yours now and save. Book No. B3T...Was \$9.95...NOW ONLY \$6.95.



## KENNY ROGERS

Much to our surprise, we have been able to secure a limited number of copies of this very popular biography. And now we are offering them to you at a substantial discount...OVER 30% OFF! Now you can have the dramatic story of Kenny's failures and triumphs, good times and bad. Find out how the so-called 1975 has-been sang his way to the top of the charts and over \$20,000,000.00 in record sales by 1980...drew TV's highest ratings with "The Gambler"...and found personal happiness with his wife, Marianne. Within this 160 page oversized paperback author Martha Hume has included 125 rare photographs, including 16 in glowing full color. If you are a Kenny Rogers fan, you will cherish this book forever. So don't wait, order your copy now and save. Book No. B3W...Was \$8.95...NOW ONLY \$5.95.



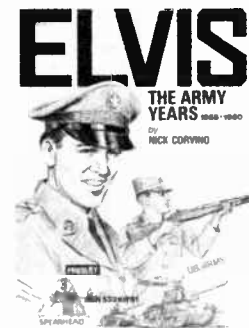
## TOM T. HALL'S NASHVILLE

Here, in his easy anecdotal style, Tom T. details his entree in the local music scene...frequenting bars such as Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, the Nino-O-One, and the Black Poodle...waiting for "stars" to come in, drink, and informally perform. In such beer-smoothed moments he befriended the likes of Kris Kristofferson, Johnny Rodriguez, Tex Ritter and others. But being the composer of over 500 songs, Tom T's stories can't help but be ones behind-the-hits: how one man's complaining about alimony led to his wonderful creation "Back Pocket Money"...about the time Margie Singleton asked Tom T. to write a song that resulted in "Harper Valley PTA"...and on and on. It is truly a fascinating book that no real country music fan should be without. Book N. B3C...Was \$9.95...NOW ONLY \$6.95



## DOLLY PARTON: A PERSONAL PORTRAIT

Here is a dandy of a little book for every Dolly Parton fan out there. Author Otis James brings us a fascinating look at today's biggest singing sensation...and the most successful star to ever bridge the Nashville - rock 'n' roll gap. Pictures, pictures, pictures...that is one of the best things about this great book. You get 63 b/w shots in all...of Dolly on-stage, in the studio, at home, at work, at fun. Many of these fine pictures you are not likely to find anywhere else. See Dolly as other stars see her...see Dolly as she sees herself. It's a great little book, 96 pages in all. And the price is just right. Softcover. Book No. B3G...\$3.95



## ELVIS THE ARMY YEARS

They were two of the most important years in Elvis' life. Yet other books pass over them like they never happened. Until this book. Here is the first truly revealing look at the Elvis Army Years...the complete never-before-told story. Learn about the fan protests, the controversial 60-day deferment, the trauma of losing his mother, the basic training razzing, the record sessions while on leave, the tour in Germany, the first meeting with Priscilla, the early discharge and his re-emergence to super stardom. The whole fascinating story is between the covers of this hardcover book... Book No. B3J...Was \$8.95...NOW ONLY \$4.95.

**Continued on the next page...**

# COUNTRY MUSIC BOOK SALE



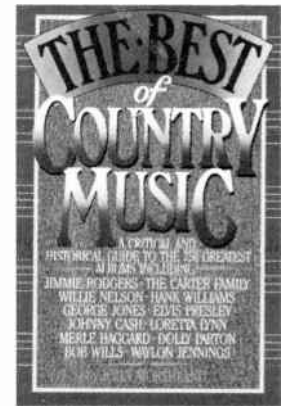
## OPRY STARS OF THE 60's AND 70's

Quite plain and simply, this book is just one thing... pictures. Pictures of your favorite stars... the biggest names in country music... when they appeared on stage at the Grand Ole Opry, and off-stage as few of us have ever seen them. This is truly a photo essay that is almost as famous as the stars it profiles. That's because it was put together by one of the most renowned photographers on the country music scene... Les Leverett, official photographer to the Grand Ole Opry. Everybody is here... Gene Autry, Roy Acuff and Tex Ritter backstage... A beaming Loretta Lynn relaxing with Mooney and the twins... Chet Atkins with Willie and Waylon... Grandpa Jones... Roy Clark... Jerry Lee Lewis... and so much more that it's impossible to mention it all here. Order your copy now and you'll save \$6.00. Book No. B3P... Was \$9.95... NOW ONLY \$3.95.



## TOO YOUNG TO DIE

Not country, but still a book that everyone should read. Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Judy Garland, Bruce Lee, Buddy Holly, Hank Williams... these are just some of the 31 stars whose stories are told in this unique volume. TOO YOUNG TO DIE is a handsomely designed and printed hardcover edition that will enhance any home library. It is a treasury of documented material about some very famous people from the era of the 20's to the 70's. Each biography tells of the star's endless search for love, praise, applause, adulation and affection. It also lists every film or record that the entertainer was involved in. When you finally put this book down, you will say, as the author does, "Some made it, some didn't. Some could handle it, some could not. All died trying." Book No. B3Z... Published At \$19.95... NOW ONLY \$9.95.



## NEW THE BEST OF COUNTRY MUSIC

An authoritative guide to the top 750 country albums, THE BEST OF COUNTRY MUSIC evokes like never before the rowdy good spirits, the hard truths, and the high lonesome cries of the country music sound. As he traces its roots and branches in string bands, bluegrass, western swing, singing cowboys, rockabilly, honky-tonk, the Nashville sound, and the modern-day "outlaw," author John Morthland shows how country music shaped America, and how America shaped it. THE BEST OF COUNTRY MUSIC describes in detail the 100 greatest albums of all times and provides capsule commentaries on 650 more. You can use it as a consumer guide and dip into it anywhere you please, or plunge right in and read it from beginning to end. This is truly one new book that no serious country music fan should be without. Book No. B1Y... \$14.95.

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# All-Time Best

*As Determined by Members of  
The Country Music Society of America*

**C**ountry Music Society of America members were recently asked to name their ten favorite country songs and their ten favorite country singers. Over 9,000 votes were received, nominating 327 different singers and more than 600 songs. The results have been tabulated, and the nominations for the top 200 songs and the top 100 singers are presented here along with a ballot for selecting the all-time top ten country songs and country singers. These lists are in alphabetical order and not related to the number of votes received. Use the numbers to fill in the ballot on

the opposite page.

Only members of the CMSA are eligible to vote. If you are a *Country Music* subscriber but not a CMSA member and would like to vote, you may join the CMSA and cast your vote at the same time by filling out the ballot and returning it with your check for \$12. (this is a special Charter Member rate for *Country Music* subscribers, others pay \$15 per year. Your membership will include another year of *Country Music*). Write the date and number of your check in the space for membership number.

## 100 Singers

1. Roy Acuff
2. Alabama
3. Bill Anderson
4. John Anderson
5. Lynn Anderson
6. Gene Autry
7. Moe Bandy
8. Bobby Bare
9. Ed Bruce
10. Carter Family
11. Johnny Cash
12. Ray Charles
13. Roy Clark
14. Patsy Cline
15. David Allan Coe
16. John Conlee
17. Earl Thomas Conley
18. Billy Crash Craddock
19. Charlie Daniels
20. Lacy J. Dalton
21. Jimmy Dean
22. Donna Fargo
23. Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs
24. Red Foley
25. Tennessee Ernie Ford
26. Janie Fricke
27. Lefty Frizzell
28. David Frizzell
29. Larry Gatlin
30. Crystal Gayle
31. Mickey Gilley
32. Vem Gosdin
33. Lee Greenwood
34. Merle Haggard
35. Tom T. Hall
36. Emmylou Harris
37. Freddie Hart
38. Johnny Horton
39. Ferlin Husky
40. Sonny James
41. Waylon Jennings
42. George Jones
43. Grandpa Jones
44. Tom Jones
45. Kris Kristofferson
46. Brenda Lee
47. Jerry Lee Lewis
48. Loretta Lynn
49. Barbara Mandrell
50. Louise Mandrell
51. Charly McClain
52. Ronnie McDowell
53. Roger Miller
54. Ronnie Milsap
55. Bill Monroe
56. George Morgan
57. Gary Morris
58. Anne Murray
59. Willie Nelson
60. Oak Ridge Boys
61. Buck Owens
62. Dolly Parton
63. Webb Pierce
64. Elvis Presley
65. Ray Price
66. Charley Pride
67. Eddie Rabbitt
68. Jim Reeves
69. Tex Ritter
70. Marty Robbins
71. Jimmie Rodgers
72. Johnny Rodriguez
73. Kenny Rogers
74. Linda Ronstadt
75. Jean Shepherd
76. T. G. Sheppard
77. Ricky Skaggs
78. Carl Smith

79. Connie Smith
80. Hank Snow
81. Sons of the Pioneers
82. Red Sovine
83. Statler Brothers
84. George Strait
85. Sylvia
86. Hank Thompson
87. Mel Tillis
88. Ernest Tubb
89. Tanya Tucker

90. Conway Twitty
91. Porter Wagoner
92. Steve Wariner
93. Gene Watson
94. Kitty Wells
95. Dottie West
96. Shelly West
97. Don Williams
98. Hank Williams
99. Hank Williams, Jr.
100. Faron Young

## 200 Songs

1. A Boy Named Sue
2. Almost Persuaded
3. All the Gold in California
4. Amanda
5. Amazing Grace
6. Anytime
7. Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way
8. A White Sport Coat
9. Back in the Saddle Again
10. Battle of New Orleans
11. Bed of Roses
12. Before the Next Teardrop Falls
13. Behind Closed Doors
14. Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain
15. Blue Kentucky Girl
16. Blue Moon of Kentucky
17. Blue Suede Shoes
18. Bobby Sue
19. Bouquet of Roses
20. Born to Lose
21. Cattle Call
22. City Lights
23. City of New Orleans
24. Class of '57
25. Coal Miner's Daughter
26. Coat of Many Colors
27. Cold, Cold Heart
28. Cool Water
29. Crazy
30. Crazy Arms
31. Crying My Heart Out Over You
32. Crying in the Chapel
33. Crying Time
34. Dark as a Dungeon
35. Delta Dawn
36. Detroit City
37. Devil Went Down to Georgia
38. Devil Woman
39. D-I-V-O-R-C-E
40. Don't Cheat in Our Hometown
41. Don't Come Home A Drinkin' With Lovin' On Your Mind
42. Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue



# All-Time Best

43. Dreaming My Dreams
44. Easy Lovin'
45. Elizabeth
46. El Paso
47. El Paso City
48. Elvira
49. Faded Love
50. Family Tradition
51. Flowers on the Wall
52. Foggy Mountain Breakdown
53. Folsom Prison Blues
54. For the Good Times
55. Four Strong Winds
56. Four Walls
57. Fraulein
58. Funny How Time Slips Away
59. The Gambler
60. Gentle on my Mind
61. Georgia on my Mind
62. Ghost Riders in the Sky
63. Golden Rocket
64. Golden Ring
65. Good Hearted Woman
66. Grand Tour
67. Great Speckled Bird
68. Green Green Grass of Home
69. Harper Valley PTA
70. Have I Told You Lately That I Love You
71. Heartaches by the Number
72. Heartbreak Hotel
73. He'll Have to Go
74. Hello Darlin'
75. Hello Walls
76. Help Me Make It Through The Night
77. He Stopped Loving Her Today
78. Hey Good Lookin'
79. Hey Porter
80. High Noon
81. Highway 40 Blues
82. Honey
83. Honky Tonk Heroes
84. How Great Thou Art
85. I Can't Help it (if I'm Still in Love With You)
86. I Can't Stop Loving You
87. I Fall to Pieces
88. I Don't Hurt Anymore
89. I Love You Because
90. I Really Don't Want to Know
91. I Remember The Year Clayton Delaney Died
92. I Saw the Light
93. I Still Miss Someone
94. I Walk the Line
95. I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool
96. I'd Rather Die Young (than Grow Old Without You)
97. If Drinking Don't Kill Me Her Memory Will
98. If You've Got The Money
99. I'm Always on a Mountain When I Fall
100. I'm Gonna Hire a Wino to Decorate Our Home
101. I'm Making Believe
102. I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry
103. In the Jailhouse Now
104. It Was Almost Like a Song
105. It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels
106. Jambalaya
107. Kaw-liga
108. King of the Road
109. Kiss An Angel Good Morning
110. Living Proof
111. Long Black Veil

112. Love Me Tender
113. Lovesick Blues
114. Loving Her Was Easier
115. Lucille
116. Make the World Go Away
117. Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys
118. Mansion on the Hill
119. Memphis
120. Mom & Dad's Waltz
121. Mountain Music
122. Mavin' On
123. My Heroes Have Always Been Cowboys
124. My Home's In Alabama
125. My Woman, My Woman, My Wife
126. Near You
127. North to Alaska
128. Oh Lonesome Me
129. Okie From Muskogee
130. Old Dogs, Children and Watermelon Wine
131. Old Flames (Can't Hold A Candle to You)
132. On the Road Again
133. One Day at a Time
134. Orange Blossom Special
135. Queen of My Heart
136. Ramblin' Man
137. Release Me
138. Remember Me (I'm the One Who Loves You)
139. Ring of Fire
140. Rocky Top
141. Roomful of Roses
142. Rose Colored Glasses
143. (I Never Promised You A) Rose Garden
144. Ruby Don't Take Your Love to Town
145. San Antonio Rose
146. Satin Sheets
147. Satisfied Mind
148. Save the Last Dance for Me
149. Send Me the Pillow You Dream On
150. Seven Year Ache
151. She Thinks I Still Care
152. Since You've Gone
153. Singin' the Blues
154. Sixteen Tons
155. Sleeping Single in a Double Bed
156. Slippin' Around
157. Slow Hand
158. Snowbird
159. Some Memories Just Won't Die
160. Stand By Your Man
161. Storms Never Last
162. Streets of Larado
163. Sunday Morning Coming Dawn
164. Swingin'
165. T For Texas
166. Teddy Bear
167. Tennessee Waltz
168. Tennessee Whiskey
169. Thank God for Kids
170. That's the Way Love Goes
171. The Last Cheaters Waltz
172. The Rose
173. There Goes My Everything
174. There Stands the Glass
175. Three Bells
176. Till I Gain Control Again
177. Today I Started Loving You Again

178. Tumbling Tumbleweeds
179. Two Story House
180. Wabash Cannonball
181. Walking After Midnight
182. Walking the Floor Over You
183. Waltz Across Texas
184. When I Dream
185. White Lightning
186. Whiskey River
187. Why Baby Why
188. Why Me Lord
189. Wild Side of Life
190. Wildwood Flower

191. Will the Circle Be Unbroken
192. Y'all Come Back Saloon
193. You Ain't Woman Enough to Take My Man
194. You Are My Sunshine
195. You Gave Me A Mountain
196. You Needed Me
197. You Were Always On My Mind
198. You're the Reason God Made Oklahoma
199. Your Cheatin' Heart
200. Young Love

## Cast Your Vote

### How to Do It

1. Read the complete list of songs and singers carefully before marking the ballot. The lists are in alphabetical order, so your favorites could be anywhere.
2. Vote for the top ten songs and top ten singers by writing the numbers of your choices in the space provided below.
3. Write your name, address and registration number from your CMSA Membership Card (not the number from your magazine label) in the space provided. Ballots without valid membership numbers will not be counted, nor will photocopies. (Members just joining, write in the date and number of your check and enclose \$12.)
4. Cut this ballot out and mail to: Top-Ten Vote, Country Music Society of America, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

### Your Ballot

Indicate your votes by writing the numbers of your choices in the following spaces:

#### TOP 10 SINGERS

#### TOP 10 SONGS

Check One:

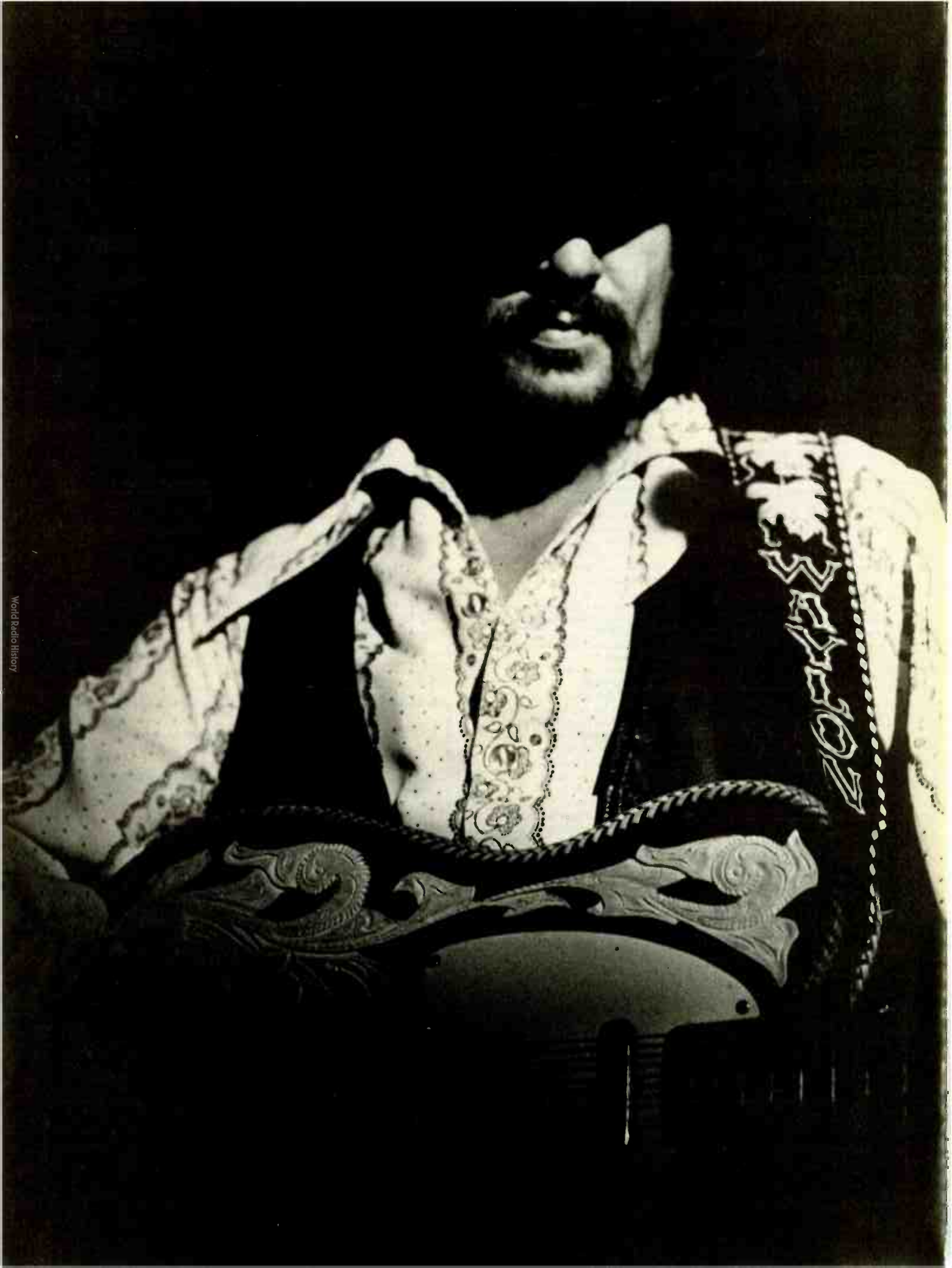
I am a CMSA member. The registration number on my Membership Card is \_\_\_\_\_.

I want to join now and cast the votes above. Enclosed is my \$12 check.

MEMBER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_



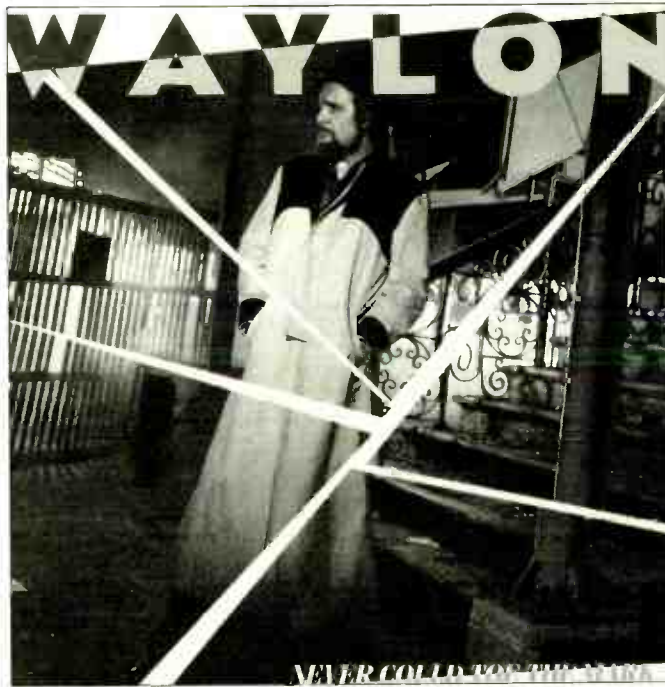
# Record Reviews

## Waylon Jennings *Never Could Toe the Mark* RCA AHLI-5017

Let us deliver a small tribute to Waylon Jennings. Let us say that after his well-publicized sojourn in the wilds of "artistic confusion" (an area with close ties to those of bankruptcy and pharmacology), and after the weary but spirited *It's Only Rock & Roll* album with which he officially reclaimed his credentials, he has now produced an album which really hangs together. *Never Could Toe the Mark* is confident and cohesive, it demonstrates growth, and it grows on you too. It has a solid-grounded core and a sliding, gut-centered groove.

The groove is quite something. It is very much a band-based business, guided by Waylon and his trio of engineer/co-producers, and if you wanted to call it something, you might have to resort to terminology like, oh, "dense-pack bluesabilly technofunk" or maybe (more formal, this) "progressive-organic multi-rhythmic layering." Basically, it is Waylon's original and ever-trusty rhythm guitar phrasing taken to a truly complex full-ensemble extreme, a kind of chicken-pickin' symphony. It has its precursors in his past work, of course, but it also incorporates a lot of production tricks from contemporary black and Latin music and much of the feel of both J.J. Cale's best work and Tompall's wonderful black/white mid-70s Outlaw band.

The groove rides all the way through this album—Waylon has given it its head and to some extent made it the star of



the production—and it's what really ties the album together, lets you know that this music was made in one time and place by one unit of individuals with a common vision. That doesn't happen often, especially in Nashville and especially these days (just in case you hadn't noticed, most of you—all's favorite singing stars are back to cutting singles and filling up albums with whatever tunes come most cheaply to hand), and it makes for a superior listening experience. The groove is smart, too, and it represents a genuine and natural evolution for Waylon, musically funkier and rhythmically more advanced than his work during the peak of his vocal powers (the *Dreaming My Dreams* album). It's an intelligent and adventurous way around the problem of how to improve your music when you have already gone as far as you'll ever go in the total-killer vocals game.

This, I hasten to add, is not to say that Waylon's vocals won't still move you. In his singing of Paul Kennerly's "Where Would I Be (Without You)," a love song fully as elegant as "Dreaming My Dreams" and just as clearly personal as Hank, Jr.'s "Queen of My Heart," the husky edges which betray too much for too long are also perfect for the spirit of the song. Here's one beat-up old singing boy who's made it on through thanks to the "you" in the song, and he's proud and thankful, and you can hear that, not just understand it from the words. Waylon obviously sings the song to Jessi Colter, and that doesn't hurt, either. He is making his limitations work for him, and he is also back up to par in his choice of material.

We have used the word "personal" here, and we should use it some more. All the material on this album, whether written by Waylon or not, is "per-

sonal"—even "People Up In Texas," yet another commercial for God's country which would be entirely forgettable if it weren't for the fact that it's so obviously sincere—and all of it is *what Waylon wants to say*. At his best, the man's great strength has always been his ability to articulate his chronically independent attitudes very clearly ("Waymore's Blues" and "Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way?" are of course the classics), and it's encouraging to see him back on that track, too.

The man's courage is right there in his voice. Waylon sings it as he feels it, and so much of what he feels is so full of traps and contradictions, such a discord of anger and genuine sympathy (especially about women), that if you have your wits about you, you just have to marvel at both the depth of his honesty in expressing it all and the survival of his considerable sense of humor.

I mean, Waylon doesn't exactly play it safe, and that is nine-tenths of his worth. If he had wanted to become Mr. Sensitivity in the public mind, rather than a sensitive man in his own, he would easily have ordered up a bunch more Bob McDill waltzes after cutting "Amanda" ten years ago, and hired on for the job they ended up having to give to Don Williams. It would have saved him an awful lot of trouble—but then, as a great man in another profession once said, "that would have been wrong." And we, of course, would have missed out on records like this one, where the real interest lies in the real-life edginess of much of the material.

*Never Could Toe the Mark* concludes, appropriately, with a bitter Billy Joel song about the transience of music biz

# Record Reviews

fame, and the groove-borne Waylon really vamps it up, somehow managing to transform it into an almost jolly exercise in irony. In Joel's mouth, the line "I've seen all kinds of places, met all kinds of girls" is just another ingredient in the entertainer's prescription for jadedness, but Waylon sings it with such a light and rollicking sea-chanty touch that you just *know* the lifelong trip wasn't all unremitting tedium from start to finish. Likewise, Joel's final chorus sounds like either pure self-pity or the even purer conceit of an "artist" upset by the fact that he actually has to *sell* his work; coming from Waylon, it sounds a whole lot more like the lusty rattling of some favorite sabers, as if Waylon really *enjoys* the prospect of another tussle with fickle fame and its coldhearted masters. Given his nature, that may well be true.

Buy yourself this album and let Waylon's new groove work on you. It's his best work in years. As you listen, you may perhaps feel the pleasure which comes from thinking about people, like Waylon, who can be counted on.

—PATRICK CARR

## George Jones

*You've Still Got a Place in My Heart*  
Epic FE39002

**I**dolizing George Jones has become a full-time profession in Nashville these days. Ol' George is talked about in hushed tones, the tones that used to be reserved for funerals and visiting religious leaders. And heaven knows he deserves it all. No other person, outside of Jerry Lee Lewis, who probably doesn't count, can expect to do all the things George has done and keep on ticking.

George is definitely still ticking, and if *You've Still Got a Place in My Heart* is any indication, he's in a pretty good mood. This album lacks the bleak despair that has charac-

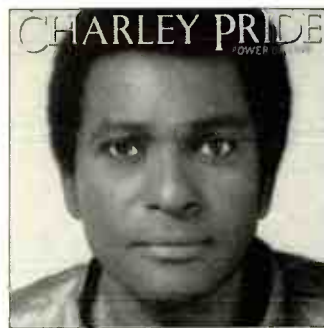
terized so much of George's best work. It also, unfortunately, lacks some of the sheer exuberance at being alive that marked George's upbeat material. His re-recording of "Ragged But Right," one of his earliest cuts, is strangely flat, with only a hint of what he can do with the song surfacing every now and then.

Still, there's some good stuff on this album—especially the title track, "You've Still Got a Place in My Heart," and "Your Lying Blue Eyes," which is, in my opinion, the best song here. I also like "Loveshine," sort of an upbeat Jones ditty that highlights George having a good time. And that's what it seems like with this album—George had a good time making it. And I guess that's a pretty thing these days.

—MICHAEL "BIG SOFTIE" BANE

## Charley Pride

*Power of Love*  
RCA AHL1-5031



**T**here are two magnificent numbers on this album. "Missin' Mississippi" is one of those finely-crafted miniatures in the tradition of "Mississippi Cotton-Pickin' Delta Town" or "Roll On, Mississippi," and the wistful nostalgia in Pride's vocal treatment can be traced to his own Mississippi roots. "Some Days It Rains All Night Long," despite its incongruous title, is a powerful, blues-flavored ballad by Ed Penney that shows off Pride as country bluesman. He gives it an explosive performance that not only cuts through the symphonic arrangement, but puts the rest

of the album to shame.

I've been disappointed with the content of recent Charley Pride albums. Much of the material has been so bland and lightweight that it can't hold a candle to "Snakes Crawl at Night" or "Is Anybody Goin' to San Antone?" Not that there's anything terribly *wrong* with the newer stuff, but to paraphrase that shopworn analogy about Chinese food, you forget about it an hour after you've heard it. At least I do.

Much of *Power of Love* fits that unfortunate pattern. Again, Charley's immense vocal gifts are wasted on lightweight crossover ditties, interchangeable with the ones being recorded to death by so many other acts today. This safe approach may seem comfortable, but it rarely generates memorable music. I defy you to listen to "Power of Love," "Everybody's Lookin' for You," "Falling in Love Again," "Ellie" or "Gotta See Some More of You" and remember their melodies or lyrics for long. "Girl Trouble," with fluffy teen lyrics reminiscent of Elvis' worst movie soundtracks, positively made my flesh crawl. This stuff is nothing more than filler—and there is no excuse for it.

I don't believe for a second that Pride and his producer Norro Wilson can't find an album's worth of material as good as the first two numbers mentioned. As it stands, it's no pleasure seeing such a fine singer's recording career being so totally trivialized.

—RICH KIENZLE

## The Whites

*Forever You*  
MCA-5490

**B**ack in the days before Sharon White married Ricky Skaggs, The Whites, then known as Buck White and the Down Home Folks, were working as a solo act on the bluegrass circuit when Skaggs himself was still a



sideman with Emmylou Harris' Hot Band. When Skaggs broke through with his amazingly successful contemporary-traditional country sound, it gave The Whites the opportunity to expand their reach to an audience they'd barely touched when they occasionally recorded and performed with Emmylou.

The Whites are now proving that the concept works as well for them as it did for Skaggs, with a similar fusion of bluegrass, Western Swing, Cajun and gospel at the core (minus the rockabilly overtones in Skaggs' music). The combination of youthful energy and ideas with these more traditional styles continues to work, particularly with their traditional treatment of contemporary numbers like John Beland's "Forever You," "Mama, Don't You Know Your Little Girl" by Harlan Howard and the haunting "Blue Baby Now," all enhanced by their clear, spare harmonies. Skaggs is, not surprisingly, all over the place on this album, playing every stringed instrument in his arsenal and singing harmony. And, he was the producer.

As for Buck, he turns the stage over to his daughters, Sharon and Cheryl, while concentrating on backing harmonies and piano. But he cuts loose twice, appropriately enough on the album's two oldest numbers. His remake of Roy Acuff's remake of Moon Mullican's 1947 remake of Harry Choates' 1946 Cajun classic, "Jole Blon," is engaging, though it lacks the rawness of Acuff's and the primal madness of Choates' original.

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Hank Williams' "Move It on Over" gets a buoyant Western Swing treatment, complete with an extended piano break from Buck and a stunning solo break from fiddler Mark O'Connor. The treatment of "Pins and Needles" (not the 1940s Roy Acuff hit) is in much the same vein.

All in all, The Whites have a highly appealing piece of modern traditional country music in *Forever You*. I hope they continue their current direction, but never get so smooth that they lose the authentic rough edges that marked the best of the older music they obviously love.

—RICH KIENZLE

### Jessi Colter

*Rock and Roll Lullaby*  
Triad Records  
TELP 1001

Jessi Colter does not have what one would call a "good" voice. What she does have is even better—a powerful, individualistic voice that, when coupled with the right music, can outperform any of today's girl singers with their white bread-perfect pitch.

And with *Rock and Roll*



*Lullaby*, Jessi Colter has found, or has been given, the right music and the right songs. Not since the *I'm Not Lisa* years has she been given such an opportunity to show off her talent unhampered by over-production and sappy material.

The best cuts are the familiar ones, including the title song, "Rock and Roll Lullaby,"

"Wild and Blue," "Stormy Weather," "I Can't Stop Loving You" and "I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know." All are kept simple, with Colter's voice permitted to dominate as it weaves and wavers its way through each of the old and new classics. The voice alone brings to each song a particular feeling—the title song is touching, "Stormy Weather" is blues-ily plaintive.

Although she moves into the upbeat "I Want to be With You" without skipping a beat, Jessi's strength lies in the ballads, of which there are—wisely—an abundance.

It's heartening to see a talented artist hook up with people who recognize that talent as unique and who work with it. In this case, producers Chips Moman and Bobby Emmons have led Jessi Colter through a forest of songs perfectly suited to her eccentric style—and surely there are a lot more trees out there for future albums.

—MARY ELLEN MOORE

### Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

*Plain Dirt Fashion*

Warner Bros. 25113-1

Like many other groups that found themselves in limbo in the late seventies as folk rock faded before our very ears, along with the commercial appeal of their records, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band seemed either too country for rock, or too rock for country listeners. But they drew in their forces and returned with a new sparkle as if to say "thanks for the the rest."

They started firing back with such hits as "American Dream," and in 1983 moved closer onto country charts with "Shot Full of Love" and "Dance Little Jean." And now, *Plain Dirt Fashion* could be the exact mark they've been looking for. Maybe it doesn't have the raw, abstract, energetic edge of, say, the *Uncle Charlie* album, but it represents a well-seasoned collection of



thoughts, songs, ideas and reflections of mutual musical boundaries shared by Jeff Hanna, John McEuen, Jimmy Fadden, Bob Carpenter and Jim Ibbotson. Ibbotson, an original member from sixteen years back, left the band for a period, and returned recently with a batch of fresh songs he had written (two on this album), apparently ready to sing. He sings with a rich, earthy voice that paints a vivid picture, especially on a Rodney Crowell gem, "Long Hard Road." It's the too familiar story of the country boy who follows his dream into town: soon he realizes that he really isn't where he belongs, and follows his way "back down the road where his name is known." Ricky Skaggs cameos on this track on fiddle, and his solo is so pure it would make Jerry Rivers proud.

"High Horse" is an up-tempo tailor-made Dirt Band song that starts semi-rockabilly only to pull you into a banjo/fiddle event that you hate to see fade, while "Face on the Cutting Room Floor" is a story song about a hopeful starlet and the predictable steps she takes, only to be deceived—about ten years worth of experience in three minutes time.

"I Love Only You" is a statement from the pens of Don Schlitz and Dave Loggins. The words are everyday and earthy, wrapping themselves into a tender love song. Harmonies soar alongside taste. "Run With Me," another love song, is well delivered by Hanner. The Stratocaster player found a nice part, adding to an already nicely flowing melody.

"Cadillac Ranch," a Bruce Springsteen rouser, re-confirms that these boys can take most any song that moves them, work it till it suits them, and make it appear as if they wrote it themselves. Jimmy Fadden finally gets a harmonica solo. Perhaps future records will feature more of him.

This is a solid set of material that you're not likely to tire of quickly. These songs seem to have been carefully chosen and well read before ever making it to the studio, which isn't always the case anymore. The album sounds as if it has been produced by men who are in tune with their artists as well as their business, men who know that these artists are capable of offering an extra dimension to most any situation. So it's good news for

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Warner Brothers and especially country music.

—MARTY STUART



## Ray Charles *Friendship*

Columbia FCT 39415

If you went through a “who’s who” of country singers and asked them to list their life’s ambitions, no doubt a goodly number of them would put the opportunity of singing a duet with Ray Charles near the top of the list.

Up until recently, the prospect of actually doing that was so remote as to be nearly impossible. But things changed considerably a couple of years ago, when Charles signed on with the Nashville division of CBS Records. Now, a handful of country artists have gotten the shot that they’ve been waiting for.

More than anything else, in fact, it seems to be the sheer excitement of trading vocal licks with a legend like Charles that imbues *Friendship* with a pervasive sense of liveliness and good feeling. And it is, no doubt, this same excitement that has also brought out the best in many of the singers featured on this album. Some, for that matter, turn in far more moving vocal performances here than have been heard on their solo albums for some time, like Mickey Gilley (whose duet outing on “It Ain’t Gonna Worry My Mind” is one of the most soulful tracks on the album) and Janie Fricke (who demonstrates on “Who Cares” the unique prowess as a back-up singer which used

to earn her several hundred grand a year).

A memorable effort is also made by Johnny Cash who shares with Charles a laconic reading of the Paul Kennerly-Troy Seals neo-honky-tonk classic “Crazy Old Soldier” (previously recorded by David Allan Coe and George Jones). The centerpiece and one of the most enjoyable songs on the

entire album, though, is Charles’ hit duet with George Jones, “We Didn’t See a Thing.” The track is enlivened not only by the seemingly spontaneous bantering and comic asides shared by these two vocal geniuses (and I don’t hesitate to use that word here, because in my estimation, George Jones is the Ray Charles of country music), but

also by the presence of yet another master, Chet Atkins on guitar.

Not so memorable, but still good clean fun, is Charles’ rollicking duet with Hank Williams, Jr. on “Old Cats Like Us.” “This Old Heart (Is Gonna Rise Again),” the cut featuring the Oak Ridge Boys, however, is an utterly incongruous blending of styles. (I

## Hits or Misses? Notes on Review by Kip Kirby

**Lee Greenwood**  
*You’ve Got a Good Love Comin’*  
MCA 5488

**Gary Morris**  
*Faded Blue*  
Warner Bros. 25069

**David Frizzell**  
*Solo*  
Viva 25112

**Louise Mandrell**  
*I’m Not Through Loving You Yet*  
RCA AHL1-5015

**The Bellamy Brothers**  
*Restless*  
MCA/Curb 5489

**Bill Medley**  
*I Still Do*  
MHL 8519

Why is it that artists with above-average talent settle for average material and commercial superficiality?

It would be different if there were a shortage of great songs in Nashville. Judging from what finds its way across our desk for review, there is no shortage of mediocre ones. But excellent songs can be found with effort; there’s no reason for artists of stature to compromise on material.

Or, for that matter, to accept

formula production.

Nashville gets raked over the coals routinely for slick, sterile packaging. Critics single out the predictability and stultifying sameness of today’s “Nashville sound”—sophisticated and soulless—wondering whether Nashville has fallen prey to its own press, turning success into excess.

Each of the six acts reviewed in this column is capable of greatness. None of them finds it on these albums, although Gary Morris and former Righteous Brother Bill Medley may come the closest. All six albums are pleasant but transitory, merely grazing the emotions.

Lee Greenwood, a singer who out-Kennys Kenny Rogers, has the kind of voice that makes Jell-O quiver. With his voice, he could probably record the Manhattan telephone directory and make it sound wonderful. But even a great voice needs worthy material. Don’t hold your breath: his newest, *You’ve Got a Good Love Comin’*, contains nothing as spine-chilling as “It Turns Me Inside Out.”

Instead are some adequate pop things like “Love in Time” and “Fool’s Gold” that tend to evaporate from memory, and one total waste of time called “Lean Mean Lovin’ Machine.” The title cut has nice energy—and obvious crossover commerciality—but then the al-

bum also features Greenwood’s own ode to nationalism, “God Bless the U.S.A.,” about which the less said, the better. It’s not a bad album, but not close to Greenwood’s potential.



Gary Morris’ latest, *Faded Blue*, appears to be the singer’s decision to get Serious. Morris, like Greenwood, is a tremendously talented vocalist. (He’s also a writer.) On *Faded Blue*, one gets the idea that he wants to move away from the style of his earlier hits like “Headin’ for a Heartache” and “Velvet Chains.”

And he does, although through some rather weighty ballads (“Between Two Fires,” “Second Hand Heart,” “Bed of Roses”) apparently designed to show the breadth of his range and power. He throws in two or three high-energy numbers to spotlight his band; “Baby Bye Bye,” “Whoever’s Watchin’,” “Roll Back the Rug and Dance.”

Morris is in transition (not to mention on his fifth pro-

## Record Reviews

can't seem to shake the comic image of Ray, with his "Raybans" bobbing soulfully on his piano stool while the four Oaks stand grinning behind him, doing their stage routine: sort of like Michael Jackson meets The Muppets.) But even so, it sounds like they had a good time.

Inevitably, some of the duets have more life than others.

And though I can make my own guesses, it would have been interesting, just for the record, to know which of these are actually "live" duets (where the two singers were actually together in the same studio at the same time), as opposed to "overdubbed" duets, where each singer merely added his part over Charles' pre-recorded voice in a sepa-

rate studio, many miles away. Willie Nelson, for instance, on "Seven Spanish Angels," pushes his voice to such an unusual tenor and stentorian extreme that you might think he was phoning it in from Julio Iglesias's yacht.

All in all, this album does seem like a calculated attempt to broaden Charles' appeal among the country audience.

(It's worth noting that eight of the ten guest vocalists on *Friendship*—including Merle Haggard, Ricky Skaggs, and B.J. Thomas—are also, conveniently, members of the CBS (Columbia and Epic) roster. Though this did limit the selection a little, I'm sure it also cut down on the legal paperwork.) And when placed against something like *Do I*

ducer), so he can be forgiven a few rocky spots. At least he shares his own production responsibilities with Jim Ed Norman and apparently understands what works best for him. When he finds his niche, Morris will fly.

David Frizzell, on the other hand, doesn't seem to know what works best for him and makes the mistake of leaving it to his producers. That shows on his newest album, *Solo*.

Can we talk? Frizzell is not a great vocalist. He is, however, an affecting stylist. What he *doesn't* need—but continually gets—are saccharine tracks, intrusively sweet background voices and upbeat arrangements that detract even from the mundane material.

"It's Hard to Hit a Moving Target," for instance, might have worked if produced simply and cleanly. Others on the album might have fared better with better production as well. Nothing, however, could save the inexcusably stupid "Who Dat (Messin' with That Woman of Mine)" or "Katy Did and Dinah Might."

Give us a break, puh-leeze. Can it be that Frizzell actually *likes* cutting stuff like this? What a shame. Because the one truly nice moment on this album, Hugh Moffat's lovely "Still One Broken Heart," shows all too clearly what Frizzell could do if he'd start taking himself seriously.

Then we have Louise Mandrell. Mandrell is often underrated as a singer, which is easy to understand, given some of the wimpy albums she's recorded in the past. This time out, she's trying harder and it shows with the release of *I'm Not Through Loving You Yet*.

Mandrell has suffered from a love song fixation. Past albums wallow in syrupy love ballads and overly-cute romantic wordplays. (Who can forget her embarrassing duet album two years ago with husband R.C. Bannon, (*You're My Superwoman, (I'm Your Incredible Man?)*) Mandrell also comes off as too ingratiating at times which causes listeners to take her less than seriously.

But *I'm Not Through Loving You Yet* is a minor breakthrough. Here, Mandrell sounds like she's matured finally, capable at last of honest pain, wounded pride and, yes, of love-without-superficiality. This album isn't a milestone: it has mushy numbers like "So Much Love" and pseudo-clever things like "The Eyes of Tex Are Upon You" to trap her. But given the chance on songs with substance ("This Bed's Not Big Enough," "If You Think About It Long Enough"), Mandrell is equal to the challenge.

The Bellamy Brothers have made a career out of

alternating slow curves and fast pitches. Their albums have split personalities: half the songs are very good, half are totally dispensable. The title of their latest, *Restless*, is apt.

*Restless* is flawlessly produced on 48-track analog, mixed digitally. It's hard to peg it creatively. Two of the cuts are standouts worth the price of the album, "Forget About Me" and "Down To You," and a Buddy Holly soundalike called "I Love It" squeaks by due to the Bellamys' polished exuberance.

On the minus side, there are a couple of David Bellamy's incessant songs of praise to womanhood (especially in the physical area), and a rockably number which won't convince anyone that Sun Records didn't do it better 25 years ago.

The Bellamys have great harmonies and stinging guitar sounds that camouflage even their weakest material. So they get by with bunts when they should be smashing home runs. One of these days, the brothers will make a true career album and show us all what they've been hiding.

Bill Medley's debut for RCA, *I Still Do*, is, by rights, a six-cut mini-LP rather than a full 10-cut album. Maybe that's why, of all the artists mentioned this month, he fares best in overall content and



production.

True, producer Jerry Crutchfield gives him rich backgrounds and harmonies; but Medley's vocal texture overcomes this, and the song choices are quite good. By far the most arresting here is the one RCA chose for his first single, "Til Your Memory's Gone," a straightforward country ballad with a tangible ache throughout. Vying for second-place honors is "I've Got Dreams to Remember," a wrenching, tear-stained Otis Redding original from 1968 ideally matched to Medley's hoarsely-emotional style.

Perhaps there's something to be said for mini-albums. If more artists can't come up with ten solid candidates for their albums, maybe they should consider doing brilliant six-cut LP releases instead. And now, please excuse us. We must go answer an irate fan letter which demands to know why, if critics are so smart, *we* aren't in the studio making hit records ourselves...

Closeout  
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Custom 1125-Dreams of Everyday  
Housewife  
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Starday 377-Good Humor Man

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Sun 101-Golden Hits, Vol. 2  
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Hick 44004-Let Me Love You Now

#### ROY CLARK

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# Record Reviews

*Ever Cross Your Mind*, Charles's self-produced solo album from earlier this year, this one sounds like a mere creative whisper.

Still, under the guiding hand of veteran producer Billy Sherrill (another long-time Ray Charles fan), the pieces do seem to fall together nicely on *Friendship*. The album clearly resonates from start to finish with "good vibes"—making its title an appropriate one.

—BOB ALLEN



## The Osborne Brothers

*Some Things I Want to Sing About*

Sugar Hill SH-3740

**T**his album is not guaranteed to please bluegrass purists, but then the Osbornes never really have, and how many bluegrass purists are left today anyhow? It certainly does strike an agreeable balance between bluegrass and Nashville.

It may take you a minute, for example, to get used to those trademark Johnny Cash licks being played on banjo, of all things, by Sonny Osborne on the heartbreaking "So Doggone Lonesome," but they sound pretty fine anyhow. Or how about the way session man Hal Rugg's pedal steel cries out in the background of "Always You" before stepping front and center at the end of each line. Bobby Osborne's irregular vocal phrasing on this

cut is intriguing enough in itself, and it's a pleasure to hear a weeper like this (or "If You're Gonna Do Me Wrong, Do It Right") integrated into a bluegrass repertoire.

But tradition isn't slighted, either. "Wreck of the Old 97" gets a flashy treatment, and there are stirring moments of bluegrass virtuosity throughout—the fiddle (by Blaine Sprouse) and banjo breaks on "How Much Does It Cost to Ride This Train" stand out in this regard, but so does the laconic banjo and fancy mandolin (by Bobby) on "February in My Heart," or the prickly mandolin intro of "Somehow Tonight." Bobby's vocals are forthright bluegrass, pinched and nasal the way it should be, even if the harmonies are often a little *too* Nashville-pop; and when the group emphasizes the beat via drummer Kenny Malone, he seldom overdoes it. It could well be that bluegrass vocals and instruments played off against country steel and piano and all applied to a good weeper or cheating song is the closest thing to hard country coming out these days.

—JOHN MORTHLAND



## John Anderson

*Eye of a Hurricane*

Warner Bros. WB-25099

**S**ometimes John Anderson unwittingly puts too much distance between himself and his song, so he sounds less like a country singer than he does like an urban folkie singing country songs. Sometimes, on

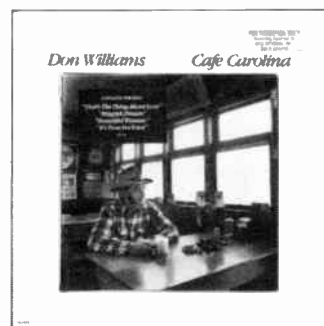
the other hand, he sounds like the last of the country singers. What's interesting is that as he gets more successful, he himself sounds more like the latter, while his records sound more like the former.

This contradiction becomes apparent as soon as his voice cuts through the guitar-piano-steel intro on the opening song, "I Can't Take Another Heartache." This is a real country song, and Anderson gives it a real country reading, aided further by some fuzz guitar-steel tradeoffs in the middle. So why undercut everything with the string section, which sounds precious? It's hard to believe he still needs that kind of sweetening to get radioplay when he's one of the most popular country singers alive.

Strings and horns get in the way of a couple of other songs, but that's the only quibble from these quarters. Who else, after all, would cut a grisly murder ballad like "Red Georgia Clay" in 1984? Or work a country metaphor as clever as the one on the title song? Or cut such other hard-country classics as "I Wish I Could Write You a Song" and "I Wish I Had Loved Her That Way"? Not too many people, right? I'm also partial towards "She Sure Got Away With My Heart," an experiment that works dramatically, as the swirling intro gives way to a slinky, countrified Van Morrison-like vocal. There's also that guitar solo from "Lonely Is Another State," which could have been lifted right off a Willie Nelson record, though you will perhaps understand if I don't take up too much space describing the *chainsaw* lines John's co-producer Lou Bradley plays on "Take That Woman Away."

There's always a tendency, as an artist receives escalating acclaim, to soften the sound. There are signs of that here, but John Anderson hasn't succumbed, not yet. I think he should record "I Walk the Line," because that's exactly what he does.

—JOHN MORTHLAND



## Don Williams

*Cafe Carolina*

MCA-5493

**A**ccording to the sticker on my copy of this album, *Cafe Carolina* contains (so far) four hits: "That's the Thing About Love," "Maggie's Dream," "Beautiful Woman," and "It's Time for Love." But listening to the music, it's hard to tell the hits from the non-hits, and that's a measure of both Don Williams' appeal and his dilemma. Everything sounds the same, now more than ever.

Only one of the four hits, to be blunt, strikes me as a very good song or a very good performance, and that's "It's Time for Love," a Bob McDill-Hunter Moore collaboration full of agony and insight. There are a few more tunes that stand out somewhat. "Walkin' a Broken Heart" has great hooks, a sax that offers plenty of atmosphere, strings that are not too obtrusive, and strong imagery—the empty city and misty rain, the paperback book and television set, all these accentuate the feeling of the song. And Don's own "True Blue Hearts" is sung so softly and reverently, it sucks you in like prime early Williams material. It's also hard to fault his attitude, the hope and determination behind lines like, "But we're diggin' in/There's just no retreat/Too many we know/ Are down in defeat."

As for the rest of the album, well, songs like "Beautiful Woman" are vague and pointless where "It's Time for Love"

is specific and thus evocative; "Beautiful Woman" has a lot of the trappings of a Williams song without the essence. "That's the Thing About Love" and "I'll Never Need Another You" are strictly filler—maybe classy filler, but filler nonetheless. And if "Leavin" sounds like a retread of dozens of Don Williams songs you've heard before, please note that it was written by Williams in 1969, and is thus a sort of prototype. Which makes it something of a curiosity or historical artifact, but adds little to either this album or his repertoire in general.

I'm sure *Cafe Carolina* will suffice for Williams' staunchest fans, and it does have virtues. The man has settled into an utterly predictable niche that's comfortable for both himself and his fans. Maybe *too* comfortable—I'd like to see Williams do something soon that confounded expectations and shook things up just a bit.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

## Moe Bandy and Joe Stampley

*Alive and Well*

Columbia FC 39426

**H**ot damn! Bushhog country! On *Alive And Well*, ole Moe says—pretty profoundly, I think—"Some things never change." Well, thankfully, two of those things that never change are Moe Bandy and Joe Stampley, who every so often get together and record little honky tonk masterpieces.

The thing that makes these guys so great together is that there's not an ounce of pretention between them. What we've got here is not a couple of college students who learned all about the wild side of life in a sociology class, but a couple of authentic good ole boys, singin' about authentic good ole boy things. We aren't talking about great art here, but, boy, it's sure fun to listen to.

The hit here is, of course, *Where's The Dress*, a good-

natured slap at good ole Boy George and the Culture Club. I mean, just the idea is enough to boggle the mind—Moe and Joe wearing dresses. That'll scare you off the whiskey! The song's fun, and it keeps with an old, old tradition of country music making fun of its pop counterpart.

My personal favorite is



"Daddy's Honky Tonk", which features these great lyrics:

*She smoked her first joint and did it right*

*Mamma burned down Daddy's honky tonk last night.*

The music is perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the album—a lot of fiddle (courtesy of Rob Hajacos) and steel (Sonny Garrish). Producer Blake Mevis is to be complimented.

I mean, this stuff isn't going to cross over, but it's good country music in an old tradition. It's good to know the good ole boys are still on a roll.

—MICHAEL "COWBOY" BANE

## Merle Haggard

*It's All in the Game*

Epic FE39364

**I**t's really hard to find the correct yardstick to measure the work of an artist the caliber of Merle Haggard. Like a handful of others—Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson come to mind—Merle Haggard has been one of the pillars of country music. As much as Willie, Merle Haggard has been responsible for seeing that the true roots of country music, especially the southwestern roots, don't get

lost in the Music City Shuffle.

The problem, though, becomes one of expectations. Why settle for *good* when there's a shot at *great* or even *landmark*? The reason, of course, is that greatness in a song can't be called up like hotel room service. A bigtime Nashville producer, who's probably cut a million or so hits, told me once that he only went into the studio to cut Number One records; he was just as surprised as the next person when they all didn't turn out that way.

All that said, *It's All in the Game* is a very good record. The production by Haggard is textbook perfect, low-key and minimal, as befits Haggard's perfect voice. Each cut bears the imprint of a perfectionist, no corners cut, no worthless frills added. In fact, the whole album smacks of Willie Nelson (who, indeed, co-wrote "A Place to Fall Apart" with Haggard) in its music choice (eclectic, from the Lerner-Loewe battleship "Thank Heaven For Little Girls" to ole Ernest Tubbs' "You Nearly Lose Your Mind") and production values.

Okay, so why do I not like this record?

The answer, I think, is in the eclectic music choice I mentioned earlier. This is a very mixed lot tending toward lounge singer ballads of love, lost and found. Some, like "I Never Go Home Anymore" and Haggard's rendition of "It's All in the Game," really work for me. But most, despite their quality, fall short. I particularly dislike "For All the Girls I've Loved Before," because I think it's a patently awful song. The sentiment rings as flat and hollow as a gigolo's head. Let's leave this one for Wayne Newton, guys.

This would be a good album for hardcore Haggard fans, and it's almost worth having for Haggard's light-hearted rendition of "You Nearly Lose Your Mind." Mostly, though, it's an excellent holding action.

—MICHAEL "NICE GUY" BANE

## Sylvia

*Surprise*

RCA AHL1-4960

**T**he problem with *Surprise* isn't so much with Sylvia, who can be a very good singer, as it is with the prevailing style for female vocalists in country music. While country fans are perfectly willing to let a Ricky Skaggs or John Anderson or George Strait slip through now and again with a little real country music, the operative word for women artists is *pop*.

Sylvia has built her career on lightweight but infectiously hummable songs like "Nobody," songs that can go pop with only the slightest encouragement. Unfortunately for *Surprise*, there isn't a song on this album with the deft, light touch of "Nobody." For the most part, what is here is the classic Nashville definition of a pop song—overwrought, overproduced and about as light as a lasagne dinner with Uncle Vito.

Still, I have to admit that Sylvia does an excellent job with a paucity of material. I think, underneath it all, she has an excellent voice and the fairly rare ability to take a song and have some fun with it. Not surprisingly, my two favorite cuts are the album's obligatory upbeat numbers, "Give 'Em Rhythm" and "One Foot On the Street." She sounds good on those two numbers, neither overwrought nor pretentious. On the other hand, "On the Other Side of Midnight" caused my dogs to howl, my teeth to ache and my girlfriend to threaten to leave me. Still, I suppose, someone must read all those romance novels on the shelves out there, and I suspect the same people buy Sylvia records. Until Nashville takes a deep breath and decides to take a bit of a risk, talented singers like Sylvia are doomed to labor in the fields of cross-over. —MICHAEL BANE

# Buried Treasures

*Re-issues, Rarities, and the Hard-to-Find*

by Rich Kienzle

I'm not fooling around with long introductions for we have here one of the strongest groups of reissues since Buried Treasures began in 1978, including four rare 1950s Capitol albums released by French Pathe Marconi in their original cover. 'Nuff said.

Not long after Merle Travis signed with Capitol in 1946, he took his acoustic guitar into the studio to record for Capitol's Electrical Transcriptions series, which were records sold only to radio stations. Some of these performances featured backup musicians, but many were Travis alone, mixing vocals with instrumentals, varying in length from 30 seconds to several minutes. With Cliffie Stone telling him how long to play, Merle kicked off, spontaneously picking, instrumentals he had learned from Ike Everly and Mose Ranger in the 30s.

None of this material was commercially available until the 50s, when Capitol picked 22 tracks for *Walkin' the Strings* (Pathe 1550801), now one of Merle's rarest albums. (I paid \$40 for a copy a couple of years back.) Despite the electric guitar he holds on the cover, these intimate performances are the basic, unvarnished Travis with acoustic guitar. His story-teller side dominates the vocals, particularly "Darby's Ram," and "Little David Play on Your Harp." And his guitar picking is flawless. Listening to these songs reminds us again just what we lost when Merle died last fall, and hopefully, EMI will get the rest of the Travis output back into circulation in the future.



One of the most formidable instrumental teams of the late Forties and early Fifties were the late Jimmy Bryant and Speedy West. Bryant was a fluid, flawless country/jazz guitarist whose speed and creativity drew admiration from jazzmen while West's explosive, visionary steel technique, combined with his consummate showmanship, made him a favorite onstage and in the studios of Los Angeles. The pair first met on Cliffie Stone's KXLA *Hometown Jamboree* in the late Forties and became part of Capitol's country house band. Their instrumentals were models of daring harmonic sophistication. *Two Guitars Country Style* (Pathe 1550831), originally issued in the mid 50s, features some of their strongest work, including the incredible "Arkansas Traveler" (cited by guitarist Albert Lee as a major in-

fluence on him), as well as "Bryant's Bounce," West's futuristic tour-de-force "Midnight Ramble," and the goofy "Serenade to a Frog." Bryant and West are a joy to listen to. Neither was afraid to take chances, and both pushed each other to dizzying heights of virtuosity, playing in ensemble one moment, flying apart for individual solo breaks, then rejoining without breaking stride once. Again, there's more fine material about by these two, and hopefully Pathe will keep that in mind in the future.

Less celebrated as an instrumental team, but no less important, were Fender Telecaster genius James Burton and Ralph Mooney, lately the steel guitar player in Waylon's band. These two helped establish the so-called "Bakersfield Sound" of the late Sixties, working on some

of the classic Capitol recordings from that period by Buck Owens, Merle Haggard and Wynn Stewart. Mooney's tense, high-pitched steel and Burton's famous chicken-pickin' Tele were a formidable combination on such records as Haggard's "The Bottle Let Me Down" and "Workin' Man Blues." In 1968 Capitol producer Ken Nelson had them record an instrumental album of their own. *Corn Pickin' and Slick Slidin'* (Pathe 1550751) combines country favorites, including such Bakersfield classics as "I'm a Lonesome Fugitive" and "It's Such a Pretty World Today" with "Your Cheatin' Heart" and some original numbers, including Mooney's deftly executed "Texas Waltz" and Burton's "Corn Pickin'," a textbook example of his famous—and much copied—picking technique, accomplished by using both flatpick and fingerpick. "Moonshine," another Mooney original, can only be called rockabilly steel, and he and Burton deftly hand choruses back and forth. If you're new to country music, this was the sound back in the late Sixties, though Emmylou and Waylon have preserved its essence in their own music.

Tommy Collins was "Leonard," the subject of Merle Haggard's 1981 hit. Born Leonard Sipes, Collins was one of the first Bakersfield performers to make it with his 1954 novelty hit "You Better Not Do That." Other hits, including "United" and "It Tickles," were in the same slightly corny mold. By 1959, he'd done enough records in this wry vein to

justify an album, *This is Tommy Collins* (Pathe 1550771) which includes the early hits and nine others, written by Collins himself, in an uptempo honky tonk vein remindful of Jimmy Dickens' style. Collins' most significant contribution was that he broke away from the "western" mold that influenced so many West Coast country singers. In doing so, he paved the way for Buck, Merle and Wynn Stewart as they would quickly admit.

**B**ritish RCA Victor, meanwhile, has come up with some unbelievable bargains in their *20 of the Best* series, which includes the label's top country artists. Considering how fast the industry is deleting even the "greatest hits" packages by many of these artists, it's none too soon. Try finding the best of Don Gibson and Hank Snow in most record bins these days if you don't believe me.

In any case, one of the most welcome is British RCA's *Jimmie Rodgers* collection (NL 89370), including his best-known songs and most of the legendary Blue Yodels. "Blue Yodel #1" (T For Texas) is here, as is "California Blues" (#4), "Muleskinner Blues" (#6), "T.B. Blues," "Jimmie Rodgers' Last Blue Yodel," "In the Jailhouse Now, No. 2" and 11 more of the most important early country songs ever recorded. There's no sense in evaluating this music for it has certainly stood the test of time. The least welcome addition is the intrusion of modern backing on "Jailhouse" which was added in 1955 by Nashville studio musicians like Chet Atkins. Those who think the desecration of Jim Reeves' and Patsy Cline's music by adding "modern" instrumentals is something new can hear for themselves that it's not.

Pay close attention to the excellent "Blue Yodel #9," which features Louis Armstrong and wife Lillian on trumpet and piano, respectively

Most of Rodgers' material

is impossible to find these days, so this fine import is all the more welcome.

**V**ernon Oxford has long been one of the grand holdouts in the Hank Williams-honkytonk style of the 50s. He recorded some outstanding music for RCA in 1965-66 and 1974-77. Oxford has had his hits in America



but has also been revered in Britain for his lean, pure honkytonk sound. Hits like "Redneck!" (his biggest so far) were prominent, but most lingered in the low end of the charts. Nonetheless, the excellence of Oxford's music held true through both stays with Victor, and *Vernon Oxford* (NL 89373) features all his hits and some equally excellent misses. The man deserved better.

**T**he Carter Family's Bluebird sides are equally essential. You might still find the *Legendary Performer* set (on U.S. RCA) with the notes by Johnny Cash, but it's getting scarce. *The Carter Family* (NL 89369) is as valuable, bringing together such essential material as "Keep on the Sunny Side," "Lonesome Valley," "Wildwood Flower," "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes," "My Clinch Mountain

Home," "Foggy Mountain Top" and "Church in the Wildwood." The pure, crystal clear Virginia mountain harmonies of the Carters have as much validity now as they did during the 1927 to 1934 period when these Victor recordings were made. Certainly their influence on bluegrass musicians was immense, and every fledgling

and "John Hardy" with Guthrie's "Tom Joad," and "Wildwood Flower" with "Reuben James" to realize where Guthrie picked up his melodies (he filched his picking from Maybelle, too...). And, of course, "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes" provided the melody of both Hank Thompson's and Kitty Wells' "Honky Tonk Angels" hits of 1952.

**M**ore recently, Gary Stewart has made some of the rawest, hardest-rocking honkytonk music of the past decade. He had his share of hits ("Drinkin' Thing," "She's Actin' Single" and "Out of Hand") and a series of brilliant albums for Victor, but Stewart never held onto the momentum despite his manic, passionate music with its Southern rock overtones. His collaborations with Dean Dillon weren't hot sellers, and today he's no longer with RCA; his albums are all out of print. But the *Gary Stewart 20 Best* (NL 89372) assembles his strongest RCA sides, though "Blue Ribbon Blues" should be here as well. Stewart never achieved the massive stardom he should have, and if you missed his best work, this is one way to get the cream of it at truly substantial savings.

Like I said, a good group this month. And you'll find nary a one in your local record outlets. ■

### How To Get These Treasures

**T**o buy any of the albums mentioned in Buried Treasures, make your check payable to Nashville Warehouse, P.O. Box 236, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37075. (Country Music Society of America members, deduct 10% and include your membership number.)

For \$8.50 — Merle Travis, *Walkin' the Strings* (Pathe 1550801); Jimmy Bryant and Speedy West, *Two Guitars Country Style* (Pathe 1550831); James Burton and Ralph Mooney, *Corn Pickin' and Slick Slidin'* (Pathe 1550751); Tommy Collins, *This Is Tommy Collins* (Pathe 1550771).

For \$7.98 — *Jimmie Rodgers* (NL 89370); *The Carter Family* (NL 89369); *Vernon Oxford* (NL 89373); *Gary Stewart* (NL 89372).

For all orders add \$1.95 postage and handling for one album, \$.95 for each additional. No cassettes. ■

# TOP 25

## Singles

## Albums

1. **Hank Williams, Jr.**..... *Major Moves*
2. **Alabama**..... *Roll On*
3. **George Strait**..... *Right or Wrong*
4. **The Oak Ridge Boys**... *Deliver*
5. **Earl Thomas Conley**... *Don't Make It Easy for Me*
6. **Ricky Skaggs**..... *Don't Cheat in our Hometown*
7. **Lee Greenwood**..... *You've Got A Good Love Comin'*
8. **Mickey Gilley & Charly McClain**..... *It Takes Believers*
9. **Willie Nelson**..... *Without a Song*
10. **Atlanta**..... *Pictures*
11. **The Statler Brothers**... *Atlanta Blue*
12. **Merle Haggard**..... *It's All in the Game*
13. **Exile**..... *Exile*
14. **Anne Murray**..... *A Little Good News*
15. **Ronnie Milsap**..... *One More Try for Love*
16. **Don Williams**..... *Cafe Carolina*
17. **Vern Gosdin**..... *There Is a Season*
18. **Crystal Gayle**..... *Cage the Songbird*
19. **Gary Morris**..... *Faded Blue*
20. **Larry Gatlin & The Gatlin Bros.**..... *Houston to Denver*
21. **The Judds**..... *The Judds—Wynonna & Naomi*
22. **John Conlee**..... *In My Eyes*
23. **The Statler Brothers**... *Today*
24. **David Allan Coe**..... *Just Divorced*
25. **Hank Williams, Jr.**..... *Hank Williams Jr.'s Greatest Hits*

1. **Earl Thomas Conley**... *Angel In Disguise*
2. **The Judds**..... *Mama He's Crazy*
3. **Eddie Rabbitt**..... *B-B-B- Burnin' Up With Love*
4. **Don Williams**..... *That's the Thing About Love*
5. **Anne Murray**..... *Just Another Woman In Love*
6. **Ronnie Milsap**..... *Still Losing You*
7. **Lee Greenwood**..... *God Bless the U.S.A.*
8. **Moe Bandy & Joe Stampley**..... *Where's the Dress*
9. **Nitty Gritty Dirt Band**..... *Long Hard Road*
10. **Mel Tillis**..... *New Patches*
11. **T.G. Sheppard**..... *Somewhere Down the Line*
12. **Michael Martin Murphey**..... *Disenchanted*
13. **George Strait**..... *Let's Fall To Pieces Together*
14. **The Bellamy Brothers**..... *Forget About Me*
15. **The Whites**..... *Forever You*
16. **Dolly Parton**..... *Tennessee Homesick Blues*
17. **Janie Fricke**..... *If the Fall Don't Get You*
18. **Mark Gray**..... *If All the Magic Is Gone*
19. **Hank Williams, Jr.**..... *Attitude Adjustment*
20. **Deborah Allen**..... *I Hurt For You*
21. **Barbara Mandrell**.... *Only a Lonely Heart Knows*
22. **The Statler Brothers**... *Atlanta Blue*
23. **Jim Glaser**..... *You're Gettin' To Me Again*
24. **Charley Pride**..... *The Power of Love*
25. **The Kendalls**..... *My Baby's Gone*

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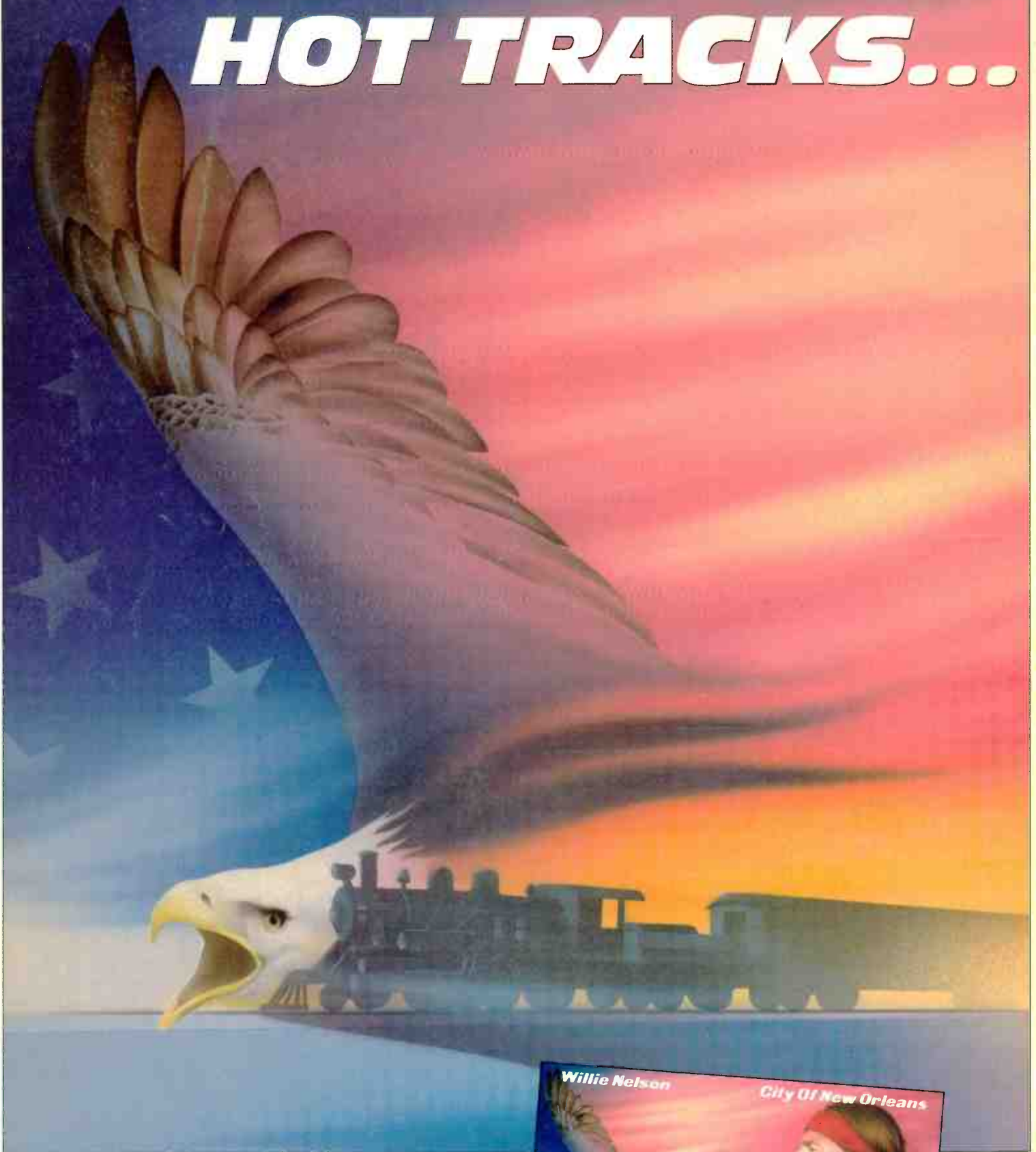
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