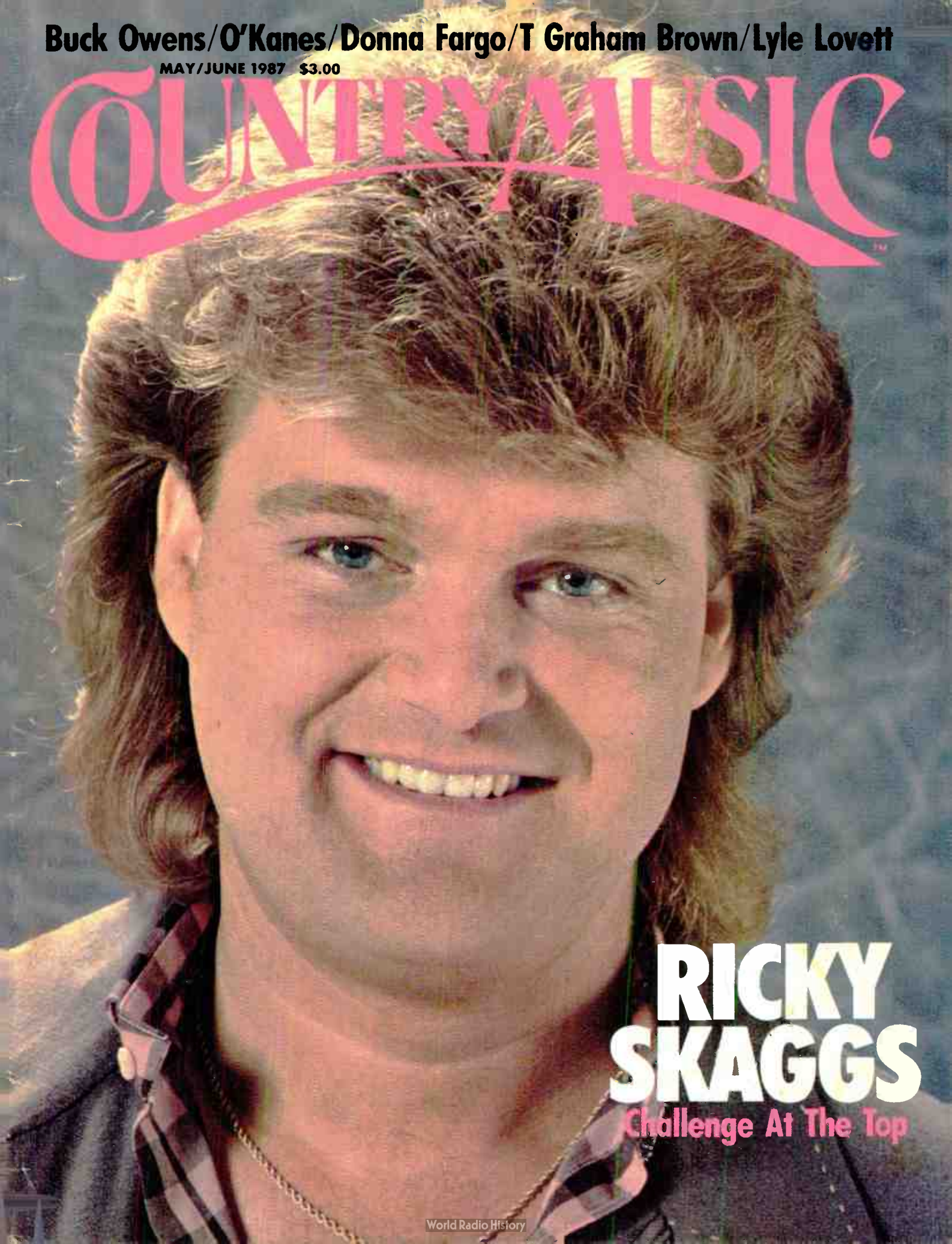


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# COUNTRY MUSIC



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# COUNTRY MUSIC™



## 2 Letters

Tot dances to tunes from Willie Nelson, Ricky Skaggs wins a fan, Marty Robbins lives on video, and Claude Grey and Texas Bill Strength are "found."

## 15 People

*by Hazel Smith*

The Oaks visit Roy Clark on *Hee Haw*, Gene Autry and Pat Butrum host their own movies on TV, Travis joins the Opry, *The Red Headed Stranger* premieres in Austin, Cristy Forester marries and Keith Whitley and Lorrie Morgan find they're in a family way.

## 28 Lyle Lovett: True to That Texas Sound

*by Bob Allen*

Lone Star balladeer Lyle Lovett's music owes a lot to many different sounds. He recorded his first album largely on his own. Nashville producers and audiences nationwide like it fine.

## 30 Ricky Skaggs: That's Just the Way It Is

*by Bob Allen*

Ricky Skaggs has his organization in high gear. He's keeping in touch with fans' ideas, and he's working hard to keep his career headed in the right direction.

## 36 Donna Fargo: The Traveller Talks About the Storm

*by Patrick Carr*

Donna Fargo has lived through some hard times, but she's back performing and recording. Her distinctive optimism is tempered but still strong.

## 42 20 Questions With Buck Owens

*by Michael Bane*

In his first interview in eight years, Buck Owens rares back and lets fly about life as a publisher, his work ethic, what it's like being retired and when, if ever, he's going to perform.

## 46 T. Graham Brown: Country Soul Man With a Sense of Humor

*by Patrick Carr*

From songwriter to demo singer to solo artist, T. has not missed a trick. He's enjoying his shot at stardom.

## 49 The O'Kanes: Can the Son of a NYC Sausage Maker and an Ohio All-American Football Player Make It Big in Nashville?

The answer is yes. But even they were surprised.

*by Bob Allen*

## 59 Record Reviews

Ricky Van Shelton hits the rockabilly mark, George Strait comes around again, Patty Loveless has a fine debut, T Bone Burnett dodges over from L.A., Moe Bandy turns in a workmanlike job. Plus newgrassers Tony Rice, a live performance of Reeves at the Opry and early tracks from Steve Earle.

## 70 Buried Treasures

*by Rich Kienzle*

More Bob Wills from Columbia Historic Editions, George Jones' tributes to Williams and Wills, Duane Eddy's 1960's hits, lively garage tracks from Buddy Holly, digitalized Gene Autry in beautiful picture disk form. Also, Willie Nelson in a Texas mood, more rural music from Wayne Raney, and Milton Brown and His 1930's Musical Brownies.



# Letters

## Willie Live Forever

Thanks for the wonderful article on Willie Nelson in your January/February issue. As usual, Patrick Carr did an outstanding job. Just two questions, who is Gina, mentioned in the article? Is she a new member of the band? And where can I find the album with Willie and Bobbie?

Thanks for a great magazine. You're getting better with every issue.

Rexine Grant

Chula Vista, California

*The album is still in the works, and Gina is an aspiring songwriter.—Ed.*

## Willie's a Doll

In your September/October issue, there is a letter from a lady named Dot Roggi, in which she stated that she had a Willie Nelson doll she purchased in Nashville.

I have been to Nashville briefly but couldn't search as well as I would have liked. And all three of our local doll shops have not been able to locate any either.

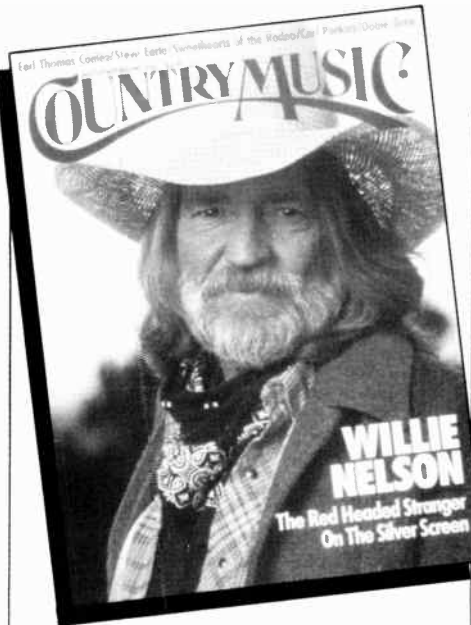
Jonna Pulver  
Chillicothe, Ohio

*The Willie Nelson Family General Store, 118 16th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203 hopes to have a doll available soon.—Ed.*

## Willie, My Hero

I loved your article on Willie Nelson! It was truly great, just like Willie. I think that Willie is one of the best, if not *the* best singer, songwriter and actor in the whole wide world! Anything that I can find about Willie, I keep. I have subscribed to your magazine for a while now, and I was beginning to wonder when you were going to have an article on my hero. Now I have another one to add to my numerous collection of newspaper clippings, magazine articles, bandanas, hats, t-shirts, pictures and about twenty records and tapes of Willie. I also have piano books of his songs that I play on my piano. You would be surprised at how many people, who thought Willie was "just a hick," like him now after listening to him and his music and reading articles about him. He is no hick, Willie is great!

Ellen Ethridge  
Chattahoochee, Florida



## Willie Inspires the Young

My grandson and I are spending a quiet evening, no television (football's over), we are reading, writing letters, playing in the playpen, eating. Well, eating is a problem. *Have* you ever tried to feed turkey rice dinner to a seven-month-old when Willie Nelson starts singing on the radio? He's all but climbing out of the high chair trying to find him. It's hard to hit his mouth when you can't keep his head still.

This isn't the first time he has reacted to Willie. When Willie was on a TV program with Alabama, he was four months old. I was rocking him to sleep. When Alabama or Willie would sing, he would try to sit up. I finally gave up rocking, sat him up and turned him around till they went off.

He is undoubtedly the youngest Willie Nelson fan. Of course, I'm not complaining. I've been in love with Willie for years.

Pat Steele  
Bristol, Virginia

## Rosanne Cash Has a Special Fan

I personally resent Ms. Jones' comments about Rosanne Cash not being a good mother in her letter in the January/February issue. Not being a fan does not give someone the right to make that kind of judgment.

If someone were suffering from cancer or diabetes, does that make them a

poor parent? Chemical Dependency is a *hereditary disease* and the fault of no one. I admire Rosanne for coming forward and discussing such a personal issue.

I personally know that Rosanne's children have *always* been top priority in her life. Ask anyone who knows her and they would tell you the same.

Rosanne's a *great* mother. Believe me, she started out early, mothering me and our two sisters. She's a natural.

Kathy Cash-Tittle  
Nashville, Tennessee

## Marty Robbins' Video

From an ad in your January/February issue, I ordered the video *Marty Robbins, His Legacy*. Finally, I got it and put it in my VCR.

I have a two-fold reaction to it. On the one hand, it was so enjoyable to watch Marty, and hear his music. That man, to me, had the talent that many artists today would give their eyeteeth for.

And on the other hand, it reminded me that he is gone, never to add his magic to another song. I remember the day the news came over the radio that he had passed away. I have been a fan since I was 10 and "El Paso" hit the airwaves. He gave to me the love of the old west, and the west today. He said it all and from his songs, like "El Paso" and "San Angelo," you could close your eyes and envision exactly what he was singing about.

I would also like to add, I'm really glad that Marty's son is editing his father's shows, and eventually will put them out on video. I plan to buy each and every one. Marty may be gone, but with this video never ever forgotten.

Karen Stanley  
Mission Viejo, California

## One of the Lucky Ones

I always felt a little jealous when I saw fans with their picture taken with the stars. I was always too busy taking their pictures than having mine taken too, until now.

Recently I had a chance to be one of the lucky ones. I won a contest on the radio by the best country music station in the world, WGRK/FM in Buffalo, New York. The grand prize was front



# TRUTH IN ADVERTISING.

## Janie Frickie

Janie Frickie, produced by Norro Wilson, is truer than ever to her own innermost feelings. The new album, "After Midnight", includes her recent hit "Are You Satisfied" and much more from the heart and soul of a great singer. Satisfaction guaranteed!



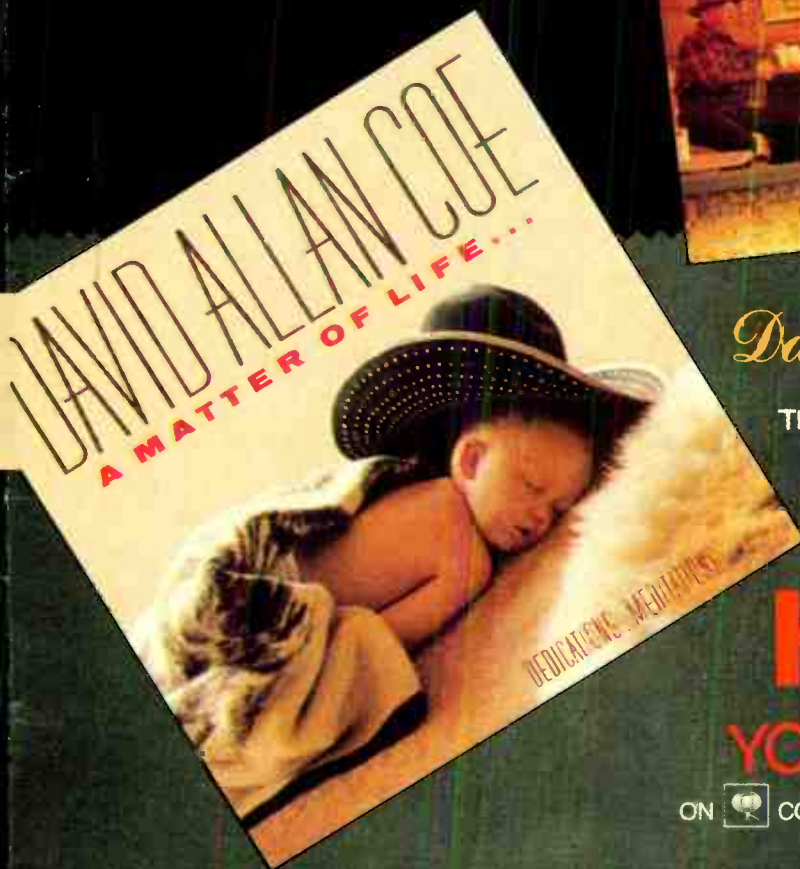
## John Conlee

John Conlee is a genuine working class hero. On his new album, "American Faces", Conlee sings about people we've all met and things we've all seen. It's an album everyone can relate to but only Conlee could have recorded. Face the music America!




## David Allan Coe

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row tickets to see Ricky Skaggs in concert in Kleinhans Music Hall.

Well, let me tell you, it was one of the biggest thrills of my life. I have been a country music fan all of my life and have seen a lot of stars, but this night was like a dream come true, not only because of the front row seats (we could almost touch Ricky), not only because he was so great, his music never sounded better, but because he made it seem so special after the concert. We went backstage and he signed an album for me, and "need I say, let me have my picture taken with him." I was so star struck, he is such a wonderful person, I could have joined his crew if he would have let me.

He also stayed and signed autographs, and had pictures taken with everyone, until they were done. You don't see that happen all the time. He is so gracious, and polite, and not to leave out how gorgeous he is.

I would go to see him again at any price.

Elaina M. Riedel  
Cheektowaga, New York

For more on Ricky and his fans, see feature in this issue.—Ed.

### Talk About T. Graham Brown

I want to say how much I enjoy reading your magazine. It's always great to be able to read about all my favorites.

One of my favorites that I have not been able to read about is T. Graham Brown. I think he is so talented. I have practically worn out his tape, *I Tell It Like It Used To Be*, which I got in December.

Two others I would like to read more about are Steve Wariner and Jim Glaser.

Dodie Moore  
Ellsworth, Maine

How's this for quick action on T. Graham Brown? See feature in this issue.—Ed.

### Donna Franks Meyers, Where Are You?

Donna Franks Meyers, we'd like to return your photo of Conway Twitty, published in July 1985. Let us hear from you.

### "Whatever Happened to...?"

Is it true that Boxcar Willie, Leroy Van Dyke and T. G. Sheppard have music theaters in Branson, Missouri?

Whatever happened to Charlie Hodge, who sang with The Marksmen on the *Ozark Jubilee* in Springfield, Missouri, in 1955-56? He worked for Elvis later.

D.S.  
Berryville, Arkansas  
Anyone with info on Charlie Hodge, come in, please. As for Branson, it's



Ricky Skaggs was part of Elaina Riedel's fairy tale evening recently in Buffalo.

chock full of theaters. Boxcar has one opening there on June 1. We don't know about T. G. Sheppard or Leroy Van Dyke.—Ed.

### Here's What Happened to Texas Bill and Claude Grey

I saw the letter entitled, "Whatever Happened to..." in the January/February issue of *Country Music*

*Magazine*. In years past I have been lead guitar player for Marvin Rainwater, Claude Grey and Texas Bill Strength. I met Texas Bill when he traveled with the Claude Grey show. I have lost contact with Claude Grey, but I know that Texas Bill Strength died of injuries suffered in an automobile accident in Minnesota somewhere in the mid-1970's.

Johnny Hawk  
Hartsville, Tennessee

### More on Claude Grey

In response to the letter from Joe Acker of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, regarding Claude Grey and where he is now:

Claude Grey made a personal appearance at the Mesquite Opry on December 6, 1986 and everyone in attendance, young and older, had to agree that Claude Grey still has what it takes to please them.

Claude lives in Henderson, Texas, and still tours extensively. He has cassette tapes available for sale on his personal appearances but I do not know how else they may be obtained.

I might add that I too am one of the people in the "Whatever Happened to..." category. My records stayed in the charts in the middle 1960's, but since

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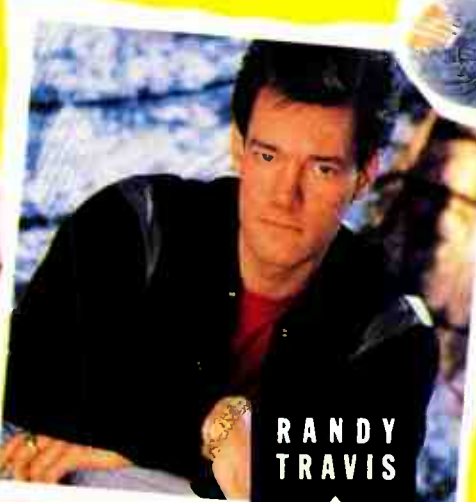
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World Radio History





I am pure country and not programmable in today's market, I quit singing and recording for some time. I now own and operate the Mesquite Opry in downtown Mesquite, Texas. My Saturday night show is very popular and consists of mostly traditional country music. I have had three albums released from West Germany and have quite a following overseas. My albums can be obtained from Frontier Records, Jenks, Oklahoma 74037, or of course at the Mesquite Opry in Mesquite, Texas 75149.

I would love to hear from anyone who remembers me.

Janet McBride  
Mesquite, Texas

### The Details on Bill Strength

In reply to Joe Acker of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the January/February issue, I'd like to answer "Whatever Happened to Texas Bill Strength"—in case someone else hasn't written.

Bill succumbed on October 1, 1973, to injuries suffered in an August 5, 1973, auto accident when he was returning from an engagement in North Dakota. His injuries included a broken neck, arm and other injuries. This information was in the November 1973 issue of *Country/Western News Scene*, a Minneapolis publication.

I remember Bill as a DJ on KTCR, a country music station in Minneapolis, and as an emcee many times at The Flame in Minneapolis where Nashville entertainers were booked. That is where I first saw Patsy Cline, Ferlin Husky, The Louvin Brothers, The Browns, to name a few.

A Fan  
San Marcos, California  
*Thanks to all who responded.—Ed.*

### ...and Where's Tommy Overstreet?

I have been a fan of country music for the better part of my life. My favorite singer is Tommy Overstreet. I have traveled to many other states to hear him in concert. However, I have lost track of him. Where is he and is he still recording? His singing is so beautiful, it would be a shame if the fans wouldn't get the opportunity to hear it.

Gene Gilliam  
Beckley, West Virginia  
*This one we know the answer to. Tommy's working out of Branson, Missouri, recording and touring. Right now, he's in Spain and Germany. To reach him, write P.O. Box 710, Branson, Missouri 65616.—Ed.*

### "Licensed" Steve Wariner

I am a subscriber to your wonderful, newsy *Country Music*. I can't learn enough about the stars.



**Polly Christenbury lets the world know who's her favorite country singer.**

My favorite, of course, is none other than the wonderful guy, Steve Wariner. He is the greatest all-around good guy, the band is wonderful, they are all just great, I love all of them. Of course, Steve is Number One, and I am his Number One fan. If you don't believe me, just ask him or Terry. I have my license plate, *Wariner 1*, of which I am very proud, and Steve is also. He takes the club managers outside to see it.

Polly Christenbury  
Charlotte, North Carolina

### Recognition for Earl Thomas Conley

I just had to write and thank Patrick Carr for the super interview and pictures on Earl Thomas Conley in the January/February issue. It is high time Earl gets some of the recognition he so richly deserves. There is more to the man than first meets the eye, as I'm sure all his fans agree. Now, how about a cover on this great star in the near future? Your magazine is the greatest.

Evelyn Curl  
Williston, Florida

### Turned off by "Once in a Blue Moon"

I have been an ETC fan for quite a while now and have enjoyed both his music and his videos. The video of "Crowd Around the Corner" is one of the best I have ever seen, from the message/story content to the lyrics.

My reason in writing now, however, is to complain about ETC's song, "Once in a Blue Moon," and its accompanying video. I found this to be one of the most disgusting songs I have heard on country radio in the last decade. Why? Because it is about a no-good, redneck creep who treats his woman like an object, and worse, he treats her shabbily most of the time. And rather than having self-recriminations about it, he does nothing to change his behavior. He merely tells us about it all matter-of-factly. The worst line of all is "She only hears 'I love you' when we're makin' love." He knows he is wrong and yet he

# COUNTRY MUSIC

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surely were not taken in the early 1950's as stated by Lester H. Hagler. According to *Country Music Encyclopedia* by Melvin Shestack, pages 301 and 306, Hank Jr. was born May 26, 1949 and Hank Sr. died January 1, 1953, making Jr. three years, seven months and five days old when Sr. died. In this published picture of Hank Jr., he is at least 12 years or maybe more. Believe Mr. Hagler gave inaccurate information!

Jackie Stockard  
Weatherford, Texas

We'll ask Hank Jr.—Ed.

### Which Way Is Up?

Regarding Hal Durham, "Just One of The Boys," in the People section of the January/February issue: All them folks that as you say traveled *up* from Nashville, really traveled *down*. Please refer to your atlas—you yankees trying to confuse us rebels! McMinnville is south of Nashville.

Fred W. Smith  
Pleasant Hill, California

O.K.!—Ed.

### Who Really Wrote "Grandpa"

Rich Kienzle's review of the O'Kanes album in the January/February issue was great, only one slight mistake. Jamie O'Hara is the super-talented songwriter who wrote "Grandpa (Tell Me 'Bout the Good Old Days)." The guy is the most expressive songwriter around today. Thank God he moved to Nashville from Ohio, and gave up football. Kieran Kane, the other half of this great duo, wrote "Gonna Have a Party" that Alabama recorded, among other songs. Together, they wrote "Bluegrass Blues," recorded by Southern Pacific. These two were very smart to start recording together. What a perfect sound. Definitely my favorite.

L. Jo Nicholson

West Union, West Virginia

Thanks for the correction. For more on The O'Kanes, see feature in this issue.—Ed.

### Loretta Lynn Improves With Time

We recently had the pleasure of seeing Loretta Lynn in person for the fifth

Who could be lovelier than Loretta Lynn in concert in Pennsylvania recently.



time. She looked and sounded better than ever. She appeared at the Bloomsburg Fair at Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. Her son sang the Conway Twitty part of one of the duets she had on the charts with Conway. She sang most of her hits, and the whole show was just great. She came to the front of the stage and shook hands with a lot of the fans. Keep up the good work, Loretta, we are looking forward to seeing you again.

Joan and Charlie Rothrock  
Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

### Sleeping With Conway

First, I want to say that I love *Country Music Magazine*. It's very informative and interesting. Secondly, people show their interest in country music stars in lots of ways—from clothes, hats, belts, cups to license tags and stickers.

This is my way—I love Conway Twitty! So I made a quilt with most of his songs embroidered on record shapes. Also, his real name, family members, date of birth, sketches of the states from which the name "Conway Twitty" was taken—Conway, Arkansas, and Twitty, Texas—and even a

Twitty Bird. I named the quilt "Sleeping With Conway." I expect my quilt to last a lot longer than clothes or stickers.

Thanks for reading this and keep up the good work on the magazine.

Lora Leigh Dellis  
Huddleston, Virginia

### Last Word on Stagecoach

I was delighted to read the review of *Stagecoach*, which I produced for CBS-TV, by Hazel Smith in the People section of your September/October 1986 issue.

As you can imagine, it was a pure joy working with Waylon, Willie, Johnny and Kris. This remake of *Stagecoach*, patterned on the original 1939 film that starred John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Andy Devine, Thomas Mitchell and John Carradine, was a labor of love. It took two and one half years to put it together. Monetarily it paid about fifty cents an hour, but creatively it proved what we always knew, that these four loved being country heroes. We did it, and they are.

I am writing a new Movie of the Week for CBS, titled *Angel and the Bad Man*. It too is a remake of a 1946 John Wayne, Gail Russell, Bruce Cohot and Harry Carey film. We will star Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings and John Schneider, with some more surprises in store for our audience. We'll shoot in Tuscon.

Jack Thompson  
Studio City, California

We can't wait to see it!—Ed.



Chilly nights are a thing of the past for Lora Leigh Dellis, now that she's got her Conway quilt to keep her warm.

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*Merle Haggard*



# People

## THE COWBOY WAY



*South of the Border, Riders In the Sky, Melody Ranch, Cow Town.* These titles should immediately conjur up images of your favorite singing cowboy, his horse Champion and his sidekick Pat Butrum. If they don't—well, you're just too young. But now everyone, young and old, can get a chance to appreciate these movies, and others, on the Nashville Network's new 90-minute *Melody Ranch Theater*. The show, hosted by none other than Gene Autry himself, along with Pat Butrum, features Gene Autry classics airing from Monday through Friday. Gene and Pat introduce each film and reminisce about the days when singing cowboys ruled the silver screen.

It's good to have Gene back in the saddle again.

*Guide's '86 Reader's Poll.* Congratulations to the *Nashville Now* TV host. I cannot express my happiness that Ralph won this deserving award. He must face cameras more than anyone on TV. Besides five nights a week on TNN, he also hosts his early morning local TV show, *The Ralph Emery Show*, from 5:30 to 7:00 A.M. Incidentally, both shows are broadcast live.

## MIKE SNIDER REACHING FOR THE STARS

Mike Snider, Gleason, Tennessee native is a hillbilly banjo picker with a gift for gab that would make both aristocrats and paupers laugh till their sides hurt. He and the Billy Smith half of the Smith Brothers took off for Grand Rapids that January weekend that snowed all over the northern part of the U.S. for a little picking, grinning, joking and singing. The duo was working a



Watch for Mike Snider on the tube.

telethon with Jimmy Dean, Carl Perkins, Janie Fricke and others.

Mike tells me that he is the newest addition to *Hee Haw*, although no "papers" had been signed as we went to press. Mike says producer Sam Luvullo allowed as how he will be the new kid in town come this June.

## CHET ON VIDEO

Everybody knows Chet Atkins is famous. If they don't, then they have had their head in the sand for the past 30 years, or else they don't dig country music—or any other kind. Well, Chet has a video entitled *How to Get Started on Guitar*. It's a mail order deal. If you're interested, see the ad in this

Hank Williams did the same thing early in his career. Look at his photos!

Alan Whitcomb was also backstage watching the goings on, as Randy joined the Opry. Alan books Randy, and I guarantee he could see dollar signs as Randy performed "Digging Up Bones" on the TV segment of the Opry that night. Last but not least, the other lady behind the star is Lib Hatcher, Randy's manager. And may I add doing a "man-sized job" as she does it, too. Randy's first Warner album was certified platinum—stone country solid platinum piece of precious music from Music City. Anybody who doesn't know the significance of a platinum album...it is real big. Signifying 1,000,000 sales! Bunches of money, folks. Big times and better times just ahead. Keep it in the road, Randy. And by the way, you don't need to overdub with strings either!

## FARAWAY PLACES

Each year the National Arts Council sends performers on an exchange pro-

gram to various parts of the world. Scheduled this year for Morocco, Egypt and India are the New Grass Revival. The Smith Brothers with Blaine Sprouse and Roland White will tour Western Africa, including Cameroon, Nigeria, Zaire, Congo, Ivory Coast and Liberia. Jerry Douglas, Mark O'Connor and Peter Rowan will be touring Turkey, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland. Way to go, troops.

## RODRIGUEZ FISHING WITH THE LORD

Tex/Mex darling Johnny Rodriguez went fishing with Bobby Lord for TNN's *Country Sportsman*. This show should be aired as you read this or before.

## RALPH WINS IN A LANDSLIDE!!

My favorite TV host, Ralph Emery, is apparently a fave of a bunch more folks. The broadcast veteran was voted Favorite Personality of the Year in the *Cable*



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issue. If anybody knows the starting and stopping of a guitar, it is surely Mr. Chester Atkins from East Tennessee.

## REEVES ON THE WEST COAST

Del Reeves—good singer, good entertainer, good impersonator—and his band toured the West Coast through Montana, the Dakotas, Washington, Oregon, Utah and thereabouts. Del's show is worth the price. He is so good as an impersonator, it seems to me that conventioners would get a real good boost out of the Reeves humor.

## MARTY STUART SNOWED OUT!

How? How can anyone be snowed out? Well, young Marty Stuart was returning from his Dickson, Tennessee hang-out cabin to pick old timey tunes with mandolin virtuoso Roland White, dobroist Gene Wooten and bassist Terry Smith (half of the Smith Brothers) when he was stopped by police who were blocking the interstate asking folks to turn around and stay out of town. There were some 250 accidents in three hours that day in Davidson County. What a mess. Marty apologized to the Station Inn folks, his picking friends, etc. Marty, I've heard tell of folks getting snowed in, but you are the first ever to get snowed out. Snowed out of town.

## TRASH AND SASS

Yep, trash and sass best describe one of Music Row's newer trios. Ethel and The Shameless Hussies have birthed and are learning to crawl. Quitting their non-musical jobs to pursue show biz, the gals reportedly did well for themselves in Reno at the Eldorado Hotel where they performed for a month.

You'd have to stretch to call this awesome threesome country; however, David Allan Coe and Ray Stevens both boast a Kacey Jones penned tune on their album. Kacey's alter ego, Ethel, writes most of the songs and is lead singer for The Hussies. Her musical partners are Valerie Hunt and Becki Fogle.

## REBA THE ONLY "FEMALE GOLD" IN 1986

Oklahoma's answer to Kitty Wells and Loretta Lynn, Miss Reba McEntire, chalked up the only gold album for hillbilly girl singers in 1986. In an "un-ceremony" ceremony, Reba was pre-



Janie Fricke, who usually goes solo, and Larry Gatlin, who usually sings with his brothers, got together recently to work on their first video and single together. "From Time to Time" is a single from Gatlin's *Partners* album. The video will begin airing in conjunction with the release of the single. These two stars have both been around long enough to know how to sing a heck of a good country song.

sented her gold disc by MCA Records V.P. Bruce Hinton on Ralph Emery's *Nashville Now* TV show. The album, *Whoever's in New England*, has surpassed the 500,000 mark in sales and continues to sell, so I understand.



Reba gets the gold. Pictured above with long-time friend Red Steagall.

## WILLIE

All one needs to say is Willie and the world knows the rest. But sometimes even great men/famous men have trouble putting wings on dreams. *Red Headed Stranger* was one of the biggest selling albums in anybody's book, but it still took eleven years for the album to become a movie. Once it went into production, shortage of funds almost prevented its completion. Willie's daughter Lana explained it simply like this, "One of Daddy's fans heard about what was going on, flew to Austin where we were filming, wrote the check and went back home." (*See Country Music January/February issue for more details.*) Still one of the best albums I've heard in my life, *Red Headed Stranger* has sold in excess of two million records. "Blue Eyes Cryin' in the Rain," the single from the album, a masterpiece musically, is the subject of Nelson's latest video, according to CBS. "Blue Eyes" made the public aware of the album might' near a dozen years ago. In fact, I think I'd be safe to say that "Blue Eyes" made Willie the household word he is today. His performance on that



# TASTY NEW RELEASES



## REBA MCENTIRE

Includes:  
*One Promise  
Too Late*



## GEORGE STRAIT

Includes:  
*All My Ex's Live  
In Texas*

## WAYLON JENNINGS

Includes:  
*Rose In  
Paradise*

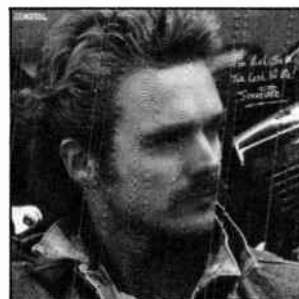


## OAK RIDGE BOYS

Includes:  
*It Takes A Little  
Rain To Make  
Love Grow*

## JOHN SCHNEIDER

Includes:  
*Love You Ain't  
Seen The Last  
Of Me*

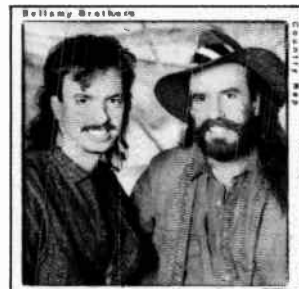


## CONWAY TWITTY

Includes:  
*Julia*

## THE BELLAMY BROTHERS

Includes:  
*Country Rap*



## STEVE WARINER

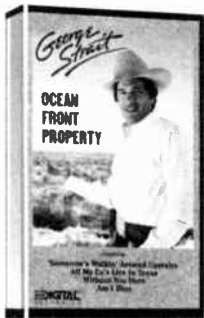
Includes:  
*The Weekend*

*Eight tasty new albums on MCA*

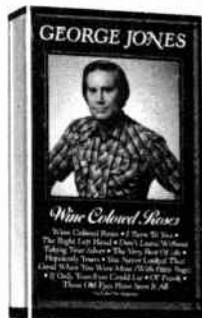
**MCA RECORDS  
NASHVILLE**



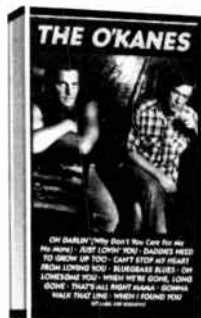
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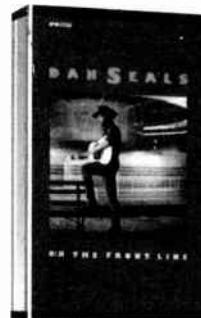
**353250**  
George Strait—Ocean Front Property. All My Ex's Live In Texas; more! (MCA)



**348904**  
George Jones—Wine Colored Roses. Title cut; The Right Left Hand; etc. (Epic)



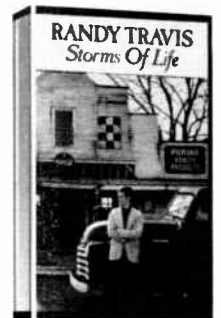
**351478**  
The Okanes—Includes top 10 hit—Oh Darlin'; plus more! (Columbia)



**350090**  
Dan Seals—On The Front Line. You Still Move Me; I Will Be There. (EMI America)



**345793**  
Steve Earle—Guitar Town. Title cut; Hillybilly Highway; more! (MCA)



**346965**  
Randy Travis—Storms Of Life. Digg'in' Up Bones; 1982; much more! (Warner Bros.)

353755 LYLE LOVETT MCA	351692* BEASTIE BOYS LICENSED TO ILL MCA	353458* BRUCE WILLIS THE RETURN OF BRUNO MCA	347047 Hank Williams, Jr. MONTANA CAFE WARNER BROS.	352294* LOS LOBOS BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON BLUESWOMEN BROS.	351718* GEORGIA SATELLITES COLUMBIA
349738 BELLAMY BROTHERS GREATEST HITS COLUMBIA	351858* ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK AN AMERICAN TAIL MCA	350140* PRETENDERS GET CLOSE MCA	345389 GEORGE STRAIT NUMBER SEVEN MCA	350058 MEL McDaniel JUST CRAFT 3RD DOWN MUSIC	351486 ANDY WILLIAMS CLOSE ENOUGH FOR LOVE MCA
352641* STAND BY ME THE BEST OF BEN E. KING AND BEN J. KING WITH THE SHIMMER ATLANTIC	349621 1970 COUNTRY REQUESTS VOL. 4 VARIOUS ARTISTS EPC	138586 BOB DYLAN'S GREATEST HITS COLUMBIA	331934* THE BEST OF BILL COSBY WARNER BROS.	339317 SAWYER BROWN SHAKIN' CAPITOL	352302 MERLE TRAVIS ROUGH, ROWDY AND BLUE COLUMBIA
336750 EDDIE RABBITT #1'S WARNER BROS.	331157 ANNE MURRAY HEART OVER MIND CAPITOL	340729 BARBARA MANDRELL GET TO THE HEART MCA	345900 OAK RIDGE BOYS SEASONS MCA	314922 The Golden Hits Of The Everly Brothers WARNER BROS.	328658 JULIO IGLESIAS 1100 Bel Air Place COLUMBIA
352393* MAURICE JARRE JARRE BY JARRE ROYAL PHIL. ORCH. CBS	349340* B. J. THOMAS NIGHT LIFE COLUMBIA	346023 GENESIS Invisible Touch ATLANTIC	331950 GREAT LOVE SONGS OF THE 50'S & 60'S VARIOUS ARTISTS MCA	339291 JAMES TAYLOR That's Why I'm Here COLUMBIA	344622* ANITA BAKER CAPTURE ELETRA
336362 OAK RIDGE BOYS STEP ON OUT MCA	336644* More of the Best of BILL COSBY WARNER BROS.	340463 THE BEST OF FRANK SINATRA CAPITOL	345868 GENE WATSON Starting New Memories EPC	314443 NEIL DIAMOND 12 GREATEST HITS vol. 1 COLUMBIA	328609 JUICE NEWTON GREATEST HITS CAPITOL
352389 DAVID ALLAN COE A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH MCA	349209 VARIOUS ARTISTS TODAY'S COUNTRY CLASSICS MCA	318733 MELISSA MANCHESTER'S GREATEST HITS MCA	331801 MICHAEL MARTIN MURPHY MCA	339200 STEVIE WONDER In Square Circle MCA	344408 NEIL DIAMOND HEADS FOR THE FUTURE COLUMBIA
336222* DIRE STRAITS Brothers In Arms WARNER BROS.	187088* Barbra Streisand's GREATEST HITS COLUMBIA	34D43D Vince Giordano's Night Hawks DIGITAL BIG BAND HITS OF THE 20'S & 30'S MCA	345751 PAUL SIMON GRACELAND WARNER BROS.	313734 WILLIE NELSON ALWAYS ON MY MIND COLUMBIA	328302* TINA TURNER PRIVATE DANCER CAPITOL
352179 VARIOUS ARTISTS TRUE ROMANCE A COLLECTION OF GREAT LOVE SONGS EPC	347096 Southern Pacific Kilbilly Hill WARNER BROS.	318386 MARTY ROBBINS BIGGEST HITS COLUMBIA	330902 WHAM! MAKE IT BIG MCA	338616 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK FROM THE TELEVISION SERIES MIAMI VICE MCA	343947 TONY BENNETT THE ART OF EXCELLENCE COLUMBIA
335935 ROSANNE CASH Rhythm And Romance MCA	345785 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK TOP GUN COLUMBIA	340758 HANK WILLIAMS, JR. GREATEST HITS Vol. 2 WARNER BROS.	345231 JOHNNY CASH WATSON JENNINGS -HOPKES MCA	313239 KENNY ROGERS AND DOTTIE WEST - CLASSICS MCA	252387 THE BEST OF NAT KING COLE CAPITOL
346536 THEN & NOW THE BEST OF THE MONKEES ATLANTIC	346502 CONWAY TWITTY FALLIN' FOR YOU FIVE YE. ARTS	317788 EAGLES GREATEST HITS - VOLUME 2 ATLANTIC	330738 PROFILES II: THE BEST OF EMMYLOU HARRIS WARNER BROS.	338608 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK SWEET DREAMS MCA	343830* STAR SEARCH THE WINNERS ALBUM MCA
335778 HANK WILLIAMS JR. FIVE O WARNER BROS.	345777* PETER GABRIEL SO DEFEN	339911 JIMMY BUFFETT'S GREATEST HITS SONGS YOU KNOW BY HEART EPC	345108* 38 SPECIAL Strength In Numbers MCA	236885 CARPENTERS SINGLES 1969-1973 MCA	249953 TANYA TUCKER'S GREATEST HITS MCA
346510 THE FORESTER SISTERS REFINE RIBBONS & PEARLS MCA	345876 DAVID ALLAN COE SON OF THE SOUTH COLUMBIA	317149 DAN FOGELBERG GREATEST HITS MCA	330720 JOHN ANDERSON GREATEST HITS WARNER BROS.	338475 CHARLY MCCLAIN BIGGEST HITS EPC	343608* LIONEL HAMPTON Sentimental Journey ATLANTIC
335653 BARBARA MANDRELL'S GREATEST HITS MCA	343889* THE FABULOUS TUFF ENUFF CBS DISCO/POP	339796 DON WILLIAMS GREATEST HITS MCA	344812* BILLY OCEAN LOVE ZONE COLUMBIA	219477 Simon & Garfunkel's Greatest Hits COLUMBIA	246868 JIM CROCE HIS GREATEST HITS MCA
346478 MADONNA TRUE BLUE MCA	343012 TAN & TUCKER GIRLS LIKE ME CAPITOL	SELECTIONS WITH TWO NUMBERS ARE 2-RECORD SETS OR DOUBLE-LENGTH TAPES, AND COUNT AS TWO SELECTIONS—WRITE EACH NUMBER IN A SEPARATE BOX		343582 VAN HALEN 5150 WARNER BROS.	
335109 LEE GREENWOOD GREATEST HITS MCA	348912* LUTHER VANDROSS GIVE ME THE REASON EPC	223131 393132 TONY BENNETT ALL TIME GREATEST HITS COLUMBIA	345454* 395459 DIANA ROSS & THE SUPREMES 25TH ANNIVERSARY MOTOWN	327171 ROY ROGERS COLUMBIA MCA (ONE EDITION)	
346312 BILLY JOEL THE BRIDGE COLUMBIA	342287 MERLE HAGGARD FRIENDS FROM CALIFORNIA EPC	308049 392040 CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REBEL YELL - 20 GREATEST HITS (REMASTER) Featuring John Fogarty	346486* 396481 LAWRENCE WELK & HIS ORCHESTRA, MEMORIES WITH LAWRENCE WELK WARNER BROS.	342881 CHARLY MCCLAIN WAYNE SHAWNEE WHEN LOVE IS RIGHT EPC	
335067 JOHNNY CASH WITH OR WITHOUT ME YOU WOULD STILL BE HIGHWAYMAN COLUMBIA	340323 SADE PROMISE MCA	346841 396846 VARIOUS ARTISTS TEXAS COUNTRY MCA	342786 392787 VARIOUS ARTISTS TELEVISION'S GREATEST HITS—65 THEMES FROM THE 50'S AND 60'S MCA	326629 Bruce Springsteen Born In The U.S.A. COLUMBIA	
346304 LACY J. DALTON HIGHWAY DINER COLUMBIA	342253 JOHN SCHNEIDER A Memory Like You MCA	342113* 392118 RICKY NELSON ALL MY BEST EPC	347187* 397182 THE GREAT ROY ORBISON - ALL TIME GREATEST HITS COLUMBIA	343236 WAYLON JENNINGS Will The Wolf Survive MCA	
335000 GENE WATSON GREATEST HITS MCA	329581* BILLY OCEAN SUDDENLY COLUMBIA	221937 391938 RAY PRICE'S ALL TIME GREATEST HITS COLUMBIA	341461 391466 ANNONCEMENT: 50 YEARS OF BLUE GRASS HITS COLUMBIA	324764 RAY CONNIFF'S GREATEST HITS MCA	
346296 JANIE FRICKE BLACK AND WHITE COLUMBIA	340885 GLEN CAMPBELL IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME ATLANTIC/IMPACT	310219 390211 JOHNNY MATSIS SILVER ANNIVERSARY ALBUM COLUMBIA	348987 398982 LINDA RONSTADT ROUND MIDNIGHT ATLANTIC	343004 REBA MCKENZIE WHOEVER'S IN MY ENGLAND MCA	
334466 GEORGE STRAIT GREATEST HITS MCA	316992 LIONEL RICHIE EPC	350173 390175 HANK WILLIAMS, JR. The Early Years WARNER BROS.	329849 399642 MICKY GILLEY Ten Years Of Hits EPC	324616 CYNDI LAUPER SHE'S SO UNUSUAL MCA	
346288 RAY CHARLES FROM THE PAGES OF MY MIND COLUMBIA	339812 STEVE WARNER LIFE'S HIGHWAY MCA	319996 399998 MOTOWN'S 25 #1 HITS FROM 25 YEARS MOTOWN	351205* 391201 BILL COSBY - COSBY AND THE ARD COSBY CLASSICS WARNER BROS.	342972 EMMYLOU HARRIS THIRTEEN WARNER BROS.	
334409 15 TOP TEN HITS OF THE 50'S & 60'S COLUMBIA	347716* E. KUNZEL Cond. BROADWAY HITS FAMUSIC	352427 392423 TAMMY WYNETTE LADY SINGER: 20 YEARS OF HITS EPC	351387 391383 THE WORLD'S GREATEST BLUEGRASS PROVERBS WITH VARIOUS ARTISTS COLUMBIA	324327 JOHN CONLEE'S GREATEST HITS MCA	

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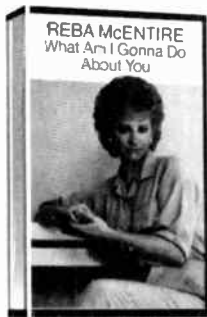
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**344614**  
**Dwight Yoakam—Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc.** *Honky Tonk Man*; etc. (Reprise)



**350041**  
**Sawyer Brown—Out Goin' Cattin'.** Title cut; *New Shoes*; etc. (Capitol/Curb)



**349316**  
**Willie Nelson—Partners.** *Something In The Way She Moves*; etc. (Columbia)



**348896**  
**Ricky Skaggs—Love's Gonna Get Ya!** Top 10 album. *New Star Shining*; etc. (Epic)



**352252**  
**Hank Williams, Jr.—Hank "Live!"** Includes *I'm For Love*; etc. (Warner Bros./Curb)

- |   |   |  |   |  |  |
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| 349233 THE GATLIN BROS.—LARRY STEVE RUDY PARTNERS   | 347153 CYNTHIA LAUPER Trib Colort               | 349571 BOSTON THIRD STAGE                                  | 348957* STEVE WINWOOD BACK IN THE HIGH LIFE                       | 351338* ERIC CLAPTON AUGUST  | 35112* EUROPE The Final Countdown                            |
| 347995 HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS FORE                 | 351361 VERN GOSDIN'S GREATEST HITS              | 342105* BANGLES Different Light                            | 348961 SWEETHEARTS OF THE RODEO                                   | 343319* JANET JACKSON CONTROL  | 362344* DAVE EDMUNDS BAND LIVE I HEAR 'OL ROCK'!             |
| 305672 ANNE MURRAY'S GREATEST HITS                  | 337899 The Very Best Of JANIE FRICKE            | 341636* SHARON SOUND MACHINE PRIMITIVE LOVE                | 321067 CHARLIE DANIELS BAND A DECADE OF HITS                      | 351403* CONWAY TWITTY WITH CONWAY TWITTY                             | 342956 DON WILLIAMS NEW MOVES                                |
| 342360 ANNE MURRAY SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT          | 321380 Barbra Streisand's Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 | 286740 LINDA RONSTADT'S GREATEST HITS                      | 337303 GARY MORRIS ANYTHING GOES                                  | 323264 LIONEL RICHIE Can't Slow Down                                 | 323774 KENNY ROGERS 20 Greatest Hits                         |
| 291302 JAMES TAYLOR'S GREATEST HITS                 | 337709 EXILE HANG ON TO YOUR HEART              | 341552 DIONNE WARWICK FRIENDS                              | 319541 ELTON JOHN'S GREATEST HITS                                 | 338301 GEORGE STRAIT Something Special                               | 342733 WILLIE NELSON The Promise Land                        |
| 342097 Barbra Streisand The Broadway Album          | 321349 CRYSTAL GAYLE Greatest Hits              | 266403 CHARLIE RICH GREATEST HITS                          | 336818 THE NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND / PARTNERS BROTHERS AND FRIENDS | 32219* LARRY GATLIN & THE GATLIN BROTHERS BAND GREATEST HITS, VOL. 7 | 334391* WHITNEY HOUSTON                                      |
| 291278* BEST OF THE DOBBIE BROTHERS                 | 337800 PEBBY CLINE TOMMYE TOMMYE AND FOREVER    | 341065 FERRANTE & TEICHER A FEW OF OUR FAVORITES 'N' STAGE | 31921C JOHNNY CASH BIGGEST HITS                                   | 338012 LEE GREENWOOD STREAMLINE                                      | 329672 MERLE HAGGARD HIS EPIC HITS & MORE                    |
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| 287003 EAGLES 1971-1975 GREATEST HITS               | 337519 HEART                                    | 336792* JOHN ANDERSON TOKYO, OKLAHOMA                      | 335828 T.G. SHEPPARD Livin' On The Edge                           | 337988 WILLIE NELSON HALF NELSON                                     | 329236 BARBARA MANORRELL LEE GREENWOOD—MY AMY FOR EACH OTHER |
| 339267 LARRY GATLIN & THE GATLIN BROTHERS BAND SILE | 338665 GENE WATSON MEMORIES TO BURN             | 336321 REBA McENTIRE I GOT A DEAL FOR YOU                  | 335539 MERLE HAGGARD HIS BEST                                     | 349993 JOHN CONLEE CONLEE COUNTRY                                    | 344697 THE WHITES GREATEST HITS                              |
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| 348318 THE POLICE EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE             | 346643* ANDRE AS VOLEVINE DOWN TO THE MOON      | 349985 JOHNNY MATHIS/REHELY MAMON THE HOLLOWOOD MUSICALS   | 346635 EXILE GREATEST HITS  | 348128 LEE GREENWOOD LOVE WILL FIND ITS WAY TO YOU                   | 310236 OAK RIDGE BOYS GREATEST HITS                          |
| 350679* ARETHA FRANKLIN ARETHA                      | 350272 MARIE OSMOND I ONLY WANTED YOU           | 350124 JOHN ANDERSON COUNTRYFIED                           | 350108* PIA ZADORA I AM WHAT I AM                                 | 349647 LIBERACE Concert Favorites                                    | 338319 JOHN CONLEE Greatest Hits Vol. 2                      |

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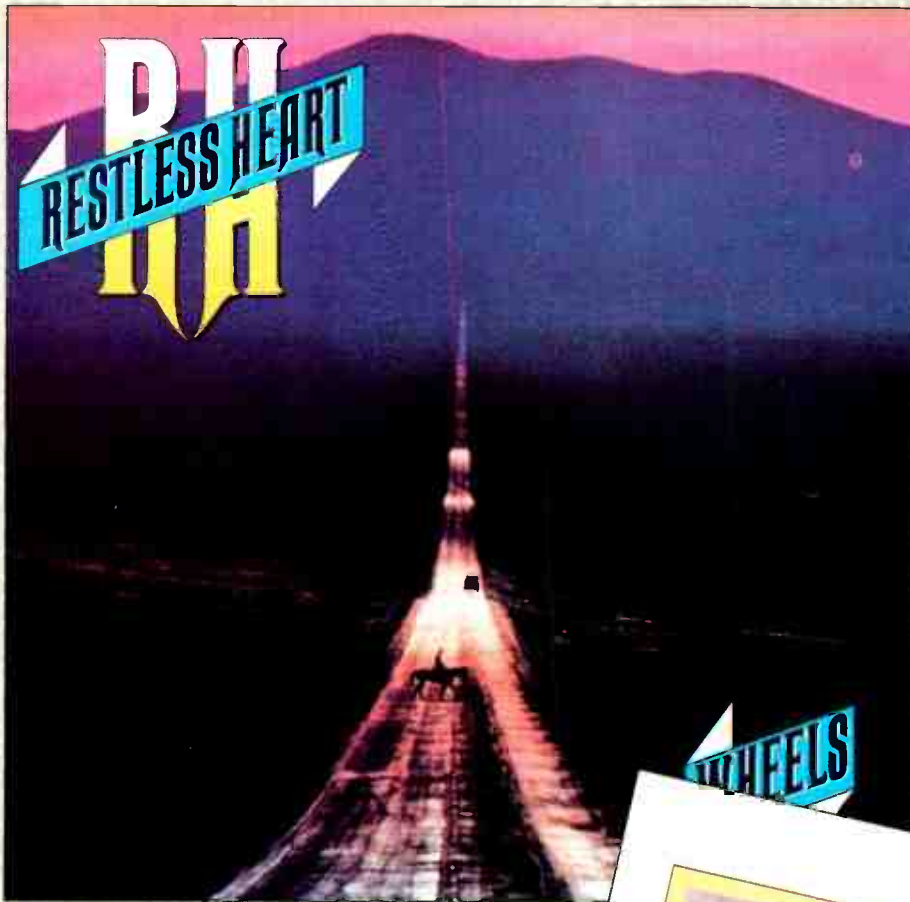
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- |   |                                      |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 347757 THE KENDALLS Fire At First Sight | 349589 CHICAGO 18                    | 316711 HANK WILLIAMS, JR. GREATEST HITS  |
| 347427 MICKEY GILLEY ONE AND ONLY       | 349324 SOUTH PACIFIC                 | 339481 RICKY SKAGGS LIVE IN LONDON   |
| 348237 AIR SUPPLY Hearts in Motion      | 348979 TINA TURNER BREAK EVERY RULE  | 315358* GENE AUTRY   |
| 347195 JIMMY BUFFETT FLORIDAYS          | 347195 JIMMY BUFFETT FLORIDAYS       | 339325 MEL McDANIEL STANDUP  |
| 348953 GARY MORRIS PLAIN BROWN WRAPPER  | 347161* AMY GRANT THE COLLECTION     | 335018 ED BRUCE GREATEST HITS  |
| 348938 MERLE HAGGARD AMONG THE STARS    | 348938 MERLE HAGGARD AMONG THE STARS | 342212 BRIG CROSBY—THE RADIO YEARS '69 '70 '71 '72 '73 '74 '75 '76 '77 '78 '79 '80 '81 '82 '83 '84 '85 '86 '87 '88 '89 '90 '91 '92 '93 '94 '95 '96 '97 '98 '99 '00 '01 '02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07 '08 '09 '10 '11 '12 '13 '14 '15 '16 '17 '18 '19 '20 '21 '22 '23 '24 '25 '26 '27 '28 '29 '30 '31 '32 '33 '34 '35 '36 '37 '38 '39 '40 '41 '42 '43 '44 '45 '46 '47 '48 '49 '50 '51 '52 '53 '54 '55 '56 '57 '58 '59 '60 '61 '62 '63 '64 '65 '66 '67 '68 '69 '70 '71 '72 '73 '74 '75 '76 '77 '78 '79 '80 '81 '82 '83 '84 '85 '86 '87 '88 '89 '90 '91 '92 '93 '94 '95 '96 '97 '98 '99 '00 '01 '02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07 '08 '09 '10 '11 '12 '13 '14 '15 '16 '17 '18 '19 '20 '21 '22 '23 '24 '25 '26 '27 '28 '29 '30 '31 '32 '33 '34 '35 '36 '37 '38 '39 '40 '41 '42 '43 '44 '45 '46 '47 '48 '49 '50 '51 '52 '53 '54 '55 '56 '57 '58 '59 '60 '61 '62 '63 '64 '65 '66 '67 '68 '69 '70 '71 '72 '73 '74 '75 '76 '77 '78 '79 '80 '81 '82 '83 '84 '85 '86 '87 '88 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# Great Music from Country's **HOTTEST ACTS!**



## RESTLESS HEART *"WHEELS"*

Includes the smash singles:

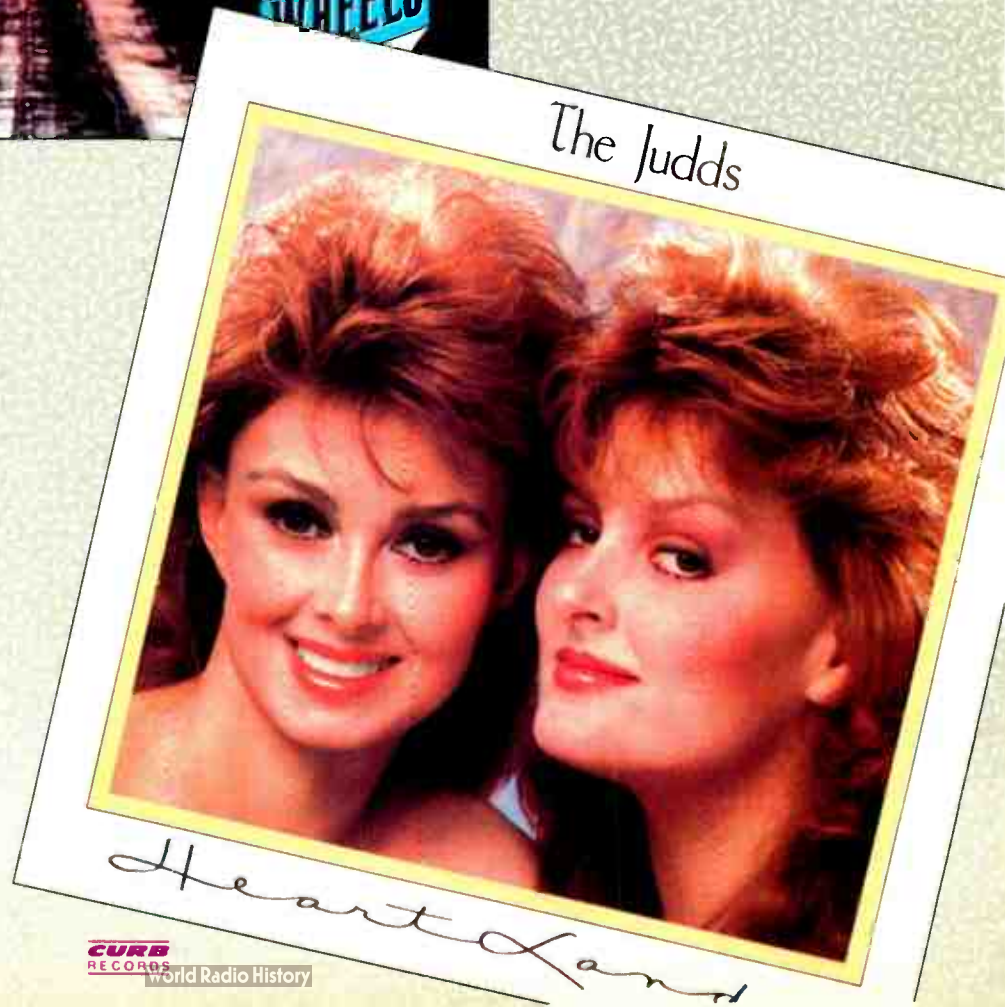
- "I'll Still Be Loving You"
- "Why Does It Have To Be Wrong Or Right"
- "That Rock Won't Roll" and more!

## THE JUDDS *"HEARTLAND"*

Featuring their hit singles

- "I Know Where I'm Going"
- "Don't Be Cruel"

plus many more!





# People

record still gives me the shivers today.

The movie premiered in Austin, and was released in March. Besides Willie who co-produced and starred in the flick, the movie also stars Morgan Fairchild and Katherine Ross. Willie's drummer Paul English, guitarist Jody Payne and bassman Bee Sebars all have speaking roles in the film. Let it be said that all of us at the Smith house and *Country Music Magazine* do wish Willie the best that money can make...I could dig Willie's being worth a by-God hundred mill!

## KENNY'S NEVER FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM MUSIC CITY TO HURT HIS SINGING!

Kenny Rogers' good taste and sense to match have brought him back into the Music City music scene. He's back re-



**MISS EMMYLOU HARRIS**

This photo is for two great Americans. First, my editor, Mr. Russell Barnard, who gets all bleary-eyed and smiley when he hears Emmy's music, name and/or sees her. Second, for the man in black who wrote *The Man in White* and *The Man in Black*, Mr. Johnny Cash, who also gets all bleary-eyed and smiley when he hears Emmy's music, name and/or sees her. Just call them two boys two great Americans living in the land of the free, and let's call Miss Emmy the Statue of Liberty.

cording where folks love him and made him a star. I'm so pleased. His and Dolly Parton's duo on "Islands in the Stream" was a crowd pleaser, and Kenny's done some okay stuff by himself. But he ain't never recorded nothing as good as "Lucille" and "The Gambler" since he left producer Larry Butler and Nashville. Nope, the boy may have taken himself out of Music City, but his heart has brought him back. They always come home to roost.

## WHEN A COUNTRY BOY ROCKS AND ROLLS

Steve Earle's *Guitar Town* video has been shown on the rock 'n' roller MTV. Watch his smoke 'cause he's worth giving an ear to.

## TO: HANK WILLIAMS JR. AND MERLE KILGORE DATELINE: NASHVILLE, TENN.

Dear Hank Jr. and Merle, Thank you for the teddy bear! I gotta tell you guys, that was my very first teddy bear in my life. Maybe you all sent out hundreds and maybe just a few. I don't know. But I know this, mine is appreciated very much. And I like the teddy bear's t-shirt, too, which reads, "I love Hank Jr."

Thanks again, guys. If I can be of help, let me know.

Regards,  
Hazel

## IF YOU LOVE COUNTRY SONGS ABOUT RINGS AROUND FINGERS, BATHTUBS, COLLARS AND/OR SINKS, OR ANY OTHER GOD GIVEN SUBJECT, READ ON

One of the better books ever written dealing with songs and songwriters is *Sing Your Heart Out, Country Boy*. Written by Louisiana native Dorothy Horstman, the book was first published in 1975 and now has been reissued in an updated version by the Country Music Foundation Press. If you love country music, especially country lyrics, as I do, then this book is a must on your shelf. A good portion of the writers were contacted by Horstman personally either by phone, in person or by letter. Each artist or writer is documented in the bibliography by the manner in which they were contacted. For instance, the first name in the book is Roy Acuff referring to "Fireball Mail," "Great Speckled Bird," etc. The information was gathered from a personal interview

## LOVE IS ALL AROUND



Something must be in the air, what with all the weddings we've been telling you about lately. Newest in the country community to tie the knot are Cristy Forester and Gary Smith. The nuptials were held in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, where Cristy and sisters Forester grew up singing. Gary, formerly of the Ricky Skaggs Band, has now taken the reins as The Forester Sisters' bandleader and keyboard player. It's always good to keep things in the family.

with Mr. Acuff on September 8, 1973.

Being a writer, I found what Tom T. Hall said about Clayton Defaney very interesting. Not only was Clayton a real person, he sang the hits of the day in a manner which suited his own style. Tom T. was so impressed with Clayton that he fashioned his own musical style after him. I can dig the daylights out of that. Tom T. did too. He just wrote 'em up and served 'em down.

I haven't seen or heard from Dorothy Horstman since the mid-1970's when she was gathering her info for the book. Wherever you are, Dorothy, thanks for acknowledging this writer for assistance, whatever little or much it might have been. I understand you live in New York City still, but I know your heart is in the country.

## IV HOSTS

Grand Ole Opry star George Hamilton IV has announced that he will host the Silkeut Wembley Festival in London. Artists confirmed for the event include the acoustic trio of Jerry Douglas,

# People

Peter Rowan and Mark O'Connor, New Grass Revival, O.B. McClinton, Box Car Willie, Connie Smith, Johnny Russell, Little Jimmy Dickens, Riders in the Sky and John Schneider. The three-day event also features the talents of Patty Loveless, fiddler Tokyo Matsuo, Tanya Tucker, Moe Bandy, Rex Allen Jr., the great Jerry Lee Lewis, Bobby Bare, Wanda Jackson, Tommy Collins, Leon Everette, Emmylou Harris, The Bellamy Brothers, David Allan Coe and The Forester Sisters. I would love to know exactly how much money festival promoter Mervyn Conn paid for this array of talent.

## EL CHICO SERVES STARS AND ME

There's no telling who you might see at El Chico. Why I spied Jeannie Kendall and her hubby dining there, and I spied Lorrie Morgan and Keith Whitely holding hands and eating hot sauce on chips...which warmed their lips!! It's not easy to walk past El Chico and not enter. It was not even close to any mealtime, and me and part of my crowd



### THE SONGWRITER

Like good wine that is slow to age, Paul Davis takes his time with his writing, singing, whatever, and his speed or slowness has paid off in dollars and sense. His song "Meet Me in Montana" was a big record that brought a bundle of awards to Dan Seals and Marie Osmond who recorded it. Paul also dueted with Marie on "You're Still New to Me," which he wrote with master song craftsman Paul Overstreet. Reportedly, Davis and Kyle Lehning have a project underway that is hotter 'n a two-dollar pistol covered with jalapeno peppers!

## OF MICE AND MEN



Yes, that's Eddie Rabbit beside two of the most famous mice we know. Eddie got to meet the world-renowned pair as part of the NBC Radio Network's *Live From Walt Disney World* series.

were in the mall to keep out of the cold. I, who am walking for my health these days, was doing so. Then it was time to go. My body could not walk past the door of El Chico! I mean, those Fajita Quesidillas were watering my mouth so much that I just took a quick right instead of a left, entered, ordered and was waiting to be served when the eldest Smith Brothers brother, Billy Smith, said, "This ain't lunch, and it ain't supper. I reckon this must be lupper." So, if you are near Rivergate Mall, north of the mainline Nashville, and it's between 2 P.M. and 5 P.M., why don't you just drop in El Chico and have lupper. You will return. And who knows, you might see a star like I did!

## GATLIN HONORED

Larry Gatlin, who has wrote, sung and yo-yoed up and down the charts, flirting with superstardom a dozen or more years, was honored on the National Songwriters Award show in the "Golden Spotlight." The former Texan basked beautifully, singing a medley of several self-penned hits. Looking lean and tan, he and bros Rudy and Steve harmonized like angels, that is if God made any honky tonky male angels! One of my personal favorite Gatlin songs is the gospel tune "Help Me" that I had the privilege of hearing him debut at Evangel Temple Church years ago. This may

have been Larry's first song. I know Johnny Cash heard the song, sang it in that movie *Gospel Road* and included it in the sound track album. So Gatlin was off to a flying start. There's no telling how many other folks cut that song. I know that Kristofferson recorded it also.

## DANNY SEALS GOT EIGHT FEET TO SHOD!

Jesse Tyler Seals made his debut into the world, making four young uns for Dan Seals and his wife Andrea—two boys and two girls. So, ladies and gentlemen, if you got a little extra work that Dan can do in the picking and singing area, just yell. He's got eight feet to shoe and that takes a bunch of money! Just kidding, Danny. I love you and wish you and your family the best. Especially the best to your manager, Tony Gottlieb, who is single and by far the cutest manager in show biz. By the way, Jesse Tyler weighed a solid 7 pounds, 14 ounces!

## FOLKS DON'T CARE WHERE HANK LIVED

The Hank Williams House tourist attraction, which moved from Franklin Road to Division Street, just off Music Row, not too long ago, is closed. Hank's step-daughter, who was caretaker of the house, is now fixing hair.



# GEORGE JONES

THE LIVING LEGEND

**Captured live on video!**



**FEATURING THE HIT SINGLE:  
"WHO'S GONNA FILL THEIR SHOES"!**

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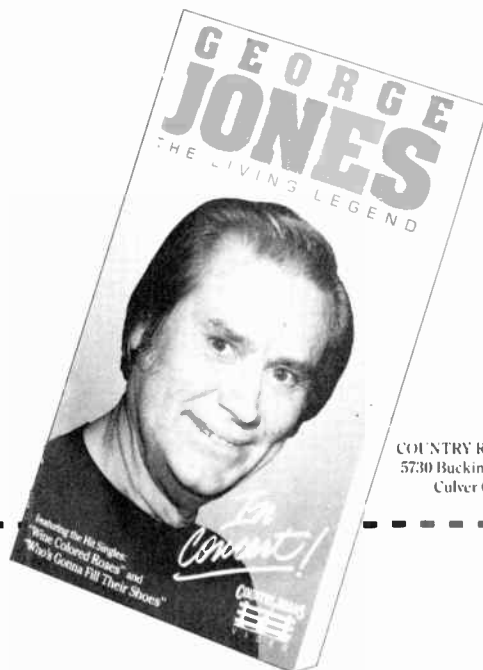
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*Lyle Lovett has signed with a major label, broken onto the country charts and received high praise for his debut album—not bad for a newcomer, but not surprising either. He's the latest from the rich tradition of Texas singer/songwriters.*

# **LYLE LOVETT**

**True to  
That Texas  
Sound**

*by Bob Allen*





**M**ore than any other state, Texas has evolved its own tradition of singer/songwriters. These are artists whose music echoes with a strong sense of place and a lingering preoccupation and emotional identification with their home state. It is a loose-knit group which encompasses everyone from Willie Nelson, Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt to more recently emerging figures like Steve Earle and Nanci Griffith.

One of the most talented Lone Star balladeers to become visible in this field lately is Lyle Lovett. Lovett made a splash on the contemporary country charts with his debut hit single, "Farther Down the Line," a hard-luck rodeo song, and *Lyle Lovett*, his first album, is one of the most impressive introductory efforts released by a new talent in 1986.

Texas has produced a vast array of musical talents—everyone from Ernest Tubb, to rock 'n' roller Janis Joplin, to jazz master Ornette Coleman. So it's not surprising that Lovett's sophistication as a songwriter and his low-key persuasiveness as a singer echo with a wide range of influences. You can hear traces of such pop and rock 'n' roll forerunners as Jesse Winchester and Tom Waits in his understated social awareness and offhanded sarcasm, and the best of his songs are full of undercurrents of emotional complexity and lyric sophistication that you just won't find in, say, the latest Mickey Gilley single.

"Cowboy Man," a jazzy, lyrically provocative number off his first album, pokes good-natured fun at the super-macho "Marlboro Man" image, extolled in cigarette advertisements and blue jean commercials as well as in mundane country lyrics. "Now, I ain't never been no cowboy," he sings, "but heaven knows I try." With his spiky hair and gaunt cheekbones accentuating his long, angular and vaguely melancholy face, Lovett himself looks a far cry from your prototypical country singer—if, indeed, there ever was such a creature!

"I'm not really trying to carry a banner for my home state or anything," Lovett shrugs and smiles thoughtfully. "All I'm really trying to do is to write about what I know. My family grew up on the same piece of ground in Texas, about 25 miles north of Houston, since the 1840's. So some of these songs are just about where I'm from, and what home means to me—like, the rest of the world goes on, but there is always home."

Lovett, who has won over crowds in recent months as an opening act for Ricky Skaggs, John Prine and Bonnie Raitt, and who was the surprise hit of both the annual Kerrville, Texas, Texas

Folk Festival and the Kennedy Center's Texas Songwriters' Concert in Washington, D.C., last June, has had an open window on the cultural changes that have descended upon the Lone Star State in the past couple of decades. He has watched the wide-open spaces of his youth slowly become engulfed by the encroaching suburban glacier of high-rises, subdivisions and eight-lane freeways.

"Where I grew up was really out in the country when I was a kid," he recalls. "I used to help my grandfather in the hay fields and the dairy barn. But now, if you

recently emerging into the big time, helped Lovett land a few openings at prestigious northeastern showcases like The Speakeasy, in New York City, and has recorded one of his songs.

Interesting in light of all the acclaim that it has received is the fact that, as Lovett explains, *Lyle Lovett*, his debut album, was very much a home-grown project. He recorded it on his own, with his band, in Arizona, before he'd even landed his present recording deal with MCA. He paid for the studio time with his own money, along with some he borrowed from his parents.

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*"My original intent was just to have an album that I could sell from on stage at my shows."*

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drive a mile in any direction, you get to a stoplight.

"My grandpa's old place, where I hunted and fished as a kid, is all split up now," he adds with a trace of wistfulness. "There is only a little bit of it left. So, yeah, there is a certain sense of loss. But, you know, there's still that part, that sense of home, that you never lose no matter how much it changes."

While attending Texas A&M University, where he earned degrees in both journalism and German, Lovett learned guitar and began performing at restaurants and college clubs.

"The clubs that I played in around Houston were really affected by the times when people like Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt and Jerry Jeff Walker and Willis Allen Ramsey were all still living there, in the late 1960's and early 1970's," he explains. "There was a real strong singer-songwriter thing going on, a strong sense of original music. Lightnin' Hopkins lived down there. I was real influenced by all that. I learned to finger-pick listening to Guy Clark's first album."

Eventually, Lovett and his music began coming to the attention of some of those very same writers. Guy Clark was an early admirer of Lovett's songs; he began circulating tapes of them and generally talking Lovett up around Nashville. Later, Clark wrote a short but humorously incisive set of liner notes for Lovett's album. "Guy was a big help," Lovett laughs. "I'm still running into people in Nashville that he played my songs for."

Nanci Griffith, another singer-songwriter from the Lone Star State cur-

"My band is from Arizona, so I just went out there and went in a local studio and tried to see if I could make my songs sound like something you would hear on the radio. My original intent was just to have an album that I could sell from on stage at my shows.

"Later, after MCA picked it up, Tony Brown, one of MCA's producers, took over the project. He remixed it and did some overdubs—like the fiddle on 'Cowboy Man,' and some additional acoustic guitars. We also added Vince Gill on electric guitar and Rosanne Cash on background vocals on 'You Can't Resist It.' But the essential project, most of what you hear, was done by just me and my band, out in Arizona."

**T**hough his music has made him the hit of Nashville and taken him on national tours, it seems safe to say that Lovett will not be leaving the old home place out on the edge of the Houston suburbs any time soon.

"When my grandpa died in 1979, the old homeplace was sold out of the family to a group of nameless and faceless investors in California. It really broke my heart. But I stayed after them, and finally last year, I talked them into selling me the buildings on the old place. I borrowed the money to move my grandfather's old house, along with the barn and the potato house, about 100 yards, over to my mom and dad's place. I still can't afford to get heat and water in the house," he smiles. "But I figure if I can just get one room livable, I can go ahead and move in, and take it from there." ■

# RICKY SKAGGS

That's Just the Way It Is



Ricky





Skaggs

*Ricky looks at his career and his life with his eyes wide open. What he sees may not always be perfection, but he's up to the challenge.*

*by Bob Allen*



**S**o first let's look at the up side of this proposition: Ricky Skaggs, an eminently talented and still youthful musician, has had the country music world at his feet for the last four or five years.

Skaggs has had an impressive run of Number One records—eleven at last count—as well as a handful of gold records.

And, of course, in 1985, he won the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year Award, which is the Big Bowling Trophy in the sky as far as country singers are concerned. Just as important, Skaggs has been hailed far and wide as one of the leaders of the "New Traditionalists" movement, which is getting the lion's share of media attention in the country field these days.

On the personal side, he is happily married to the beautiful Sharon White, of the much-respected recording group, The Whites, whose records Skaggs produced until very recently. Just now, the two of them are busy making plans to purchase an 800-acre farm near Nashville where they can build their dream house, bring up their three kids in the country, maybe raise some cattle and horses and even start a Christian youth camp, as well.

But as Skaggs sits in the board room of his Music Row management company and sips coffee poured from a silver-plated server, there is a nagging trace of concern in his robust, youthful countenance and wistfulness in his voice. Mind you, he is pleasant enough as he sits there underneath the soft fluorescent lights on the third or fourth floor of a glass and chrome skyscraper on Music Square East, just a block or so down the street from CBS, his record label. At times, he is downright enthusiastic as he presides at the head of the table with his always-perfect hair and his pre-faded denim jeans and jacket, the collar of which is pulled up tightly around his neck. With obvious pride, he shows a visitor through a batch of the exquisite color slides he's taken on his frequent forays overseas: dramatic shots of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, a mist-shrouded sunrise over the Copenhagen skyline, a panoramic view of the Spey River in Scotland, where he went salmon fishing last year.

Yet for all the world, this youthful-looking, 32-year-old—who has already assembled an impressive portfolio of song publishing, real estate and other

ERIK BAKKE/MARLBORO COUNTRY MUSIC



# RICKY SKAGGS: RECORDING ARTIST AS PHOTOGRAPHER



## Scotland

*"I spotted this row of houses while touring the streets of Scotland. It had just stopped raining, and the sun peeking through the picket fence immediately caught my eye."*

(May 1985)

## Tennessee

*"A wet, snowy Tennessee morning. This photo was taken just down the road from my home in Hendersonville."*

(February 1987)



## Copenhagen

*"Waking up to a cold, foggy morning in Copenhagen, Denmark. It was the third concert stop on our European tour, and I took this shot from my hotel room window."*

(January 1986)



investments—looks like the poor little rich boy. That nagging tone of concern, of vague distraction, creeps back into his voice. And with a little prodding, he finally admits that he is suffering from a case of the post-Entertainer-of-the-Year blues and that all is not right in Ricky-land.

“Yeh, yeh,” Skaggs smiles thinly, and sighs, as he stares into his coffee cup and sets aside his collection of photos. “I may be fightin’ through something like that right now. My record sales are down a bit, and my new one sure didn’t debut at Number One like George Strait’s did, or go platinum like Randy Travis’ new one. My concerts are off a little bit, and my income this year maybe isn’t gonna be quite what it was the last couple of years. I laid five people off in my organization earlier this year. I just really needed to trim some fat.”

Skaggs sighs again, with an air of strength and self control in the face of adversity. He considers the fact that he is, after all, functioning within an industry where music is marketed like breakfast cereal and if you aren’t constantly coming up with new brands with less sugar or more natural fibre, or at least repackaging the same old shredded wheat and corn flakes in brand-new flashy packaging that jumps out at the consumers and glistens under the supermarket lights, then you are sooner or later going to be out of the game. He ponders the reality that he is both the golden boy and the potential victim of an industry where the word “legend” is sometimes a derogatory term for veteran recording artists who can no longer sell records.

“I think part of it is that the newness, the mystique, the new kid on the block thing, has worn off,” he admits. “I mean, I *ain’t* the new kid on the block anymore. And you know, man, once they’ve handed you that big gold ring—the CMA’s Entertainer of the Year trophy—it’s like, ‘Okay, you’ve had your shot’. And I think there’s a lot of people right now who are saying, ‘Skaggs just ain’t as hot as he once was.’” He shrugs and leans back in his chair. “And maybe I ain’t.

“So...,” he adds as he moves forward again, drums his fingers on the shiny wood table and fixes his eyes on some distant horizon, “I guess we’ll have to make some adjustments. I guess we’ll just have to put some more water in the soup.” So says the budding music publishing magnate, who has recently been out shopping for huge parcels of prime middle Tennessee real estate. “Better times are a-comin’.”

**L**ooking at things through the small end of the telescope, recent numbers bear out Skaggs’ mild sense of career anxiety. His last couple of singles did not quite go Number One, as his first dozen or so did.

His most recent album *Love’s Gonna Get Ya* hasn’t reached the gold mark yet, as four of his previous CBS albums did. Instead, its sales currently appear to be stalled somewhere in the range of 200,000 to 250,000.

Nevertheless, Skaggs’ stature as a recording artist, as sort of the Bill Monroe of the 1980’s, is secure. He is clearly an artist whose creativity and ingenuity are likely to endure the periodic shifts and slumps in popular taste which occasionally leave even the most brilliant careers temporarily stranded like sail-



*“Sharon and I just have such a commitment that way to each other.”*

boats drifting in the windless seas of the horse latitudes.

Skaggs is a perfectionist. He’s “Picky Ricky,” as his dad nicknamed him. He is the sort of fierce competitor who, in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, hauled himself up through the ranks of the bluegrass/newgrass scene and accomplished the seemingly impossible task of finding a dominant position for himself within the confines of commercial country music’s mainstream. He is a man who is, no doubt, haunted by that old credo of the Christian work ethic, which is: If you ain’t moving forward, then look out, because you must be sliding backwards.

“I feel like, man, there for a while I was a pretty good-sized fish in a small stream,” Skaggs chips in with a touch of self-deprecating humor. “But then, boy, the floodgate of new artists—which to some extent, I think my own success helped open up—just busted loose back there behind me. And now there’s a pretty good-sized river that a whole lot more of us are tryin’ to swim in.”

If there is a focal point to Skaggs’ career lag, it seems to be his new album, *Love’s Gonna Get Ya*. The critical acclaim this time around has been less than unanimous, the sales disappointing—at least to Skaggs himself—and at the radio level, there seems to have been resistance to the first singles pulled from it. “It’s a real good album, I’m real happy with it, real proud of it,” says Skaggs, who seems genuinely perplexed by all this. “I will say that some of what you hear on there is about as pop as anything you’ll ever hear from Ricky

Skaggs—yet it’s still not getting as much airplay as I hoped over in England, which is the market I was specifically aiming for with some of the songs, like ‘Artificial Heart’.

“For some reason,” he smiles sadly and with a touch of disbelief, “the English fans seem to love the music on *Love’s Gonna Get Ya*, but they don’t like the album cover,” which features a somewhat new, trimmed-down and slicked up version of Skaggs, as if he’s poised to make the move from country boy to downhome neo-countryopolitan sex symbol. “I guess they might have thought it was too contemporary looking or somethin’.

“Again,” he frowns and looks weary,

"it's a matter of fighting this preconceived notion of what a country artist should be like. Like he should be sittin' on a bale of hay, or standin' on the fender of a truck, or with an old hound dog or somethin'."

**S**kaggs cuts short this contemplation in the quiet and dust-free boardroom and heads off to make the rounds of the various departments in his management and publishing company. First, there is a lengthy consultation regarding some fine-line changes in the design of the new official Ricky Skaggs T-shirt sold by his concessionaires. Then he pops in on a couple of the half dozen or so songwriters he has signed to his own publishing company, and audits their latest output of new songs. He carries around a leather-bound note and appointment book in which he's entered the titles of at least 80 tunes that are already under consideration for his next album, which won't see the light of day until at least early 1988.

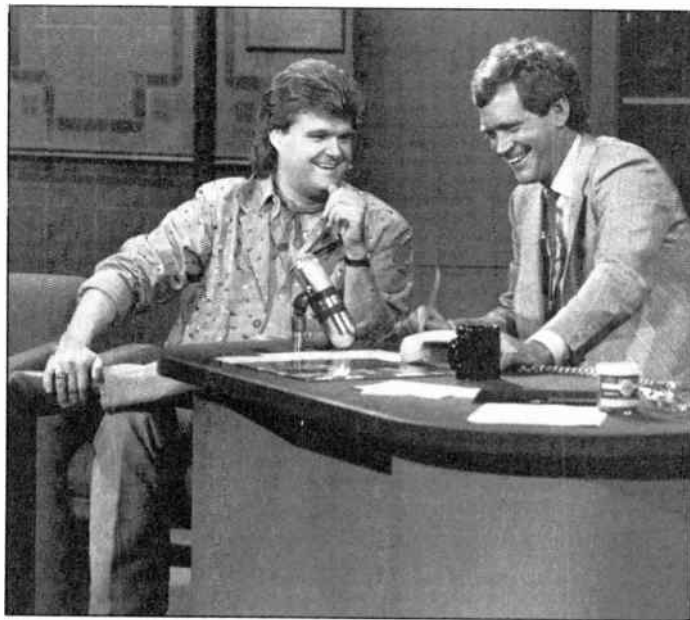
Next, there are some details regarding the choice of a new musician for his road band, to replace the one who recently left to tour with The Forester Sisters. Then there are a batch of publicity photos to be autographed for some business acquaintances. And finally, there are last-minute travel arrangements regarding a couple of concerts in the Midwest that he'll be flying out to play early the next morning.

It soon becomes apparent that there is no detail too small to be left unattended by "Picky Ricky." Even when he walks into a local Wendy's to order a burger, it's: "Hold the lettuce, hold the tomato, hold the mayonnaise... and *try* and get it right this time.

"I even have these little cards, little questionnaires that I send out to everybody at our shows," Skaggs explains as he hurries down the corridor to the elevator, past smiling receptionists and glad-handing business associates. "It's more or less a customer survey, like the Cracker Barrel restaurant chain or Hilton does. I ask everybody in the audience what their favorite Ricky Skaggs song is, their favorite album. I ask 'em what they liked about the show, what they didn't like. I even ask 'em if they had just one piece of advice they'd give Ricky Skaggs, what would it be. I even let them rate my show, on a scale of one to five.

"I'm making a real, all-out effort to please my fans right now, and to get closer to them and listen to them more," he adds. "Because I sure don't have all the answers."

As Ricky exits to the office skyrise's parking lot and hops into his new Ford Bronco, it is twilight and the rush hour



**Whether he's guest-starring on David Letterman, taping shows for the BBC, or posing for pictures with Martin Satterthwaite, the European Head of the CMA in London, Ricky pays attention to the smallest detail. He says he wants to get closer to his fans and even lets them rate his show on a one to five basis.**

traffic is beginning to pick up along busy 16th Avenue South. He decides to head across town to a local steak house for a bite to eat before driving out to the Opryland Hotel for a round of interviews with deejays at the annual promotefest, debauch and music broadcast industry sharkpit known as the Country Radio Seminar.

Just getting away from the office, the tension seems to ease from his brow, and his conversation veers into lighter areas—like his avid interest in amateur photography and the convenience of the cellular phone which enables him to do business from the cab of his four-wheel drive.

"I was ridin' into town this morning, listening to George Jones being interviewed on Keith Billbury's radio show on WSM," Ricky recalls with much enthusiasm as he steers his Bronco across the maze of congested avenues and narrow side streets of the Music Row area. "George and Keith got to talking about how Ricky Skaggs had said that the one thing in his career that he really wanted to do was a duet with George Jones. Well, George just laughed and said, 'Now, if you remember, I made that request first'—which he really did," Skaggs beams. "Man, when Rick Blackburn," head of CBS/Nashville, "told me that George had asked him about that, it just laid me out.

"So anyway, when I heard that, I just had to call in on the WSM hotline number. They put me on the air, and I just told George how much I loved him,



and I just told him I wanted him to know how much he meant to me. I just said, 'George, you're the *teacher*; you're the one who really taught us all to sing. I can't sing like you; I wish I could. But just hearin' you inspires me!'"

The steakhouse where we end up is one of those dimly-lit, pretentious





places stuffed with overdressed people and waitresses who introduce themselves to you by their first name. Some sort of not too pleasant post-disco rock music blares loudly through the speakers. The joint redeems itself, though, by having good salads. Glancing at his watch, Ricky orders one with his usual thoroughness. "Hold the croutons, hold the cheese," etc., etc.

It is merely a coincidence that this turns out to be the very day set for sentencing the truck driver who was convicted of shooting and wounding Skaggs' seven-year-old son from his first marriage in a bizarre highway incident last year in Virginia. The man received 40 years in prison. The conversation is gingerly steered in that direction; and Ricky, picking at his salad with his fork, relives the high emotions of that tragedy with reluctance.

"Yeh, it was rough, and it's not over," he says softly, carefully choosing his words. "It will never really be over. But my son is out of the hospital, and he's back in school doing good. And, boy, he's a miracle to see.

"I mean, if you shot a hole through that wooden door over there with a .38 hollow point, you'd see what kind of a hole it makes. And there'd be an even bigger one blown out of the other side, where the bullet comes out. How that bullet passed through his skin, through the jawbone, and right past his jugular vein without touching it... how it lodged in the back of his neck without coming out... I know how it happened. I know

who guided it and saved his life. The Miracle Man was right there.

"There's no anger there anymore; it's all gone," Skaggs responds quietly to the obvious question. "Someone asked me earlier today if I thought forty years was enough. They didn't think it was. I said I did. I'm satisfied, just knowing justice was done. And I also know that there is nothing I can do to call back what happened. Obviously, I would rather have taken that shot for my son. I would gladly have had it be me, rather than him that got the bullet. But it wasn't meant for me.

"Oh, there was anger at first," he admits after a pause. "The Lord had promised me that he'd always take care of my kids, and keep an angel around them. There for a minute, in my anger and excitement and humiliation, I thought He'd broken his promise to me. I was just emotionally blown apart.

"It was a terrible thing that happened." Then Ricky smiles. "But to see the goodness and good things that came out of it has been like a miracle. It is really wonderful to see how God took a bad situation and made it beautiful."

**T**here is another recent occurrence in Skaggs' life, one which is insignificant only in comparison with the ordeal of his son. After several years of producing The Whites, the trio which includes his wife Sharon, her sister Cheryl, and his father-in-law, piano-player extraordinaire Buck White, he has relinquished

that duty. "More or less I got booted out of the saddle," he says sheepishly.

"MCA, The Whites' label, just felt like I wasn't producing hit records on them, and it was time for a change," he explains. "It broke my heart, and there were definitely some tears all around. It was a big shock to me, and kind of a shock to them too."

The Whites' production will now be handled by Larry Butler, a Music Row veteran, best known for his early country hits with Kenny Rogers in the 1970's; he has been considerably less visible during the 1980's.

"I have my own opinions about The Whites, and the changes in their sound and the record company that they are with," Skaggs acknowledges with a touch of evasiveness. "But I would never share those opinions in a media publication. But Larry Butler does have his own sound, which the record company felt would work to get The Whites some radio hits. So we're all sitting back with our fingers crossed."

All of which eventually leads around to the question of Sharon White, Ricky's wife, to whom he's been happily—maybe even blissfully—married since 1981. Despite the fact that they both have separate and demanding careers that sometimes keep them apart for considerable lengths of time, their relationship seems to be the sort of solid nurturing kind so many out in the world strive for, yet so few achieve.

So what's the secret?

"Well, gosh," Skaggs shrugs as he picks up the check and heads out the door to his truck, and off into the jaws of the Country Radio Seminar, where he will shake hands, pose for pictures, tape interviews, make small talk, and otherwise sweet-talk the deejays and radio program directors into giving the singles off his new album the sort of airplay that they so badly need to keep the album selling. "This is a perfect opportunity for me to get up on my spiritual soapbox. But I don't want people to think that's all Ricky Skaggs talks about.

"Sharon and I just have such a commitment that way to each other, though. And that doesn't mean that we don't get mad and argue a little bit and cuss some. That's just life. That just happens. But we get along as good as anybody I know, and better than a lot.

"Even if I had to give up all this tomorrow, to keep us together, that's what I'd do," he adds without hesitation. "It would hurt me, but we both know that music is not the most important thing. My spiritual relationship is the most important thing in my life, and Sharon is the next most important thing.

"And that's just the way it is." ■

# DONNA FARGO

## The Traveller Talks About the Storm

**D**oodling on a notepad as she talks, Donna Fargo is remembering her schoolteaching days and explaining what they meant to her. Miz Fargo, as every country fan must know, taught English in the California public schools system before she became The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A. and then, of course, The Singing Schoolmarm. Today, things in the country music image business having changed as much as most other facts of American life since those bright-eyed times, she is advertised simply as her self. Donna Fargo on teaching school, then:

"I was a real sensitive little kid. I needed more confidence in growing up," she says. "So I think I went into teaching because I wanted to help kids who felt the same way I did: afraid, real bashful, scared to ask a question, feeling like you don't fit anywhere. It seemed to me that teachers could really help that. In fact they really can't, but in my mind I thought they could, so I decided that's what I wanted to be."

Which tells you a thing or two about the woman who by all accounts was a very special schoolteacher (she became head of her English Department in her mid-twenties, for instance), and who by any standards has had an interesting career as a writer and singer of country songs. Basically, it tells you that she cares about people, and that she is strong. Sensitive little girls who make it through a life like Donna Fargo's just have to be.

**S**ome public perceptions of Donna Fargo may be a little off the beam. Inevitably so, really, since "Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A." was her first and biggest hit, and remains the dominant sub-theme of her image even today. For instance, while the first album of her recording "comeback" on the Mercury label was titled *Winners* after a strong and impressive song of recent vintage, the album also featured a new version of "Happiest Girl" (and several of her other hits), and cover art which was almost painfully happy, peppy, and full of fun-fun-fun! There was Donna in closeup, all



ALAN L. MAYOR

pink and perky in a sort of candy-striped sport-aerobics outfit, looking for all the world like an only ever so slightly overage high school cheerleader with nothing on her mind but muscle tone and multivitamins and milkshakes. My, she looked cute—and dippy.

The reality is a little different. Donna Fargo is a professional writer/entertainer in her early middle age, a veteran of every kind of curve and spitball the music industry is capable of delivering, a person who has spent the last eight years afflicted with a serious and incurable disease, and a woman of considerable depth, feeling, and maturity. When she smiles—suddenly, radiantly—she loses twenty years in a flash and you see a *very* happy girl in there, an individual far more genuinely lively than that fantasy person on the album cover, but otherwise the word her face suggests more than anything is "thoughtful." Reflective, perceptive, inquisitive, self-aware.

This woman says that primarily she thinks of herself as a writer (her "love of the language" is what prompted her to teach English rather than anything else, and she is assembling "some sort of book" on a continuing basis) rather than an entertainer.

"I've always geared my show towards an entertainment kind of feel, rather than doing a songwriter's kind of show," she says, "but I get confused about it. I don't know sometimes who I am with that, and as I try to change I get more confused. For a couple of years I'll feel I should do *this*, so I'll do it—but then I won't get the right kind of reading from the audience, so I'll ditch it and start doing *that*. And then I *still* won't know. I dunno; sometimes your judgment gets all screwed up."

That sounds like the shy kid talking, but Donna is not at all confused about what she wants to do as a writer; she knows she has to walk that fine line between the personal and the universal.

"You *have* to write from the heart, or you end up losing it," she says, "but you also have to be able to make it mean what you want it to mean when people hear it. If you do that, then you've done your job. You've moved someone; made

*With a Nashville record label behind her, Donna's career future looks rosy. Her severe illness is in remission, her mind is clear, her songwriting talents are sharp. All in all, she's weathered the storm.*

*by Patrick Carr*



them happy, made them sad, made them think about something in their lives.

"That's the reward in it. That's the special thing about writing. You can say what you're feeling, but you can make it more than that; you can express something that *they're* feeling, you can say something for *them*."

Her best moments come when people let her know she's done that, either in person or on record. "Then it's a type of love," she says. "That's the satisfaction of it, and that's where it comes from: our need to love each other. I just try to love my audiences, and hope they love me back." Her ultrahappy smile blooms suddenly and completely as she adds "and sometimes they do."

Basically, Donna thinks of her whole career in these terms: not quite a crusade, but definitely a long-term effort to achieve communication about things she feels are too important to ignore. "I have to write about things that matter," she says. "My songs have to have guts; they can't just be air." So she writes about all sorts of things, but always about feelings: on the broader canvas, the Watergate years' shadows of corruption and dishonesty addressed and countered with compassion in 1976's "U.S. of A.," and the fear and anger and confusion of families facing unemployment during the nation's pre-Reagan slump opened up and sung about in "Sign of the Times"; on the smaller scale, the pain of growing up focused around the death of a parent in "Little Girl Gone" and the regrets which follow such a loss expressed so well in "You Were Always There."

Those latter feelings, the small-scale-personal ones, came very much from her own life. Donna's mother died suddenly of a heart attack while her youngest daughter was in her mid-twenties, still teaching school, and Donna realized too late that her mother was somebody she had never really known. "I never asked her if she'd been happy, how she felt about her life, or even if she really wanted me," says Donna now, "and I never told her how I felt, either. She was just *there*, and I assumed she always would be.

"That made me feel very bad, very



The early years in country music were good to Donna. In 1972 she was named Female Vocalist of the year by both the CMA and the ACM. She also won single, album and song of the year awards from both organizations. The following year, 1973, the CMA again gave her the female vocalist honor.





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## Rated ★★★★★ In *Country Music*, Sept./Oct. '85

Hawkshaw began with King covering whatever Ernest Tubbs was doing. But "Sunny Side of the Mountain" and "Slow Poke" in 1948 and 1951 were enough to establish him as a force in his own right. Like Copas, Hawkins fell by the wayside, with no hit records, though he was a member of the Grand Ole Opry and had contracts with RCA, Starday and Columbia. Then in March 1963, just days before he died, his King recording of "Lonesome 7-7203" hit Number One. Hawkins, like Copas, made other fine records, "Rattlesnakin' Daddy" and "Dog House Boogie" among them, that hinted at rockabilly. *16 Greatest Hits of Hawkshaw Hawkins* (Gusto SD-3013) covers all these and more.

Copas first made his mark as a vocalist with Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys... "Filipino Baby," his first hit, came in 1944. Throughout the 1940's he had still more hits—with "Tennessee Waltz," "Tragic Romance" and others. In the early 1960's, Copas was successful with Starday, with the hits "Alabam," and "Signed, Sealed and Delivered" in 1961. Some of his best-known songs are available on *16 Greatest Hits of Cowboy Copas* (Gusto SD-3012). Most of the material is from his Starday period, though "Filipino Baby" and "Tragic Romance" are also included. Copas never got the credit he should have, considering his rich, supple voice and laconic, offhand delivery.

Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper worked together nearly 40 years... *Early Recordings* (County CCS 103) compiles 12 Columbia songs, leased from CBS, that helped establish their reputation. A second Wilma Lee/Stoney album from the 1970's is *Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper Sing The Carter Family's Greatest Hits* (Starday SD 980), an outstanding salute to the Carter's cut in the early 1970's. Wilma Lee and Stoney tackle such Carter classics as "Keep on the Firing Line," produce a delicate version of "You Are My Flower" and are back on Wilma Lee's stops-out treatment of "Lulla Walls." The Carter style and the Coopers' sound blend easily here.

RICH KIENZLE, SEPT./OCT. 85  
PAGE 67, *Country Music Magazine*



**THE BLUEGRASS HALL OF FAME** Stringbean: String's Mountain Dew/Grandpa Jones: Old Rattler/Stanley Bros.: Rank Stranger/Flatt & Scruggs: Foggy Mountain Breakdown/Carl Story: Tramp On The Street/Lonesome Pine Fiddlers: Windy Mountain/Hylo Brown: Hills Of Georgia Country Gentlemen: Sunrise (Instrumental)/Reno & Smiley: Home Sweet Home J.E. Mainers Mountainers: Run Mountain Jimmie Skinner: Fallen Leaves Rex Allen & Kentuckians: Beautiful Blue Eyes Jim & Jesse & The Virginia Boys/Let Me Whisper, and more!



# CMSA NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRY MUSIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA MAY/JUNE 1987—HELEN BARNARD, EDITOR

# Newsletter

## REVIEWS & FEATURES

### Grab Bag of Good Reactions

Newsletter readers are good writers, too. They let us know how they feel about our features. Fortunately, it's usually good.

This issue includes a number of responses to various things

we've done over the last few issues. Plus it starts out several new features—things we'd like to pursue. The new things are mostly ideas that come from you.

So keep those cards and letters coming. The *Newsletter* is you.

### CMSA Q & A— Questions for Rich Kienzle

*There's nobody like Rich Kienzle. He'll tell you all about an old record or a long-lost artist before you can say "Jack Robinson." Now he's available to CMSA members to answer frequently-asked questions. This will be a continuing feature.*

*Questions that appear here are based on Rich's reading of your requests sent in to Information, Please. Information, Please continues to be so popular that it's running some six to nine months behind the actual receipt of mail. We can't devote a whole issue to it, wonderful as that would be, and even that might not get it fully caught up. Any suggestions?*

**Q:** I remember a record called "Alabam" which was popular by Cowboy Copas on the King label about 25 years ago. Do you know where I can find a copy?

**Mable T. Hillery**  
Hamilton, Ohio

**A:** "Alabam" was Cowboy Copas' last Number One hit in the summer of 1960, released on the Starday label. It's available on *16 Greatest Hits of Cowboy Copas* (Gusto SD-3012).

**Q:** Back in the late 1930's, I listened to Hank and the Radio Cowboys on WSB in Atlanta. They sounded different, and I've always wondered what happened to Hank?

**Mrs. Ritchie Barracks**  
Waycross, Georgia

**A:** Hank Penny and His Radio Cowboys were among the earliest western swing groups to work east of the Mississippi. Boudleaux Bryant, the legendary songwriter ("Rocky Top," "Bye, Bye, Love") started his country music career fiddling in this group. Penny later led several fine western swing groups in Los Angeles and became an innovative



Goldmine of information, Rich Kienzle.

country comedian. Among those who worked with him were Jaye P. Morgan, Roy Clark, Billy Strange, Billy Mize, Sue Thompson—he was married to her at one point—and Tom Bresh. Now 68, Hank and his present wife Shari live in the San Fernando Valley and supervise the rising career of their actress daughter Sydney, a star of the *New Gidget* syndicated TV series.

**Q:** Who was the black country singer called The Midnight Cowboy? He had an album out about 20 years ago.

**Simon Hacker**  
Ypsilanti, Michigan

**A:** Veteran rhythm-and-blues singer Otis Williams decided to try country music in the early 1970's and formed a backup band called The Midnight Cowboys. They recorded a well-received album for Pete Drake's Stop Records in

1971, but never really followed it up. The album is long out of print.

**Q:** A long time ago the Big 'D' Jamboree in Dallas had a singer who wore a mask onstage. I could swear I heard the same voice later. Do you know who it is?

**"Barky" Kolby**  
Fort Worth, Texas

**A:** My Big 'D' Jamboree spies tell me there's good reason for this. The singer was Billy Walker, later of "Charlie's Shoes" and "Cross the Brazos at Waco" fame.

### So Who's Rich Kienzle?

*CMSA's top information source, Rich Kienzle, got his start in college.*

Rich Kienzle bought his first country album, *The Best of Buck Owens, Vol. 2*, in 1969 and proudly filed it next to his Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix albums. While attending the University of Pittsburgh in the early 1970s, in an age of denim, drugs and Led Zeppelin, Rich rebelled by dressing like Ernest Tubb, drinking Jack Daniels and searching out albums by Bob Wills, Jerry Lee Lewis and Merle Haggard. He sold us his first record review in 1973, the year he graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in English. He spent a year in graduate school before realizing he could learn more from Hank, Hag, E.T. and Lefty than he could by getting coffee for airhead speech professors.

Still, one professor, country music authority Dr. Bill C. Malone, in the revised edition of his definitive history, *Country Music, U.S.A.*, praises Rieh's "genuine appreciation for and understanding of older forms of country music." In addition to scores of articles, *Buried Treasures* columns and outspoken reviews for this magazine and

#### In This Issue

- CMSA Q & A
- Wanted: Historic Photos
- Red Foley Remembered
- Collections

others, he's researched and written liner notes for reissue projects for Time-Life, the Franklin Mint, Bear Family and other labels. He's author of "Great Guitarists" in *Facts on File* and co-author of *The Country Music Book* put out by Scribners. His second book, *Rockabilly*, will be published in 1988 by the University of Illinois Press. He still has that first Buck Owens album.

## All About Interns

*New York is full of young people who'd like to get a start in publishing. Country Music Magazine has taken some of them on as interns. They work for school credit or just for the experience.*

*We thought you'd like to meet them.*



MORLEY      DI CENSO      BOSSOTTI

### Jeanine Morley

Originally from Yorktown Heights, New York, I am now a senior finance major at Fordham University in the Bronx, New York. I am a member of the diving team there, and I've been working one day a week here at *Country Music Magazine*. I enjoy the experience I'm getting here, and I hope that after graduation I'll find a position in magazine publishing that I like as much as this one.

### Emily Di Censo

My name is Emily Di Censo. I attend Queens College in Queens, New York. I'm studying Communications—Media Studies, to be specific. I will be graduating soon. Also, I work part-time as a bank teller. Most of all, I enjoy working at *Country Music Magazine*, and the people here are great!

### Diane Bossotti

I am a junior at Queens College of the City University of New York, and my major is English. One of my goals after I finish school is to write stories for others to enjoy, in the same way that songwriters create enjoyable lyrics. I came to *Country Music Magazine* with the hope of gaining experience associated with magazine production. I haven't been disappointed, for I am learning the ropes and coming in contact with a lot of friendly, talented people.

## Here's Another Honky Tonk

*Jackie Jones has sent in yet another response to Keith Sanderson's letter about honky tonks in the July/August 1986 Newsletter. Jackie likes the Corral Club in her hometown of Seaside, California.*

If you decide to visit the Monterey Peninsula, why not stop by the Corral Club? It's located here in Seaside at 1153 Fremont Blvd. It is open Tuesday through Sunday (Sunday is the chest/splash dance contest), and there is no cover charge. The house band currently is Joe Chunn and The Country Gentlemen.

In its 50-plus years, the bar has had several A-1 country stars perform there. My mother and her parents saw the following people at the Corral Club in the 1940's: Ernest Tubb, Patsy Cline (six months before her tragic death), Buck Owens, Jim Reeves, Little Jimmie Dickens, Eddy Arnold and Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys.

I've seen Alabama in 1981 and Eddy Raven in 1985. Alabama was playing at the Monterey County Fair at the time and came over to "jam" for a half hour after that!

I've enclosed a photo of the "lead man" in the group, Joe Chunn, so ladies every-



Joe Chunn keeps hearts throbbing at the Corral Club near Monterey.

where will see what attracts ladies out here to the Corral Club. Jackie Jones  
Seaside, California

## A Flash From the Past

Cash meets Elvis at the *Louisiana Hayride Show* at the Hirsch Coliseum, March 10, 1956. Thanks to Ronnie Pugh of the Country Music Foundation for identifying the occasion.

The House of Cash's best guess on this one was that it was taken backstage at the Opry in July 1956, the month Cash first appeared there. Any other suggestions?

Antiques dealer and CMSA reporter Dennis Devine spotted the original of



Johnny Cash and Elvis in 1956.

this photo at an Omaha antiques show he was heading up in September. He paid \$5 for it. "I just about burned my hand getting out my billfold," he told us. Rumor has it that he threatened the photo shop that made the photo print from the original. "Be extra careful," were his words, reportedly. "If you mess it up, I'm gonna shoot you." Collecting brings out the best in everyone.

## Growing up with John Cash

*Everyone meets someone special in their lifetime. Here is Dennis Devine's story about how he first got hooked on John Cash and his music.*

I first became aware of John Cash in 1955 when I was in the eighth grade. My mother Della and I heard him on the radio and were so impressed that I went into the town of Hastings, Nebraska, (we were living in Giltner, Nebraska, at the time) to buy his record of "Cry, Cry, Cry." Next came "Folsom Prison Blues" and the one I will always like best, "I Walk the Line." My mother's favorite, "Ballad of a Teenage Queen," came out in 1958. "Don't Take Your Guns to Town" came out in 1959, the year I graduated from Giltner High School, followed by "Ring of Fire" in 1963 when I was in Korea. I heard it on a juke box far from home while in the United States Army.

What I am conveying is that I grew up



## WANTED! HISTORIC PHOTOS

Dennis is the lucky owner of an historic photo of John Cash and Elvis, taken in 1956. We're proud to print it here. Back in November/December 1985, the *Newsletter* printed an historic photo of Hank Williams Sr., sent in by member Donna Church of Duluth.

Anyone with an historic photo of a country music star, send us a print. We'd like to let the world peek into the past with you. Include where and when the photo was taken and any interesting details of how you got it. All prints will be returned.

listening to John Cash and his music and have been fortunate enough to personally see and visit with my favorite American country music star and hero. He is all that rolled into one and even more!

He has "Walked the Line" and has been through "The Ring of Fire" and has emerged a stronger person, a true Christian and a figure anyone could be happy to emulate. I am not embarrassed to say "I Love Him," his family and his music.

Dennis P. Devine Sr.  
Council Bluffs, Iowa

### MARCH POLL

#### Album and Single of the Month

Randy Travis	<i>Storms of Life</i>
Randy Travis	"No Place Like Home"

Randy Travis has the top album and the top single in the CMSA March Poll. Congratulations, Randy! *Storms of Life* was the top album in the January Poll, too, and Number Two in November. Another artist who rates high with the CMSA is Reba McEntire. Her *What Am I Gonna Do About You* is album Number Two for the second poll in a row. Her *Whoever's in New England*, the November winner, is back in March as Number Three. Perennial favorites George Jones and George Strait have albums Number Four and Five, *Wine Colored Roses* and #7.

Randy Travis' first place single, "No Place Like Home," is followed by The Statlers' "Forever," Number Two, and John Schneider's "Take the Long Way Home," Number Three. Conway Twitty's "Fallin' For You For Years" is a very close Number Four.

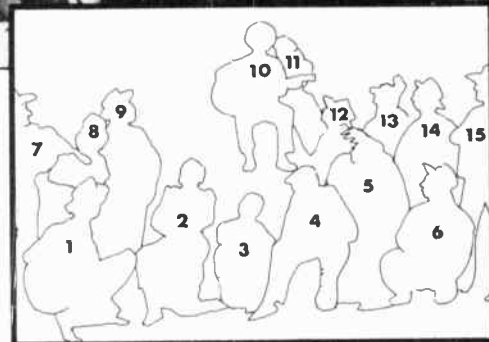
Look for the May Poll on the For CMSA Members Only page elsewhere in this issue.



#### Way Back When

Remember this picture of Eddy Arnold and the *Feudin' Rhythm* gang in the Legends section of the January/February *Newsletter*? Well, after giving it much thought, Eddy can only identify nine people in this photo:

- 1) Guy Willis of The Willis Boys
- 2) Isabel Wiggins
- 6) Roy Wiggins
- 9) Kirby Grant
- 10) Eddy Arnold
- 11) Carolina Cotton
- 12 & 13) Mustard and Gravy (any avid fans out there know their real names?)



15) Vic Willis, the other half of The Willis Boys

If any of you members are experts on *Feudin' Rhythm*, or if you remember who these people are, please let us know.



Marvin Rainwater with "his" issue.

#### Marvin Rainwater Reads Top Country Publication

*Response to our request for information about Marvin Rainwater in Letters in May/June 1986 was overwhelming. As Dennis Devine reports, Marvin was happy we found him.*

Huge jump in sales following *Country Music* coverage—Marvin Rainwater sold over 100 albums and had to print more to fill those orders after he was featured in the September/October *Newsletter* and in *Letters*. He told Dennis that there are three Marvin Rainwaters that he knows of and that one of them is in prison in Oklahoma. That's how this whole thing started. Marvin appeared on *Nashville Now* on February 19 with George Jones, Charley Pride and others. He got to sing one song.

# Red Foley

*Red Foley made it to the Hall of Fame, and he left a trail of songs behind him that in his day reached one of country's widest audiences.*

*by Rich Kienzle*

**T**hey elected Clyde Julian Foley to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1967, a year before he died. It was a poignant event, for by then he'd become irrelevant to the industry he'd helped build. His hits were past, his visibility low. Yet the words on the plaque brought back memories. "One of the most versatile and moving performers of all time," it said. "A giant influence during the formative years of contemporary country music and today a timeless legend."

That's the ticket. Before Eddy Arnold broke country singers into pop, Red Foley made the first successful stabs in that direction. In his time he stood with Hank Williams, Roy Acuff and Ernest Tubb as a cornerstone of the industry, and his hits were right up there with those three. He left a trail of 31 Top Ten singles, three of which crossed over to pop success.

Statistics don't tell it all. Foley brought country gospel to a wider audience than it ever had before. He was also an enormous influence on Elvis, who recorded or performed Foley's "Old Shep," "Tennessee Saturday Night," "Blue Guitar" and "Peace in the Valley" at different times in his career, plus Foley's boogie numbers pointed the way toward rock 'n' roll. Today he's a nearly forgotten name, and that's disgraceful in light of such achievements.

Blue Lick, Kentucky, northeast of Lexington, was his birthplace in 1910. He started playing guitar as a kid, and though he was a star athlete, he moved toward a singing career when, at age 17, he won a singing contest sponsored by the Atwater-Kent radio company. His college days ended when a talent scout from 50,000 watt WLS Radio in Chicago snapped him up for the station's popular *National Barn Dance* in 1932.

*The Barn Dance* was a potent showcase, and Foley stayed there until 1937, when he and fellow Kentuckian John Lair went back home to found the *Renfro Valley Barn Dance*. Foley wasn't there long. His mellow baritone and the WLS exposure made him "marketable," and he wound up back in Chicago co-starring with Red Skelton on NBC's *Avalon Time*—the first country

singer to star on a network radio series.

After signing with Decca in the early 1940's, he racked up some impressive hits, including one with his own composition, "Old Shep." He also did well with Western Swing numbers like Bob Wills' "Hang Your Head in Shame," and with the World War II flag-waver, "Smoke on the Water," an enormous hit for Red in 1944. In 1945 Decca producer Paul Cohen took him into the WSM studios in Nashville to record. Eddy Arnold had done the same the year before, but Foley's trip to the studio was the beginning of regular Decca sessions, one more step in Nashville's rise as a recording center.

Red's marketability hinged on his good looks and the fact that he neither talked nor sang as "country" as Ernest Tubb or Roy Acuff. When Acuff quit hosting the Opry's Prince Albert Tobacco segment, the company's ad agency picked Red to replace him. That didn't go down well with some on the Opry, who griped about Foley's slickness.

Nobody knew what would happen when Foley debuted in April of 1946, but Chet Atkins, who'd joined Red as his lead guitarist just before they came to Nashville, remembered both the tension and the tumultuous ovation the Opry audience gave them when they stepped onstage. "The tension was broken," Chet wrote in his autobiography. "After Red sang 'Old Shep,' it was clear to everyone just how popular he was." "Red was just natural," said Eddy Arnold. "He was a natural guy, he could sing real good, and had a good sound. I really enjoyed Red, but he had his hits after he got down here."

Not all Red's contributions were hit records. Charles Wolfe has written of Foley's touring band, the Cumberland Valley Boys, who played so well they were recruited to back other artists on recording sessions, including Hank Williams on "Lovesick Blues." They became Nashville's first real studio band.

Foley's success continued through the remainder of the 1940's. In 1948 came his version of Harry Choates' Cajun classic, "Jole Blon," and "Tennessee Saturday Night," a boogie-woogie number that

pointed the way to rockabilly. In February 1949, George Morgan's "Candy Kisses" was at Number One; Red's version was at Number Six a month later. From 1949 to 1953 four duets with Ernest Tubb all made the Top Ten.

"Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy," another boogie, not only went Number One country in 1950, it did likewise on the pop charts and wound up a million-seller. His next hit was two-sided—both sides of one single, both hymns: "Steal Away" and "Just a Closer Walk With Thee." Later that year the irrepressible Foley took his version of Hard-rock Gunter's rocking "Birmingham Bounce" to Number One, then did likewise with the pop-oriented "M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I." Through 1950, he and Lefty Frizzell

PHOTOS COURTESY COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION







Red Foley as he looked in the 1940's, left. Right, Red got his start on WLS in the early 1930's with John Lair and The Cumberland Ridge Runners. Back row, l. to r., Slim Miller, Karl Davis, Red Foley and Harky Taylor; front, John Lair and Linda Parker. In 1937, Foley left WLS with Lair to found The Renfro Valley Barn Dance, back in Renfro Valley, Kentucky, but soon found himself back in Chicago.

Lee and Marvin Rainwater among them. Wanda Jackson and Bobby Lord were there from 1957 to 1960.

Rock 'n' roll was not kind to Red. His 1955 release "Plantation Boogie" was his best effort in that direction. Later tries, singles like the 1958 "Crazy Little Guitar Man," were inferior to the earlier boogies. Still, the *Jubilee* kept his profile high through that period, making him a bigger man than ever. At last, a final hit, "Travelin' Man," in 1959.

ABC abruptly pulled the plug on the *Jubilee* in the fall of 1960. They said they wanted the time slot for the Saturday Night fights, but the real reason was that Red, never known for handling his money well, had been indicted for income tax evasion. The first trial ended in a hung jury. A second trial in 1961 acquitted him.

The combination of emotional suffering and alcoholism reduced Foley to going through the motions. Under a lifetime contract with Decca, he continued recording, but nothing much came of his efforts. Ernie Newton, the Cumberland Valley Boys' bassplayer, told writer John Pugh in 1976, "After a while Red quit laughing, quit joking, quit visiting with his old friends and mostly stayed to himself. His last few years I rarely saw him."

He still managed to tour, though, even after the Hall of Fame honor, and it was after a show in Fort Wayne, Indiana, that he died in his motel room on October 19, 1968. A few days later he was buried in Nashville. Hank Williams Jr. returned the favor that Red had done his father by singing "Peace in the Valley."

It's amazing that there's been no revival of interest in Red Foley. Nobody cuts his songs, and even "Old Shep" is seldom heard anymore. The only real tribute has been a barely-noticed Kenny Price album, *A Red Foley Songbook*, released in 1971. Perhaps it was all bad timing. In the early 1950's, recording country and gospel was fine, but mixing in pop songs—and Red cut several flatout pop albums—wasn't well regarded. Today Willie Nelson does it all the time and everyone loves it. Perhaps Red did it too soon. It's hell being a pioneer. ■

dominated the country charts. Clearly he'd reached his zenith.

Foley's offstage life was another story. His first wife had died years before in childbirth. His second wife committed suicide in 1951 after she discovered Red was seeing a female singer. He slipped deep into alcoholism, and had his last Number One hit late in 1952—the dark and brooding "Midnight," a masterpiece of that era that's seldom heard these days.

He'd made an agreement with his friend Hank Williams that when either man died,

the survivor would sing "Peace in the Valley" at the other's funeral. The song, movingly sung by Red, had been a Number Seven country hit in 1951. Red honored that pact when Hank died in 1953. From then on, Foley's hits began to taper off, some of the later ones being rhythm-and-blues covers like Faye Adams' "Shake a Hand." sung with the Anita Kerr Singers.

TV brought Red out of his funk. In January 1955, he took over the Springfield, Missouri-based *Ozark Jubilee* for ABC. By bringing top Nashville musicians like Bud Isaacs and Grady Martin to Missouri, Foley caught on so quickly with viewers that the show became a Saturday-night fixture for the next five years. Some big names got their start there. Porter Wagoner, Brenda

#### Albums Available

See *Red & Ernie* and *The Red Foley Show* on page 53. Members deduct 20%.

# Readers Create

## Two-Step to the Stars

Wanda Pirani has put her knowledge of country music to work with this two-step puzzle. Names of the first three members to send in correctly completed puzzles will be published in an upcoming issue. Mark your envelope, Attention: Newsletter Puzzle.

Wanda first appeared in the Newsletter in May/June 1986 as a Fandango winner. Thanks, Wanda, for this brain-teaser.

## Step One—Fill in the Blanks

Do you know all these famous nicknames? Fill in the name of the country music star, past or present, who goes by each of these special handles. Be sure to write clearly. You'll need these names for Part Two.

- King of Country Music \_\_\_\_\_
- Mister Cowboy \_\_\_\_\_
- Whisperin' Bill \_\_\_\_\_
- Tennessee Plowboy \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. Guitar \_\_\_\_\_
- Mayor of Bull's Gap \_\_\_\_\_
- Man in Black \_\_\_\_\_
- Crash \_\_\_\_\_
- Mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy \_\_\_\_\_
- Pea Picker \_\_\_\_\_
- Happiest Girl in the USA \_\_\_\_\_
- Jolly Giant \_\_\_\_\_
- The Voice \_\_\_\_\_
- The Hag \_\_\_\_\_
- The Storyteller \_\_\_\_\_
- The Solemn Ole Judge \_\_\_\_\_
- The Singing Fisherman \_\_\_\_\_
- The Southern Gentleman \_\_\_\_\_
- Possum \_\_\_\_\_
- International Ambassador  
of Country Music \_\_\_\_\_
- Kentucky Mountain Boy \_\_\_\_\_
- Little Miss Dynamite \_\_\_\_\_
- Coal Miner's Daughter \_\_\_\_\_
- Dixie Dewdrop \_\_\_\_\_
- Father of Bluegrass \_\_\_\_\_
- Yodeling Cowgirl \_\_\_\_\_
- Snowbird \_\_\_\_\_
- Round Mound of Sound \_\_\_\_\_
- Cherokee Cowboy \_\_\_\_\_
- Gentleman Jim \_\_\_\_\_
- Silver Fox \_\_\_\_\_

- King of the Cowboys \_\_\_\_\_
- Singing Ranger \_\_\_\_\_
- Gentle Giant \_\_\_\_\_
- Drifting Cowboy \_\_\_\_\_
- Bocephus \_\_\_\_\_
- Queen of the Ivories \_\_\_\_\_
- Singing Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_
- First Lady of Country Music \_\_\_\_\_
- High Priest of Country Music \_\_\_\_\_

## Step Two—Circle the Names

Now look for the names you've written in the blanks in the puzzle square and circle them.

Names run up, down, horizontally (both backwards and forwards) and diagonally. There are 40 in all. Good luck to everyone.

**Wanda J. Watson Pirani**  
Indianapolis, Indiana

B	I	L	L	A	N	D	E	R	S	O	N	N	O	T	R	O	H	Y	N	N	H	O	J	D	A	B	C
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C	U	R	A	H	T	K	G	E	O	R	G	E	H	A	M	I	L	T	O	N	I	V	L	R	J	A	W

## A Post's Thank You

*Karen Thorsteinson has more ideas about who's going to fill whose shoes.*

I would like to thank you for printing my poem, "Answer to 'Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes,'" in the September/October Newsletter. I would especially like to thank you for letting me know about it before it came out. I sent it to another magazine the same time I sent it to you, and I still haven't heard

from them. I don't know if they even received it. I really appreciated hearing from you.

I think I could write it all over again with the artists I left out and the fantastic new artists since I wrote it. Artists like Randy Travis, Dwight Yoakam, T. Graham Brown, Judy Rodman and Girls Next Door.

**Karen Thorsteinson**  
Grafton, North Dakota



**In Memory of Marty Robbins**

Here's a nice way of looking back at one of country music's greatest stars from Betty Suter of Saugatuck, Michigan. Thanks, Betty, for this imaginative approach.

Space did not permit running this poem with Terri Barr's sketch of Marty in the March/April Newsletter. You readers can put the two together in your minds.

**Marty's Buddy**

I'm an ole clock hanging on the wall.  
If I could talk, oh, the tales I could tell  
About the folks at the Grand Ole Opry  
That perform down in Ole Nashville.

My first home was Ryman Auditorium,  
And I promised myself from the start  
That I'd never let any of the Opry stars  
Find a place of love in my heart.

Many Opry stars would come and go,  
Funny how I've remembered their names,  
As they passed through the doors of the Opry  
On to fortune and fame.

One was a tall, lanky fellow.  
Marty Robbins was his name.  
When he sang, you could hear a pin drop.  
Ryman Auditorium was never the same.

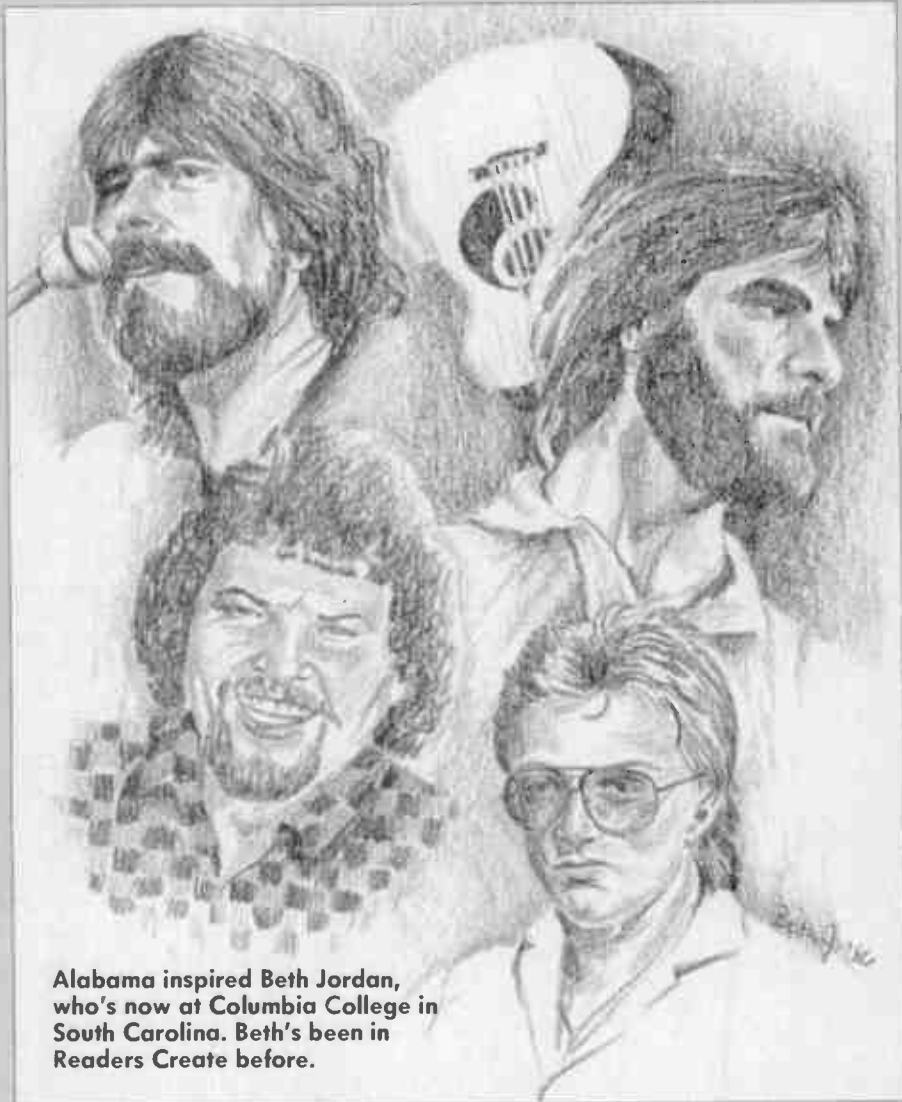
New stars came to the Opry.  
Crowds came, people had to stand.  
We had to find a new home.  
So we moved to Opryland.

I remembered the tall, lanky fellow  
So when Roy Acuff called.  
"Folks, here's Marty Robbins."  
I almost ticked myself off the wall.

Sometimes Ronnie came with Marty,  
And he'd help his dad sing.  
The crowd became his people.  
How the Opry House would ring.



**Marty Robbins in the deserted Ryman.**



**Alabama inspired Beth Jordan, who's now at Columbia College in South Carolina. Beth's been in Readers Create before.**

All too soon his time was over  
And you would hear Marty say,  
"Well, I see by the old clock on the wall,  
I'd better be on my way.

"It seems I've taken up Ernie's time.  
He won't mind, though. He's one nice guy.  
So I'll sing one more song for you  
Before I say good-bye."

I'd catch myself waiting for Marty,  
Anxious for him to close the show,  
Waiting for the wink he'd give me  
When he finished singing "El Paso."

So many years he entertained us,  
Made us laugh, gave us beautiful songs.  
Then one day he had to leave us.  
God called Marty home.

People still come to the Opry.  
They travel from near and far.  
They all remember Marty,  
Nashville's Grand Ole Opry star.

New songs now close the Opry,  
But I hear loud and clear  
The haunting strains of "El Paso"  
Just as if Marty were here.

It's Ronnie singing dad's song,  
What a beautiful surprise.  
Old buddy, I sure miss you.  
Tears fill my tired old eyes.

So from the ole clock hanging on the wall  
To Marty, wherever you are—  
Your people and I sure love you,  
You're still our favorite old Opry star.

—Betty Suter

**Lost Address**

Stanley Guy of Everman, Texas,  
come in, please. We'd like to  
return your original drawing of  
George Jones featured in the  
March/April Newsletter.

## COLLECTIONS

### Collecting the Magazine

*Buying or selling collections? Read on about members who may be able to help.*

• I have every issue of *Country Music Magazine*, except the first six issues that were borrowed and not returned. I would like to sell them all as a set, rather than break it up. Best offer plus postage takes them all. All special issues included. **Mary Bly, Box 57, Custer, South Dakota 57730.**

• I have some *Country Music Magazines* that I would be willing to sell. I have March, June, July, August, September 1981, and January/February 1982 (Stella Parton issue). Write and make an offer! **Kenny Lierheimer, R.R. 1 Box 41, Benton City, Missouri 65232.**

• I have back issues of *Country Music Magazine* for sale, from 1973 to the present. All in top condition. **Georgia Dicker, RFD #2 Box 167, Presque Isle, Maine 04769.**

• I have several copies of *Country Music Magazine*. I'll be glad to sell. They date from August 1975 through December 1981. There are 26 issues missing but some of these may be combined issues.

Also, I would really appreciate it if anyone could tell me how to get an early record of T.G. Sheppard. It was called "May I Spend Every New Year's with You." It was out in the fall of 1975, I think. His fan club couldn't help me. At the same time Vicki Lawrence had a song called "The Other Woman." I'd sure be happy to find these. **Marlene Bidwell, 131 4th Street, Nekoosa, Wisconsin 54457.**

### Overwhelming Response

*Members have been a great help to one another through the Information, Please column.*

• I want to thank all of you who have written me with help in finding tapes of Ricky Nelson. I received so many letters that I can't answer them all so I will answer here by saying thank

you. I have found the tape of his songs. **Jan Lang, 15710 12th Street, Kenosha, Wisconsin 53142.**

### Information, Please

*Contact these members directly if you have the information or items they need.*

• I need your help. I am trying to find some albums of Leroy Van Dyke. I'm looking for: *I've Never Been Loved* (Harmony HS 11308), *Songs for Mom and Dad* (Mercury SR 60922), *Just a Closer Walk With Thee* (Kapp KS 3607), *At the Trade Winds, Live* (Mercury SR 60950), and *Out of Love* (Mercury SR 16302). I am also interested in any 45 r.p.m. records, magazine and newspaper articles or anything else on Leroy Van Dyke. I'm desperate. **Janice Cherry, RR 1, Lane, Kansas 66042.**

• I am seeking items on Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and The Lone Ranger, such as records (LP's, 45's, 78's), books, comics, toys, photos and any such-like items. I also have a lot of items of the above that can be traded and/or for sale. Also have several movies and half-hour TV shows on Gene and the Lone Ranger on video—VHS and Beta. Send me your list of items for sale or trade. Send an SASE for my list. Thanks. **Doug Altizer, First Street Station, P.O. Box 3454, Radford, Virginia 24143.**

• I am looking for two old songs which were on albums, "The Leaves Mustn't Fall" by Moon Mullican, and "Barbara Allen" by the Browns Ferry Four. Anyone having information as to how I can get either of these, please contact me. **Ken Sauls, Apt. 160, 3248 So. Military Highway, Chesapeake, Virginia 23323.**

• I am searching for these records by the Carter Family: *Mother Maybelle Carter, a Living Legend; Keep on the Sunny Side—The Carter Family with Special Guest Johnny Cash; Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs—Featuring Mother Maybelle Carter and the Foggy Mountain Boys, Songs of The Famous Carter Family.* I can't find these anywhere—no store here has

them. I sing Carter Family songs in my volunteer singing at the hospital where I work. Most of the patients are in wheelchairs. They love music of all kinds, but they love the old ones best.

The records must be in good shape as I tape off of them. I have most of The Carter Family's records, including the original *Carter Family in Texas* set. Thank you. **Mrs. Kathy Rahn, Apt. 5, 2031 Snowhill Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45237.**

• I am looking for a copy of the 1976 single of Jim Glaser's "She's Free But She's Not Easy." It was on MCA. If anyone knows where I could buy this record, please write. **Millicie Sloan, Pottersville Rt. Box 28, West Plains, Missouri 65775.**

• I really enjoy your magazine and as I was reading the *CMSA Newsletter*, I noticed that a lot of people are trying to find copies of old records. As I have several original old 78 records, I wondered if any of your readers would be interested in buying records by such artists as Slim Whitman, Gene Autry, Jimmie Rodgers, Montana Slim, Carl Smith, Hank Snow, Bob Sandy, Jimmy Davis, Dick Turley, Rusty Howard and others. I also have an old 78 of Hank Williams singing "Cold, Cold Heart." If anyone is interested, they can contact me at the following address. **Linda Thomas, Route 1, Spanish Fork, Utah 84660.**

• Can you help me? I am looking for a record or someone who could make a tape of "Release Me" as recorded by Terry Fell. I think this is the first version of this song recorded in the country field. Help! Help! Help! **John Duhon, 108 William Drive, Lafayette, Louisiana 70508.**

• Help is needed for avid country and western record collector from way back. We are very interested in finding a copy of Rusty Draper's mid-1950's hit record of "Gambler's Guitar." Does anyone out there have one that they would part with? Or maybe one that I could tape and return. **Jim Huttel, 422 W. Maple Grove, Duluth, Min-**

**nesota 55811.**

• I have been looking everywhere for the album *There and Back* by Susan Raye. I saw the video on the Nashville channel several months ago, and have been unable to locate it. Would appreciate any information on where I could find this record. I would like to have it. **Debbie K. Jackson, Box 531, Chinook, Montana 59523.**

### Pen Pals

*Members would like to receive mail from others.*

• My name is Rich Armstrong. I am 43 years old, 5'7", 145 lbs. I play traditional country music. I used to play regularly, but now just now and then for fun. I would like to hear from other country music fans, or performers. I am divorced and very lonely, so the letters would mean a lot to me. I will answer all letters.

I guess my fondest memory is being allowed to sing with the Fred Maddox Band in 1961. The band included Vern Stovall, Ralph Mooney, Phil Bough, and Bobby George. They were playing at the Palms Ballroom in Glendora, California. **Richard L. Armstrong, 312 E. Buena Vista, Barstow, California 92311.**

• I live in a very small town in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. I've been getting *Country Music Magazine* for years. I read and enjoy every page, especially the articles on the artists. I'm a great lover of country music and western music and the Grand Ole Opry. Someday I hope to make it to Fan Fair. I'm a white female, widow, 61 "years young," love to travel, collect stamps, postcards and book matches.

Anyone wanting a pen pal, just send me a card. **Gay Greer, P.O. Box 632, Hudson, North Carolina 28638.**

*To submit material to the Newsletter, write Country Music Magazine, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118, New York, New York 10173. Mark envelope: Attention, Newsletter. Include membership number.*





**CARL SMITH: GREATEST HITS**  
In this album Carl sings better than ever, giving a warm new glow to these classic hits he created. Included are: Mr. Moon/Are You Teasing Me/Hey Joe/Deep Water/I Just Loved Her For The Last Time Again/You Are The One/Don't Just Stand There/If Teardrops Were Pennies/Take My Ring Off Your Finger/Kisses Don't Lie



**MAC WISEMAN: GOLDEN CLASSICS**  
This album is a compilation of some new recordings of the very best traditional bluegrass songs, plus some newer releases. Included: Jimmie Brown, The Newsboy/Goin' Like Wildfire/I Saw Your Face In The Moon/Barbara Allen/The Prisoner's Song/Johnny Cash & Charlie's Pride/Sweeter Than The Flowers/18 Wheels A Humming/Don't Make Me Go To Bed, more!



**LULU BELLE & SCOTTY: SWEET-HEARTS OF COUNTRY MUSIC**  
Their style and songs made America think of them as close personal friends. Here's a sample: Homecoming Time In Happy Valley/Each Time You Leave Have I Told You Lately That I Love You/Remember Me/The Brown Mountain Light When The Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again/In The Doghouse Now/Sunday School/Sweet Lips/Mountain Dew, more!



**LULU BELLE & SCOTTY: SWEET-HEARTS STILL**  
More classic recordings, including: I Told Them All About You/First Whippoorwill Call/Molly Darlin'/Between You And Me/Bonnie Blue Eyes/I'll Be All Smiles/Try To Live Some (While You're Here)/Blue Eyes Cryin' In The Rain/When I Yoo Hoo In The Valley/Rocking Alone In An Old Rocking Chair/Sweet Evalena/Sunset Years Of Life. Why not order both.



**SKEETER DAVIS: THE BEST OF THE BEST OF**  
A gracious star with a different sound, especially with harmony. Included on this great album are: Set Him Free/(I Can't Help You) I'm Falling Too/The End Of The World/I'm Saving My Love/Gonna Get Along Without You Now/I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know/I'm A Lover (Not A Fighter)/My Last Date With You/Bus Fare To Kentucky, more!



**PATSY CLINE COWBOY COPAS HAWKSHAW HAWKINS: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN**  
Patsy: Lovesick Blues—Just A Closer Walk With Thee—There He Goes/Hawkshaw: I Suppose—Little White Washed Chimney—Summy Side Of The Mountain—The Life Of Hank Williams/Cowboy: Wings Of A Dove—Cowboy's Deck Of Cards—He Stands Real Tall—Beyond The Sunset. A truly fitting tribute to some great legends.



**WILF CARTER: "Montana Slim"**  
Many of the great old favorites of yesteryear and more. Including: Two Little Girls In Blue/Put My Little Shoes Away/Daddy And Home/One Golden Girl/Hey Hey Mr. D.J./Granddad's Yodelling Song/Lonesome For My Baby Tonight/Shoo Shoo Shoo She Lah Lah/Two Little Stars/The Little Shirt My Mother Made For Me



**BEN COLDER (SHEB WOOLEY): GOLDEN HITS**  
There are few aspects of the entertainment field that this star has not been highly successful in. This album is another success story with tunes like: Easy Lovin' #2/Almost Persuaded #2/Detroit City #2/Little Green Apples #2/Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms/Don't Go Near Eskimos/Sunday Morning Falling Down/Games People Play/10 Little Bottles, and more!

**BUY 3  
AND PICK  
ANOTHER  
1 FREE!**

## Rated ☆☆☆☆

—Editorial Staff,  
Country Music Magazine

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Carl Smith	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (GT0058)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (GT80058)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT50058)
Mac Wiseman	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (GT0049)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (GT80049)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT50049)
Lulu Belle/Scotty Sweathearts of Country Music	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (SLP206)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SLPT1206)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT5206)
Sweathearts Still	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (SLP351)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SLPT1351)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT5351)
Hawkshaw Hawkins	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (SD3013)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SDT13013)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT53013)
Cowboy Copas	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (SD3012)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SDT13012)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT53012)
Wilma Lee/Stoney Cooper	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (SLP980)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SLPT1980)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT5980)
Jimmy Dickens	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (GT0014)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (GT80014)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT50014)
Skeeter Davis	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (GT0041)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (GT80041)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT50041)
Gone But Not Forgotten	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (SLP346)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SLPT1346)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT5346)
Wilf Carter	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (SLP300)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SLPT1300)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT5300)
Ben Colder	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (GT0051)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (GT80051)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT50051)
Bluegrass Hall of Fame	<input type="checkbox"/> LP (SLP181)	<input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SLPT1181)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT5181)

I've ordered 4 selections for the price of 3. Enclosed find \$20.85 plus \$3.45 postage & handling.

567-9







guilty—I'd been kind of mean as a kid, and then I was just gone to college, gone to California—so I had to write a song about it. Maybe somebody would hear it, and avoid the mistake I made. Somebody did, too. A lady wrote to me that she heard 'You Were Always There' on the radio when she was driving her car, and she had to pull off the road and cry because it was true about her and *her* mother. But her mother was still alive, and they were able to start talking to each other."

Donna's mother never got to see her little girl become a writer and singer; her daughter had been secretive about the dream she always had, unwilling to risk talking about it in case it never came true. It was only after she had earned a career and taken care of "the security things" that she allowed herself to start working towards her most instinctive ambition; writing songs, learning to play guitar, making the contact with Stan Silver, which led to her first record (and to her continuing marriage). "Happiest Girl" was in fact high on the charts before she swallowed her fear and quit her teaching job three days before the end of the term, just in time to work a show in Las Vegas.

Her mother didn't see the wonders and pains of the subsequent years, either: Donna's marriage to Stan Silver—who abandoned most of his other musical activities to become her producer/manager/partner, the flush of hits through the early and mid-1970's, the succession of little mistakes and instances of unfortunate timing which eventually relegated her almost, though not quite, to the "Where Are They Now?" category, and, beginning in 1978, the most terrifying setback of all. That was the year in which a second, severe episode of deeply disquieting symptoms—headaches, uncontrolled trembling, loss of coordination—was diagnosed as Multiple Sclerosis.

**"I'd always thought that you can do anything with your mind,"** Donna remembers, "but that's just not true; there are real limits. When I was in that hospital, and I couldn't dial the phone, it didn't have anything to do with my mind.

"It was like, things you take for granted—focusing your eyes, cutting a piece of meat, writing your name—I couldn't do them. And that scared the hell out of me! I just pulled the cover over my head and thought, 'Oh, man, I don't want to *do* this.' But you have to; you have to go on."

In a way she was lucky; she had the attack/remission form of the incurable disease, not the progressive strain which comes to stay and just gets steadily worse. "Certain aspects of it do

go into remission after an attack," she says. "You *do* get your coordination back, you *do* get your feeling back to an extent. Somebody going through an attack has to know that; somebody has to say, 'Hey, cool it. This is going to change. Don't panic.'"

Gradually Donna worked her way over her fear. She educated herself about the disease, she read book after book on ways to strengthen her body and spirit and mind, she accepted the help and humor of her husband; in short, she fought it. Worked back up to a normal activity level, went back on the road, refused the release offered by a dazzling variety of drugs because she preferred pain to the loss of mental



*"I'd always thought that you can do anything with your mind, but that's just not true."*

alertness ("I'd rather cuss the pain: *We'll see who's the biggest here!*"), and took it as it came. She wanted "a quality of life," not just life itself, and she got it. She knows that she can live well with her disease, and that while it will never leave her, she can fight it to a standstill on a daily basis: "You can't cure it, but you *can* stop it in its tracks."

Today she says that she has learned a lot from her illness: "I don't know quite *what* I've learned, but I have learned. I was never a person who didn't appreciate rainbows and sunsets and all that—I really always felt that I was attuned to every aspect of life—but now I'm... I dunno; I'm just *more*."

"I guess it all has something to do with my song 'Winners.' I mean, we need to realize that there's a God in us, a winner in us. Everybody has one—we just *do*; it wouldn't be fair otherwise—and we just have to learn to let him out. But it's hard for people to think like that. It's hard for *me* to think like that. We've beaten ourselves down so much by the time we've grown up that then we have to start un-learning all that garbage we've put ourselves through by accident and habit. We're all such judges; we

need to just let things be."

Donna notes that she thought this way before MS settled over her—and that's true; you can hear it in her songs—but that fighting the disease has intensified her feelings. Some clarity has emerged from the storm.

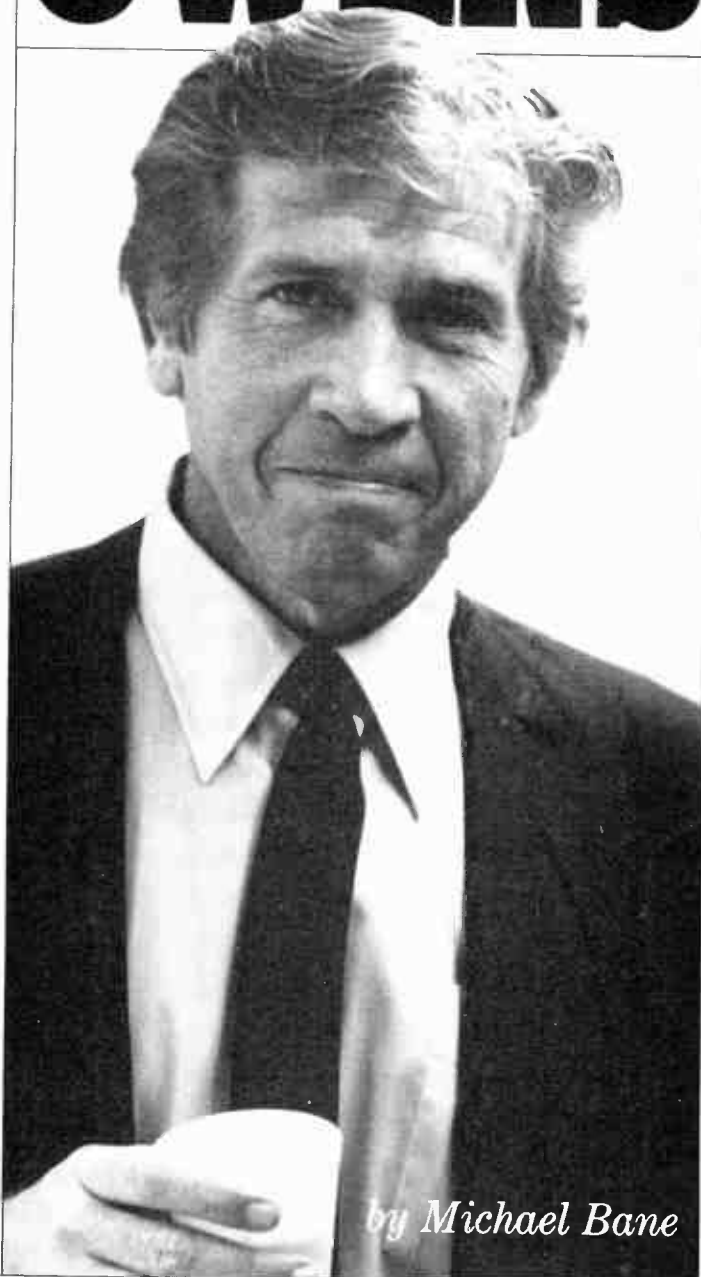
**T**oday Donna Fargo leads a full, almost normal life which includes some pain and occasional disorienting neurological episodes, but with which she has no quarrel. Even the blunders and accidents which still dog her attempts to launch songs into the world with a fighting chance of success in the charts don't disturb her unreasonably, and in fact she is now in a position considerably more promising than any she's been in for years; having moved with the unconventional, sublimely funky and usually most effective Mr. Steve Popovich from his own Cleveland International label to the Mercury/Polygram Nashville operation which he now runs, she feels that all those pesky little business/promo ducks are a little more likely than not to fall into line sometime soon—if they haven't already by the time you read this article. And if they don't—if they haven't, well, it's like she sings in that recent song of hers: "I've laid too many eggs to count my chickens before they hatch."

It's at the Mercury/Polygram office, with Popovich's gleeful, distinctly fan-like blasting of some new rough Johnny Cash/Jack Clement tracks shaking the walls, that we leave Ms. Fargo. She has been very warm and honest throughout the interview, and also very sharp; in a sort of writer-to-writer, traveller-to-traveller way, she has asked as many questions as she has answered. This is unusual, to say the least, for in interview situations the great majority of star performers in any field simply set their dials to "Transmit" and run with it, ignoring the "Receive" function altogether.

And corny as this sounds, the event has also been educational for both of us. I don't know what Donna has learned—I don't ask to look at whatever she's been writing or drawing on the notepad she's had on the desk before her—but I have gained a couple of new insights.

Firstly, Donna Fargo is an impressive person—a winner—and an unusually thoughtful, compassionate individual, and furthermore she is one of those rare people who actually act on their principles, put their mouths where their hearts are. Secondly, I figure, it may have been inevitable that her voice has not been heard as clearly as it might have been during the last decade or so—just one of those crummy business happenstances—but that is nonetheless a shame; it is our loss. ■

# 20 Questions with BUCK OWENS



by Michael Bane

*He was the king of Bakersfield, California; the man who broke Nashville's stranglehold on country music in the 1960's. Outrageous, off-beat and wildly talented, Buck Owens flashed through the business like jagged lightning, cutting one hit after another—27 Number One hits in a row—writing such stone-cold classics as "Together Again" and "Cryin' Time." His songs found favor with groups like The Beatles ("Act Naturally") and other English rock groups. His production company, his song publishing company, his empire in Bakersfield, which included Merle Haggard, made him a very rich man. But in the mid-1970's, Buck Owens was obviously unhappy. He finally made his break from both recording and the road. Last year, he left Hee Haw after a successful run of 16 years. When 20 Questions caught up with Buck for his first interview in eight years, we wanted to know what happened to one of the great stars in country music history. We found him at the crack of dawn, in Bakersfield.*

1

**Could you fill us in a little bit about what's been going on with Buck Owens recently?**

Well, let me tell you that, first of all, I'm in the middle of being a publisher. A publisher with a weekly shopper that's mailed to 110,000 homes in Bakersfield; a publisher with a real estate magazine. We plan on some other publishing things as well. Of course, I still have my radio stations, KUZZ-KZIN, and I have KTIK AM and FM over in Phoenix.

2

**How'd you get involved in publishing—that seems a strange turn of events?**

Let me tell you. In 1979, I stopped recording. In 1980, I stopped touring. I still do things occasionally for charitable causes and things. And, of course, in 1986, I left television—I came off the road.

And don't forget, this is a guy who's played Carnegie Hall, the Capitol in Washington, D.C., the White House, the Astrodome, the Palladium and the Prince Albert Hall in London, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand and—I've done it, you follow what I'm saying? So I said, "Now I'm going to play all the golf I want to. I'm going to play every day, and on the days I don't play golf, I'm going to play tennis. Then I'm going to sneak down and play racquetball..." I did that, Mike, but in a very short period of time, it's kind of like sex and sleep, you catch up on them quick.

3

**So you started looking for a new career?**

Not at first. Then I began to get into a very deep depression, this was about 1981 or so. We have a whole city block here. I still have my recording studios and everything, and they're still active. So anyway, there's probably 95 people here in this block, and I began to go around to the different offices and sit around. And I began to see in their eyes, they'd say, "Uh-oh, here comes the old guy again. He's lonesome, he's bored and he's depressed." I never talked music to them, I was just bored and depressed. And my wife Jennifer began to say, "My goodness, Daddy, if you don't get something to do pretty soon, you're going to run us all nutski!" So I was sitting around the last of 1985, and I saw this little ad that said, "Wanted: Investment partner for small publication." To make a long story short, I bought 51 percent of a monthly. The next month, I bought the other 49 percent, and now we've gone weekly.

4

**You sound excited about it.**

It's been a lifesaver for me. Before I got started, I had aches and pains and damn near thought I was going to die. I was so bored, a beautiful day was nothing. It reminded me of a doctor friend of mine who told me about 15



years ago that he was going to close up his practice and play golf. Ninety days later he had his office open again. I didn't know what he was talking about when he told me that was worse than going to work, having to play golf every day, not having any problems to solve.

## 5

**It must have been hard to come off the road after so many miles and so many years...**

Well...it's always a picture of the grass looking greener on the other side of the fence. Every time I jumped the fence and got over where the grass was greener, I looked back where I came from and said, "Gee whiz, it looks pretty green there, too!" In fact, it looked *greener*. I've got to tell you, I was a *Grapes of Wrath* child. I was born in Texas and we started out in the Dust Bowl. I was a Dust Bowl escapee, I guess you'd call it. In 1938 we started out to California to pick some oranges and grapefruits, I guess, ten of us in an old car pulling an old trailer with the mattresses on top. We broke down in Arizona, and we didn't have the money to continue. So we stopped there, and I was raised there. Eventually, I came to California. Once I got out of the cotton patch—I did a lot of picking cotton, chopping cotton, swamping fruit and swamping potatoes—once I got a guitar and got into one of those air-conditioned beer joints playing for tips, I never wanted to get back in hot sun any more.

## 6

**The 'tonks weren't as bad as the fields, in other words?**

You've got to remember that the worst old skull orchard still was cooler than it was outside in the summer and warmer than it was in the winter. You didn't sweat as much and you didn't get cold as much.

Getting back to the point, it was extremely hard to leave the road. I was not prepared for it. It was kind of like a



**Buck has nothing but fond memories of Hee Haw—he made some great friends there.**

culture shock, as much as I said if I see another airport, another airplane, another skycap, another taxicab, another limo, another concert hall I'm going to just faint. That's what I thought for five years before I did that. Of course, after Don Rich's death, all the heart went out of me. I never had the heart after that... 'Cause Don... When I lived in Seattle and wrote a song called "Under My Skull Again" that got me started in this business, Don Rich was up there. He was 16 years old and working lounges with me up there. I was a disk jockey and an account executive in a little old radio station. Then I played in a honky tonk five nights a week and promoted a dance on Saturday. On Sunday, we'd work out at the air force base. So Don worked with me when he was a sophomore in high school, and 16 years later he was still with me. When he was killed in 1974, all the heart went out of me. I just never got it together after that...

## 7

**So from then until you left the road, you were just going through the motions?**

Yes. Don't forget that, at that time, I'd done it, I'd been doing music for 25 or 30 years. I'm 57 now. So what happened was, there was no

problem. All I had to do was just waltz right through it. It's kind of like you writing a story—all you've got to do is have somebody talk. You know what to do... I just rattle—I trust you to put this together. I haven't done any interviews in... how long? ... Eight years? People call me all the time, want to do interviews. I didn't do any, because I didn't *want* to; I wanted to put some distance between it and me. Let me go on—culture shock though it was, I got through it. I've had a lot of invitations to go all over the world, much more than when I was doing it! The more I say no, the more they want me! Reminds me of the days when I was a teenager and used to be chasing the girls... Well, anyway, I'll leave that one there.

## 8

**Are you doing anything in music right now?**

The only thing I do now and have done—and I'm not saying I wouldn't do something else—is I'm going to do a concert next year with the Bakersfield Symphony Orchestra. They've been asking me to do it for a long time. Hell, we might name it The Last Concert. But I don't know if that would be true. I'm like a lot of these other people—I could keep retiring... He's making another comeback,

folks. This is his 19th straight comeback!... I haven't retired. I've just changed my directions. I even sold my production company, my publishing company to Tree International a couple of years ago. I just literally changed my direction. I've got to tell you, though. I still love music. I'm involved on a daily basis, on an *hourly* basis with my radio stations.

## 9

**Do you miss performing?**

Honestly, I don't. Let me give you a little thing I thought of the other day. You know, for spending one hour on the stage and receiving, from across the footlights, all this love, all this *warmth*, that you can feel flow over the footlights. All of that—of *course* I miss that! Anybody misses receiving recognition and love and warmth. But the things I don't miss are all the airplanes, all the skycaps, all the lost luggage, all the equipment you've got to carry around and get. Sure, I miss the camaraderie. Going through Atlanta at three o'clock in the morning, and suddenly you're missing a guitar... Yeah, I miss the people. I'll tell you, I miss them and I love them. I will perform again... when the time is right... I gotta go do it again to see if I want to do it again, right?

10

**That's right. There are fans out there who miss you.**

Maybe I'll do it next year. England. Or Sweden, I always liked Sweden... My goodness gracious, there's no greater fans, unless it might be in New York. I got to tell you something about when I played Carnegie Hall in 1966. The record label called me and said we want you to play Carnegie Hall. I said, "Who does?" They kept on and finally said what about cutting a live album? I said, "What about if nobody comes?" I'd been to New York City a lot to do television—Jimmy Dean, the Kraft Music Hall—and the big Madison Square Garden package shows, and, I mean, I've had some terrible experiences because I didn't know how to get along in New York City. Country boy comes to the big city. People do not have time to say, "Good morning. How are you?" They got other ways of greeting you, especially if you're a rube. I mean, I didn't have any hay sticking out of my teeth, but it seemed like that to some people. Anyway, I finally said I'd do the show at Carnegie Hall. They sold it out in advance, and I said, "Hmmm. By gosh, if they're going to antagonize me, at least they're paying for it." I'd even written a song called, "I Wouldn't Live in New York City If They Gave Me the Whole Damn Town," except they made me change "damn" to "dang." Twenty years ago it wasn't fashionable to say "damn." I went down to the street and recorded it live. That's the truth—they took it in good humor. It's a great place to live, but I'm not sure it's a good place to visit. New York people know about people. You can't fool them very much. But I've never played for better audiences.

11

**Do you ever get an urge to go back into the studio and record, cut another record?**

Well, I've had a lot of people ask me about that. People

want me to go and do records with them. I get a call every once in a while from someone who wants to record an album of my hits or have me work as a duo. So far, the way I feel, the right thing hasn't happened. If the right thing comes along and it feels just right, well, I'll attack that just the way I do everything else. With everything I have.

12

**You've had so much influence on country music for so long. What do you think of the music now?**

Well, Mike, I'm very flattered by these young people. I never knew I was doing anything. I was just doing the best I could do. Ricky Skaggs, what really impressed me was when the guy got up on national television and said he wanted to thank Buck Owens. That flatters me. Dwight Yoakam and Randy Travis and Keith Whitley—I read articles or hear them on the radio say they were influenced by my records and my method of guitar picking. It's a big, big ego lift to me. Makes me think that history will be the judge.

13

**Does it make you feel kind of strange to be thought of as an influence?**

No, you know. It's like when the guy said, "From Van Halen to The Beatles, you can hear Buck Owens' style of picking a guitar." That was 20 years ago, and they're still doing it today. I never really thought of the time frame—I guess I'm just thankful that I got to be one little part of the big picture.

14

**What's important to you now?**

To be the best that you can be at whatever you do. Whatever your chosen field is. I think that would be good advice for anyone. My radio stations, here in Bakersfield, we play country on the AM and rock 'n' roll on the FM. And we've got the number one and number two positions here. And I'm proud of that, because I



drive to not be cold and hungry, the drive to not be poor, that drive... I just think that I wanted to be *somebody* so bad. We had a motto, my manager Jack McFadden and I. Our motto was simply, "Whatever it takes." And I got to tell you something, Mike. It *works*.

15

**Is there any other advice you have for newcomers?**

People ask me all the time, how do you start? I'm in love with country, so how do I start? They say be in the right place at the right time with the right product. Now, let me tell you what I did... Getting to the right place at the right time with the right product is the name of the game, but nobody knows what any of the three are. So what I did, I got to the right *places*, at the right *times*, with more than one piece of *product*. Enhance your chances of success. In other words, work *hard*. Listen, I was in the songwriting business, and I had my songs recorded by Ray Charles and Barbra Streisand and The Beatles, and all these people said, "Gosh, he's so *lucky*."





**Buck's been in the music business for over 30 years, built empires and influenced many a young musician. His advice is simple—be the best you can be.**

Why's he so lucky?" Well, I believed them for some time, then I looked at it closer and I found out that the harder I worked, the luckier I got. I got to more places at more times with more products. They can out-think me and out-do me in many ways, but they can't out-work me.

## 16

**Are there any of the songs that you've written that stand out as your favorites?** Two. One is called "Together Again" and the other is called "Cryin' Time." Let me tell you why. You know "Tiger By the Tail" and "Act Naturally" and "Sam's Place" and all those things that I recorded and helped write and wrote on, the up-tempo, fast, zippy songs that people liked to hear me do, those things happen. But the songs that are going to live and breathe, that I'll be remembered for more than anything else are the songs that touch the heart... "Together Again," I got up at three o'clock in the morning and wrote the song in about 15 or 20 minutes. I put it on a B-side and it went to Number One. So did the A-side, "Act Naturally." Same thing hap-

pened with "Cryin' Time." I put it on the back of "Tiger By the Tail." The way I wrote "Cryin' Time," Bobby Bare had let me open the show, so I could get back to Chicago from Milwaukee to catch the two A.M. flight to the coast and get home. (Bobby reminded me the other day that I played on the first song he recorded on Capitol in 1955 that I wrote, called "Down on the Corner of Love." Bobby Bare's got the dangest memory of anybody I know.) He let me do that, and it just came in my mind that, boy, it was going to be cryin' time if I don't make that plane. I didn't write it down, but the next day I remembered it, so that way I knew it was a good song. I thought it was a throwaway, but the one that's been recorded over and over is not "Tiger By the Tail."

## 17

**I've always heard that is one of the hardest things for a songwriter to do...** I'll tell you one thing—I've played on a lot of sessions from Gene Vincent to Ferlin Husky to Tommy Sands to just about everybody who recorded out here. I find a way

to sneak on and play ukelele — and every song the musicians like was a flop.

## 18

**Do you have any good memories of *Hee Haw*?**

I have nothing *but* good memories of *Hee Haw*. They're all great friends of mine, and it took a name and a sound and put a face with it. Folks, let's face it. I've had a good songwriting career and a good singing career and a good performing career, and I did some producing and things, and then I had a great television career. I had a good helping and then some... I wasn't tired of it, but they wanted it to be fresher and fresher, and I'd have had to been going back more and more often. It had gotten, long ago, to where it wasn't a case of money.

## 19

**Is it true that your first gig was at a place so tough and so vicious that you tried to run and hide?**

You know, you might be referring to this 1948 gig, I don't know if it was the first one or not. I lived in a little town in Arizona—they even declared

martial law there. That's true. I played a little place called The Silver Dollar. I played a little bit of ukelele, piano, steel guitar, all those things—none of them very good, but I knew how to tune them. So anyway, this big brawl started. The whole place was a brawl! Everywhere you looked, people was fighting. I was 18 years old, now, don't forget. I was on this little old podium about six inches off the ground, and this beer bottle hits the wall beside me and glass and beer gets all over me. Well, I thought, "Oh, gee. I don't want any of this! I'm getting paid to pick. I'm not getting paid to fight." So I put the guitar down and started running for the bathroom. This little Greek guy who ran the place came running over, shouting, "Hey! Hey! Keepa de music goin'! Keepa de music goin'!" He fired me that night, but I didn't keep de music goin'.

## 20

**Regrets?**

Mike, I don't know. If I had it to do over, there might be two or three little things I'd change... I might have been a little less renegade, maybe. A little bit easier to get along with in some instances. If I could have know then what I know now, I would have been. There was times when I was a renegade when I didn't need to be. I didn't need to... to *fight* Nashville so hard. You've got to understand where I was coming from, then, though. Here I was 27 years old, with "Under Your Spell Again." Everybody I'd ever known who tried to cut records out here had never had any success. So they'd been telling us for as long as I remember that you can't cut a country and western record anywhere outside of Nashville. At last! But to stand up on my guitar at Hollywood and Vine and beat my chest and taunt Nashville was an absolutely unprofessional thing. I didn't need to do that... I gotta tell you something, I think, if I had it to do over, I would move to Nashville. ■





# T. GRAHAM BROWN

## Country Soul Man With a Sense of Humor



*His music may not be strictly country, but his fans don't mind. A combination of country, soul, rock and rhythm & blues is what they've come to expect from T. Graham Brown. And, he just might make them laugh in the process.*

*by Patrick Carr*

**A**nthony Graham Brown of Nashville and Arabi, Georgia, is doing one of the things he does best: being amusing, and amusing himself. He's having his picture taken, the picture you see here, so he's filling in the blanks between the shots, skidding around happily from bit to bit.

There's the bit from *Green Acres* where Mr. Douglas is figuring that what he needs around the place is a bathtub, and up drives Mr. Haney, as usual, with a ridiculous, inadequate, broken-down, loose approximation of same. "What's that monstrosity?" asks Mr. Douglas.

"You're exactly right," replies Mr. Haney. "This here is a gene-wine Fettucini Monstrositi, boy, the last of the great Eye-talian bathtub makers. This is the same tub that Aunt Helen used to take her milk baths in; if you look real close you can still see the curd line..."

Once you've started talking *Green Acres*, *The Andy Griffith Show* just follows naturally. And what follows that? *Mr. Ed*, of course.

"You heard where one a them born-agin record burners is sayin' that the theme from *Mr. Ed* is inspired by the Devil?" our man inquires with wonder, the accent not quite as thick as that employed for his Mr. Haney impersonation but close, definitely backroads Georgia. "A horse is a horse, of course, of course is some sort of message from Satan?"

Then he's into his hellfire-preacher routine, then his grunt-perfect imitation of the Lester "Roadhog" Moran bit

about Charley Pride being the only "nnnnn, nnnnn, name that's not on our list," then a looned-out imaginary radio commercial for a hillbilly moving company, and finally, by way of getting back to work, a little piece of business he neared while signing autographs out at Fan Fair: "Now, my sister's cousin's boy, he's got a band. He's got the ha'r, he plays rock, but it ain't hard rock. They practice in the basement, an' it's loud, but they don't play no *hard* rock, none a that *pill pop*..."

"You want my hard rock smile, or just rock?"

It doesn't matter to the photographer, who like most people confronted by T. Graham Brown is delighted to have been put so quickly at ease. It's always nice to meet a natural clown—your defenses fall away, you feel like a co-conspirator, you begin rooting for him—and meeting T. Graham is no exception; this big, cute, happy kid *can't* have too bad a case of Showbiz Syndrome, he just *has* to be okay at heart. Here's to him, may he survive and prosper.

That, more or less, is the social perception of T. Graham Brown around Nashville. Music people see his black '67 Cadillac, the one with the COD-1 plate in back and the *God Is My Co-Pilot* plate up front, and they remember that the man has three pet fish called Andy and Barney and Tennessee Tuxedo and a burning ambition to have a Masters of the Universe doll named after him, and they crack a smile; *that's nice*, it ain't all pride and ego and ass-kissing and cut-

throat competition. There's room for a laugh or two along the way.

The professional perception of T. adds a lot, makes his social role all the more legitimate, for the man is a well-rounded, heavily sponsored, just about solid gold certified *success*. He's been exactly where he needs to have been, he's precisely where he needs to be today, and in all likelihood he's going where everybody in the music business just loves to go.

**"I** love this place," says T., sliding the Cadillac smoothly past Music Row's offices and studios and lurid gift emporiums. "When I came here, it was like the Promised Land, like goin' to Heaven. I still haven't gotten over it."

That may be because when T. arrived, he *arrived*; connected solidly within six months of hitting town. There wasn't a whole lot of fruitless door-knocking. He was lucky, of course—in this business, you just never know—but on the other hand he was also experienced, his talent was already well developed. "I guess I had my act pretty together," he says. "Hell, I *should*; I'd been singing since 1973."

He means singing professionally, of course, doing it more or less for a living, being in showbiz. And was he ever in showbiz. Around Athens, Georgia, where he went to college and subsequently sank to spectacular depths of local infamy, they still remember his adventures with affection and, yes, even

a certain awe.

Perhaps the most interesting of his exploits began when he caught a public-TV special about David Allan Coe. "It was uncensored, and I think the cussin' was what caught my ear," T. remembers. "I started lookin', and I thought, 'Who is *this*? This guy is out there, he's nuts!' Then I started listenin' to the songs, and I thought, 'Damn, that's pretty cool.'"

You have to understand here that T. had never been particularly attuned to mainstream country music. Sure, he wore out a couple of copies of Cash's *Live at Folsom Prison* album, but basically he was always a soul man: Otis Redding, Percy Sledge, Aretha Franklin, the deeply emotional, secular black gospel of the 1960's. But then, our boy Coe can get *anybody's* attention (and he's not exactly short on soul, either). T. ran right out and bought one of his records, then went to catch his act and got hooked. He grew a beard, bought himself a planet-sized cowboy hat and the David Allan Coe psycho-cowboy clothes to go with it, and cranked himself up a psycho-cowboy band with the curiously mild-mannered name of Reo Diamond.

"I used to drink Wild Turkey from the bottle on stage, smash guitars, wear guns, wear spurs, feathers everywhere, all that craziness," he recalls. "We were the only ones doing that around the area, so we sold a lot of tickets. We were good, too. Hank Jr. stuff, Coe stuff, Merle Haggard, E.T., but all *real* electrified. It was about exactly like Hank Jr.'s show. Rowdy. A lot of cussin'. You know: *Kiss my ass*. But then *Urban Cowboy* came out, and every sonofabitch in the whole world was wearin' cowboy boots, and that just ruined it. I burned out real fast."

But no matter. He went back to his first love with another outfit, this one very nicely named: the Rack of Spam Band, playing hard-core-soulful album tracks and originals and featuring a logo in which a Spam can turned temptingly on a spit, almost ready for *Yum: good eatin'!*

Through all this T. made an okay living, even if his dad—the "hardass of the world"—was always calling to ask when the hell he was going to get a real job, and there *were* periods when he didn't do much but hang out—once he took six months off after getting a "baccy-chewin' redneck part" in a Richard Pryor movie which paid enough to keep him in Crackerjacks and gasoline for that period of time. But careers, even in music, tend to get serious at a certain point in life, and in T.'s case the direction of the seriousness became Nashville, in particular that city's song-supply industry. T. wrote songs—wrote them well—and if there's one thing Nashville can't



*"So sign the sonofabitch."*

get enough of, it's songs with a certain something. Pretty soon after he hit town, he signed on as a writer with CBS Songs. This meant that he actually had a job; hardly the kind of dress-up, 10-to-5, memo-spewing professional position his father might have wished for, but a steady paycheck nonetheless.

**A**nd of course one thing led to another. CBS Songs is in the business of acquiring original material, then getting it recorded by "name" artists, and a significant element of that process is the creation of "demo" tapes. A demo can get pretty sophisticated, and of course a good singer close at hand is a very important asset in its production, and T. is a *very* good, very distinctive, individualistic singer. Therefore he began singing on CBS Songs demos, and everybody on Music Row started hearing his voice all the time in the usual course of business.

It fell to one Terry Choate, a CBS song plugger, to make the final connection. Terry had been pushing T. to various talent executives around town as he pushed the songs T. was singing, but then he himself got a real nice offer: the top Artists and Repertoire spot in the new order of things Jim Fogelson was creating at Capitol/E.M.I. Records. The way the story goes, there was a talent meeting at Capitol/E.M.I. shortly after things got rolling, and the subject of T. Graham Brown came up. One by one, every single executive voiced the opinion that T. was verily, a "singin' sonofabitch." According to T., Fogelson's response was brief and to

the point: "So *sign* the sonofabitch!" The whole affair was over within a minute.

You've heard the rest of it on the radio. "I Tell It Like It Used To Be," "I Wish That I Could Hurt That Way Again," etc. It's keen stuff, sort of funky-Milsap, Delbert McClintonish, crossbred country soul rock rhythm-and-blues, the diametric opposite of the George Strait/Randy Travis purist axis. It goes over big with country fans of catholic taste and anyone else who likes melody with their git-down, some bump with their broken hearts. And then of course when T. gets on TV, *he* goes over big with a very good many of the ladies; looks a lot like the funny hunk on *Moonlighting*, acts like "the Jim McMahon of country music," has it knocked in the modern sex-appeal market. Even better, he's a happily married man, has been for almost six years now; no new romances with inappropriate fan-jealousy figures are likely to ruffle the flow of his appeal.

All of which goes a long way towards explaining the good-times, high-times, relaxed and hopeful feeling around the man. Relations with the record company are free and easy, bolstered by personal friendships and the invigorating aroma of crisp new money, and T. is happy both personally and professionally. He loves his musicians, cherry-picked from the ranks of Grade-A outfits like The Nighthawks, Delbert McClinton's band, The Oaks' band and others; he can't wait to record his next album and improve on his last; he gets all sorts of kicks from telling people that he's on the label that gave them The Beatles and The Beach Boys; he's tickled pink that, finally, his daddy has broken down. Went out and bought a good component stereo system and a satellite TV dish so he can hear and see his boy out there making it, singing like a star, touring with *Kenny Rogers!* for God's sake...

That's very pleasant, isn't it, and it's a good stopping point for a T. Graham Brown story. We leave him sailing happily along the boulevards of Nashville in his big, black, funky land yacht, unworried by the question of where he and his music might fit in the scheme of things because a) it's not his nature to be overly concerned about anything much, and b) events have proven very nicely that he is where he belongs. It looks as if he might get marketed into contention with Huey Lewis and John Cougar Mellencamp, the sub-Springsteen big boys of mass-market blue-collar roots-rock, and that kind of move always suggests a scenario in which hard country fans might get offended and jump ship, but T. has faith.

"I may be rock, y'know," he says. "I mean, I really *may*. But I ain't *hard* rock. I ain't that *pill pop*." ■





**Can the Son  
of a NYC  
Sausage Maker  
and an Ohio  
All-American  
Football Player**

**Make It Big  
in  
Nashville?**

# THE O'KANES

*Handsome enough to be movie stars, successful as songwriters, Kieran Kane and Jamie O'Hara heard something in their own attic harmonizing they thought the world might like.*

*by Bob Allen*

**T**he whole concept for the O'Kanes, the new vocal harmony duo that has quickly risen to be one of the most heralded new country acts of 1987, began rather inauspiciously.

It was basically just two guys—Kieran Kane and Jamie O'Hara, the two Nashville songwriters, who *are* the

O'Kanes—co-writing and recording demo records together in an attic studio.

At first, insists Kane, whose attic studio it was, there was no intention of starting a group or a recording act. But then: "We found that even though we have very different sounding voices, when we sang together, something hap-

pened. And just in the process of writing and demo-ing our own songs, this distinct *sound* took shape. We liked it and became increasingly interested in it, and felt we had something to contribute."

Not even quite sure what they had in mind themselves, Kane and O'Hara spent hours fleshing out this new har-

mony sound in Kane's home studio. They pulled together some musicians they knew; they put a band together, and started playing now and then in clubs around Nashville.

"We just grew increasingly attached to the music, and we found that people really responded positively to it," Kane adds. "That's when we decided to go into the studio, so that, at the very least, we would have some kind of memory of that particular musical period of our lives."

O'Hara and Kane also both happen to be staff songwriters for the huge Tree International Publishing Company. Around this time they were able to have written into their songwriting contracts a special budget for studio time.

So, with a handful of original songs, the same group of fellow musicians, and without any kind of recording contract, they started getting it all down on tape. "What we emerged with is about eighty percent of what you hear on the album," O'Hara explains. "But even then, we weren't really sure of what we were doing, and we certainly weren't aiming it at any market. We were just trying to put down this music that we'd grown so attached to, as best we could." What they put down became *The O'Kanes*, released by CBS Records in 1986.

After they'd more or less finished, Kane and O'Hara, who are both in their mid-thirties, and both veterans of nearly a decade's worth of Nashville songwriting, were still largely uncertain of what they had on their hands. "We were concerned about how people would respond to it," says Kane. "It just wasn't quite as mainstream as what we'd been hearing on the radio, and we felt we might end up shipping it to an overseas label. We felt it was just sort of traditional and off-center enough that a European audience might be interested in it."

**B**ut then fate and circumstance intervened. They played their finished tapes for producer Bob Montgomery, who in turn played them for Steve Buckingham, another producer closely affiliated with CBS. Buckingham then brought the O'Kanes' music to the attention of Rick Blackburn, head of CBS/Nashville.

"Bob came back and told us they were really excited about the music up at CBS," Kane remembers. "But both of us have been in the Nashville music business a very long time, and we know that there are varying *degrees* of excitement. But practically in the first fifteen minutes of our conversation, Rick Blackburn said he wanted to buy the album—as is. With us producing, exactly as we brought it in."

"That ended a lot of our apprehension right there," adds O'Hara. "We believed

in what we'd done and we were creatively satisfied with it. But we felt that, given the normal pattern in any music town, if people like it, what were they going to ask us to change on it? You know: what new producer were they going to bring in to make it sound like they thought it should sound? Because both Kieran and I can be very stubborn on that point. But what really surprised us is they wanted it *intact*."

The commercial and critical response to their new album has been a bit overwhelming. Of all the new acts to emerge from Nashville in the past couple of years, The O'Kanes were one of the few to crack the country Top Ten with their first single, "Oh, Darlin'," released from the album. Within a short time, the music on the album had drawn accolades from such far-flung sources as *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Washington Post* and elsewhere.

Noted critic Ken Tucker of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, for instance, calls *The O'Kanes*, "a remarkable album, a mixture of old-fashioned country, new-fashioned folk, and just a whiff of rock 'n' roll." "In their vocal blend," adds veteran music commentator Jim Bessman, "they show the lived-together compatibility of the Everlys... The production and arrangements seem deliberately lowered in volume and complexity, doing justice to both The O'Kanes' music and their words."

Though the evolution of their music may indeed have been accidental, for the most part, and without calculation, there is a lot in both Kane's and O'Hara's respective professional backgrounds that indicates that each, on his own, had been pointing in this present direction for some time.

**K**ieran Kane is a native of Queens, New York, the son of an Irish-American sausage manufacturer. He spent time on the West Coast, in the 1970's, pursuing a solo recording career; and in 1981, during a brief solo stint with Warner Brothers/Nashville, he had Top Twenty success with a couple of songs called "It's Who You Love" and "You're the Best." Among his many credits as a songwriter is the Alabama standard, "Gonna Have a Party."

O'Hara is originally from Ohio, where he was once an All-American high school football player. Permanently sidelined with a knee injury, he turned to music, and eventually became half of a duo that played folk/rock/country music throughout the Midwest. He eventually ended up in Nashville, where he worked a variety of jobs and hung on for about four years before he had his first taste of success as a songwriter. One of his most recent successes in this department



came when The Judds had a Number One hit with his composition, "Grandpa (Tell Me 'Bout the Good Old Days)."

Either individually or as co-writers Kane and O'Hara have also had songs recorded by The Oak Ridge Boys, John Conlee, Janie Fricke, Mel McDaniel, Tanya Tucker, Conway Twitty, John Schneider and even Tom Jones.

Recently, as The O'Kanes braved the somewhat frigid northeastern winter landscape on a tour to promote their album, we had a chance to sit and talk to them at length about the artistic transition from songwriters to recording duo. **Country Music:** Most of the critical praise for your debut album has been for its simplicity—the austerity of the arrangements, the pure, uncomplicated emotions of the songs, the almost informal vocal mix of your duet style. You've even been quoted as saying that often, the best production is the impression of "no production at all."

**Kane:** I think that style for us really developed in the demo studio. When we were making demos, we were always careful not to let the music get in the way of the song. We would often put a lot of different instruments on, and try out a lot of different ideas. And often we found that just stripping it back down to just basic voice and guitar was all that it



*"We were just trying to put down this music that we'd grown so attached to, as best we could."*



really needed. We were always very interested in keeping the music out of the way of the songs themselves.

**O'Hara:** Speaking for myself, and I think for Kieran too, that is the sort of form that we're most often attracted to. Not just in music, but in all creative forms: novels, painting, sculpture. It's what is called, for want of a better word, *minimalism*. The question we always ask ourselves as our own producers is *how* do we get across the maximum amount of emotional impact with the least amount of technique. We just know that that moves us. So we assume that it will move other people, too.

**Kane:** I know, for me, the most important thing that is too often left out on too many records is the *air* on a record: the amount of space that's left on there for one instrument to react to another. And the more different instruments and things you have on a record, the more difficult this sort of reaction becomes. For instance, the echo you hear on a record has an effect on you. So do the places on a record where there are no notes. To me, they are as important as those places where there are notes. That's sort of how we've always approached it. Luckily, we've been able to find musicians who are very receptive to this approach, too.

**CM:** I understand that several of the tracks on the new album are actually "live" studio performances. That is to say everything was recorded in one take, with no overdubs. And what you hear on the record is exactly what went down during that three and a half or four minutes in the recording studio. That's just not done very much anymore, is it?

**Kane:** No, but there was a time when just about all records were made that way. And as we did this album, we were interested in getting as much live music down as possible. "Bluegrass Blues," for instance, was done that way. What you hear on the album is exactly what we played during that time in the studio. There was no overdubbing, no nothing. Just live vocals, live music, live everything.

**O'Hara:** That's right. *(Smiles.)* We just recorded it, put it up on the board and mixed it. And that was it. "Can't Stop My Heart" was virtually done that way, too, as was "Gone, Long Gone." There are a lot of live vocals on the album.

*(Ed. note: "Bluegrass Blues" has now been recorded by Southern Pacific and The Judds.)*

**CM:** Each of you, on his own, has made an impressive mark as a songwriter in Nashville. Tell us a little bit about the respective paths that led you to Music City.

**Kane:** I came to town about eight and a half years ago. I'd been involved in the music business on the West Coast, trying to break in as an artist out there. I was very lucky when I came here. I knew several people here, like Rafe Van Hoy and Deborah Allen, who sort of encouraged me to come to Nashville. I was lucky in that I met a lot of people when I first moved here who were very much into the songs I was writing at the time. I actually started getting songs recorded within about six months of the time I came to town. *(Laughs.)* I sort of got my hard times out of the way before I got here. I spent about ten years on the West Coast, trying to get started in the music scene. But I came here and had a lot of immediate help and encouragement. I found the community of songwriters here in Nashville to be very generous.

**O'Hara:** *(Laughs.)* I came to town under exact opposite conditions. I knew no one. I think I was maybe the last of the generation of songwriters who actually came to town cold and started taking tapes door to door. I did the whole classic progression of working different jobs just to survive. I painted houses and I chauffeured. I worked in a warehouse and had a job laying ties on the railroad. I was a substitute teacher for

quite a while. I started taking songs around to Tree Publishers, and got a good response. They started inviting me to come up and hang around with their stable of writers, which I was extremely eager to do, considering that people like Harlan Howard, Curly Putman, Bobby Braddock, Red Lane, Sonny Throckmorton and all those folks, all those classic country writers, were there. So that was a tremendous opportunity. I'd work all day, then go down to Tree and soak up whatever I could, then go back home and write at night. Still, it took me about four years to get my first major cut as a songwriter.

**CM:** How are you liking the transition from songwriter to songwriters/producers/recording artists, so far?

**Kane:** It's very gratifying to be able, as songwriters, to also do the whole package: the writing, the recording, the performing, the producing. It's all one big piece of the overall picture, you know. I think there was a little frustration for both of us, in terms of just being songwriters, in that we weren't able to complete that picture. We were thrilled with the songs of ours that other people recorded. But it's also more creatively gratifying to get to record them and perform them ourselves the way we originally heard them.

**O'Hara:** I love the transition, for the most part. It's ironic, but even before I came to Nashville I was half of an acoustic duo that toured in the Midwest. Maybe I already had something like this in the back of my mind. Right now, the two of us are just getting into it and evolving with this, too.

Sometimes, though, the travel involved isn't all that fun. And I think what's hardest for me, personally, is that, as a songwriter, I have kind of led a somewhat introverted life. I mean, I really enjoy performing, but there is a lot that goes along with it, in terms of scheduling and things like that that haven't been real easy to adjust to.

**CM:** So, when can we expect the next album?

**Kane:** *(Laughs warily.)* Well, in a lot of ways, we started working on the next album the moment we walked out of the studio and wrapped up this one. But it takes us a long time to write the material we need for an album, to come up with a collection of songs that fit the concept we're after. We also do a tremendous amount of pre-production before we actually start recording. And even though we're really looking forward to getting back into the studio, it will be a while before we do. But, yeh! *(Laughs.)* To answer your question: we're already working on it now. ■

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**Webb Pierce: Webb!**—Sittin' Alone/My Shoes Keep Walking Back To You/You Make Me Live Again/Tupelo County Jail/Falling Back To You/Life To Go/After The Boy Gets The Girl/Pick Me Up On Your Way Down/The Violet And The Rose/I Won't Be Crying Anymore. more! LP No. HAT 3019 Cass. No. HATC 3019



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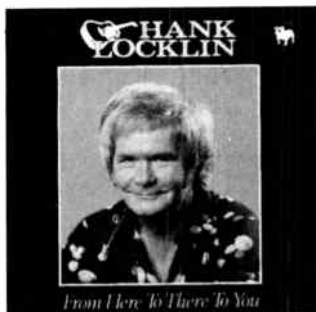
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**Hank Locklin: From Here To There To You**—Let Me Be The One/Please Help Me I'm Falling/Geisha Girl/Happy Birthday To Me/Send Me The Pillow That You Dream On/These Arms You Push Away/It's A Little More Like Heaven Where You Are. more! LP No. BDL 1033/Cass. No. BDL 1033



**Tex Ritter: Streets Of Laredo**—Title Song/Blood On The Saddle/Barbara Allen/Bury Me Not On The Lone Prairie/Rye Whiskey/Boll Weevil/Sam Bass/The Face On The Barroom Floor/When The Work's All Done This Fall. more! LP No. BDL 1022/Cass. No. BDL 1022



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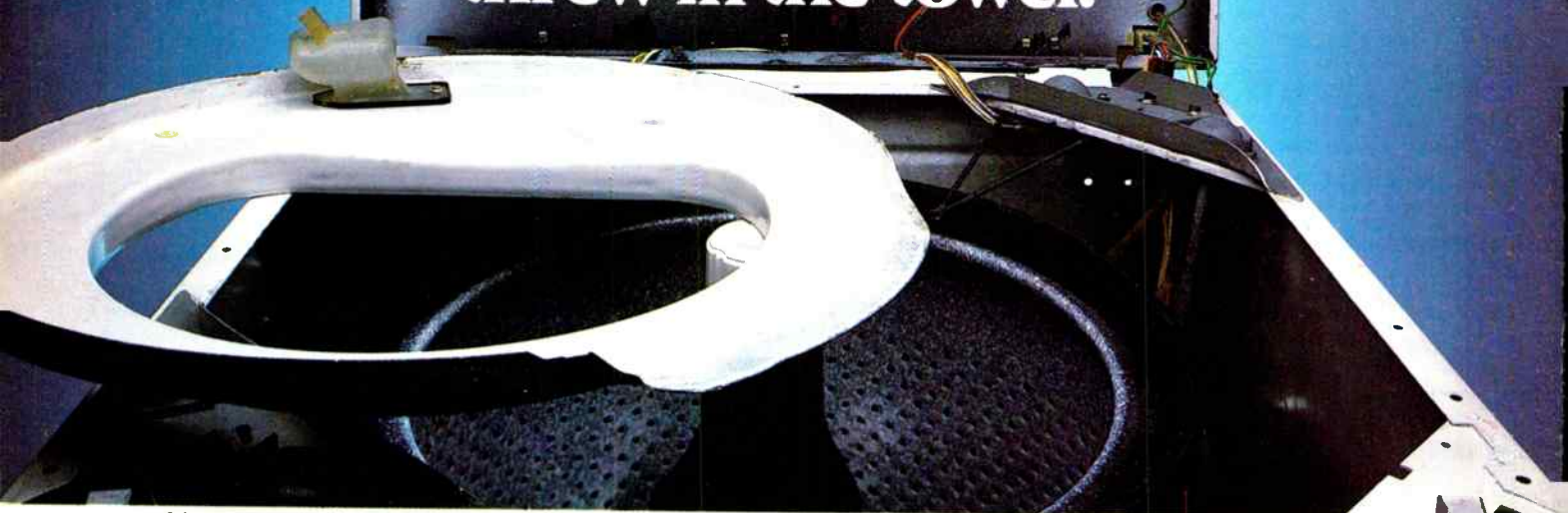
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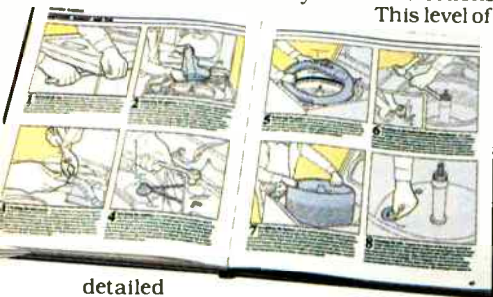
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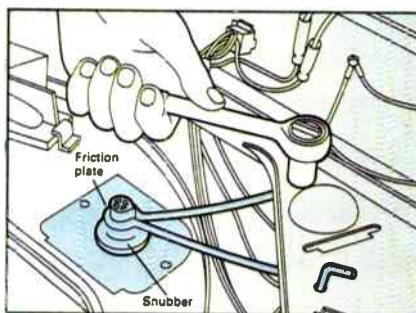
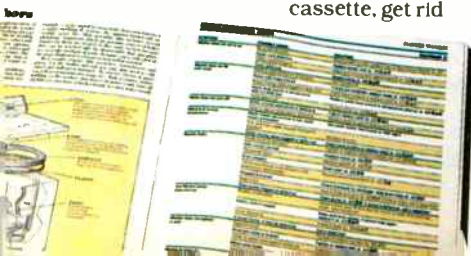


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# For CMSA Members Only

MEMBERS POLL/MAY 1987

# VOTE

Your opinions can help influence record companies, radio stations, record stores, concert promoters, managers and performers. As a CMSA member, you have an organized way of making your opinion known, by filling out the Members Poll. We forward the results of the Polls to those involved in the business of country music who are interested in what fans are thinking and doing, and we publish the results.

### Bought Any Good Records Lately?

1. Did you buy any albums (records or tapes) in the last month?  
 Yes  No

How many records? \_\_\_\_\_ How many cassettes? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which ones did you like best? List performer and album title.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

3. To vote, list the numbers of your top 5 favorites from the Top 25, page 68.

Singles (list 5 numbers)      Albums (list 5 numbers)

### Want a Free Fan Club Membership?

4. If you could get free membership in *one* country music performer's fan club, whose would you choose?

\_\_\_\_\_

### Been to Any Good Concerts Lately?

5. How many concerts, stage shows, fairs, featuring major country stars, have you attended in the last 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

Who were the stars you saw?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. \_\_\_\_\_

### Do You Own These Things?

6. Check any one of the following owned by you or anyone in your household:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stereo Equipment          | <input type="checkbox"/> Any 4-wheel Drive Vehicle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compact Disc Player (CD)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Outboard Motor & Boat     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video Cassette Recorder   | <input type="checkbox"/> Roto-tiller               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sport Utility Vehicle     | <input type="checkbox"/> Riding Lawn Mower         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pickup Truck (Mini)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Tractor            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pickup (Full Size)        | <input type="checkbox"/> Chain Saw                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) | <input type="checkbox"/> Power Tools               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cowboy Boots              | <input type="checkbox"/> Guitar                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western Clothes           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Musical Instruments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing Equipment         | <input type="checkbox"/> Pickup Truck Accessories  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting Equipment         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Music for Guitar    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work or Hunting Boots     | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Music for Piano     |

7. Do you or anyone else in your family own a radar detector?  Yes  No

If not, do you plan to buy one?  Yes  No

8. Do you or anyone else in your family have a cassette player in a car or truck?  Yes  No  
 Do you plan to buy one?  Yes  No

### What's on TV?

9. What are your 4 favorite TV shows?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

10. Do you have cable TV?  Yes  No

11. Do you get The Nashville Network?  Yes  No  
 If you do, which are your 4 favorite Nashville Network shows?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

### Do You Use These Products?

12. Do you or anyone else in your family use any tobacco product?  Yes  No

- Check what kinds:  Cigars  
 Cigarettes  Pipe Tobacco  
 Chewing Tobacco  
 Snuff

13. Did you or anyone in your household buy any videocassette tapes in the last month?  Yes  No

How many blank video cassettes? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many pre-recorded video cassettes? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Check any of the following beverages used by you or anyone else in your family:

- |   |                                  |  |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bourbon          | <input type="checkbox"/> Vodka   | <input type="checkbox"/> Brandy (Cognac) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scotch           | <input type="checkbox"/> Gin     | <input type="checkbox"/> Beer            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blended Rye      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tequila | <input type="checkbox"/> Wine            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blended Canadian | <input type="checkbox"/> Rum     | <input type="checkbox"/> Wine Coolers    |

### Do You Do These Things?

15. Check any of the following activities you or anyone in your household do:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend car races            | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable gardening        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using video camera          | <input type="checkbox"/> Flower gardening           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do-it-yourself home repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Needlecrafts               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do-it-yourself car repairs  | <input type="checkbox"/> Attend country music shows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boating                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping                    |

16. How old are you?

- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 40-44      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24    | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-49      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-29    | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-54      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-34    | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-59      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-39    | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 or over |

17. Are you female or male?  Female  Male

18. Check the appropriate amount of the combined annual income of everyone in your household. Be sure to include all salaries, wages, interest, rent and profits from business or farming.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$15,000       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$34,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000 to \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35,000 to \$39,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$24,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$49,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 to \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,000 or more     |

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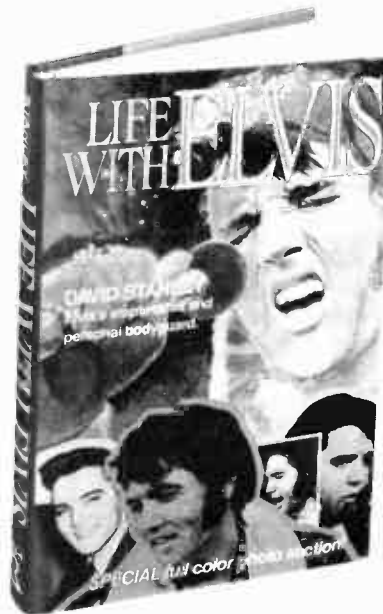


### COOKING WITH COUNTRY MUSIC STARS

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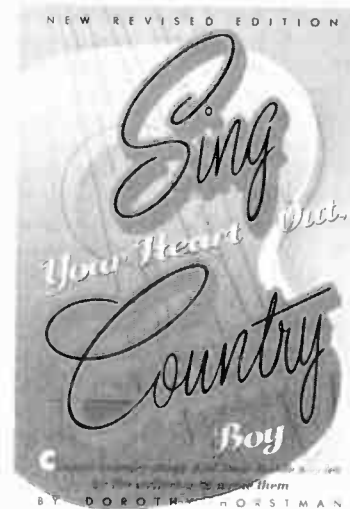
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# Record Reviews

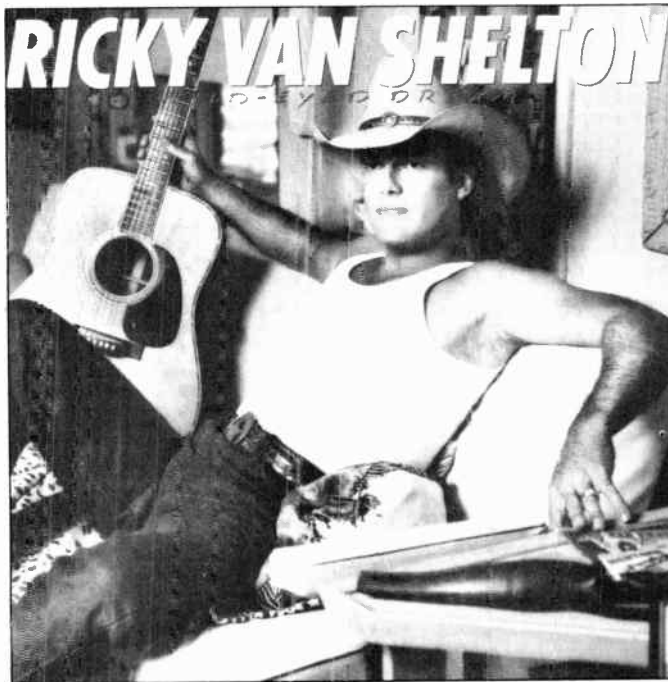
## Ricky Van Shelton *Wild-Eyed Dream* Columbia B6C 40602

I never heard of this guy before Michele at CBS sent me the tape. And the carefully posed macho cover photo, with the artist in proper working class garb, didn't encourage me. But for now, I've given up some of my legendary cynicism about new artists. Aside from the quality of so many newcomers, few hairstylists and makeup artists get album credits anymore, an encouraging move in itself.

Don't automatically lump Ricky Van Shelton in with Steve Earle or Dwight Yoakam. He doesn't write his own material. What he is, and I say this honestly for the first time since Billy Swan, is a *real* rockabilly who gives the music the urgency and spontaneity without which it doesn't qualify. (For more on this subject, see the Steve Earle review elsewhere in this section.)

Skeptical? You have a right to be. Rockabilly's an easy label to use or abuse. I've been guilty of it a few times myself. But producer Steve Buckingham did it right by recording everything live with minimal overdubs; Van Shelton got most of his vocals on the first take.

The proof's in the sound, and "Ultimately Fine" is so fierce it literally bops off the turntable. "Crime of Passion," a saga of robbery, love and sleaze, represents the type of reality we don't often hear in country music these days (it's not "family" oriented—neither is reality)



even though such songs were common 65 years or so ago.

The unrequited love lyrics of "Wild-Eyed Dreams," the sort usually done with a wimpy melody, take on new power sung over a hard-rocking arrangement. "Crazy Over You" may not be much of a song, but it feels so great with its 3 A.M. blues arrangement that it doesn't matter.

That also applies to Van Shelton's remake of Carl Smith's 1954 all-night honky tonk celebration, "Baby, I'm Ready." Smith's original, never released until it appeared on a 1984 CBS Historic Edition album, was great, but Van Shelton matches him shot for shot. The two Bakersfield tributes, a remake of Buck Owens' old hit "I Don't Care" and Merle Haggard's "Working Man Blues," fit perfectly into the album's context.

As you might suspect, ballads pose the biggest risks. How often have we seen them turn hard-driving artists to jelly? Well, this man's version of Harlan Howard's "Life Turned Her That Way" is just this side of precious, particularly when stacked against his dynamic interpretations of Roger Miller's "Don't We All Have the Right" and "Somebody Lied," which harkens back to the Conway Twitty of "Hello, Darlin'." "Life Turned Her That Way" might not have worked at all except for the sheer intensity and conviction in Van Shelton's voice.

No debut is perfect, and Buckingham should've canned all but one harmony singer—a minor gripe. The power and intensity of the entire album still bowl me over a month after I got the tape and that doesn't happen often.

Are you sure Sam Phillips done it this way? Damn straight. —RICH KIENZLE

## George Strait *Ocean Front Property* MCA-5913

By now, George Strait's Texas groove is so well established that even with Jimmy Bowen producing, there's no real surprises. For Strait fans, there should be no real disappointments, either.

That becomes apparent with the loose, lazy swing intro of the very first cut, "All My Ex's Live in Texas," which maintains a jaunty tempo and some nifty melodic hooks as the singer runs down a list of All The Girls He's Loved Before and their hometowns in the Lone Star State. George's voice might be a little deeper than it was a few years ago, and his phrasing might have taken on a few more twists and turns reminiscent of Merle Haggard, but there's no mistaking whose show this is. That's equally true on a finger-popping swing number like "Am I Blue," which definitely reflects the pop end of the swing spectrum, and is thus indicative of steps Strait has been taking for several albums now.

But for my money the top cuts are not clever ditties like the title song or the tropical—well, *semi-tropical*—"Without You Here," which hints at Jimmy Buffet, or even a straight-ahead, uptempo honky tonk shouter like "My Heart Won't Wander Very Far From You." No, I'd opt instead for "Hot Burning

## Record Reviews



Flames" and "You Can't Buy Your Way Out of the Blues," and for very specific reasons.

On both these tracks, George is accompanied not by the studio vets who are behind him elsewhere, but by his own Ace in the Hole Band. And George Strait, at this point, is a cautious pro working his form of music in a rather conservative fashion, which is to say that he doesn't necessarily benefit greatly from so much studio precision; his own band, on the other hand, lights a bit of a spark under him, gives everything the slightly hotter feel of a live performance. That not only serves as a welcome antidote to the increasing softness of his studio sound, but makes his limited scope seem more expansive.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

**Tony Rice**  
*Me & My Guitar*  
Rounder 0201

**I**magine, if you can, one musician who has both the all-around talent of a Ricky Skaggs and the commanding vocal gifts of a Gordon Light-

foot and is a world-class acoustic guitar stylist, to boot. What you come up with if you throw all these priceless ingredients together is, more or less, Tony Rice.

In the past, Rice's talents have been the victim of a free-wheeling spirit and a slightly unpredictable temperament, at least at times. Even so, his musical accomplishments have long been acknowledged in newgrass and progressive bluegrass circles. He is a former member of the celebrated David Grisman Quintet, and, like Keith Whitley, he was lead singer and front man for J.D. Crowe and The New South for a considerable period of time. Along the way, he has also recorded a duet album or two with Ricky Skaggs. More recently, with his own ensemble, The Tony Rice Project, he has recorded a half dozen or so albums for the Rounder label.

*Me & My Guitar* is the latest and best expression of Rice's abundant musical gifts. For starters, Rice is a big fan of songwriters and songwriting, as is obvious from his well-thought-out liner notes. Thus, the choice of material here is impeccable—

if only occasionally predictable. There are selections by James Taylor (the title cut), Bob Dylan, Norman Blake and Ian Tyson—the unforgettable "Four Strong Winds."

Also clear in the liner notes is the fact that Rice is a big fan, almost a disciple, of Gordon Lightfoot. Five Lightfoot compositions appear on the album, everything from familiar numbers like "Early Morning Rain" to more obscure gems like "Fine as Fine Can Be." It's safe to say that Rice, with his rich, subtle baritone (indeed, so reminiscent of Lightfoot at times), is Lightfoot's most worthy latterday interpreter.

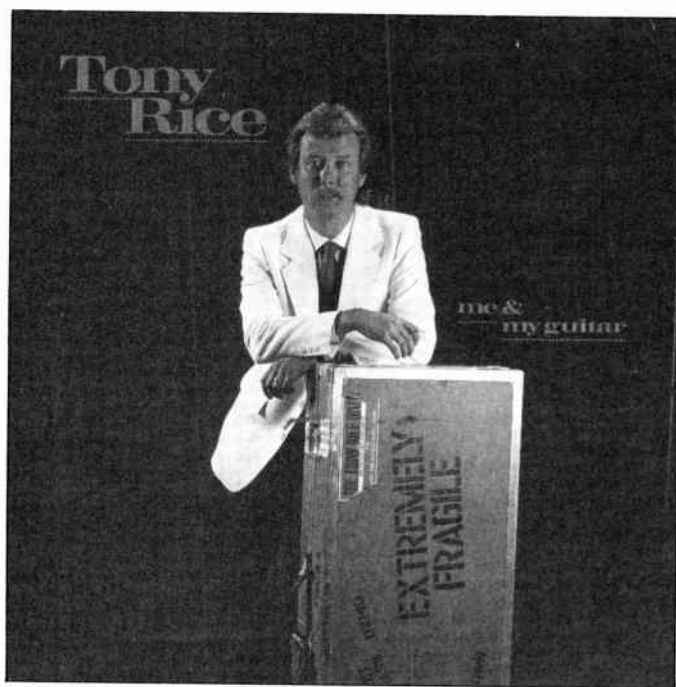
And, of course, there's more, much more, on *Me & My Guitar*: There's a beautiful, lyrically powerful ballad by Bob Franke, called "Hard Love," which even among all these Lightfoot, Dylan and Taylor gems stands out as the album's emotional high water mark. There are also a couple of evocative original instrumentals, including one called "Port Tobacco," which is about George Atzerodt, a conspirator involved in the assassination of Lincoln.

Rice is joined on *Me & My*

*Guitar* (which was recorded in studios in California, Nashville and Washington, D.C., evidently over a period of many months) by the usual round-up of newgrass luminaries: Sam Bush, Jerry Douglas, Jimmy Gaudreau, Vassar Clements, Mark Schatz, Todd Phillips and his brother, Wyatt Rice (also an accomplished guitarist). Cole Burgess' soprano saxophone adds a beautiful, lilting counterpoint to several of the cuts, as well.

Yet despite—or probably on account of—this huge front-end load of talent, every track on here rings with a crisp conciseness and emotional clarity. There's not a spare note, not one limp fiddle lick or one single extraneous guitar riff, on the entire album.

Though sometimes the compromises involved can mean a sort of artistic destruction for an artist so eminently talented, one can't help but hope that a musician of Rice's magnitude and accessibility will find a level of commercial acceptance worthy of his true stature. Particularly since *Me & My Guitar* makes it abundantly clear that there is a much





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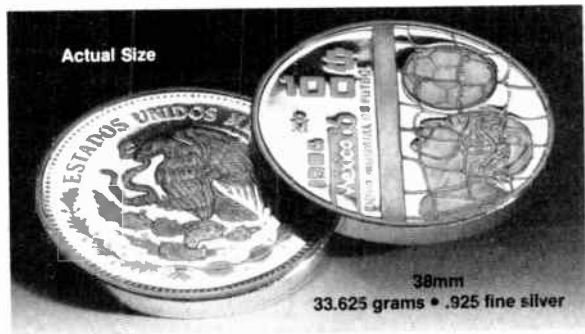
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# Record Reviews

larger audience out there that could easily learn to love Rice's music.... whether he, himself, is ready for them or not.

—BOB ALLEN

## Jim Reeves

*Live at the Opry*

Country Music Foundation  
CMF-008

**F**ew symbolized the changes that took place in post-Elvis Nashville better than Jim Reeves. Beginning as a straightforward Texas honky tonk singer in the late 1940's recording for Macy's, Abbott and RCA, his early hits stayed within those limits. In 1957 he and RCA producer Chet Atkins changed directions after rock 'n' roll made the honky tonk sound unfashionable. Reeves began singing lower, quieter and closer to the mike; Atkins stripped away the fiddles and steel in favor of a rhythm section and voices.

The result? Immense crossover hits like "Four Walls" and "He'll Have to Go," early examples of the Nashville Sound's potential. Despite the controversy this caused, Reeves did it better than most. He never went wholehog into pop and always maintained great integrity in his music. Even after he died in a 1964 plane crash, his appeal continued, and he's still revered overseas. Old recordings were released with new backing (rarely better than the original) in new packages. Some people never knew he'd died.

*Live at the Grand Ole Opry*, taken from studio quality recordings of Reeves' 1953-1960 Opry performances on the show's Prince Albert segments, begins with his first 1953 appearance after his hit recording of "Mexican Joe." It follows through his early hits with RCA, ends with some 1960 performances and includes four gospel tunes he never recorded for RCA.

The performances are con-



sistent with the high standards Reeves was renowned for, and the backing from Reeves' own band and the Opry's staff pickers is competent and faithful to the original recordings. Indeed, some of the most entertaining moments are the gospel tunes, particularly a delightfully raw 1956 version of "When God Dips His Love in My Heart" sung with Rose and Cal Maddox.

However, it's not all that simple. "What makes this album so unique," says CMF Director Bill Ivey in a press release, "is that it captures... Jim Reeves... when the 1950's honky tonk tradition was still evident in his music." He also mentions the presence of fiddle and steel.

Ivey's only partly correct. The early live performances from 1953-56 indeed feature such accompaniment. However, after 1957, Opry sidemen backing Reeves consciously recreated his softer sound onstage to the point of using vibes, an instrument not often seen on the Opry stage in those days. Historians who perceive the 1950's Opry as a rigid oasis of "pure country" miss the mark.

Secondly, part of the appeal

of live albums is the energy and presence a given performer projects when interacting with an audience. The excitement should pour out of the speakers. It doesn't here, for the very nature of Reeves' music required him to stick closely to the studio arrangements so everything—including his singing—is nearly identical to the recordings, with little left to spontaneity or chance.

This is not intended as a condemnation of the album itself. As usual, the CMF has done an outstanding packaging job, superior to virtually any major-label effort, though John Rumble's liner notes are less revealing than Bob Pinson's on the CMF's Hank Williams albums. (More great albums, including a live Louvin Brothers collection and an album of Bob Wills' fiddle tunes from the Columbia vaults are forthcoming.)

I don't mean to make unfair comparisons between Reeves and artists like Carl Smith, Red Foley or Little Jimmy Dickens whose onstage exuberance made their live recordings magical. Reeves stood in a class by himself. That his recordings and popularity have so long endured is

a tribute to his talents, and there's no doubt his fans loved him in person. I'm simply not sure he was the best choice for a live album.

—RICH KIENZLE

## Steve Earle

*Early Tracks*

Columbia FE 39226

**I**n 1983, before *Guitar Town* was even a glimmer in his eyes, Steve Earle was recording singles for CBS. So when the latter album bowled everyone over, it was inevitable those singles would surface again. And sure enough, here they are: ten numbers he recorded in 1983 produced by Roy Dea and Pat Carter. In some ways Earle's sound was ahead of his time: backing from a tight little rockabilly-flavored trio, hard-edged vocals and hints at trends and artists that have since arrived, most notably Ricky Van Shelton (see review, this issue). There are even a few early stabs at the direction he brought to such a compelling boil on *Guitar Town*.

Still, something—no, make that several things—are missing. Note I used the term *rockabilly-flavored*. That's exactly what I mean. This is cut and dried studio rockabilly, no spontaneity, no cutting edge like the real thing. It sounds like everybody listened to some Johnny Burnette and early Elvis and *took notes*. Dea, who produced some fine (and similar) material with Gary Stewart, went for the sizzle and not the steak.

But more important, most of Earle's material, competent and promising though it was in 1983, is not even remotely in a league with what he's producing currently. The lyrics are long on macho posturing and short on real conviction. "Nothin' But You," "Annie, Is Tonight the Night" and "My Baby Worships Me" all sound like the Stray Cats on Valium. (The



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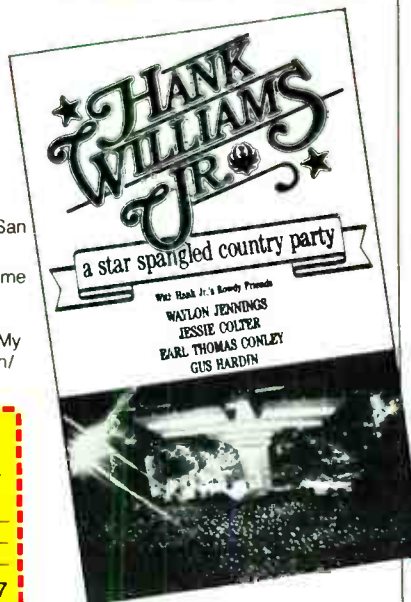
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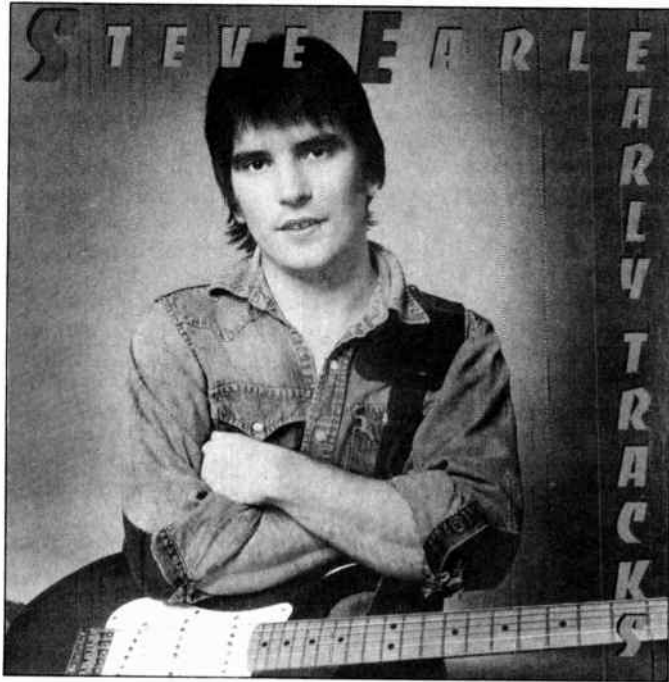
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## Record Reviews



Stray Cats were big among punk rockers in the 1980's and have recently—and unfortunately—reunited.)

"If You Need a Fool" is a bad Sun-era Johnny Cash imitation. The self-indulgent "Cadillac," with its chorus "I'm a Coupe De Ville, built to thrill," rings false from the first note. It's the old Get-the-Sun-Sound-in-10-Easy-Lessons approach, and that will automatically spell failure.

Nonetheless, Earle's future is apparent on a couple of tracks, the most notable being the original version of "Devil's Right Hand." The Buck Owens feel of "Open Up Your Door" has enough flashes of wit and humor applied to standard Country & Western clichés to be worthwhile. "Break Lane" truly hints at the current Earle sound, with its fearsome imagery of one nearly over the edge, while Reggie Young's guitar break on "Squeeze Me In" cuts through the proceedings like a fine scalpel.

I would probably have loved this material had it been released as an album in 1983. But Earle today has so completely transcended the work

he did then that now it's little more than a footnote. Still, at times, if you listen closely, you can hear him lurching toward the genius that *Guitar Town* realized. For that alone, it's an interesting, if not terribly noteworthy document. You gotta start someplace.

—RICH KIENZLE

### Patty Loveless *Patty Loveless* MCA-5915

**T**here's no doubt that this is one super-fine country voice. Patty Loveless, a coal miner's daughter from Kentucky, no less, is heiress to a number of country vocal traditions, and has assimilated them with soul and savvy. She handles ballads and uptempo songs with equal grace and finesse, and her voice tears and breaks in all the right ways and in all the right places.

On a song like her own "I Did," she can "worry" the lyrics a while and then boom 'em out without sacrificing subtlety. On Guy Clark's swinging, infectious "You Are Everything," she's

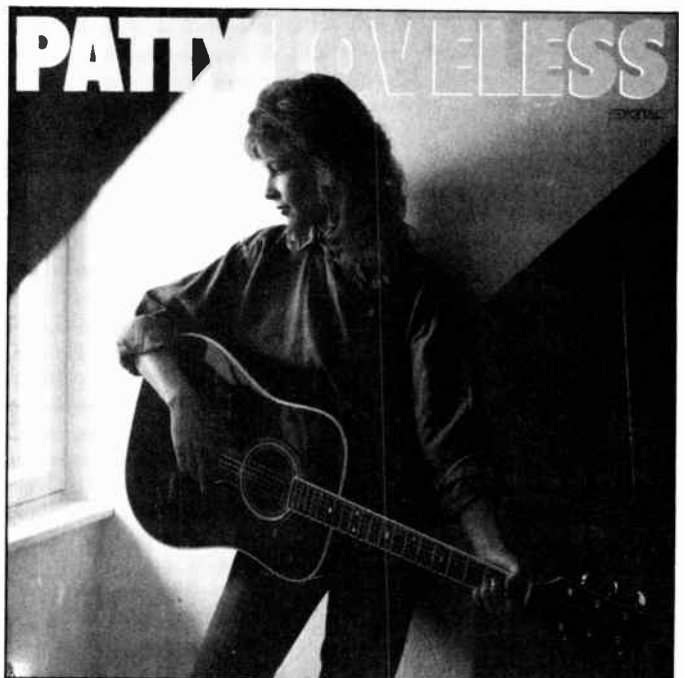
amazingly light on her voice, and handles big long vocal lines seemingly without having to pause for a breath. On Jim Rushing's exquisite "Slow Healing Heart," she begins as a voice of yearning set against an acoustic guitar and then builds slowly until she's soaring again, alternating between a caress and an outcry. "After All" has the feel of a poppish Patsy Cline ballad; on several cuts, in fact, Patty conveys the mixture of innocence and experience of some of those classic early-Sixties country/pop voices like Patsy Cline's or Brenda Lee's. I could go on for each cut, pausing to note the way Karen Staley's "Half Over You" is a ballad that doesn't build so much as it smolders all the way through; pointing out that on Staley's "Lonely Days, Lonely Nights," Patty comes across like Linda Ronstadt without that offputting layer of Hollywood cool; admiring the sauciness at the heart of her interpretation of Steve Earle's "Some Blue Moons Ago" or the ominous feel to Patty's own "Sound of Loneliness."

But I think I've made my point, which is that this is one

of the brightest new voices in an era of bright new voices. I should also not fail to acknowledge the painstaking care that obviously went into every track here, from Ray Flacke's nimble guitar lines and the contributions of all the other pickers to the Allen Reynolds-like string arrangements on two cuts. Producers Emory Gordy Jr. and Tony Brown left nothing to chance.

Having said all that, I almost hate to add that there is still something a bit tentative about this album. Though very much a showcase for a voice that deserves one, it remains a little short on personality. Taken together, the songs don't add up to a whole the way they do on recent debut albums by, say, Steve Earle or Dwight Yoakam, to name a pair of male "new traditionalists" Patty will undoubtedly be ranked with artistically. This is more like a sampler that shows her breadth and versatility, and is quite impressive on those terms, but now that it's out of the way, I hope she and her producers will focus in more. Until then, *Patty Loveless* will serve as a tantalizing introduction to the woman.

—JOHN MORTHLAND





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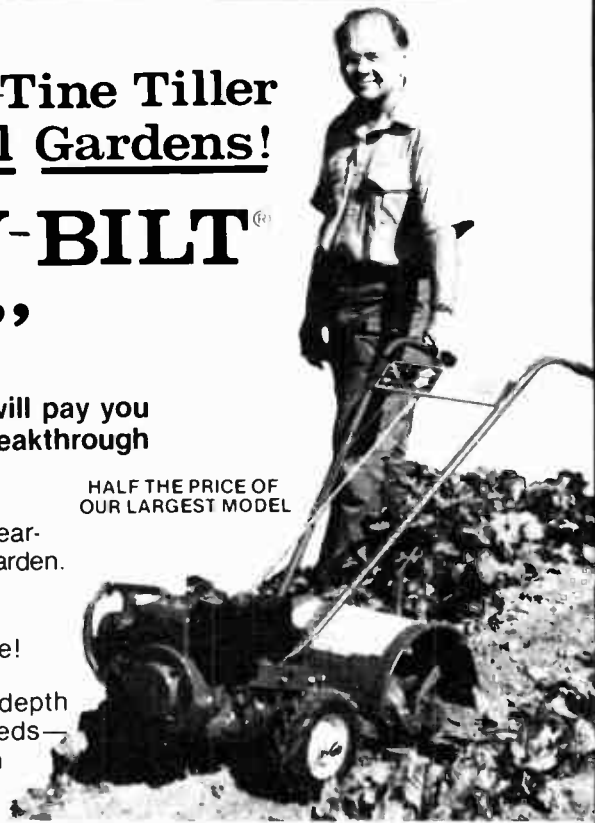


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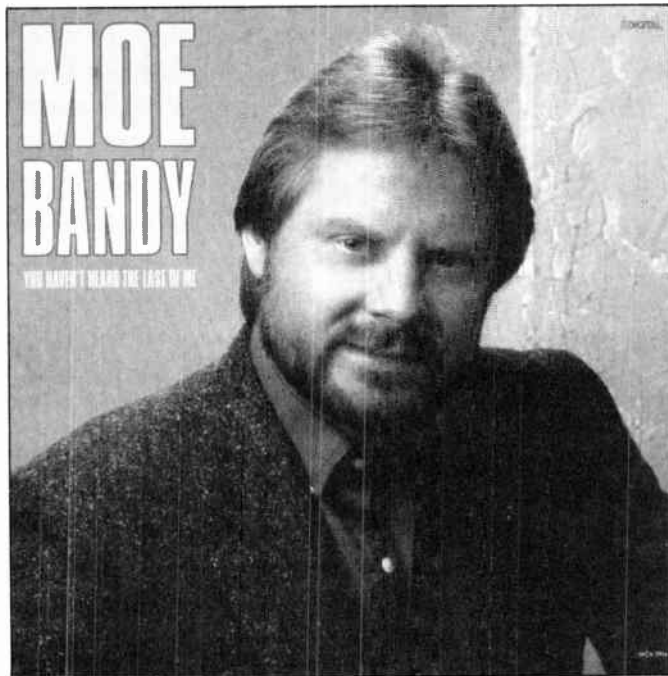


## Record Reviews

**T Bone Burnett**  
*T Bone Burnett*  
MCA-Dot 5809

**R**ock fans know T Bone Burnett as a maverick Christian solo artist and producer—of Los Lobos and Elvis Costello, among others—whose work has always had more to do with principles, ethics and ironies than with actual religion. Though he's often identified as being from Los Angeles, he hails from Fort Worth (where he still spends much of his time) and worked with Bob Dylan during one of that star's most country-influenced phases. So it's not hard to see how Jimmy Bowen would get the notion in his head that maybe T Bone should up and cut himself a countryish album for Dot just to see what might happen. The results aren't likely to win him many country fans, though, and they probably won't win him a wider rock audience. This is an instant cult album, by a cult artist who has always been frustrated by his inability to broaden his audience.

It turns out that Burnett's idea of countryish music is largely an update of acoustic, pre-Nashville Sound mountain music, heavy on the dobro, but don't shortchange the fiddle either. The pickers include two veterans of the Elvis Presley Vegas-era band (who also played with Emmylou Harris), one Los Lobos member, Byron Berline (L.A. country-rock's leading fiddler), and Billy Swan, of "I Can Help" and Kris Kristofferson sideman fame. T Bone favors melodies of almost nursery rhyme simplicity; the harmonies are high and nasal, which is fine, but his own lead vocals are—inexplicably—done with such an exaggerated hillbilly accent as to seem embarrassing and patronizing. The overall feel is somber, intimate; what with those strum-



ming guitars, it's meant also, I think, to be delicate and trance-like, but you either lock into it with him or you don't. I don't, though I continue to admire some of his earlier work. This one-shot, quite simply, is not what T Bone Burnett does best.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

**Moe Bandy**  
*You Haven't Heard the Last of Me*  
MCA-5914

**A**h, but how many of you can recall a long-ago time, way back in the last ice age I think it was, many millennia ago: way back before there was a George Strait, a Randy Travis, a Dwight Yoakam, or a John Anderson on the scene?

How many of you can actually remember way back when a guy named Moe Bandy was newly arrived, being hyped up by all the reviewers, written up in all the glossy magazines as "The Jesus Christ of Honky Tonk," the "Holy Ghost of Country Music," "The Savior of Hard Country," and such?

Well, I suppose, really, it

hasn't been that long ago. But then again, in the years since, the above-mentioned newer talents *have* come along. How quickly we forget.

If nothing else, all this is a glaring reminder of what a quick turnover, cruel business this music industry is. All it takes is a couple of lackluster records, a slight shift in taste, and—presto!—yesterday's hero, whom all the critics like myself had been busily hailing as the best thing since polio vaccine, becomes today's benchsitter.

Judging from the title of Moe Bandy's new album—his first for MCA—the irony and injustice of this has not been lost upon him, either. As if coming full circle, Bandy is now teamed with producer Jerry Kennedy, whose star has also gone into partial eclipse in the "new age" of country. Kennedy's best known for the work he did in the 1960's and early 1970's with artists like Jerry Lee Lewis and Tom T. Hall.

There are no great surprises here, even given the combination of talents. What we've got is Bandy, with his usual journeyman prowess, assisted by Kennedy's straight-ahead production, covering his usual quasi-honky tonk

musical territory.

This is territory that you *used* to be able to get away with calling hard country. But, what with people like Travis, Strait and Anderson now serving as a frame of reference, what Bandy does just doesn't seem all that *hard* anymore. The Bergen White Strings, for instance, can be heard here on any number of cuts. And Bandy himself has such a lilting, almost youthfully sweet voice that on a number of cuts, such as Becky Hobbs' "Rodeo Song," he almost sounds like a honky tonk Gilbert O. Sullivan.

What I continue to love about Bandy, though, is his cornspun sincerity: that stentorian corniness he's able to wring from his voice, and his fondness for songs built on broad puns and clumsy double entendres. These are ingredients which lie at the heart of so much great—and not so great—country music. Listen, for instance, to "That Ring You See on Her Hand Is a One Man Band." Or listen to the unabashedly drunken, self-pitying pathos of "I Forgot That I Don't Live Here Anymore."

There are a few other great songs on here, as well. "Till I'm Too Old to Die Young," written by John Hadley, Kevin Welch and Scott Dooley, is a heartfelt prayer for longevity, and a mature answer to all those "live hard, leave a beautiful memory" ballads. "You Can't Straddle the Fence Anymore," by Larry Cordle and Larry Shell, slyly mixes rodeo-riding imagery with sexual innuendo.

Bandy may not be the greatest or most inspired honky tonk stylist to come down the pike, when it's all said and done. (In this, he reminds me of Gene Watson.) Even so, he's a great mid-level artist who just keeps hanging in there and coming up with the goods. So give him a listen if you get a chance. You sure won't go wrong. —BOB ALLEN

# Buried Treasures

Reissues,  
Rarities and the  
Hard-to-Find

**Bob Wills:** Columbia's 1973 two-album *Bob Wills Anthology* was the first acknowledgment by a major label of the growing interest in Western swing and helped many newcomers, including me, understand Wills' importance. There have been rumors that the label's Historic Edition Series was ending due to poor sales, so the appearance of the two-record *The Golden Era* (C2 40149) is a pleasant surprise. This sampler of Wills material concentrates on the 1935 to 1942 period when the band was based in Tulsa and broadcast daily over KVOO.

After 15 years of listening closely to Wills, I hear this music differently than I did at first and particularly so on this collection. Despite their spirit, the early Playboys had serious musical problems. Tommy Duncan, Leon McAuliffe and Jesse Ashlock were incredible, but the rhythm section was ponderous, the horns clumsy.

Eldon Shamblin changed all that. His immense contribution to the Playboy sound is obvious throughout this set. His guitar streamlined the rhythm section and paved the way, later, for the electric guitar sound to replace horns in the band; his arrangements supercharged the horns and attracted better musicians. Note the improvement from "Bring It On Down to My House" (1936) to "Swanee River" (1938) to their dynamic 1942 arrangement of "Liebestraum," comparable to the best big swing bands in the country.

Some of these numbers have only been available on 78's, among them "Liberty," a Wills fiddle solo backed only by guitarist Sleepy Johnson, and "Good Old Oklahoma," and "There's No Disappointment in Heaven," a Wills-penned hymn he sang on the radio

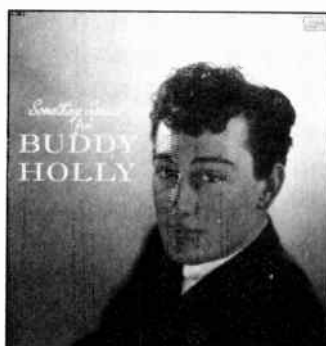


and, on request of fans, at Tulsa funerals, was previously reissued but belongs here nonetheless.

If the melody of "Steel Guitar Stomp" sounds familiar, it's because it's virtually identical to that of the later "Big Beaver." "I've Got the Wonder Where She Went (Blues)" and the previously unknown big-band/fiddle version of "New San Antonio Rose" only appeared on the 1982 Time-Life boxed set.

Others are alternate takes that differ from the issued versions, one example being "Hang Your Head In Shame," which opens with the twin guitars of Jimmy Wyble and Cameron Hill instead of its trademark twin fiddle intro. The fantastic "Girl I Left Behind Me" which, despite the "previously unissued" notation, was on an earlier reissue, remains one of their finest moments, as Bob exhorts trumpeter Tubby Lewis to "tear it up!", and he does. This is the best Wills reissue to appear in years.

**George Jones:** George Jones collectors have always known that two of his best—and most collectable—albums were his salutes to other artists, one a Hank Williams, the other a Bob Wills tribute, both originally released on United Artists. The Hank, done in 1960, and the Wills, done in 1962, have been combined by British EMI, which has reissued 20 songs, ten



from each album, under the title *George Jones Sings Hank Williams and Bob Wills* (EMS 1169).

Short of having the original albums available again, this set demonstrates better than anything else could Jones' vast musical debts to both Hank and Bob. His performances of Hank's "Wedding Bells," "They'll Never Take Her Love From Me," "Mansion on the Hill" and "You Win Again" are haunting, leaving no question that Hank's tortured spirit lives on in George's voice.

In Wills territory, though he takes on Wills standards like "San Antonio Rose," "Faded Love" and "Take Me Back to Tulsa," he also concentrates on lesser-known Wills recordings like the classic "Warm Red Wine," "Worried Mind" and "Silver Dew on the Bluegrass Tonight," all well-suited to his style.

**Duane Eddy:** Twangy guitarist Duane Eddy made a comeback last year when he recorded a new version of his classic instrumental "Peter Gunn" with the British rock band The Art of Noise and picked on Marty Stuart's debut album, *Marty Stuart*. Though his biggest hits were for Jamie Records, he moved to RCA around 1962, where he had three more: "The Ballad of Paladin," "(Dance With the) Guitar Man" and "Boss Guitar."

These three are available

now on the album—*Guitar Man* (TC-MFP 5777). Three more songs come from his out of print RCA album, *Twang a Country Song*, which are instrumental versions of country classics that were recorded with steel guitarist Buddy Emmons, and today are considered among both men's best work. These three—"Deep in the Heart of Texas," "Fireball Mail" and "Wildwood Flower"—make one year for a reissue of the complete RCA album.

**Buddy Holly:** After Buddy Holly died in 1959, Decca records released everything of his they could find, including demo tapes. On these latter, Holly's producer Norman Petty often added additional musicians to "improve" the sound. This tacky, rarely successful practice has also screwed up material by Jim Reeves, Elvis, Patsy Cline, Lefty Frizzell and Hank Williams.

*Something Special From Buddy Holly* (Rollercoaster ROLL 2013) is just that...something special. Taken from casually-taped 1956 garage jam sessions with drummer Jerry Allison, most of these songs were subjected to Petty's studio desecration before being released on the *Buddy Holly Showcase* and *Giant Buddy Holly* albums. Granted, the original sound quality is rough at times—like when Allison leans on his bass drum pedal—but the intensity of the music makes that irrelevant.

Backed by his electric guitar and Allison, Holly gets an incredibly full sound, particularly on "Good Rockin' Tonight," "Rip It Up" and "Bo Diddley," long a favorite of Holly's. Even Bill Doggett's then-new rhythm-and-blues instrumental "Honky Tonk," which was originally built around Billy Butler's guitar and Clifford Scott's tenor sax,



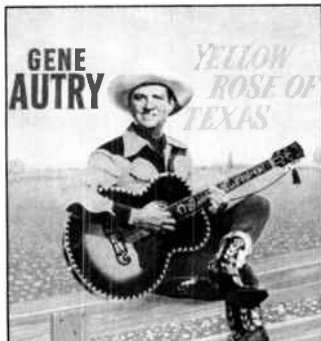
sounds great played by just Holly and Allison. The collection's also a mini-lesson in the roots and essence of rockabilly, and a revelation of just how tough Holly could play in an informal setting. When all is said and done, the tampering didn't spoil this set too much.

**Gene Autry:** Bear Family has another picture record well worth the price. This time Richard Weize has reached back into the RCA Victor vaults to release sixteen 1929 to 1933 numbers by Gene Autry under the title *Yellow Rose of Texas* (BDP 15204). This early Autry material ranges from the title track to bluesy Jimmie Rodgers-style numbers like "Black Bottom Blues" and "Do Right Daddy Blues," along with "My Dreaming of You" sung with early partner Jimmy Long.

The sound on this record is nothing short of amazing. Using modern digital tape equipment, Weize has enhanced the original monaural beyond belief, making these primitive recordings clearer, cleaner and better-sounding than the original 78's or the masters. You seem to be sitting right next to Autry, which greatly increases the enjoyment. Though all Bear Family projects are digital, the difference here is breathtaking.

**Willie Nelson:** Willie Nelson's 1968 RCA album *Texas in My Soul*, a dozen non-original songs about the state, was conceived on two levels: one, as Willie's salute to his home state and two, because Texas at the time was the only region where he sold many records. Bear Family has made it available again as *Beautiful Texas* (BFX 15256), adding two numbers from the *Country Favorites—Willie Nelson Style* album originally released two years earlier, in 1966.

Willie mixed lesser known numbers like "The Hill Country Theme," "Dallas," a minor 1967 hit for singer Vern Stovall, and "Who Put All of My Ex's in Texas," co-written



Photos adorn inside and outside covers.

by Eddie Rabbitt, with such standards as W. Lee O'Daniel's "Beautiful Texas," Ernest Tubb's "Waltz Across Texas" and the Western swing standard "Texas in My Soul."

These excellent numbers are augmented by the 1966 sides: two different versions of "San Antonio Rose" and "Home in San Antone" recorded with fiddler Wade Ray and Ernest Tubb's band, the Texas Troubadours. Surprisingly, no discographical data is provided on the sleeve, unusual for Bear Family projects.

**Wayne Raney:** Singer-harmonica player Wayne Raney was treated not long ago to a Charly Records reissue of his King sides. The current followup, *More Hot Boogie* (CR 30263), contains more excellent, if obscure King material, though there's not one boogie on this whole set.



Raney's always been seriously underrated, partly because he worked so often in the shadow of The Delmore Brothers. In addition to his work as a musician, he was an immensely popular disk jockey in Cincinnati in the early 1940's.

Raney's chief strength was always pridefully rural numbers like "I Ain't Nothin' But a Tom Cat's Kitten" and "Falling." On many tracks he's backed by his longtime associates, The Delmores, and his mentor, harmonica player Lonnie Glosson. The Delmores particularly stand out on the sweet, plaintive "I

Want a Home in Dixie." Also included is Raney's huge 1949 hit, "Why Don't You Haul Off and Love Me," which was apparently dubbed off disc, not original masters.

**Milton Brown:** Charly's *Easy Ridin' Papa* (CR 30264), featuring pioneer Western Swing band Milton Brown and His Musical Brownies (not "Milton Brown & The Brownies" as the album states), is well worth having, as it brings together some of the group's better-known 1935 and 1936 Decca sides.

Brown left the Light Crust Doughboys and his friend Bob Wills to form the Brownies in 1932, and his group was already established while Wills was still struggling to find his niche. Many in Texas actually preferred Brown's streamlined swing to the early Playboys. Little wonder, with pioneer Western swing pianist Fred "Papa" Calhoun, swing fiddle virtuosi Cliff Bruner, Jesse Ashlock and Cecil Brower and steel guitar innovator Bob Dunn in their ranks at various times.

Dunn's voicelike steel playing on "Easy Ridin' Papa" and "Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider" make it clear that he was setting the standards for *everyone*. Brown's outstanding vocals explain his charisma, and Calhoun's stomping, jazzy piano was an important anchor for the group. This is an excellent introduction to the Brownies' music, all of which desperately needs reissuing.

Alas, as is true of all too many Charly releases, the sound quality on both the Raney and Brown albums is mediocre. Raney's superb "Lonesome Wind Blues" features obnoxious overdubbed drums not on the original. In addition, Charly compiler Adam Komorowski's ill-written, uninformed notes add nothing to either album (particularly the Brown). No question, Charly offers this material at a decent price, but don't expect Bear Family quality.

—RICH KIENZLE

### How To Get These Treasures

The following are all available in records or cassettes, at the prices shown: Bob Wills, *The Golden Era* (CS 40149), double album, \$17.98; George Jones, *George Jones Sings Hank Williams and Bob Wills* (EMS 1169), \$9.98; Duane Eddy, *Guitar Man* (TC-MFP 5777), \$9.98.

Available in records only are the following, all at \$11.98: Buddy Holly, *Something Special From Buddy Holly* (Roll 2013); Willie Nelson, *Beautiful Texas* (BFX 15256); Wayne Raney, *More Hot Boogie* (CR 30263); Milton Brown and His Musical Brownies, *Easy Ridin' Papa* (CR 30264).

Last but not least, the picture disk, available in records only: Gene Autry, *Yellow Rose of Texas* (BDP 15204), \$14.98.

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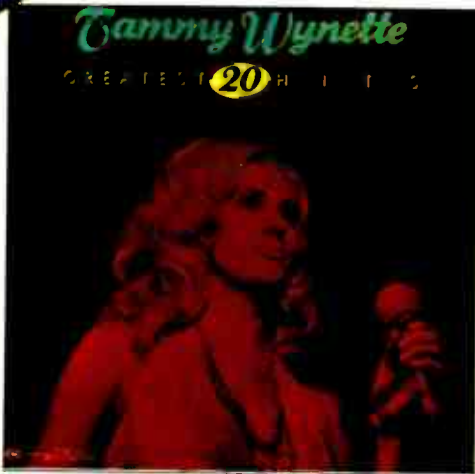
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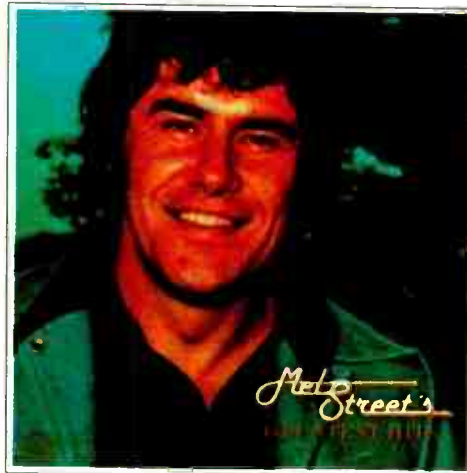
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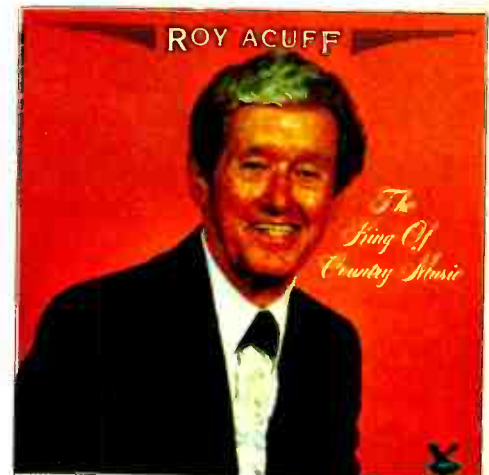
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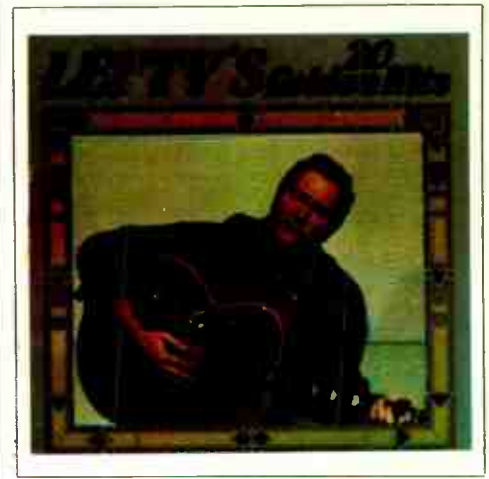
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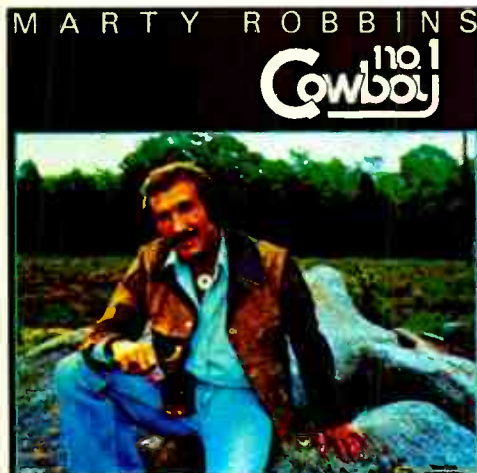
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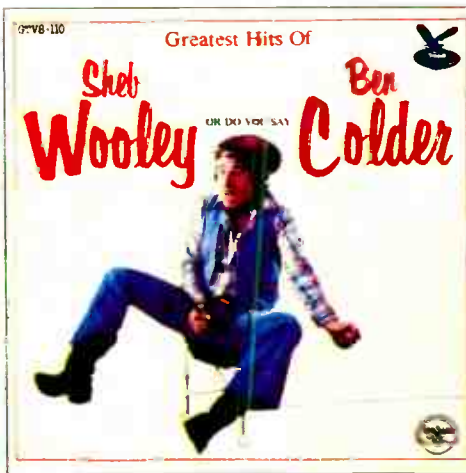
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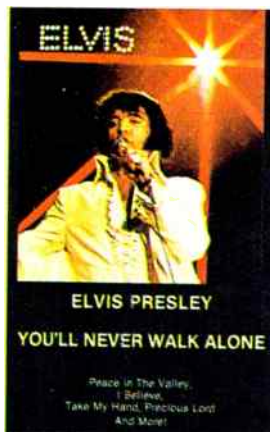
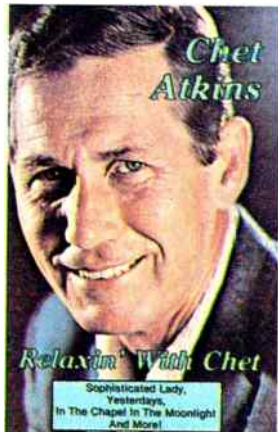
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**CHET ATKINS—RELAXIN' WITH CHET:** Blues For Dr. Joe/Sophisticated Lady/Yesterdays/Say "Si Si"/Vilia/Martha/In The Chapel/In The Moonlight/Czardas/Nagasaki/April In Portugal—No. CAK2296

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**JOHNNY CASH—THIS IS JOHNNY CASH:** A Boy Named Sue/Five Foot High And Risin'/Man In Black/Folsom Prison Blues/If I Were A Computer/Frankie's Man/Johnny/One Piece At A Time/Understand Your Man—No. CBK3014

**COUNTRY GIANTS—(M. ROBBINS, J. HORTON, J. CASH):** Battle Of New Orleans/El Paso/If You've Got The Money Honey/We Sure Can Love Each Other/Waterloo/I Walk The Line/The Grand Tour/PT 109—No. CBK3006

**SKEETER DAVIS—THE END OF THE WORLD:** The End Of The World/Daddy Sang Bass/My Coloring Book/Son-Of-A-Preacher Man/Am I That Easy To Forget?/Little Arrows/Hold Me Tight/Angel Of The Morning/I Forgot More Than You'll Ever—No. CAK2607

**HITS BY TOM T. HALL:** (Old Dogs, And Children And) Watermelon Wine/A Week In A Country Jail/The Year That Clayton Delaney Died/I Wish I Had Loved Somebody Else/Son Of Clayton Delaney/You Show Me Your Heart (And I'll Show You Mine)/It's All In The Game/More About John Henry—No. CPK3202

**JOHNNY HORTON—BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS:** The Battle Of New Orleans/North To Alaska/Sink The Bismarck/Honky Tonk Man/Comanche/Whispering Pines/Johnny Reb/Rock Island Line—No. CBK3012

**WAYLON JENNINGS—THE ONE AND ONLY WAYLON JENNINGS:** Yes, Virginia/Dream Baby (How Long Must I Dream)/You Beat All I Ever Saw/She Loves Me (She Don't Love You)/It's All Over Now/Born To Love You/Down Came The World/The Dark Side Of Fame/John's Back In Town/Listen, They're Playing My Song—No. CAK2183

**WAYLON JENNINGS—HEARTACHES BY THE NUMBER:** Heartaches By The Number/Tiger By The Tail/Foolin' Round/(That's What You Get) For Lovin' Me/You're Gonna Wonder About Me/Folsom Prison Blues/Busted/Time To Bum Again/Leavin' Town—No. CAK2556

**WAYLON JENNINGS—RUBY, DON'T TAKE YOUR LOVE TO TOWN:** Just To Satisfy You/Gentle On My Mind/Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town/Leavin' Town/Your Love/New York City, R.F.D./Hangin' On/Today I Started Loving You Again/Time To Bum Again—No. CAK2608

**BILL MONROE—THE BEST OF BILL MONROE:** Summertime Is Past And Gone/Old Cross Road (Is Waiting)/Blue Grass Special/Mansions For Me/Goodbye Old Pal/Yodel #4/Toy Heart/True Life Blues—No. CBK3021

**JIM RABORS—OUR LOVE:** The Impossible Dreams/Strangers In The Night/Somewhere My Love/Swanee/Our Love/There's A Kind Of A Hush/Little Green Apples/Sunrise/Sunset—No. CBK3011

**WILLIE NELSON—COLUMBUS STOCKADE BLUES AND OTHER COUNTRY FAVORITES:** Columbus Stockade Blues/I Love You Because/Heartaches By The Number/Seasons Of My Heart/San Antonio Rose/Don't You Ever Get Tired/Fraulein/Go On Home/I'd Trade All Of My Tomorrows (Just For You)—No. CAK2444

**OLLY PARTON—JUST THE WAY I AM:** Just The Way I Am/Little Bird/Mama Say A Prayer/My Blue Ridge Mountain Boy/In The Good Old Days (When Times Were Bad)/In The Ghetto/Daddy Come And Get Me/The Carroll County Accident/Gypsy, Joe And Me—No. CAK2583

**ELVIS PRESLEY—ELVIS SINGS "FLAMING STAR":** Flaming Star/Wonderful World/Night Life/All I Needed Was The Rain/Too Much Monkey Business/Yellow Rose Of Texas—The Eyes of Texas/She's A Machine/Do The Vega/Tiger Man—No. CAK2304

**ELVIS PRESLEY—LET'S BE FRIENDS:** Stay Away, Joe/If I'm A Fool (For Loving You)/Let's Be Friends/Let's Forget About The Stars/Mama/I'll Be There (If You Ever Want Me)/Almost/Change of Habit/Have A Happy—No. CAK2408

**ELVIS PRESLEY—ALMOST IN LOVE:** Almost In Love/Long Legged Girl/Edge Of Reality/My Little Friend/A Little Less Conversation/Rubberneckin'/Clean Up Your Own Back Yard/U.S. Mail/Charro/Stay Away—No. CAK2440

**ELVIS PRESLEY—C'MON EVERYBODY:** C'Mon Everybody/Angel/Easy Come, Easy Go/A Whistling Tune/Follow That Dream/King Of The Whole Wide World/I'll Take Love/Today, Tomorrow And Forever/I'm Not The Marrying Kind/This Is Living—No. CAK2518

**ELVIS PRESLEY—YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE:** You'll Never Walk Alone/

Who Am I?/Let Us Pray/There'll Be Peace In The Valley/We Call On Him/I Believe/It Is No Secret/Sing You Children/Take My Hand, Precious Lord—No. CAK2472

**ELVIS PRESLEY—I GOT LUCKY:** I Got Lucky/What A Wonderful Life/I Need Somebody To Lean On/Yoga Is As Yoga Does/Riding The Rainbow/Fools Fall In Love/The Love Machine/Home Is Where The Heart Is/You Gotta Stop/If You Think I Don't Need You—No. CAK2533

**ELVIS PRESLEY—ELVIS SINGS HITS FROM HIS MOVIES:** Down By The Riverside And When The Saints Go Marching In/They Remind Me Too Much Of You/Confidence/Frankie And Johnny/Guitar Man/Long Legged Girl (With The Short Dress On)/You Don't Know Me/How Would You Like To Be/Big Boss Man/Old MacDonald—No. CAK2567

**ELVIS PRESLEY—BURNING LOVE AND HITS FROM HIS MOVIES-VOL. 2:** Burning Love/Tender Feeling/Am I Ready/Tonight Is So Right For Love/Guadalajara/It's A Matter Of Time/No More/Santa Lucia/We'll Be Together/I Love Only One Girl—No. CAK2595

**ELVIS PRESLEY—SEPARATE WAYS:** Separate Ways/Sentimental Me/In My Way/I Met Her Today/What Now, What Next, Where To/Always On My Mind/I Slipped, I Stumbled, I Fell/Is It So Strange/Forget Me Never/Old Shep—No. CAK2611

**RAY PRICE—THE SAME OLD ME:** Heartaches By The Number/My Shoes Keep Walking Back To You/I Won't Mention It Again/The Same Old Me/Invitation To The Blues/City Lights/You're The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me/Crazy Arms—No. CBK3013

**THE INCOMPARABLE CHARLEY PRIDE:** I'd Rather Love You/Time/You're Not A Friend Of Mine/Jeanie Norman/Anywhere (Just Inside Your Arms)/When The Trains Come In/Piroque Joe/Was It All Worth Losing You/Instant Loneliness/This Highway Leads To Glory/Time Out For Jesus—No. CAK2584

**JIM REEVES—ACCORDING TO MY**





# TOP 25

## Singles

1. Steve Wariner..... *Small Town Girl*
2. Kenny Rogers..... *Twenty Years Ago*
3. George Strait..... *Ocean Front Property*
4. Larry Gatlin & The  
Gatlin Bros..... *Talkin' to the Moon*
5. Alabama..... *You've Got the Touch*
6. The Bellamy Brothers... *Kids of the Baby Boom*
7. Highway 101..... *The Bed You Made For Me*
8. Waylon Jennings..... *Rose in Paradise*
9. George Jones..... *The Right Left Hand*
10. T Graham Brown..... *Don't Go to Strangers*
11. Reba McEntire..... *Let the Music Lift You Up*
12. Michael Johnson..... *The Moon Is Still Over Her  
Shoulder*
13. Michael Martin Murphey  
and Holly Dunn..... *A Face in the Crowd*
14. Restless Heart..... *I'll Still Be Loving You*
15. The Judds..... *Don't Be Cruel*
16. Dolly Parton, Linda Ron-  
stadt, Emmylou Harris... *To Know Him Is to Love Him*
17. Kathy Mattea..... *You're the Power*
18. The O'Kanes..... *Can't Stop My Heart From  
Loving You*
19. Don Williams..... *Senorita*
20. The Oak Ridge Boys... *It Takes a Little Rain*
21. The Shooters..... *They Only Come Out at Night*
22. Steve Earle..... *Goodbye's All We've Got Left*
23. The Statler Brothers..... *Forever*
24. Judy Rodman..... *Girls Ride Horses, Too*
25. Billy Joe Royal..... *Old Bridges Burn Slow*

## Albums

1. The Judds..... *Heart Land*
2. George Strait..... *Ocean Front Property*
3. Hank Williams Jr..... *Hank "Live"*
4. Randy Travis..... *Storms of Life*
5. Reba McEntire..... *What Am I Gonna Do About  
You*
6. Restless Heart..... *Wheels*
7. George Jones..... *Wine Colored Roses*
8. Earl Thomas Conley.... *Too Many Times*
9. Dwight Yoakam..... *Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.*
10. Steve Earle..... *Guitar Town*
11. Sawyer Brown..... *Out Goin' Cattin'*
12. Sweethearts of the Rodeo *Sweethearts of the Rodeo*
13. Alabama..... *The Touch*
14. The O'Kanes..... *The O'Kanes*
15. Larry Gatlin and The  
Gatlin Brothers..... *Partners*
16. Emmylou Harris, Dolly  
Parton, Linda Ronstadt.. *Trio*
17. Lyle Lovett..... *Lyle Lovett*
18. Eddy Raven..... *Right Hand Man*
19. Waylon Jennings..... *Hangin' Tough*
20. John Anderson..... *Countrified*
21. Kathy Mattea..... *Walk the Way the Wind Blows*
22. The Bellamy Brothers... *Country Rap*
23. Nanci Griffith..... *Lone Star State of Mind*
24. T Graham Brown..... *I Tell It Like It Used To Be*
25. The Oak Ridge Boys.... *Where the Fast Lane Ends*

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