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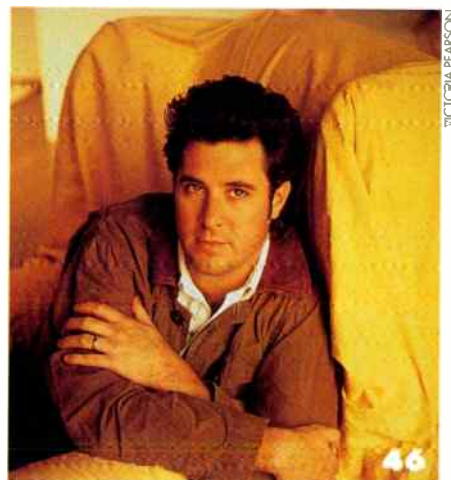
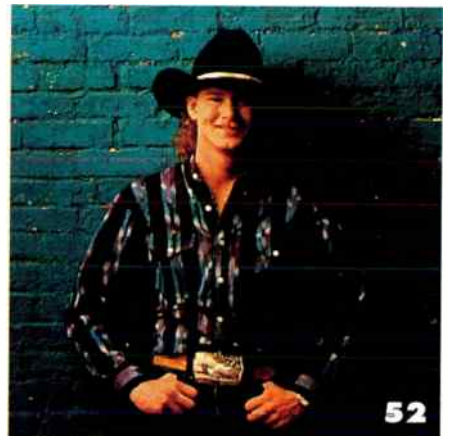
COUNTRY MUSIC

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VICTORIA PEARSON

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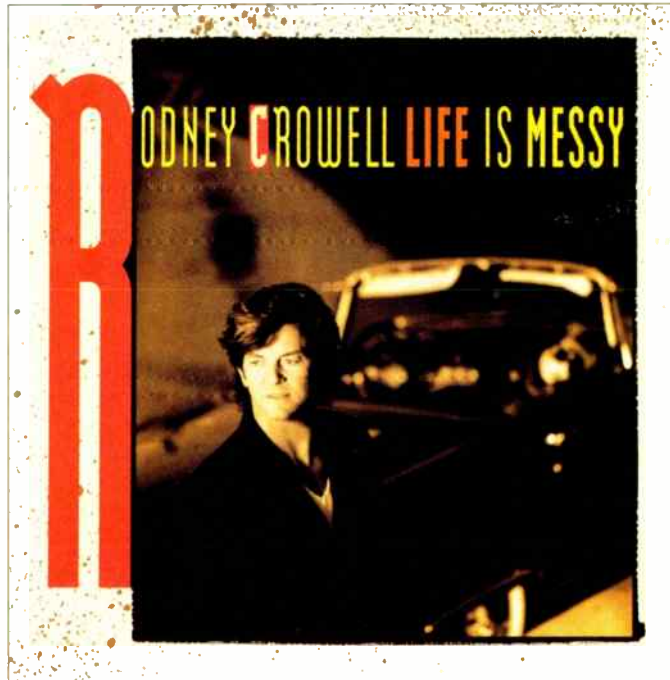
Rodney Crowell

Life Is Messy
Columbia CK 47985

Much is currently being written by music journalists about the "defections" of Lyle Lovett, k.d. lang and Michelle Shocked from country to the pop market. As happens all too often, these trend-of-the-moment scribes miss the point. Granted, Willie Nelson's hairy image wasn't exactly popular in many circles back in the 70's, but his country roots were beyond doubt. But unlike Willie, these three (two of whom I enjoy greatly) never had authentic country background. Lovett and Shocked suffered because many didn't understand their eclectic musical ideas, and lang attracted hostility from some country radio people and some fans for her anti-beef commercials, her image and her entire artistic approach.

Crowell, who's enjoyed acceptance from country fans for years, is in a different position. Three years ago, *Keys to the Highway* received justifiable critical acclaim for its strength and maturity. A lot has happened since. The Garth Juggernaut looms large, the scene is teeming with Hat Acts and, of course, Crowell's marriage to Rosanne Cash recently collapsed. In the past year he and guitarist John Leventhal also co-produced Jim Lauderdale's impressive—and individualistic—debut album.

Pain can either wreck an artist or the artist can make the pain work (in the case of Hank Williams, of course, it did both). Crowell's ability to use it constructively is well-documented. On *Keys* he accomplished it with "Things I



Wish I'd Said," his moving tribute to his late father. And before that, songs like "Till I Gain Control Again" and "Ain't Livin' Long Like This" also proved the point. This time, the changes in Crowell's life sent him in a different direction, and the result is an album packed with music that's listenable, sensual, compelling and never pretentious.

The deeply personal "I Hardly Know How to Be Myself," the compassionate "Life Is Messy," with its appropriate references to the tormented Elvis (a subject few writers ever use), and the dark, ethereal "Alone But Not Alone" all delve deep into darker moods. Crowell credits "Alone But Not Alone" to his immersion in the moody, late 50's jazz of trumpeter Miles Davis and pianist Bill Evans, music that won't register with many. However, as a fan of both Miles and Evans in that period, I hear and appreciate the connections. "Maybe Next

Time," another unorthodox love song, also fits that mold.

The magnificent "What Kind of Love," written by Crowell, Will Jennings and the late Roy Orbison, owes much of its sound to rock of the mid-60's, not the hippie music of late in the decade, but the vital music that Orbison and The Beatles made during that time. When Crowell loosens up, he doesn't do it with throwaway fluff. The driving hit record, "Lovin' All Night," and the bopping, Dion and The Belmonts-flavored "It Don't Get Better Than This" both reflect high standards. (The publicity material compares the latter to Elvis, but not to my ears.)

A word about the music itself: Crowell has done surprisingly well even though he took a risky step by co-producing the various songs with three others: Bobby Colomby (long-ago drummer for the 60's rock band Blood, Sweat and Tears), Larry Klein and John Leven-

thal. Instead of a disjointed final product, it's stunningly unified. The musicians may change, but a very basic, rich musical foundation runs throughout. Even the obligatory guest musicians, some of whom made their names in the 60's, make a difference. Linda Ronstadt and rocker Steve Winwood appear, as does Booker T. Jones (of Booker T. & The MG's—he also produced Willie Nelson's *Stardust* album).

Crowell has made some tremendous recordings in his time. This one, however, sets a standard that transcends "country" or "rock" labels. Only a few have that capability, and even fewer ever realize a magnificent achievement such as this. —RICH KIENZLE

Kevin Welch and The Overtones

Western Beat
Reprise 9 26823-4

"I dream with my eyes open," Kevin Welch declares in the first lines of the first song on his second album. "I see with my eyes closed."

There have always been people like Welch around the Nashville scene—the Jim Rooneys, Steve Youngs and Steve Earles who write a few hit songs for Music City mainstreamers—in Welch's case, The Judds, Gary Morris, Ricky Skaggs, Sweethearts of the Rodeo—and eventually get to make folky albums of their own which put them, if not in the mainstream, at least out there in the marketplace. By avoiding the sophomore slump on his new *Western Beat*, Welch establishes himself as one of the best of the current batch.

It's mostly right there in

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Record Reviews

that first track, too. "Early Summer Rain," a modern cowboy song of sorts, paints as vivid a word-picture as you could ask for. (And it's no small feat when he comes back later in the set with yet another "rain" song, "Same Old Rain," and actually pulls it off.) Yes, Welch is out on that same highway that's been home to everyone from Jimmie Rodgers to Jack Kerouac—the very term "Western Beat" conjures up music and beatniks both—but he makes each trip sound simultaneously new and familiar, as only the best writers, and born road-lovers, can do. In its first moments, "Something 'Bout You" echoes some of my favorite ghosts of American music—especially, somehow, "Sittin' on Top of the World"—but he quickly makes the melodic motif his own. It has a timeless quality, like good blues; it's full of the conflicting impulses you find in people who usually have an idea what's best for them but can't always bring themselves to embrace it. "Sam's Town" tells a story full of sly, knowing humor, while Welch's version of Joe Ely's "Me and Billy the Kid" brings that cocky fantasy to life with a snarl. As a singer, he's unpredictable but evocative—"The Other Side" twists and turns as though he wrote the words first, then just let them take his voice wherever it has to go to get them across. Good, tricky stuff. He can also pack a big thought into a little line, as on "Happy Ever After (Comes One Day at a Time)."

That being the case so often, I can easily overlook a cut like "The Restless Kind" which fails to transform yet another of the singer-songwriter's hoariest clichés—this time it just lies there, sounding like a cliché and nothing more—but Kevin Welch definitely has a way with words. Toss in the relaxed, intimate feel of the band, highlighted by a National steel guitar that suggests the Mississippi Delta



and the Mojave Desert alike—and you've got the latest in a tradition of albums on which a writer shows the bigger-name performers how it's supposed to be done.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

Mac McAnally *Live and Learn* MCA MCACD 10543

Mac McAnally comes out of the same Memphis/Mobile/New Orleans triangle of the Deep South that produced Jimmy Buffett, Tony Joe White, Lucinda Williams, Steve Forbert and Jesse Winchester—singer-songwriters who employ country music, folk-rock and rhythm & blues interchangeably to tell their stories. McAnally has had more luck selling his songs to other singers (Buffett, Ricky Van Shelton, Shenandoah, Randy Travis and Alabama) than scoring hits himself, but industry insiders have long hailed him as one of our most gifted Southern storytellers.

There's no better introduction to McAnally's ability to thread a personal narrative through a honky tonk melody and an R&B guitar riff than his first album for MCA. Co-produced by McAnally and the ever-tasteful Tony Brown, *Live and Learn* doesn't push itself at the listener as hard as McAnally's previous outings. Brown has recognized that understatement is one of McAnally's chief virtues as a writer and performer, and has given this new batch of songs leisurely arrangements with the same sleepy charm as



McAnally's voice.

That voice has a throaty hum similar to Randy Travis' but without the horsepower, and what do you get when you subtract the juice from Travis' resonance? James Taylor. McAnally sounds very much like Travis on a pair of country heartbreak ballads, even getting the Western swing feel on "It's All Over Now," but he more often resembles the Carolina side of Taylor, especially when he turns philosophical and fatalistic as he does on his best songs.

In addition to being much-sought-after as a songwriter, McAnally works a lot as a session guitarist and keyboardist, playing country sessions in Nashville and R&B sessions in Muscle Shoals. That experience produces lean, no-nonsense organ grooves for the bouncy songs on his new album and precise acoustic guitar runs for the atmospheric ballads. Thus the music readily invites one inside the songs to discover their hidden gold: the lyrics.

McAnally has a gift for details. He sums up a run-down neighborhood with the images of "mildew sofas, grown-up yards"; he quickly sketches a Southern archetype when he describes a man with "grease on the pockets of his Sunday pants," who keeps his junk cars "up on blocks for the world to see." When a man walks in unexpectedly on his wife and her lover, McAnally simply sings, "He turned the lights on and turned them off again." When he ruminates on "The Trouble with Diamonds (As a Measure of Love)," he sets the scene in a jewelry

shop that's going out of business because its owner is too honest for his own good.

Songs like "Junk Cars" and "The Trouble with Diamonds" are very funny, and songs like the title tune (the first single) and "Weight of the World" are well crafted, infectious commercial country. At times, McAnally lapses into his old problem with cutesy sentimentality—especially on a song about a dying mother—but this new album contains two songs that suggest that he could yet rise to the level of a Lyle Lovett or John Prine.

"All These Years" is a gorgeous but indescribably sad ballad performed with just McAnally's gut-string guitar and a string quartet. The lyrics describe how a hollow marriage leads to infidelity, allowing no optimism or extenuating circumstances to relieve the sting of the tale. Even better is "Passing Through," a deceptively easygoing ballad that calmly points out the insignificance of most human activity. "The worst-case scenario: the world just keeps on turning," he sings. "The best-case scenario: pretty much the same. All that seems to matter is the scramble for the credit and the blame." It's unlikely that Alabama or Ricky Van Shelton will ever record songs that cut as deeply as these two, so you'll have to hear McAnally sing them himself.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

Molly and The Heymakers

Molly and The Heymakers

Warner/Reprise 26443-2

The advance cassette of the debut album from Wisconsin-based Molly and The Heymakers had been kicking around for about a year, and I was impressed from the get-go. After some track changes, the album's finally been released, and I'm still impressed. This is a band that works well together—each member is ob-

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Record Reviews

viously a talented musician, their playing styles complement one another, they can harmonize well, and each is given the chance to shine. The band consists of: Molly Scheer (vocals, mandolin, fiddle, guitar), Andy Dee (guitar, bass, dobro), Joe Lindzius (drums, percussion), Jeff Nelson (bass) and Chad Udeen (steel).

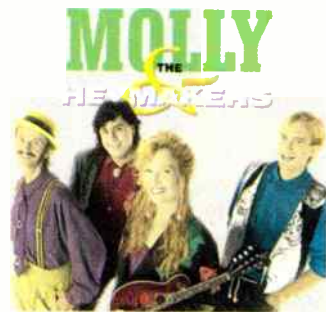
A respect for country tradition runs through the album, but at the same time, a host of other diverse elements are present—bluegrass, 60's-style California pop, rockabilly, honky tonk, Cajun, rock 'n' roll, Western swing and more. This blend makes for a distinctive sound, and an album that's got a lot of energy and is full of hot licks....Call them the Kid Creole and The Cocoanuts of country music—they're almost that eclectic, and almost that good.

Seven out of 12 cuts were written by lead singer and multi-instrumentalist Molly Scheer (either alone or with co-writers), and the other five are fine choices of cover tunes. They do an outstanding job on the Wynn Stewart classic, "Big Big Love" (also covered by k.d. lang a couple of years back), for example, giving it a Cajun/rockabilly feel, and more than do justice to the Nanci Griffith gem, "Anyone Can Be Somebody's Fool" (one of the few ballads here). And their take on "Mountain of Love" (most recently a hit for Charley Pride in 1982) builds and builds until it almost explodes. It will probably be, as the cliché in the rock world goes, "big in the clubs."

The originals are mostly upbeat, hook-filled, "feel-good" tunes. With the notable exception of "Well Ran Dry" (a song about the loss of a family farm, written by Molly alone, and dedicated to FarmAid), these aren't intense, change-the-world, tear-your-heart-out songs; they're just fun, infectious tunes backed by hot musicianship. Standouts include: "Jimmy McCarthy's Truck" (the current single, which immortalizes the simple

theme of teenagers riding around in a beat-up old truck), "Chasin' Something Called Love" (the first single, which features a shuffling groove plus inspired mandolin work from Molly), the bluegrassy "He Comes Around" and the rockabilly number, "If Love" (check the fabulous guitar work from Andy Dee and witty lyrics from Molly—*If love was a state I'm sure that it would be Texas/It'd be big and wide and Lord it would be hot/And it would talk real loud and it would be real proud*). This is good road trip music, and there's really not a clunker in the bunch.

I've no complaints about production, either. The task was handled by Paul Worley and Ed Seay on some cuts, Gregg Brown on others. It ap-

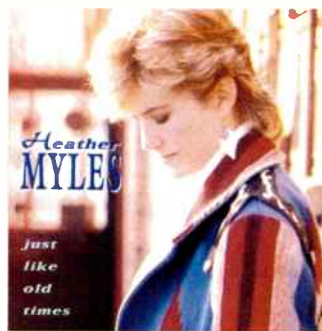


pears, especially on the Gregg Brown cuts, that the band members were given a lot of latitude to do their own thing. They were up to the challenge.

One confusing point though: It's certainly not out of the ordinary for additional musicians to play on an album, but in the liner notes, about a dozen "additional musicians" are listed as contributing, and we're not told on which songs they played. Is it possible I'm raving about the wrong group of people? Musician credits are needed for each song.

The band's press bio states that "they make music to entertain." That's evident. Their diversity is refreshing. After all, no one ever said that country music *always* has to be somber and deep—there's a place for fun, too.

—GEORGE FLETCHER



Heather Myles *Just Like Old Times* Hightone HCD 8035

Heather Myles first emerged on HighTone Records' Western Beat anthology, *Points West*. Her musical direction, like Kelly Willis', is more authentically country than that of someone like Mary-Chapin Carpenter, and her voice is throaty and muscular, intense and sensual. She's derivative of no one, though echoes of Patsy, the young Tammy Wynette and Loretta Lynn occasionally shine through. Her phrasing is just right—she neither pulls punches nor oversings.

The publicity material calls her music "Western Beat," a catchy phrase, but Myles' sound doesn't differ significantly from that of Dwight Yoakam or past Bakersfield legends. The fiddler is none other than Brantley Kearns of Dwight's band, and the remainder of the backup musicians all come from the same school of West Coast country players.

Myles penned some of the most moving songs here, among them the pensive "Rum & Rodeo," a can't-go-home-again lament to an alcoholic rodeo rider. The healing number, "I Love You, Good-bye," looks beyond a fractured relationship to a better, more substantive future. "Love Lyin' Down" takes a hardline approach to a relationship; Myles' jagged, lusty vocal is a perfect complement to the lyrics. Both "One Good Reason Why" and the image-laden

"Changes" further reveal her lyrical substance and strength. I suspect it won't be long before others cover her material. "Make a Fool Out of Me," laden with wit and directness, is in the spirit of Harlan Howard and other great composers.

Myles and producer Bruce Bromberg did equally well selecting songs written by others. Jim Lauderdale's cautionary "Stay Out of My Arms" fits her perfectly. Her version of Gary Brandin's "Lovin' the Bottle" deftly recaptures the mid-60's Bakersfield sound. "Playin' in the Dirt," co-written by contemporary blues star (and HighTone artist) Robert Cray, shows her punch as a country blues vocalist and is, in many ways, the most riveting performance here. The quality of the contemporary songs leaves little reason to revive old chestnuts. There's only one here, but Myles' eloquent version of Stonewall Jackson's 32-year-old hit, "Why I'm Walkin'," is the perfect oldie for her.

Myles' potential is so obvious it hits you in the face, and it's probably inevitable that one day soon, a major label will snap her up. If so, I only hope that they let her do what she does best. She's not another Reba, she's not another Patty, Dolly or anyone else, and her voice, sound and image don't need fixing or tampering with. You know what they say about not fixing something that ain't broke.

—RICH KIENZLE

Martina McBride *The Time Has Come* RCA 66002-2

When Martina McBride stares out from the eight-count 'em, eight-photos on her debut CD, with her blue eyes and high cheekbones, the 25-year-old Kansan looks for all the world like Michelle Pfeiffer. That resemblance certainly won't hurt the commercial prospects of

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COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE

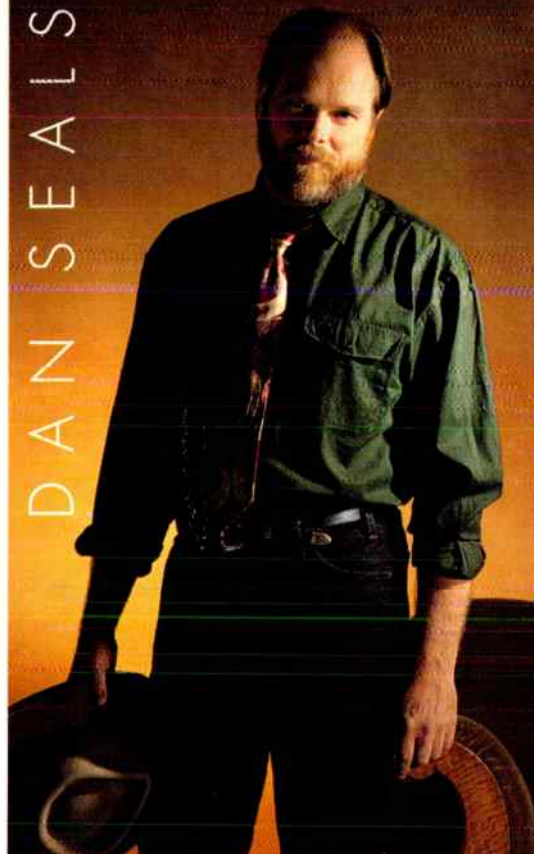
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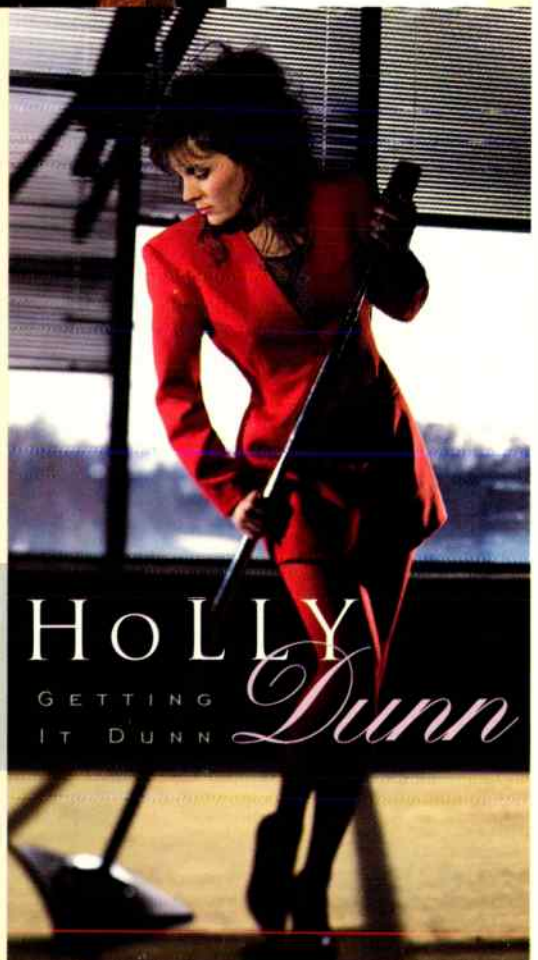
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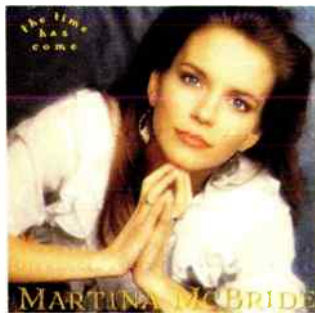
this enjoyable but less-than-earth-shaking album.

McBride got her start selling T-shirts for Garth Brooks and later became his opening act. Like her mentor, McBride pursues a brand of pop-country that owes as much to James Taylor and Carly Simon as to George Jones and Tammy Wynette. Ironically, Brooks shows up as a guest vocalist on the album's one throwback number, a delicious, tears-in-your-beers honky tonker called "Cheap Whiskey."

Producers Paul Worley and Ed Seay, who mastered the trick of marrying pop rhythm tracks to country leads with The Desert Rose Band and Highway 101, turn the same trick for McBride. Almost all the songs are old-fashioned tales of love gone wrong ornamented with fiddles and steel guitars, but the punchy drum sound, the crisp electric guitars and McBride's own twangless pop voice give the album a modern suburban sound.

McBride has a pretty if smallish soprano that serves every song capably but seldom adds anything extra. When she sings Carol Chase and Kathy Louvin's Patsy Cline tribute, "True Blue Fool," for example, McBride pulls off Cline's trademark note slides and yodel embellishments perfectly but never uses those stylish touches anywhere else on the album. On confessional ballads like "That's Me," "A Woman Knows" and "When You Are Old," she gets the melody but not the ache.

She's much better on the uptempo material. The album's title track and first single is a brisk, kiss-off number that finds McBride sailing through the pop hook with the assurance of ex-Highway 101's Paulette Carlson. The album's best number, "I Can't Sleep" by Louvin and Mark Collie, is a two-step lament with a gorgeous melody that McBride uses as the foundation for some lovely harmony



singing. McBride is young, and she has the backing and voice to eventually grow into a more assured singer. In the meantime, she has those eyes.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

Shenandoah

Long Time Comin'

RCA/BMG 07863-66001-4-2

In the last couple of years Shenandoah has been dragged through a series of professional setbacks that are probably every hit band's worst nightmare scenario: lawsuits (over ownership of the name Shenandoah) and contractual disputes which drained them financially and kept them out of the recording studios for nearly two years.

Worse yet, these disasters struck at the worst possible time. (Not that there's ever a convenient time for litigation and insolvency.) Shenandoah was, until trouble stepped in and derailed them, on one heck of a roll. They'd had a half dozen or so Number One hits ("Church on Cumberland Road," "Sunday in the South," "Two Dozen Roses," "Next to You, Next to Me," etc.), a near-platinum LP (*The Road Not Taken*) and a growing legion of devoted fans.

All in all, their problems might have been enough to turn even the most optimistic musicians into cynical wrecks. But in Shenandoah's case, at least judging from the music on *Long Time Comin'*, the long-delayed follow-up album to *Extra Mile* (1990), they haven't. The material on the



new album sparkles with the same exuberance and sincerity that were hallmarks of the band's previous hits.

Shenandoah's musical stock in trade, fueled by Marty Raybon's fantastic lead singing (he's been described as a cross between George Jones and Otis Redding, and I don't consider that too serious an exaggeration), is songs that celebrate the virtues of the rural, Southern, God-fearing good life. Admittedly—like Alabama and everyone else who plows a similar furrow—the group has occasionally lapsed into bouts of corn pone, sticky nostalgia and deep-fried sentimentality; yet they've always managed to pull the whole thing off with their abiding, at times almost naive, earnestness and honesty.

This fundamental honesty, as well as a more subtle underpinning of moral conviction, comes through on the best material on *Long Time Comin'*. "Right Where I Belong," for instance, reworks the familiar theme of a small-town boy who makes his mark in the big city, then gives it all up for the slower and saner pace back in his one-horse hometown where he still knows his neighbors by their first names and isn't afraid to walk the streets at night.

"Rock My Baby" is a saucy, uptempo celebration of a man who's all excited about rushing home from work to spend a torridly romantic evening with...his wife. "Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting" delves deeply into nostalgia; it's a fond remembrance of and tes-

timonial to being raised in the old fire-and-brimstone brand of faith where the preacher wasn't afraid to thump the Bible or invoke the agonies of the everlasting fire.

"I Was Young Once Too," co-written by the brilliant Nashville composer Richard Leigh and Shenandoah's long-time producer Robert Byrne (who is joined this time around by Keith Stegall, the producer responsible for Alan Jackson's many hits), is a lovely song about love and shared values being passed from generation to generation.

On other songs on *Long Time Comin'*, one senses that Shenandoah has reached a new, sometimes unsettling, plateau of maturity and world-awareness. Their characteristically unabashed optimism is occasionally shaded with the acknowledgment that, despite one's best efforts and most fervent hopes, things do not always work out.

You can hear this new note on "Same Old Heart" (by Mac McAnally), where a man in the midst of what sounds like a troubled marriage can only affirm that his feelings have not changed and he's as steadfast in love as ever. Yet there's a wistful undercurrent to the song that suggests this may or may not be enough.

In "Leavin's a Long Time Comin'" (co-written by drummer Mike McGuire), a man who has neglected his mate wakes up one morning and can only blame himself when he discovers she's gone. In "There Ain't No Beverly Hills in Tennessee" (co-written by Marty Raybon and Mike McGuire's brother, Bud), a man whose wife has left him for a more upscale lifestyle must concede that his notion of the good life is not for everyone.

Producers Byrne and Stegall serve Shenandoah well throughout *Long Time Comin'*—though admittedly a couple of the more uptempo numbers they and the band have come up with have an ap-

Record Reviews

peal that's little more than skin deep. Shenandoah's familiar vocal sound is augmented by a handful of first-rate Nashville session musicians and highlighted with tasteful arrangements.

Above all, Shenandoah's winning musical delivery comes through as persuasively as ever, clearly not diminished by their recent tribulation. —BOB ALLEN

Charlie Rich

Pictures and Paintings
Sire/Warner Brothers/Blue
Horizon 9 26730-2

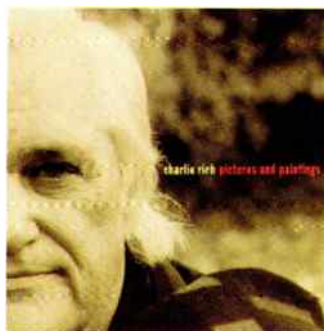
Though Charlie Rich has been all but invisible for the past decade, he was, for a brief span of years in the 1970's, the voice of country music. His mega-hit, "Behind Closed Doors," still stands as a signature song of that era.

But as popular as he became for the country-politan sound exemplified by "Behind Closed Doors," "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World" and his other 70's chart-busters, these songs only revealed the tip of the iceberg in terms of Rich's true stylistic range.

Though the above-mentioned hits did give him his first taste of national acclaim, they also reduced Rich's multi-dimensional musical talents down to one narrow dimension with which he never seemed terribly comfortable.

Rich, after all, has always been a chameleon of sorts—a singer/piano-player whose soulful style instinctively bridged the gap between such seemingly far-ranging influences as Memphis blues, mainstream jazz, country, R&B and even rock 'n' roll—and fused them all into a natural musical signature of his own. (Rich, along with Presley, Perkins, Cash, Lewis, etc., is a "graduate" of the classic Sun Records finishing school for rock 'n' rollers.)

Pictures and Paintings, his first LP in more than a decade, evolved out of a series of



informal weekly jam sessions Rich held with various Memphis musicians at his home in that city. Thus, it showcases the wayward singer in an informal, small-band setting (mostly just guitar, bass, drums, his own piano and a couple of horn arrangements thrown in for good measure) where he not only seems perfectly at ease, but even seems to be having fun.

The range of material on *Pictures and Paintings* (the title track is by Dr. John and the late Doc Pomus) reflects Rich's striking stylistic range. There are sentimental reworkings of Duke Ellington's "Mood Indigo" and the Cindy Walker-Eddy Arnold standard, "You Don't Know Me." And there are also delightfully fresh re-interpretations of a handful of Rich's own blasts from the past, including "Every Time You Touch Me I Get High" (which emerges here as a light-hearted bossa nova), the bluesy "Don't Put No Headstone on My Grave" and his own powerful gospel composition of yesteryear, "Feel Like Going Home," which features a full-blown gospel choir in this incarnation.

We could split hairs here about what *Pictures and Paintings* is and is not. Though it's not exactly a country album, it is Charlie Rich, singing and playing with conviction and a sense of purpose and enjoyment. And it's bound to move you if you still have a fond place in your heart for the Silver Fox's memorable fling as a country crooner. —BOB ALLEN

Michelle Wright

Now & Then
Arista 18685-4

Michelle Wright made her big state-side splash a year and a half or so ago with her debut American album, *Michelle Wright*, and the hit single, "New Kind of Love."

"New Kind of Love," as well as most of the other material on her first major-label album, showcased her as a smoky, sensual, low-register singer whose soulful rhythm & blues stylings owed as much to Aretha Franklin and Diana Ross as to Tammy Wynette or Loretta Lynn.



On *Now & Then*, her follow-up album, Wright charts similar stylistic territory, and sings with similar finesse—though she's more than once compelled to deal with material that's barely worthy of her best efforts.

Like her American debut album (Wright has been releasing records and winning awards in her native Canada for years), the new one features a half dozen or so top-notch songs interspersed with a handful of other tunes that are something more than filler, though something less than memorable.

To their credit, Wright's producers, Steve Bogard and Rick Giles, who co-wrote practically all the tunes the first time around, have opened up the shop to a little more outside material this time. The result is stirring songs like "Take It Like a Man" (by Tony Haselden), "If I'm Ever

Over You" (Mark Sanders and Trisha Yearwood), "A Little More Comfortable" (Chapin Hartford) and "He Would Be Sixteen" (Jill Collucci, Charlie Black and Austin Roberts).

"(If You Want This Woman's Heart) Take It Like a Man" is a wonderful contemporary love lament about the maddeningly elusive search for a member of the opposite sex with whom one is even remotely compatible. It's written with pouting, lovelorn indignation reminiscent of vintage K.T. Oslin, and comes across as a slightly more pessimistic and anguished retake on the sentiments expressed in "New Kind of Love." Wright rises masterfully to the song's emotional power and nuance, turning in a performance that is, by turns, tough, wryly sarcastic, bitter and despairing. "Take It Like a Man" is one of the true high water marks of *Now & Then* and has "hit" written all over it—if it isn't already one by the time you read this.

Wright unleashes her talents on the title song (by Gary Harrison and Karen Staley, who also sings harmony) and "If I'm Ever Over You" with similarly inspired conviction.

My own favorite here, simply because it's not the sort of country song you hear every day, and because it rings with such painful emotional truth, is "He Would Be Sixteen." It deals with the painful sense of loss and abiding guilt that a woman still feels after 16 long years when she looks back and recalls the illegitimate child she gave up for adoption when she was little more than a child herself.

If every song on *Now & Then* challenged Wright's abilities and left such a strong and satisfying after-taste with listeners as the above-mentioned selections do, then we'd have an instant classic here. But, alas, such is not to be. Too many of the remaining tunes are little more than ear candy, and have no sooner finished spinning than they are forgotten.

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Record Reviews

Wright being the gifted singer that she is, she manages to breathe adequate sultry, growling persuasion and nuance into the sleepers on *Now & Then*, singing them like she means it. And that, in and of itself, is the true mark of a pro, and no mean accomplishment. —BOB ALLEN

Carl Perkins

Friends, Family and Legends

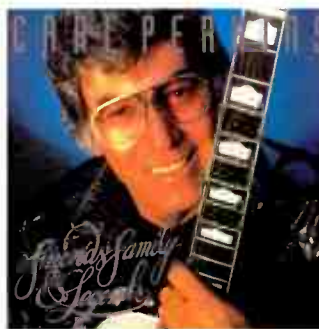
Platinum PRCD 2431-2

Carl Perkins is a survivor. Shortly after recording this album, he was diagnosed with throat cancer, from which he appears to have recovered. He's back performing again, looking none the worse for wear. He's suffered through a tragic 1956 auto accident that derailed his career, a debilitating bout with alcoholism, faded stardom and artistic stagnation to emerge triumphant.

Today, much of his repertoire from the first 25 years of his career is available on domestic and import reissues, he's been the subject of a superb Cinemax all-star tribute show and his place in rock history is solid.

Michigan-based Platinum Records International created this tribute for Carl, and as usual with such albums, they brought plenty of big names along for the ride. Sons Greg and Stan Perkins show up, as do rocker Joan Jett, Travis Tritt, singer Les Taylor, Charlie Daniels and others. Platinum went first class, recording Carl in New York and Nashville. Included are New York City studio pianist Paul Shaffer and bassist Will Lee (both of *Late Night With David Letterman's* World's Most Dangerous Band), and guitarists Hugh McCracken and David Spinozza.

What's the result of all this talent? Well, as a Carl Perkins fan of many years, I'm sorry



to say that the results don't live up to their publicity. First, the man has a very specific sound that doesn't need the abrasive synthesizers and overdone drums that are heard throughout the recording. The Perkins Cinemax special began with drummer Slim Jim Phantom of the neo-rockabilly band The Stray Cats pounding too heavily behind Carl. The minute that Ringo Starr, who knows Carl's music as well as Perkins himself, took over the sticks, the touch became lighter, and Carl's natural

sound emerged full-blown. That should have happened here.

That isn't the only problem. Only two songs really reflect the Perkins we know. The churning "Birth of Rock 'n' Roll," with Chet Atkins and Steve Wariner both playing hot guitar breaks, is his kind of song. So is "Godfather of Rock 'n' Roll," not a fantastic number but one that at least sounds like a Carl Perkins song. That, unfortunately, is as good as it gets.

The remainder simply aren't his kind of song or are embarrassingly bad. If Bruce Springsteen's "Pink Cadillac," a big pop hit for Natalie Cole a few years ago, was picked because of its "50's" image, that wasn't enough. It's simply not appropriate to Carl's style. Imagine Natalie or Bruce murdering "Blue Suede Shoes" and you'll understand. Roy Hamilton's 50's hit, "Don't Let Go," which is Perkins' kind of music, winds

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Record Reviews

up trashed by overproduction. "Don't Stop the Music" depicts Carl giving his benediction to contemporary rock. Imagine this master composer, creator of "Daddy Sang Bass" and "Restless," singing an awful line like "Music plays an intricate part." I rest my case.

And for a soulful ballad singer, the pop ballads "Wild Texas Wind," "Of Love" and "Book Faded Brown" are not only appallingly bad songs, they weren't even arranged in the correct key for his voice. He has to strain to stay on pitch, and sounds bored singing such cliched lyrics as those in "Half the Time" and "Make It Right," a trite "social protest" song.

I know this was a well-intended project, one that producer Stan Vincent might have seen as a way of giving Carl a 90's sound acceptable to contemporary radio programmers. But we're talking here about a man whose music

transcends time and defies trends, whose style is so durable and vital that it doesn't need upgrading. Carl's friends would have gladly picked and sung in *his* style. But as I said in the beginning, Carl Perkins is a survivor, and he'll survive this, too. —RICH KIENZLE

Evangeline

Evangeline
MCA/Margaritaville MCAD
10582

It's easy enough to discern what Jimmy Buffett, who owns this label and serves as the group's executive producer, sees in this five-woman band. Their songs (like his) hop between sensitive-poet-type and party animal. Not only does Evangeline work that pop-country-folk hybrid that continues to grow into the country mainstream, but they couldn't be more radio-ready about doing so.



But though the album has the formal, settled sound of an act that arrived a long time ago, I still hear more promise than anything else. "If I Had a Heart," for example piles the ironies on pretty thick, but it's a convincing performance—especially when compared to something like "Am I a Fool" (which, inadvertently or not, makes me think of "Send in the Clowns" every time) or "Who's Gonna Love You," which exhausts itself after one verse. A track like "Bayou Boy" is so packed with the imagery found in so many pre-

vious Louisiana songs that you can't help thinking the creators were trying to emulate those songs rather than simply writing from the heart. The lead voices tend to be chameleon-like, so Van Morrison's "Carrying a Torch" is phrased almost exactly as Morrison did it himself, ditto Jesse Winchester's "Rhumba Girl." And while I admire Beth McKee's snappy keyboards and Nancy Buchan's distinct, mournful fiddle style, it also bothers me that when an instrumental passage I really like pops out—the longing guitar line on "Am I a Fool," the stunning mandolin work on "Gulf Coast Highway"—a glance at the credits indicates it's played by one of the guest sidemen (Richard Bennett and Stuart Duncan, respectively).

There's a lot of commercial savvy behind this set, but only time will tell if there's anything more.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

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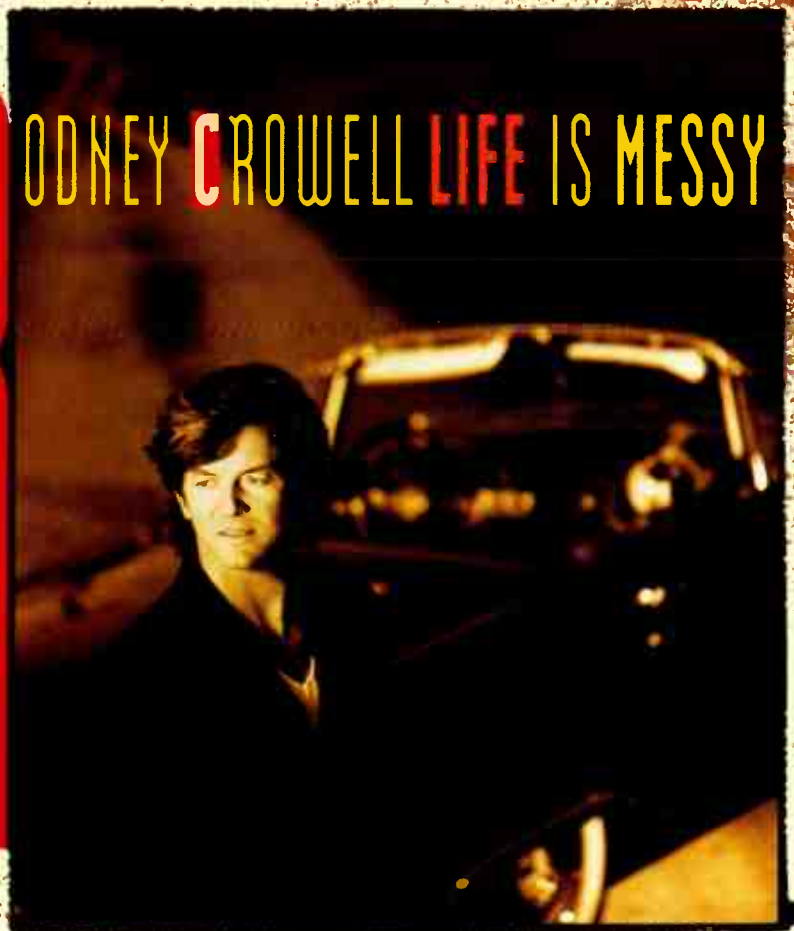
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"WHAT KIND OF LOVE"

ON COLUMBIA

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mart



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People

HONORING GRAMMY FOLKS

There I sat at the posh Loew's Vanderbilt Plaza, at a table for four with Grammy winner **Mark O'Connor** and his lady and the striking **Emmylou Harris**. Members of the **Nashville Bluegrass Band** kissed me, as did **Marty Stuart** and **Carl Jackson** (another Grammy winner). **Clint Black** and **Lisa Hartman** walked by. He smiled. Arista's headman, **Tim DuBois**, gave me a hug. So did BMG's big guy, **Jack Weston**. I looked around the room and said to myself—as I smiled at **Suzy Boggus**—Caswell County is home and wonderful, but this is wonderful, too. I do love show biz.

TAMMY WYNETTE STANDS BY HERSELF

She's sung and been sung to, she's shouted and been shouted at, she's praised and been praised, she's sworn and been sworn at. She's been hospitalized dozens of times, including recently for bile duct surgery. She's been kidnapped. She has four daughters. She's been married four times, divorced three. She has grandchildren. For a quarter of a century, **Tammy Wynette** has been, undeniably, The First Lady of Country Music. Of all the country girl performers, she and **Loretta Lynn** are the "countryriest." As a matter of fact, Tammy, as country as she is, does not like the term hillbilly, which I love.

Check this scenario out: "Who is **KLF**?" inquired Tammy. "They want me to do what?" she exclaimed.

The answer: Sing with Scottish dance/rappers, The KLF. As a result, Tammy, The First Lady, became a queen, "Queen of Mu Mu Land," the mythical place where the song "Justified and Ancient" takes place. Dressed in her skin-tight, turquoise mermaid costume, on video (and audio), The First Lady of Country Music has chart-hopped to the top of the heap on MTV as well as the pop charts, both internationally and domestically. And she sings her butt off. Dazzling in her getup, Tammy sits on the throne of Mu Mu Land with her subjects—rappers, dancers, horned men and others—



The queen reigns supreme. The KLF are big Tammy Wynette fans.

at her feet, while graphics listing her many accomplishments flash on the screen. About the collaboration, Tammy says, "I did it for all the right reasons: having fun. We had no idea that people would respond to it the way they have. Even my grandbabies want to hear 'Mu Mu Land'."

Watch for her live dates, TV shows and recordings. Yes, after 25 years, she's still in the recording studio, doing what she does best...singing. **Elizabeth Taylor** may be the Queen of Hollywood, but Tammy Wynette is the Queen of Music City. Long may she reign.

RICKY VAN'S GOSPEL

I, for one, was happy to learn that **Ricky Van Shelton** had recorded a gospel album. In the past **George Jones**, **Bill Monroe**, **Roy Acuff** and **Hank Williams Sr.** (as **Luke The Drifter**) all recorded great gospel records. They call it country/gospel now. Those old songs were great and some of them, like "One Day at a Time" and **Kris Kristofferson's** "Help Me," turned out to be huge hits. Now back to Ricky—his album's titled *Don't Overlook Salvation*. I really like it a lot.

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

People

I'M PROUD

I'm proud that RCA released the single and video of **Paul Overstreet's** "Billy Can't Read." Thanks to an 800 number with the video, the literacy hotline received a flood of calls. Viewers also sent letters expressing the impact the song and video have had on their lives. Let's give Paul and RCA a hand for this one.

JOHN HOBBS AND COUNTRY FANS

Entrepreneur **John Hobbs**, owner of the world renowned Nashville Palace, has made an announcement that pleases me and will please all you country fans. Hobbs has just announced the opening of the Celebrity Theater in the Ramada Inn

Music Valley plus the renovation of the nearby Nashville Night Life Family Theater. Hobbs says this will be a "shot in the arm to Nashville tourism." He says, "We will now have mid-sized, reasonably-priced theaters for those folks who come to town and crave to see name country and gospel entertainment."

Well known for her many years on *Hee Haw*, banjoist and comedienne **Roni Stoneman** will be appearing nightly at the Nashville Night Life Theater, along with a band and various guest stars. The theater seats 600, so come by the bus load. **T.G. Sheppard** opened the Celebrity Theater. **Mark Chesnutt**, **LuLu Roman**, **The Chuck Wagon Gang** and **J.D. Sumner and The Stamps** have already agreed to perform. There's food available at the Ramada as well as at Nashville

Night Life and the Nashville Palace, where the catfish is also world renowned. Drop by and see the "Palace," the place **Randy Travis**, **Alan Jackson** and **Ricky Van Shelton** got *their* starts on Music Valley Drive. Right up the road from Opryland and the Grand Ole Opry.

MR. ATKINS AND MR. REED

The **Chet Atkins/Jerry Reed** pairing titled *Sneakin' Around* is my favorite non-singing (well, not much singing) tape lately. The music is so smooth and so good and so perfect. Choice of songs and instrumentation, both, are beyond reproach. Can't get too much of this.

OUT TO SAVE THE WOODS

Clint Black, **Trisha Yearwood**, **Mark Chesnutt**, **The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band** and **Billy Dean** joined **Don Henley** in concert in a concentrated effort to try to save 2,680 acres of untouched land in Massachusetts. Rockers **Neil Young**, **John Fogerty** and **Roger Waters** also performed at the event, held at the Universal Amphitheater in Los Angeles. Black has reportedly been penning songs with Henley and **J.D. Souther**.

STONE HAS HEART SURGERY

On Monday, April 27th, **Doug Stone** underwent quadruple bypass surgery at a Nashville hospital. The night before, the 35-year-old singer had experienced dizziness and numbness during a concert performance. Doctors performed tests and decided on immediate surgery. Stone was expected to recover fully and be back at work in time for Fan Fair.

A LEGAL PAD AND A PENCIL

All it takes is a legal pad and a pencil. Not a pen, a pencil. Pencils erase. You write, edit, rewrite, sweat, pray, swear and do it over again. The result is the best written songs under God's blue skies. The cream of Nashville's songwriter crop was honored with a sit-down do by the Nashville Songwriters Association International. The awards bash was held at the classy Vanderbilt Plaza Hotel. One honoree was **Pat Alger**, Songwriter of the Year. Pat's honored songs were "Small Town Saturday Night," "The Thunder Rolls" and "Like We Never Had a Broken Heart." **Alan Jackson** was named Writer/Artist of the Year for his songs, "Don't Rock the Jukebox" and "Chasin' That Neon Rainbow." **Billy Dean** and **Richard Leigh** were recognized for

FROM MUSIC ROW TO SESAME STREET



A good time was had by members of the Cash family when they visited with Big Bird for a taping of the children's show, *Sesame Street*. Johnny Cash taped two segments for the show and took his daughter Rosanne and granddaughter Carrie along for the ride.

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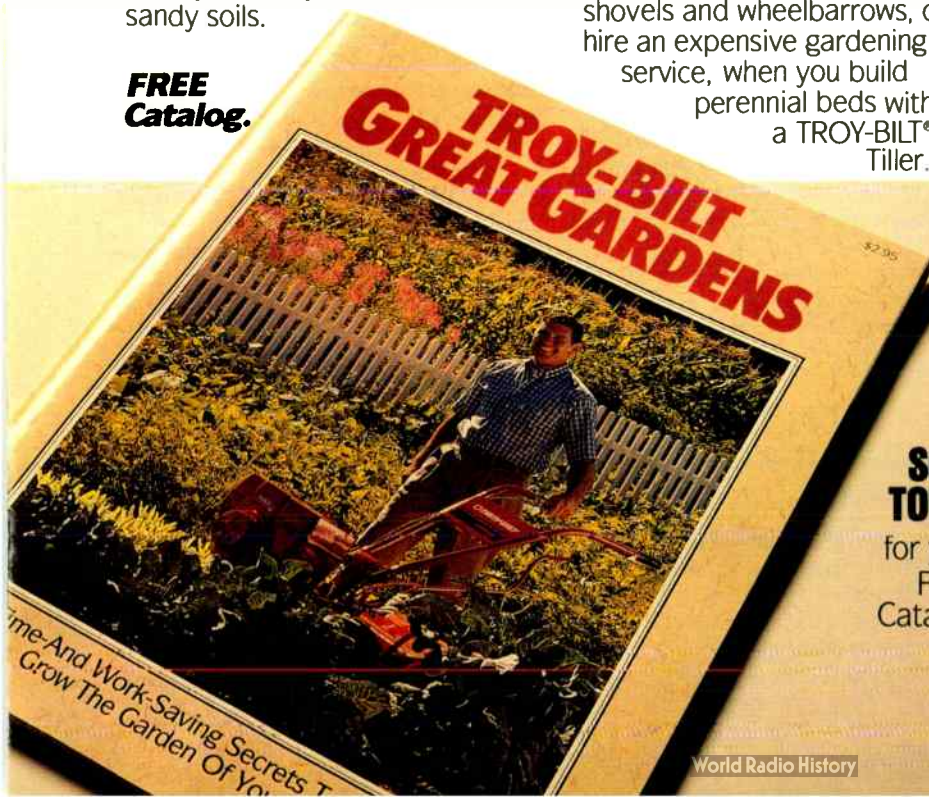
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People

"Somewhere in My Broken Heart," named Song of the Year. The President's Award for service to the songwriting community was given to nice guy **Lewis Anderson**. In all, some 20 songwriters were recognized between the main course and dessert. Other writers honored included **Travis Tritt, John Ims, Roger Murrah, Keith Stegall, Mary-Chapin Carpenter, Norro Wilson, George Richey, Vince Gill, Brian Allsmiller, Max D. Barnes, Naomi Judd, John Jarvis, Paul Overstreet, Ken Spooner, Kim Williams, Mark Petersen, Dolly Parton, Danny Mayo, Hank DeVito, Bobby Boyd, Dennis Robbins, Matraca Berg, Ronnie Samoset, Chapin Hartford, Jim Foster, Anna Lisa Graham, Mike Reid, Allen Shamblin and Harlan Howard.**

BURT GETS THE DIRT

Burt Reynolds was in town, hanging out at the Ryman with some of our people, and taping them for a TV show called *A Conversation with Burt*. Word was, he interviewed **Alan Jackson, Vince Gill, Randy Travis** and **George Jones** on the first night, followed by **Dolly Parton, Lorrie Morgan, Tanya Tucker** and **Kathy Mattea**. Speaking of Dolly, her latest film, *Straight Talk*, will have everybody talking mountain talk by the time you read this.

HELLO, NOLA

Nola Katherine Douglas made her world debut at West Side Hospital weighing in at 8 lbs. 6 oz., and that's the last time the lady will tell her weight. Daughter of **Jerry and Jill Douglas**, Nola joins siblings **Grant, Patrick** and **Olivia**. Daddy Jerry is the best dobro player on Planet Earth. He's the token dobro/lap steel picker on *American Music Shop* on TNN. He's also a record producer and recording artist.

HANK PENNY: 1918-1992

Hank Penny, singer, bandleader and comedian, died suddenly April 17th in California, at age 73 of a heart attack. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, in the mid-30's he founded The Radio Cowboys, one of the first southeastern acts to play Western swing. After moving to California in 1945, he organized bands featuring some of Western swing's greatest musicians and had three hits: "Steel Guitar Stomp" and "Get Yourself a Red Head" in 1946 and "Bloodshot Eyes" in 1950.

An influential country comedian, he

DWIGHT STEPS OUT



Dwight Yoakam showed up at this year's Academy Awards with actress **Sharon Stone** of the popular movie, *Basic Instinct*. A lot's going on with Dwight these days. Aside from playing the Opry recently, he can now be seen all over the airwaves in a McDonald's commercial. Perhaps more acting is in his future.

was a regular on **Spade Cooley's** popular L.A. TV show in the late 40's. In 1949 he co-founded the legendary Palomino nightclub (and sold it a few years later). Penny spent most of the next 15 years in Vegas, where **Roy Clark** and singer-guitarist **Thom Bresh** worked with his band. After a few years in Nashville, Hank and fifth wife, **Shari**, returned to L.A. in the mid-70's to raise their daughter **Sydney** (now an actress on TV's *Santa Barbara*). Hank had four other children including record producer **Greg Penny** (Greg's mother was Hank's first wife, **Sue Thompson**). Per his wishes, his ashes were scattered by helicopter in the Pacific, and his family hosted a party not to mourn but to celebrate his life.

—RICH KIENZLE

ASCAP CELEBRATES

The brand new, glass-plus building at the start of Music Row now houses pretty **Connie Bradley** and all the ASCAP staff. The three stories almost filled up completely during their opening party, with lookers and gazers in every nook and cranny. They saw inside walls filled

with paintings...real paintings that come from an art gallery. Are you impressed? I am. Great do, **Connie**. Great rations and great camaraderie. Also, next day—the day of the dedication of the new ASCAP building with all those in higher places—it was pouring rain...it sure rains hard in Tennessee. During the presentation, the gentleman who sings about his friends in low places, **Mr. Garth Brooks**, was presented the ASCAP Voice of Music award. And with their noses pressed to the glass walls, fans stood in the rain to get a glimpse of Garth. Congrats, **Connie**.

EYE SAW

Eye saw three of the world's primo poets at L&N Seafood: **Dickey Lee, Bucky Jones** and **Bob McDill**. Only a few recordings sneak off Music Row without a song penned by one of the above.

Eye saw **Skip Ewing** at the Slice of Life. We dined separately.

Eye saw **BMG/RCA's VP, Mr. Jack Weston**, driving down Division Street. The big guy was driving a big red and white, two-seat pickup truck. The kind of truck hillbillies sing about. Jack Weston is one of my faves. He always has a smile for me. Besides, you can't help but love and respect an exec who drives a pickup to work.

Eye saw **Big Daddy Harlan Howard** and the **Mighty Whitey Shafer** sipping lunch at Maude's. Over in the corner holding court was Tennessee Governor **Ned Ray McWerther**. Sipping a little of the vine, the Gov was doing some serious dining as well.

Eye saw **Aaron Tippin** at Kroger.

DIET COKE IS IN MY FRIDGE

My long time pal, **Ricky Skaggs**, took part in a series of Diet Coke commercials that began airing in the spring.

NARM-ING

New Orleans is definitely the place to have a convention, and that's exactly what the NARM folks did. Enjoying **Garth Brooks, The Kentucky Head-Hunters** and filet gumbo were **James Stroud** (Giant Records), **Harold Shedd** (Polygram/Mercury Records), **Tony (wow) Brown** and **Bruce Hinton** (MCA Records), **Roy Wunsch** and **Mike Martinovich** (Sony Records), **Joe Mansfield** (Liberty Records), **Bill Isaacs** (Malaco Records), **Tony Conway** (Buddy Lee Enterprises), **Joe Galante** (BMG Records), **Rick Pepin** (BNA Records) and others.

Wyatt Earp. Sitting Bull. General Custer. Legends of the Old West Sculptured Knife Collection

The first collection of knives ever commissioned by the Western Heritage Museum. Sculptured in fine pewter. Tempered steel. 24 karat gold accents.

Six legends of the American West. Buffalo Bill, Pancho Villa, and more. Brought vividly to life by acclaimed Western sculptor Jim Ponter.

Each sculptured hilt cast in fine pewter and hand-rubbed to a classic patina. Each guard, richly embellished with 24 karat gold electroplate. Each blade crafted of tempered stainless steel and polished to a gleaming finish.

To showcase this unique imported collection of original Ponter sculpts, a custom-designed hardwood-framed and glass display case, complete with lock and key.

The price for each knife, \$90. The handsome display case is yours at no additional charge.

RETURN ASSURANCE POLICY

If you wish to return any Franklin Mint purchase, you may do so within 30 days of your receipt of that purchase for replacement, credit or refund.

Sculptured knives shown actual size. Hardwood and glass display shown much smaller than actual size of 15" high and 21" wide.



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Please enter my application for The Legends of the Old West Sculptured Knife Collection. I need SEND NO MONEY NOW. I will receive one Western knife every three months, and will be billed for each knife in three equal monthly installments of \$30.00, the first due prior to shipment.

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People

JUST PLAIN WYNONNA

Dropping the "Judd" last name, Wynonna showcased on home turf with her new band recently. The local Municipal Auditorium rocked with **Mama Judd's** baby girl blasting out solo. When an act hits stardom, the critics start to be picky. So be picky. Wynonna's obvious stardom is evident and has been since the get go. Her 14-song set included "What It Takes," "I Saw the Light" and the spellbinding "All That Love from Here," written by **Sharon Rose Higgins**. Wynonna told Sharon that she sang that song for her mom, who was in attendance. Also, "Give a Little Love," "Strongest Weakness" and The Judds' signature song, their first hit, which was always Wynonna's song—"Mama He's Crazy." She romped, stomped, turned country into blues, and most of all she pleased. Further, she sang "She's His Only Need," "Rompin'" and the album track, "Live with Jesus," that she cut live in **Paul Kennerly's** living room. The last two songs, "Little Bit of Love" and "No One Else," were followed by an encore. She ended the night with "It's Never Easy." The consensus of the night was that without the petite Naomi onstage, Wynonna appears thinner and



There's nothing plain about this lady.

strikingly beautiful. Cameras were always so kind to the beauteous Naomi whereas not so kind to Wynonna. Hopefully, cameras can capture the mysterious beauty of this shy and extremely talented young lady who is on her own.

Folks who turned out to see Wynonna included her record producer, MCA's **Tony (wow) Brown**, and also from MCA:

Renee Bell, Jim Kemp, Sheila Shipley, Scott Borchetta, Lorie Hoppers, Lori Evans, Renee White, Mary Ann Daniel and Katie Gillon. Also seen were **John Cowan, EMI's Celia Froeling, CMA's Teresa George, Tree's Donna Hilley, Paul Worley and Harlan Howard, Blake Mevis, Tennessean's Bob Oermann, TNN's Kevin O'Neil, Banner's Jay Orr, Judy Rodman, Music Row's David Ross, Billboard's Lynn Shults, Entertainment Tonight's Clay Smith and Dick Heard, Nancy (Mrs. George) Jones, manager Ken Stilts, members of Diamond Rio and Pirates of the Mississippi.** Wynonna, love and prayers go to you. Go for it.

HATS OFF TO OPTIONS HOUSE

Options House, a shelter program for homeless teenagers in Hollywood, recently held its third annual country music benefit. Co-host **Marty Stuart** participated in a celebrity hat auction, and members of **The Kentucky Headhunters** joined in a celebrity jam. The Options House country music benefit traditionally takes place the night before the Academy of Country Music Awards. This year's theme, "Hats Off to Options House," coincides with the current "No Hats Tour" involving **Marty and Travis Tritt**, who was last year's benefit co-host.

THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW (WITHOUT ANDY)

The Andy Griffith Show (without Andy) will be making personal appearances. On tour are **Don Knotts a/k/a Barney Fife, George Lindsey a/k/a Goober Pyle, Hal Smith a/k/a Otis, the town drunk, Maggie Peterson a/k/a Charlene Darling and The Dillards a/k/a the musical Darlings.** Fun, fun, fun. They did their first show at Opryland last summer, and the outcome was hilarious.

FAIR SHAKE

Our country people, including **Charlie Daniels, Suzy Boggus, Lynn Anderson, Pirates of the Mississippi, John Anderson, T. Graham Brown, Johnny Rodriguez and McBride and The Ride,** donated their time to record a single and a music video to benefit Special Olympics. The project, called "Fair Shake," will premiere on the syndicated television series, *Special People*. Sponsored by Florida Special Olympics with assistance from Tennessee Special Olympics, the song is being donated to all Special Olympics chapters and will be available

REBA McENTIRE TRANSFORMED



Make-up artist **John Caglione** had his work cut out for him when he had to age **Reba McEntire** by 50 years for the shooting of her video, "The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia." The tune, a hit for **Vicki Lawrence** in 1973, appears on **Reba's** album, *For My Broken Heart*. In the complex story, "little sister" **Reba** kills her brother's cheating wife and the wife's lover. The brother is hanged for the murders which "little sister" confesses to after five decades. Watch for it.

She's "fair of face"
and pretty as
can be!



Shown smaller
than actual size of
8 1/4" in diameter.

Monday's Child

by Elaine Gignilliat

The Danbury Mint

© 1992 MBI

A numbered limited first edition collector plate trimmed in 23kt gold

"Monday's child is fair of face"... and in this delightful Elaine Gignilliat painting, all of nature seems to agree! This adorable girl's radiant beauty is reflected in everything around her... a tranquil pond mirrors her golden curls, and vibrant flowers enhance the bloom in her rosy cheeks.

Now, the innocence and charm of "Monday's Child" have been brought to life on a new porcelain collector plate by award-winning artist Elaine Gignilliat.

A Limited First Edition

"Monday's Child" is the first collector plate in an exclusive Danbury Mint series entitled *Children of the Week*. Each issue will feature an original Elaine Gignilliat portrait which captures the enchantment of a child's personality as revealed by the classic days-of-the-week nursery rhyme.

Each serially-numbered plate will be accompanied by a matching personalized Certificate of Authenticity. The edition of "Monday's Child" will be

limited to a maximum of 75 firing days. None will be offered through dealers; this First Edition is available exclusively through the Danbury Mint. As a finishing touch, each plate will be trimmed with a band of precious 23kt gold... and the price is just \$24.95.

No Obligation — No Risk

When you acquire "Monday's Child," you have the option, *but not the obligation*, to acquire all subsequent plates in this delightful new series. Furthermore, under our 100% Unconditional Guarantee, you may return any plate for replacement or refund within 30 days.

Reply Now for Lowest Serial Number

We expect the demand for "Monday's Child" to be strong since Elaine Gignilliat plates have always been extremely popular with collectors. So we urge you to act now. Reservations will be processed in the order received — send in yours today!

KWP Please Reply Promptly 44

The Danbury Mint
47 Richards Avenue
P.O. Box 4900
Norwalk, Conn. 06857

Limit:
two plates
per collector.

Please accept my reservation for "Monday's Child" as described in this announcement. I wish to reserve _____ (1 or 2) plate(s) at \$24.95 each (plus \$2.95 shipping and handling — total \$27.90*).

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One: Charge my credit card upon shipment:
 VISA Discover
 Master Card Am. Ex.

Credit Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____
Please Print Clearly

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Name to Print on Certificate(s) of Authenticity
(if different from above)

Allow 4 to 8 weeks for shipment.

*Any applicable sales tax will be billed with shipment.

People

through them. The aim is to focus attention on the Special Olympics and change negative attitudes and prejudice that have kept many disabled people from reaching their full potential. Aren't our country people wonderful?

THE TIME HAS COME

Newcomer **Martina McBride's** debut video, "The Time Has Come," is the first country video to be closed captioned for the hearing impaired. RCA Records in Nashville announced that from here on in, all country videos from the Nashville division will be available with closed captioning. **Dereama Sherrill**, Executive Director of the Tennessee Council for the Hearing Impaired, stated, "Closed captioned TV in general, closed captioned music in particular, has opened up a whole new world of entertainment and information for a large segment of our population." We say bravo to RCA.

ACM AWARDS COME IN PAIRS

Five sets of double winners cleaned up at the ACM Awards in Los Angeles in April. **Garth Brooks** took home Entertainer and Male Vocalist trophies. **Alan Jackson** grabbed Album and Single for "Don't Rock the Jukebox." **Reba McEntire** got the nod for Female Vocalist and Video. **Brooks & Dunn** took Vocal Duo and New Group/Duo. **Billy Dean** was chosen as New Male Vocalist, and his hit, "Somewhere in My Broken Heart," was tapped as Song of the Year.

That left a few awards for others, however. **Trisha Yearwood** won New Female Vocalist and **Diamond Rio** took Vocal Group. **Willie Nelson** received the Pioneer Award. Congrats to all.

CONGRATULATIONS, JOE CASEY

Congratulations to my pal, **Joe Casey**, on his new position as Vice President of A&R Special Projects, Sony/Nashville. Joe has been associated with Columbia (now Sony) for 26 years, most recently serving in the capacity of Vice President of Promotion. In his new position, Joe will develop those wonderful catalogs in the Columbia/Epic vaults for worldwide distribution. He will answer to **Roy Wunsch**, whose title is Sony Music/Nashville President. Epic's West Coast Promotion man, **Michael Moore**, will assume the post vacated by Casey. **Bob Mitchell**, lately the talent buyer for Billy Bob's in Fort Worth, will fill Moore's shoes. Joe Casey is one of my favorite people. Best of luck, Mr. Casey.

CMM Update: Charlie Louvin

After The Louvin Brothers went their separate ways in 1963, Charlie Louvin's solo career began with a Top Ten record, "I Don't Love You Anymore," in 1964. His brother Ira's death in a 1965 auto accident ended any chance of a Louvins reunion, yet as Charlie nears age 65, interest in The Louvins' music is stronger than ever. Bear Family Records plans to release the complete Louvin recordings in an elaborate eight-CD boxed set this summer. Both bluegrass and mainstream artists, spurred on by Emmylou Harris, who helped stir up the revival, are tapping the Louvin repertoire.

Most important, Charlie, who lives in his native Alabama, is reviving The Louvin Brothers sound on the road with a new partner, Louisiana singer-mandolinist Charles Whitstein, who formerly sang and recorded with his own brother. "Charles knows more Louvin songs than I do; that's all he and his brother sang," Charlie says. They call the act *A Louvin Brothers Music Celebration*, and interest is so strong that when Charlie sent a letter to promoters of 304 bluegrass festivals already fully booked for 1992, they got 30 bookings. Louvin and Whitstein aren't only working festivals they may work 60 days in Branson this year as well.

And there's a possibility of a Japanese tour in 1993. "I hear The Louvin Brothers are more famous in Japan than they were in the United States," Charlie says. He adds, "In England, you'd go in with the intention of doing a one-hour show. We found ourselves working three hours on one show. You'd go to the bar and order a Coke, and people were still applauding. We did two weeks there—every place we played was full. We want to go back."

Reflecting on the continuing appeal of The Louvins' sound, Charlie explains, "It's real. There ain't too many fantasy songs in The Louvin Brothers catalog. We were accepted by gospel people as well as secular music lovers, and the songs have just lasted. I wish my songs had lasted like The Louvin Brothers' did. I was elated that Mark Knopfler did our 'Weapon of Prayer' as part of The Notting Hillbillies," he says, adding, "I didn't know Emmylou cut 'If I Could Only Win Your Love' until it was released," back in 1975. Asked how Ira



would view the new interest, Charlie replies, "I'm sure he'd have been happy. All the stuff Emmylou did, she did it with great taste."

It wasn't easy, he says, to maintain the Louvin sound in its heyday. "The purity was in the harmony," he says, but as more instruments were added to their records, "the first thing you know, it was just like everything else." He won't allow that today. Only Charlie, Charles and a bassist will perform onstage (with no augmentation even on the Opry). And that won't change when they begin recording for the Virginia-based Copper Creek Records. "We're going to be doing 50 percent Louvin songs and 50 percent songs Ira and I *should* have cut," he says. A few are songs the brothers sang but never recorded. A gospel album may follow. Last year Charlie released two cassette/CD collections on the Playback label. The first, *50 Years of Country Music*, featured help from Willie Nelson, Waylon, Charlie Daniels, George Jones, Tanya Tucker, Crystal Gayle and Melba Montgomery. The second, concentrating on gospel, included Tammy Wynette. "The kind of product I got now can't compete with the youth and the hats—not that it's not good, because there's great stuff coming out on the indie labels. But the major labels own the airwaves and certain stations, and if you can't get on them, you can't get on the charts. I decided to narrow this down to what my roots were, and I know what I'm shootin' for and what places I can and can't play."

—RICH KIENZLE

The Elvis You Can Dance To

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Approximately actual size.

The '68 "Elvis" Concert. Dazzling. Neon-lit. Electrifying. Elvis in black leather, surrounded by his fans. And each one felt that the King was singing to them alone.

Now that special feeling is yours to cherish in an unprecedented *fine porcelain music box*: "68 Comeback Special." The King, truly, is back. Commanding artist Kimmerle Milnazik's portrait as he once commanded the stage. Riveting. Charged with energy. In slick black leather dancing with highlights.

The music is *Heartbreak Hotel*. The first million seller. The sass, the syncopation... they're here, in a finest-quality, 18-note music box. \$34.85.

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*Plus \$3.44 shipping and handling fee per music box, and state sales tax where applicable. Pending credit approval. Offer valid in the U.S. only. Also available at your local gift store.



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ELB-100R

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Please Respond Promptly

People

HERE HE IS

Porter Wagoner got so excited while introducing Travis Tritt as the newest member of the world-famed Grand Ole Opry, he almost choked the laughing boy from Georgia. Mr. Hal Durham and all the folks at the Opry are so smart adding all this new talent to the Opry roster. The fans love it, and you know what, the inductees love it, too. Travis was thrilled beyond words. Still, he sang "Here's a Quarter" as great as ever. Tritt said that he didn't know if he would ever be invited to the Opry because he has a side that's a little bit more contemporary. But, he said, he's a country artist, "I always have been, and it's a privilege to be here."

BELLAMYS FORM RECORD LABEL

Looking for something unique to add to the marketing plans of *The Bellamy Brothers—Best of the Best*, which is a greatest hits package re-recorded for sale in retail outlets and through television, **The Bellamys** saw the opportunity to test the waters with the release of the album and single under their own record label. "We have been privately tossing around the idea for our own label for several years," says **Howard Bellamy**. "During the course of talking over plans for the television package, we saw the chance to finally break ground and get serious about an idea we literally started thinking about five years ago." The first single/video is "Cowboy Beat," and it is out now. Other great hits include "Let Your Love Flow," "Redneck Girl!" and "Old Hippie."

MARCH OF DIMES

Buddy Killen has had a long-running affair with the March of Dimes, which explains why he annually turns his eatery, The Stockyard, into a party-down to raise money for his favorite charity. The celebrity auction is the highlight of the evening, raising thousands of dollars. Artists who donated their time, talent, clothing and possessions for this year's show and auction were **Lorrie Morgan**, **Six Shooter**, **The Remingtons**, **Brooks & Dunn**, **Pam Tillis**, **John Kay** with **Steppenwolf**, **Joe Diffie**, **Tracy Lawrence** and **George Jones**. After Jones performed, Buddy stepped up to the stage and auctioned the jacket right off The Possum's back. Jones went home jacketless. And it was cold that night! For a good cause, though.



Porter Wagoner welcomed Travis Tritt to the Grand Ole Opry.

I AM COUNTRY

Fans, this is happening all up and down the Row called Music. Everyone is trying to latch on to the country music bandwagon. But, there's no need to fear. There is a tree growing from a musical rock. The rock is as solid as Gibraltar, therefore, our tree goes unshaken. We are country and so are you.

Today Garth's on everybody's mind and the cover of *Time*. Today everybody

wants to be the next Garth Brooks or Reba McEntire or Alan Jackson, etc., etc. Hunks and hunkettes are omnipresent, and *Playgirl* runs their pictures. Kay Smith, the posterior expert, always called Marty Stuart a hunk, as *Playgirl* now does. I just always loved Marty so much. I thought he was a cute and talented young man. Now Marty is a hunk and that's okay.

I don't suppose they ever called Porter Wagoner a hunk. The long, tall drink of water from West Plains, Missouri, is a star, however. This summer, Porter, along with Jimmy Dickens, Grandpa Jones, Jeannie Pruett and other Grand Ole Opry stars, will be on hand meeting the fans at Opryland. Nope, Porter isn't a hunk, but he was recently chosen to be country music's ambassador at Opryland Park. And he is country, as are Jimmy, Grandpa and Jeannie. Besides, between the four of them there's almost a century of uninterrupted entertainment.

With the success of Wynonna, Trisha Yearwood, Clint Black, Vince Gill, Travis Tritt, Randy Travis and of course Garth, Reba and Alan, all eyes are looking southward.

"I am country! The song is about a train," cries today's aspiring new comer in a loud voice. "Besides, I used to play in a rock 'n' roll band," he or she adds.

So what, say I. I know Garth Brooks. I am country. So is he. Goodbye. End of scenario.



George Jones gives the coat off his back in the celebrity auction for the March of Dimes, held at Buddy Killen's Stockyard restaurant. The garment went for \$3,000.

“I want Mommy to be proud of me.”



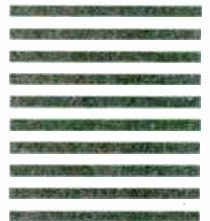
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An adorable new porcelain doll by Elke Hutchens capturing a special moment in the life of a little boy.

There's nothing more appealing than a young child trying to be grown up. Sometimes it takes every ounce of determination a little tyke can muster...but it's worth every bit of the effort just to see Mommy and Daddy so proud.

Now, one of America's most highly regarded doll artists, revered for her ability to portray the emotions of young children, shows us "growing up" like no other artist can. *Brian*, by Elke Hutchens, captures the earnest concentration of a small boy trying so hard to be grown



Adorable *Brian* will charm everyone who sees him displayed in your home.

up — and realizing that it's not so scary after all!

Exceptional personality and realism.

The minute you see *Brian's* winsome face and the wishful expression in his big blue eyes, you'll recognize Elke Hutchens' magical ability to evoke the innocence and sweetness of young children. Just look at the way he's sitting, with his little mouth set and his chin cupped in his chubby hands.

Brian's posable head, hands and legs are crafted in fine bisque porcelain. Then, his facial features are lovingly hand-painted to complement his shining blond hair. His cute blue and red play outfit is hand-tailored of soft knit fabric. As your assurance of authenticity, he is inscribed with the artist's signature.

A remarkable collector value.

Brian is available exclusively from the Danbury Mint and is priced at just \$74, payable in four monthly installments of \$18.50. His training potty and a serially-numbered Certificate of Ownership are included at no extra cost. Return your Reservation Application today.

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The Danbury Mint • 47 Richards Avenue • Norwalk, CT 06857

RESERVATION APPLICATION

The Danbury Mint
47 Richards Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06857

Brian

by Elke Hutchens

Please return promptly.

Please accept my reservation for *Brian*, a collector doll with head, hands and legs of fine bisque porcelain. The training potty is included at no additional cost.

I need send no money now. I will pay for my doll in four monthly installments of \$18.50*, the first billed prior to shipment. If not satisfied, I may return the doll within 30 days for replacement or refund.

*Plus any applicable sales tax and \$1 shipping and handling per installment.

Name _____
(Please print clearly.)

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Check here to charge each installment to your:
 VISA MasterCard Discover Am. Ex.

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____
All orders subject to acceptance.

Name to print on Certificate of Ownership (if different from above).
Allow 4 to 8 weeks after initial payment for shipment.

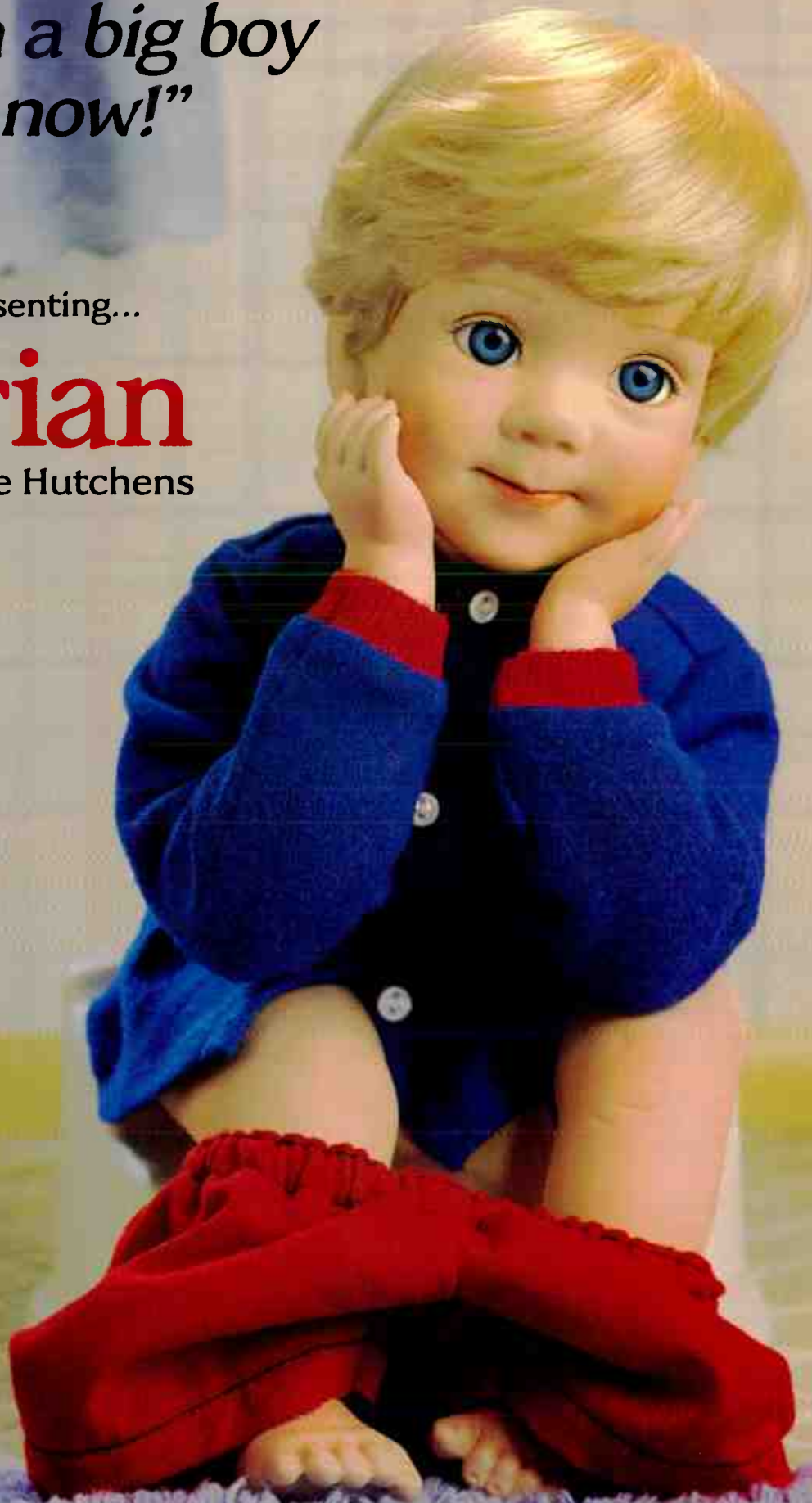
944A1M1

*“I’m a big boy
now!”*

Presenting...

Brian

by Elke Hutchens



Shown smaller than actual seated height of 11".
Doll measures approximately 13" from head to toe.

*Brian's white training potty
included at no additional charge.*

People

Bruce Hinton and Stephen McCord of MCA Records visited with Marty Stuart at the Country Radio Seminar. Below, Reba McEntire and our own Associate Publisher, Leonard Mendelson. Leonard enjoyed the event thoroughly.



STARS SHINE AT COUNTRY RADIO SEMINAR (CRS)

When radio's best comes to town to meet and greet the stars and do some biz, they bring their tape machines. Artists, especially newer artists, turn out in droves to shake hands, say howdy to acquaintances and do station I.D.'s. This year's seminar was a real boost for radio. Not only did the biggest record-seller on Planet Earth, **Garth Brooks**, perform, he came early, stayed late and did I.D.'s for the radio folks just like he did three years ago when he first came on the scene. **Susie French** from Tampa still talks about my describing Garth by saying, "Watch that boy. He's gonna be big." It seems the bigger Garth gets, the nicer he stays. This is a first in show biz.

More seminar-ing. Warner Brothers paired with WSM and blasted off the week with a bevy of stars and wannabes. Slim and svelte, **Kenny Rogers** hosted the event, which featured **Little Texas** (the group did all they were expected to do, picked, sang, danced—the keyboard player even took off his shirt and stood on the piano), **Dan Seals**, **Mark O'Connor** and **The New Nashville Cats** (who also backed the performers), **Molly and The Heymakers**, **Michael White**, **Billy Burnette**, **DeAnna Cox**, **Travis Tritt** and **Live 'n Kickin'**. Columnist **Robert Oermann** allowed as how he saw large things hap-

pening for **Live 'n Kickin'**, whose single, "You Don't Need to Knock," is out now.

Arista got down for radio with a do hosted by **Lee Roy Parnell**. Performers besides Parnell, who sang his entire new album for the folks, were **Ray Benson**, **Alan Jackson**, **Dude Mowrey**, **Radney Foster**, **The Trio**, **Diamond Rio**, **Rob Crosby**, **Michelle Wright** and **Steve Wariner**. The show included a guitar git-down led by Lee Roy and Steve. Too hot for words.

The ASCAP luncheon featured **Trisha Yearwood** and **Diamond Rio**. This year's crop of talented acts wowed the radio experts. Cruising down the Cumberland (sounds like a fiddle tune) on the General Jackson, the RCA folks treated the guests with **Aaron Tippin**, newcomer **Martina McBride** and rations fit for the kings and queens who turned out for the

party. Mighty MCA showcased **Marty Stuart** and **Lionel Cartwright**, two deserving young men, I'd say. Cutie **Renee Bell** allowed as how the hot Miami-based group, **The Mavericks**, were having a hot time in Hillbilly Town hanging out with the radio rangers. Last but certainly not least, the finale was utopia. Showcasing were **Pam Tillis**, **Clinton Gregory**—who wowed 'em to their feet, **Hal Ketchum**, **Collin Raye**, **Eddie London**, **McBride** and **The Ride**, **Brooks & Dunn**, **Tracy Lawrence**, **Little Texas** and **Sammy Kershaw**. Radio, God bless 'em, left with a pocket filled with tapes, a belly filled with food and ears filled with great music. There are at least two things we can't do without in country music. They are radio and my column.

MARGARITAVILLE, USA

Formerly located on Key West, now located on Music Row, Margaritaville is now a record label owned by **Jimmy Buffett**, managed by Buffett's husband-in-law (well, they both married the same lady, Ms. **Margie**) **Bob Mercer** and distributed locally by the mighty MCA. Buffett, the former "wild-child" of Paradise South (Key West of course), has migrated to Music City. Buffett and Mercer have signed an all-woman group called **Evangeline** that hails from New Orleans. The label will release Buffett music from MCA's vaults as well as new music from a group called **Iguanas**, due out in the fall.



All smiles are **Jimmy Buffett**, **Tony (wow) Brown** and **Bob Mercer**. All have big plans for Margaritaville, the new Buffett-Mercer label.

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Randy Travis

BLUE

HAWAII

Aloha. Welcome to Hawaii where Michael Bane catches up with Randy Travis during the filming of a TV special. The mood is pensive, the talk is calm and the questions run deep.

By Michael Bane

The fire crackles invitingly, but then breaks up into gray and white streaks on the little monitor. Still, though, we huddle around the televised image, as if we could milk the last bits of heat from the television screen. We are on the beach in Maui, Randy Travis, the television entourage and me, and perversely, we are all freezing.

"It just doesn't make any sense, does it, Michael?" Randy says. I suggest that we start cutting down palm trees and feed them into the fire.

"Well, at least it's warmer than the top of the volcano," he says, resigned.

He is right, too.

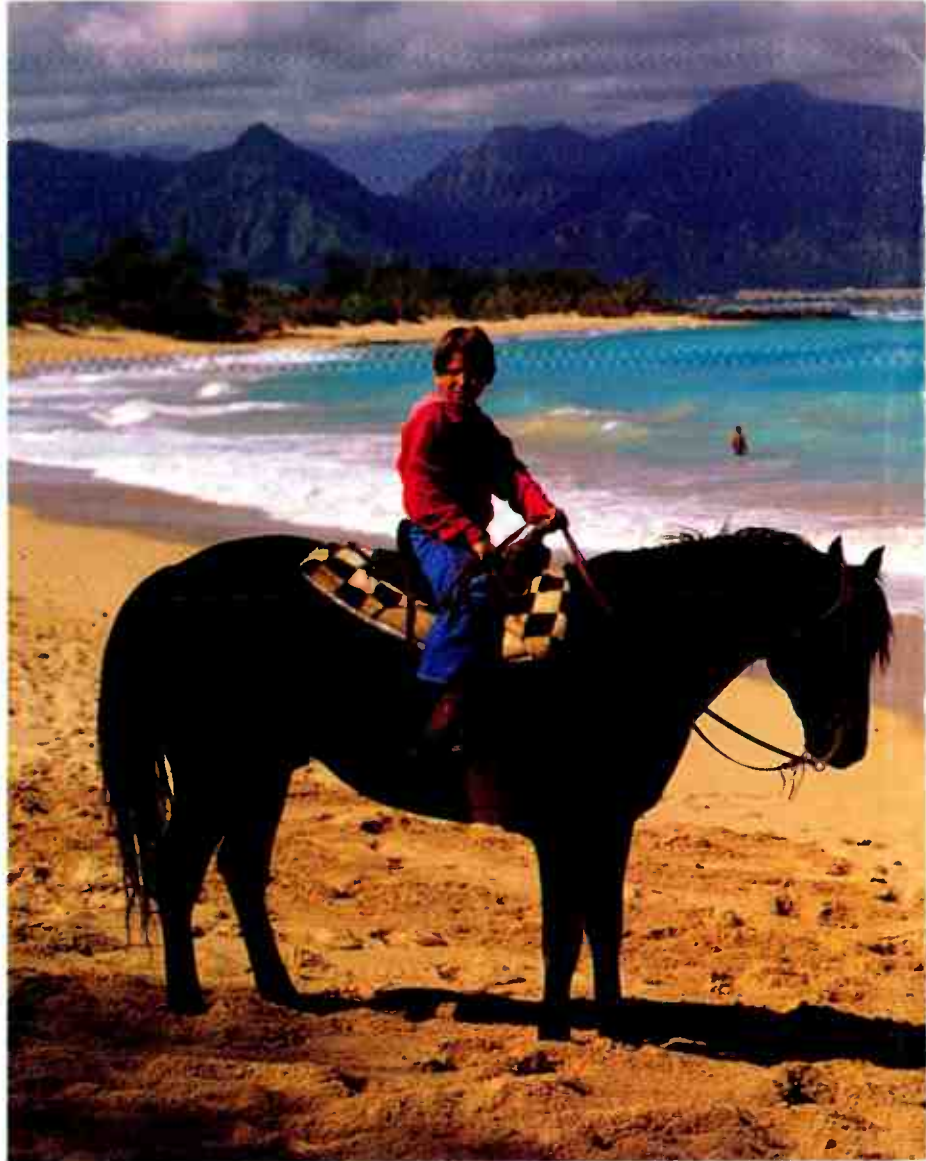
We have come to Blue Hawaii to film a television special for The Nashville Network. The plot is sort of a movie within a movie—don't ask—where Randy gets a chance to play a cowboy, a role in which he excels, and I get a chance to play Milling Around Extra, something I, too, am good at. We also get a chance to practice karate with Chuck Norris, who's doing something in this movie, ride horses up the volcano, eat strange-tasting Hawaiian food, watch whales and windsurfers and, in general, irritate Lib Hatcher, Randy's wife and manager, who can only put up with our antics for so long. You would think that Lib had never seen anyone try to give Randy knife-fighting lessons from the Philippine *arnis* system with a butter knife in a swank Maui restaurant before. Okay, maybe people were staring a little, but such harsh criticism from a woman who once went to a costume party dressed as an issue of the *National Enquirer*...

Our theory, this being Maui and February and all, could be summed up in a single word—*beach*. So we all brought bathing suits, shorts, T-shirts, then climbed up 4,000 feet on the volcano Haleacala, where the trickster god Maui once stole the fires from heaven. Unfortunately, the fires had gone out by the time we got there, leaving Randy, Chuck, Lib, me, the television crew and everybody but the Hawaiian cowboys shivering in 40-degree temperatures and a 30-mile-per-hour wind.



STEVEN MINIKOVSKI





MICHAEL BANE

The plot is a movie within a movie where Randy plays cowboy and gets to bring horses and cattle to Hawaii. Co-starring with Randy are Chuck Norris, Melanie Chartoff, Nick Banko and Denver Pyle. Cast and crew faced many surprises during the filming.

"I never figured I'd freeze to death in Hawaii," says Chuck Norris.

"No kidding," I say, gulping black coffee and fantasizing about a suitcaseful of ski wear tucked in my closet at home. Randy rides up on the Old Man, one of two horses he's shipped over from the mainland for the filming. The other horse, referred to as the stallion, he's saved for Chuck. As Chuck heads off to get ready to ride, Randy leans over and stage-whispers. "The stallion's been acting up a little," he says. "I don't think he likes the grass."

Should we, I reply, mention this to Chuck?

"Naw," says Randy. "Chuck's a great rider."

Within minutes, with much whinnying, bucking and assorted horse antics, the stallion and Chuck Norris have reached some sort of Mexican standoff. Chuck wants to go forward; the stallion wants to go backwards; as a result, they stand still. Chuck's mother is here, and even she can't resist giggling.

"I haven't ridden since *Lone Wolf McQuade*," says Chuck, somewhat defensively.

"The stallion's a little spooky," I add knowingly, although, in fact, I know less than nothing about horses, and most of what little I know I've learned from Randy.

"C'mon, c'mon," says the director in true Hollywood style. "The light's wasting! Let's ride."

We've come to Hawaii at what I think is a very strange time

in the career of Randy Travis.

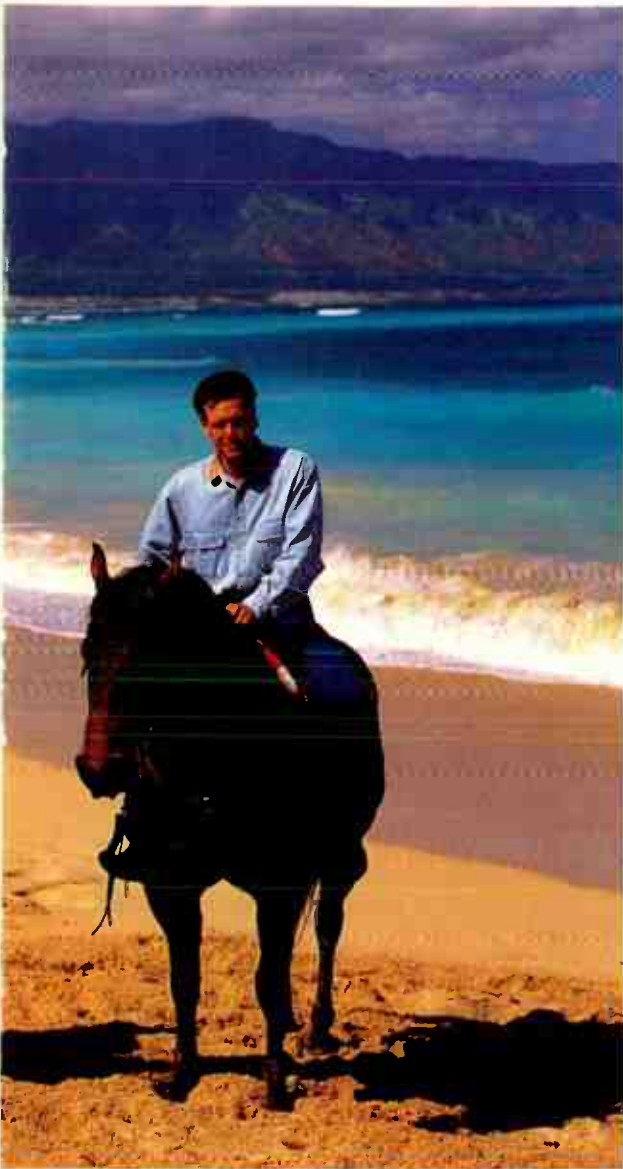
Country music is on a rocket to the moon, popularity-wise. It is, as those of you reading this magazine have known all along, the most popular music in America. You can't turn around these days without seeing Garth Brooks or Alan Jackson or Travis Tritt.

But not Randy Travis.

Despite the most successful concert tour of his career, despite a critically acclaimed album—*High Lonesome*—that is clearly some of his best vocal work ever, despite a triumphant return to songwriting (with co-writers Alan Jackson and Don Schlitz), despite solid, accept-no-substitute Number One hit records, there's a sense that, at least in the eyes of some people in the industry, Randy Travis is old news in a sea of white hats.

"It's the damn *Billboard* charts," a Nashville insider tells me one day. "Nothing against Garth, but if the new computerized charts had been in place for 'Forever and Ever, Amen' or any of those hits, it would have been a different story. I mean, it's hard for people to grasp just how influential Randy Travis has been, and that's getting a little obscured now."

Perhaps the controversy about "Better Class of Losers" will illustrate the problem a little better. "Better Class of Losers" is one of the songs Randy co-wrote with Alan Jackson. The first time I heard it was a couple of days after the two of them had started writing. Randy and Alan were passing through Tampa,



*Like many before
him, Randy
Travis comes to
Hawaii for
the peace it offers.
When we meet
on the volcano,
he looks great,
rested, ready
to work.*



where I live, and Randy wanted me to come out to the bus after the show and listen to the new songs.

I was enthusiastic, because, too often, it's hard to remain a songwriter on a grueling road schedule. Especially in a case like Randy Travis', where you're talking superstar status and all the constraints that status puts on your time. It's hard to imagine how quickly the time on the road is eaten up, with personal appearances, interviews, rehearsals and sound checks, checking in and out, until more than one evening ends up early in the morning, too tired to do anything except sleep, much less write.

And songwriting, I think, doesn't come easy to Randy Travis. Not like Alan Jackson, who throws off songs the way a hot fire spits sparks, or Marty Brown, who can grab a guitar and sing you what he ate for breakfast. Although Randy has written steadily throughout his career, the collaborations with Alan Jackson seemed to be the first time I'd seen him really enthused about his own songs in a long time.

And I just liked "Better Class of Losers." It was lighthearted and seemed to me to be a good blend of Alan Jackson's flashy lyrics ("People...who buy their coffee beans already ground...") and Randy's swinging rhythms.

The song was destined to be a single, and, eventually, it was. Along the way, it was involved in a particularly ugly little lawsuit filed by none other than Harlan Howard, who claimed that since "Better Class of Losers" shared the same title with a song

he'd written years ago, there was a copyright infringement going on. As a rule, titles can't be copyrighted the way lyrics and melodies can. Country music historian Rich Kienzle notes that it's not unheard-of for an artist to even record two songs with the same name—Buck Owens, for example recorded two songs titled "Only You"—one The Platters' classic, the other a song Buck penned. The Howard "Better Class of Losers," recorded by Ray Price in 1984, hit Number 72 on the charts before drifting into oblivion, only to resurface as a lawsuit.

It should never have been a big deal, much less anything that required hauling in the lawyers. What I thought was strange, however, was people's reactions to the mini-controversy. After all, one of the involved parties told me, Randy and Alan Jackson's song was "derivative."

Of what, I asked?

"Friends in Low Places," was the reply.

Which, I pointed out, was derived from any number of other country songs, up to and including "Rednecks, White Socks and Blue Ribbon Beer." Saying a country music song is "derivative" is a little like saying mud is brown. It's true, but it doesn't tell you a whole heck of a lot about the mud. Secondly, the idea of a country music legend like Randy Travis and an artist and songwriter of the stature of Alan Jackson huddled in a corner trying to come up with another version of "Friends in Low Places" was laughable.

Yet, to me, the allegation was part and parcel of a feeling I sensed in Music City—the new guys could do no wrong, and anybody who'd been around longer than a couple of weeks could do no right. What was in the air was the sweet and pungent smell of money, and there was a feeding frenzy going on in the old cattle pond.

* * *

Chuck Norris is teaching Randy Travis karate. Tang Soo Do, actually, which is sort of a Korean variant of what everyone thinks of as karate. It is something Randy is very serious about—I think he and I started talking about karate years ago, when I had about two or three years in the arts. He always talked about the martial arts with a sense of longing, something he'd always wanted to do, that was just out of reach on the road. He envied me my long nights of practice in the *dojo*, the steady and ancient rhythms of learning. But that is, I think, typical of Randy Travis. He is one to chip away at what he doesn't know, methodically and steadily, learning more. Whether it's lifting weights or singing country songs or training horses or learning the martial arts, he has approached each with an almost insatiable curiosity and a patience that seems out of place for a traveling musician.

When he talks about other singers, I'm always surprised at the level of detail he comes up with. He's *listened* to their songs, dissected them, studied their voices and come away with something that he thinks is excellent. Ask Randy what he thinks about Garth Brooks or Alan Jackson, and he'll home in on a certain song, the way Garth or Alan used their voices just so. Then he'll shake his head and explain just how hard that type of singing actually is, and just how good a singer has to be to pull that off. I've been with Randy when he quizzed professional wrestlers about wrestling, actresses about acting, weight lifters about pumping iron, runners about sneakers, shooters about handguns, until Lib Hatcher is ready to strangle him. Once, late at night on the beach in Maui, Randy spent 15 minutes discussing sandcastles with a homeless man who felt building sandcastles was his calling. As we were walking away, Randy just shrugged and laughed.

"Did you know all that stuff about sandcastles?" he asked, and I admitted I didn't.

"It's important to listen," he said, as if stating a very simple truth. "People have things to say."

And he listens to Chuck Norris, who teaches with the patience and care of the master that he is. Randy is a serious student, learning each new move, then practicing on the road. He is humble and attentive, forcing the stretches that come so hard to someone accustomed to lifting weights and building muscles.

"The last workout we had," he tells me as an aside, "I thought the next day I was going to die."

* * *

"This isn't very hard, Michael," Randy is saying, tossing a Ruger Single-Six revolver up in the air. "You ought to be able to do this."

I ought, I suppose, to be able to do a lot of things that I can't seem to do. Randy's been trying to teach me quick-draw tricks for a while now, and, so far, nobody's called to offer me a part in a cowboy movie. Randy takes the unloaded gun, puts it on the back of his hand and flips it up in the air. The gun spins a couple of times and lands perfectly in Randy's hand, just like in all the old Roy Rogers movies. He hands me the gun, which I place on the back of my hand. One quick flip, and, in no time at all, Randy's gun is sticking butt-up in the dirt. The crew laughs.

We are back up on the volcano, filming at an old farm house in what has to be the most beautiful spot on earth. The steep sides of the mountain are carpeted in green, sloping down to the rolling fields of pineapples and sugar cane. In the distance, the rolling blue waves crash against the beaches at Ho'opika Point. Ho'opika is Mecca for windsurfers, where world-class sailors go to challenge winds and waves that will grind lesser boardheads into so much powdered fiberglass, shredded mylar

and coral cuts. From our perch on the volcano, we can see the bright flash of polychromatic sails as the sailors launch off the wave platforms, turning cartwheels in the air. Our clearing is surrounded by giant eucalyptus trees, some standing straight and tall, others stretched prone, their shallow roots offering little protection from the wind gods that dance on the skirts of Haleacala. Above us is the huge moonscape of the crater of the dormant volcano. In the ancient Hawaiian religion, the crater is a place of power, a holy place. Standing on the edge of the crater is like stepping up to a huge machine and feeling the power hum from its sides. Or maybe it's more like sounds just out of reach—catch the ephemeral laughter of the old gods.

Like many before him, Randy Travis comes to Hawaii for the peace it offers. When I saw him earlier on the tour, he was tired, wrung out, the strain of singing every night taking its toll on his vocal cords. When we meet again on the volcano, he looks great, rested, ready to work.

"I'll tell you, man, I needed the break this time," he says. "I was pretty tired."

That's as close as he'll come to saying that five years of steady touring, standing in the spotlights, has taken its toll. Careful monitoring of his diet over the last couple of years has given his voice a new strength and power, and the old discipline of the gym, backed with the new disciplines of karate, have kept him in great shape. But the road is the road, and it has a way of sanding off your edges.

So I decide to take the proverbial bull by the proverbial horns and ask Randy what he thinks about the incredible disappearing Travis. We are huddled at another restaurant, and Lib is watching us very closely, in case things get out of control. I keep my hands on the table, away from the butter knife.

Do you think, I ask with typical journalistic subtlety, that Randy Travis has been "whited out" by the White Hats?

Randy mulls the question over. Finally, he shrugs and laughs.

"You know, Michael," he begins, "I don't think that's true. I mean, I see the concerts, the fans, every night. The fans are there, so I'd have to say, no, I don't think I've disappeared."

I persist, but Randy demurs: The two most important parts of the music business are the fans and the music; the business part is a distant third.

One final comment: "You know, Michael, those guys are just such great singers—they deserve everything that's coming to them," he says, "and that's a fact."

He then goes on to tell me all the things he's learned from the Hats. And how much more he has to learn.

* * *

Maui has a way of getting those edges sharp again. From the deck of Randy and Lib's house in Maui, you can look out on the bay and see the humpback whales, their huge tails thrashing the water with a message that was already old when mankind was young. The humpbacks sing unique, haunting songs. If you take an afternoon to dive in the flawless waters off Maui and hold yourself very still and calm while the butterfly-colored reef fish dart around you, you can hear those songs, distant, at the edge of hearing.

In his book, *Mastery*, akidoist George Leonard recalls the story of judo founder Jigoro Kano, who, as his death drew near, asked to be buried in a white belt, the rank of a beginner.

"In the master's secret mirror," writes Leonard, "even at the moment of highest reknown and accomplishment, there is the image of the newest student in the class, eager for knowledge, willing to play the fool."

When we deal in the world of the popular arts, it's hard not to fall into the business trap, seeing the artist in terms of chart position. I recently asked an artist about his music, and he spent ten minutes telling me a history of how his songs had charted. In the overheated world of country music, talent isn't hard to find. Much harder to find is an artist committed to the art, willing to walk the harder path. Like Randy Travis.

Now, if I can just learn how he flips that gun over in the air... ■



MARTY STUART

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE JULY/AUGUST 1992

PULL-OUT
CENTERFOLD
OF-THE-MONTH

MARTY STUART

Facts of Life

Personal Data

Given Name: John Marty Stuart
Birthdate: September 30, 1958
Birthplace: Philadelphia, Mississippi
Family: parents, John and Hilda Stuart; sister, Jennifer Stuart; brother, Western tailor Manuel ("adopted").
Pets: Oscar Lee Perkins, a bloodhound ("Perkins after Carl, Lee after Jerry and Oscar after Lonzo").
Hobbies: Collecting guitars and country music memorabilia
Favorite Movie: *The Last Picture Show*
Favorite Color: Black
Favorite Food: Fried chicken, sushi
Famous for: Going on the road at age 13 with Lester Flatt's band. Marty played mandolin.

Vital Statistics

Height: 5' 7"
Weight: 145 lbs
Color of eyes: Hazel
Color of hair: Black

Recording Career

Record label: MCA Records, 1514 South Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37212.

Albums	Release Date
<i>Marty, With a Little Help from My Friends</i> (Ridge Runner)	1977
<i>Busy Bee Cafe</i> (Sugar Hill)	1982
<i>Marty Stuart</i> (CBS)	1986
<i>Hillbilly Rock</i> (MCA)	1990
<i>Tempted</i> (MCA)	1991
<i>This One's Gonna Hurt You</i> (MCA)	1992

Number One Singles
"The Whiskey Ain't Workin'"—with Travis Tritt/co-written with Ronnie Scaife

Media Highlights

1991 Named one of country music's Hot Young Hunks by *Us Magazine*
1992 Profiled in *USA Today*



CANDACE WEST

Marty and Travis Tritt on the "No Hats" Tour in Miami recently and man and dog at home—Oscar Lee Perkins is a bonafide bloodhound.



HILEVA STUART

Videos

"Mirrors Don't Lie"
"Cry, Cry, Cry"
"Hillbilly Rock"
"Little Things"
"Tempted"
"The Whiskey Ain't Workin'"
"This One's Gonna Hurt You (For a Long, Long Time)"

Awards

1991 "Hillbilly Rock" nominated for CMA Video of the Year
1992 Marty and Travis Tritt nominated for ACM Top Vocal Duet and TNN/MCN Vocal Collaboration of the Year

Career Highlights

1972-79 Toured with Lester Flatt
1980-86 Toured with Johnny Cash
1981 Played Johnny Cash's long-lost son in video for Cash's hit, "The Baron."
1987 Appeared in video documentary, *Let There Be Country*.
1991 Co-produced Jerry and Tammy Sullivan's gospel album, *A Joyful Noise*/co-wrote songs for the album.
1991-to present Marty's songs recorded by Wynonna, George Strait and others.

Current Events

"No Hats" Tour with Travis Tritt sold out shows across the U.S./New album, *This One's Gonna Hurt You*, includes a duet with Travis Tritt, a duet with Johnny Cash and a cover of Cowboy Jack Clement's "Just Between You and Me."

Fan Club Information

Membership in the Marty Stuart Fan Club includes an 8x10 photo, membership card, biography, fact sheet, discography, four newsletters per year and Marty's itineraries. To join, send membership dues of \$10 to Marty Stuart Fan Club, P.O. Box 67, St. Croix, Wisconsin 54024-0067.

If you lose your one and only

There's always room here for the lonely

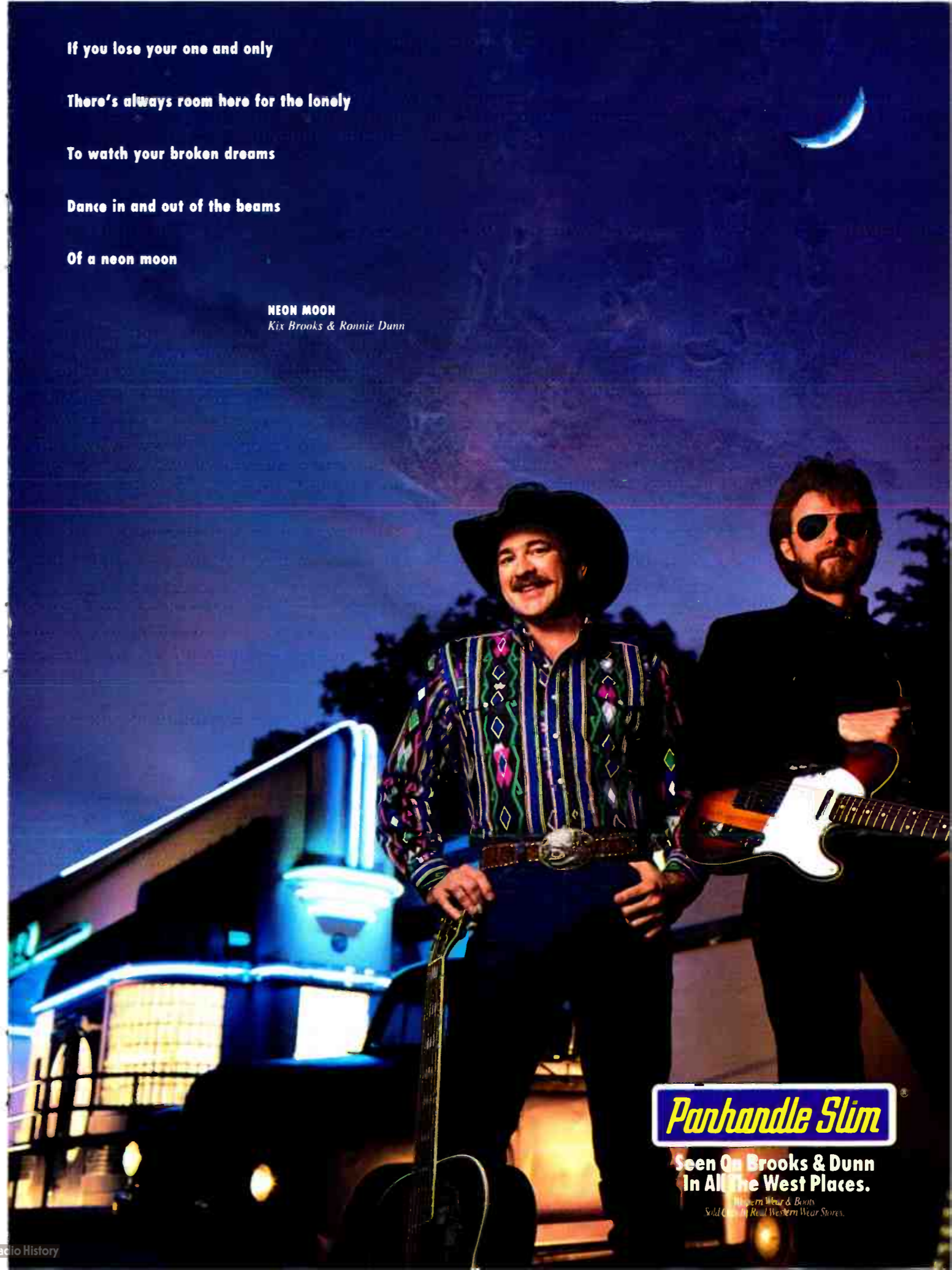
To watch your broken dreams

Dance in and out of the beams

Of a neon moon

NEON MOON

Kix Brooks & Ronnie Dunn



Parhandle Slim

Seen On Brooks & Dunn
In All the West Places.

Western Wear & Boots
Sold Only in Real Western Wear Stores.

...and when she was bad, she was simply adorable...and affordable!

"The Little Girl with a Curl"



It's broken! The little pot of flowers this "Little Girl With a Curl" prized so highly has been damaged. One look, and she scowls in childish dismay, stomps her foot, "boo hoos" for effect and then waits for Mama to come and make things right.

"The Little Girl With a Curl" is an original issue in *Dianna Effner's Mother Goose* collection, a group of porcelain nursery-rhyme dolls that captures the magic of this artist's gift.

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MARK CHESNUTT

Child of the Honky Tonks

He got his education in the Texas honky tonks of his youth. Those studies have paid off with hit singles, a Gold record and friends like George Jones. ■ By Bob Millard

On a crisp, clear, chilly afternoon—a rare day in normally-rainy Nashville—Mark Chesnutt is hunkered down in the compact offices of his Music Row managers. Mixing sessions are done on his second album, *Longnecks and Short Stories*, and though he is supposedly on vacation from a grueling year on the concert trail, working more than 300 days in dance halls, honky tonks and some large halls behind his freshman hits, “Brother Jukebox,” “Too Cold at Home” and “Blame It on Texas,” Chesnutt is neither rested nor resting.

Chesnutt looks younger than his 28 years, though he claims otherwise.

“You haven’t looked close enough to see the gray hairs,” he jokes. “I have quite a few more than I did two years ago.”

In fact, Chesnutt’s brown hair and tired brown eyes are punctuated by cheery, wind-rouged cheeks that are baby smooth. Dressed in a simple white shirt with Western-style snaps, tan boots and tight blue jeans, he looks like the rodeo-ridin’ kid next door from any one of a thousand Southwest small towns. There is none of the dazzle one might expect of a guy who sold more than a half-million copies of his first album on the way to establishing himself as one of the most solid new honky tonk traditionalists.

When I arrive, he is on the phone listening, mostly, and grunting short half-sentences down long distance lines. Chesnutt is clearly tired. Again and again he flicks a lighter just to watch the sparks fly. And they say the life of a country star isn’t as glamorous as it used to be...

“I was up till three in the mornin’ hangin’ out at Joe Diffie’s house,” Chesnutt explains in a laconic east Texas twang. “We

were just sittin’ around playin’ old country records and singin’ them old songs.”

It’s as simple as this: Mark Chesnutt lives for honky tonk music. Singing it is just about all he has ever done. It’s certainly all he has ever *wanted* to do. His mother and father started taking him to nightclubs to hear country bands long before he was old enough to get in alone. Daddy, Bob Chesnutt, was a one-time country singer and songwriter. He was Chesnutt’s first and most abiding musical influence.

“Yeah, ‘cause Daddy was the first singer I ever heard,” Chesnutt says. “As far back as I can remember, Daddy was singin’—singin’ Roy Acuff songs.”

Although a five-year stint at Nashville’s Cedarwood Publishing failed to launch the recording career he had hoped for, Chesnutt’s father kept Hank Williams, George Jones and Merle Haggard on the family radio or turntable most of the time. Bob Chesnutt was something of a jack-of-all-trades and a workaholic. He gave his son a strong work ethic during the day, but when night fell, he steeped Mark in one of the most enduring pleasures of the Beaumont, Texas, working class—honky tonk music, the kind cowboys can dance to.

“As far back as I can remember, I remember going into those honky tonks with my parents and hearin’ those songs and seein’ those people dance,” says Chesnutt. “I still see that.”

Even when he isn’t playing that music himself, or in the wings watching pals like Joe Diffie and heroes like George Jones perform, he likes to be around that music.

“I love to go to a bar now with a jukebox that has all those old songs,” he explains. “That’s what I learned to sing on—songs like ‘She Thinks I Still Care,’ ‘Swingin’ Doors’ and ‘The Bottle Let Me Down.’ To me there’s a mystique about that. I would rather listen to any old cryin’ in your beer George Jones or Merle Haggard song than anything.”

With his daddy’s encouragement, Chesnutt has made a life-long study of country music, with particular emphasis on the honky tonk artists. He memorized whole albums by his favorites as a kid. When he finally talked his parents into letting him quit school in the 11th grade to devote himself to developing a career in country music, he worked hard to expand his repertoire to include relatively arcane classics by honky tonkers. If a tune sported a steel guitar and a danceable fiddle, Chesnutt probably learned it. He is said to have the words to perhaps as many as a thousand songs ready to repeat at the drop of a cowboy hat, though he is too shy to brag about it.

“Some people around here started calling me ‘the human jukebox,’” he admits, almost embarrassed. “I don’t know why... Maybe it’s ‘cause I know so many songs. A lot of people can name a singer and an old song, and I probably know it.”

With his daddy’s encouragement, Chesnutt has made a lifelong study of country music, with particular emphasis on the honky tonk artists. “I remember going into those honky tonks with my parents and hearin’ those songs and seein’ those people dance.”



He also knows who he is and where he's going, though he admits he is still learning the business end of getting there. Some artists are swept away by a tide of unexpected developments when their career takes off as Chesnutt's did with "Too Cold at Home" in 1990. Not Chesnutt. He had his feet on the ground to begin with, plus Mark Chesnutt was groomed for this. Having seen the Nashville music business close up, his father gave his son savvy and timely advice right up until everything started to happen for him.

Then, just when the gold ring seemed within reach, Bob Chesnutt died.

"He saw everything starting to take off," Chesnutt says, taking what comfort he can in what is obviously a great loss for him.

"He always wanted to go with me, but he didn't want to leave my mother at home. And he still worked all the time. That's what gets to me—now he wouldn't have to work. He wanted to be involved in what I'm doin', and that's what I planned on. The way I look at it—he couldn't make it on the road with me and he wanted to go so bad, but this way he can. I believe he's always watchin' over me, still makin' sure I make the right moves."

Funny how things work out. With the loss of his father, Chesnutt has found a father figure in one of his all-time heroes.

George Jones has taken the young honky tonker under his wing in a manner that few who knew him during the worst years of his wild-ass heyday might imagine.

"Yeah, he has; he's been really good about a lot of things," Chesnutt says. "I just had lunch with him the other day, and we talked about a lot of things—a lot of things you can't talk to a lot of people about, but George is somebody who can really give me advice.

"He told me one time about a year ago that I reminded him of himself when he was my age. So I think he really cares and gives me a lot of good advice.

"He checks up on me. If he's wantin' to know how I'm doin', he will call over here and talk to Stan or somebody," he says, speaking of co-manager Stan Byrd. "And I think that's great because I need that. I'm still young and I don't know it all. In my eyes George Jones knows it all. He's been there. It's nice to be able to pick up the phone and ask him something that's botherin' me. And then when we go to play a gig together, it's like workin' with family.

"Knowin' him like I do, it's hard to imagine him in the bad old days because he's totally different than that now. He tells me to stay sober and stay out of trouble."

Another of this cherubic-looking honky tonk singer's heroes—though you wouldn't know it from his records—was Elvis Presley. Yet, Chesnutt has taken a page from Presley's own early days. Like Presley, Chesnutt took some of the first fruits of his success and bought his mother a brand new car.

"My mother's the only one left now and I take care of her," he says. "This year I bought her her very first new car. That just



George Jones has taken the young honky tonker under his wing.

thrilled me. She was drivin' Daddy's old car, an old Cadillac, and it had done petered out anyway. She hates big cars, so she finally let me buy her a Buick Cutlass Ciera. Boy, that's a good feelin', to go back home and see her drivin' that new car."

Chesnutt has been so busy in the past year and a half that he never got a chance to leave home, in a manner of speaking. When he gets back to Beaumont, he still sleeps in his old room in the house out in suburban South Park where he grew up. Otherwise he calls the tour bus and the odd motel room home. He hasn't had time to buy a place of his own.

On even rarer occasions these days, he likes to get outside to give nature's little creatures a run for their money. When working the nightclubs around Beaumont and nearby Jasper, Texas, he was an avid hunter and fisherman, sporting "a permanent suntan" rather than the "motel tan" of the musician.

Following years of careful advice from his father, Chesnutt is squirreling away money, hoping to build a house in Beaumont someday and fill it with sporting goods. But for this likeable young singer, the real sign of his success is not what he can buy, but what he can hear when he slips into a honky tonk while the house band is playing.

"Man, what's really great now is when I go in and the band is playing one of *my* songs," he says, his soft voice betraying a sense of awe. "After all those years learnin' everybody else's songs, and now somebody else is learnin' mine—even if they're killin' 'em. That's what really tells me something—tells me I'm really here."

That, friends, is also a pretty good sign that an artist might be around for a while. ■

VINCE GILL

First At Last

— by Bob Allen —

Sincerity is a rare and precious commodity in the music business, where award winners seem to shed tears on demand on national TV and corporate decisions often seem based more on politics and personal prejudices than on the music itself.

That's why I was so floored a couple of years ago when MCA Records threw a small reception for Vince Gill after "When I Call Your Name" became his very first Number One record. It was not a huge crowd by any means—just the usual gathering of Music Row insiders: label employees, media reps, various industry figures and even a few musicians. (The musicians seem to be the last to get invited to these functions.)

The ever-approachable Gill was all smiles until he got the award. Then he simply burst into tears, wept uncontrollably. There was no question that his outburst was completely sincere, completely spontaneous. It cut like a knife through all the ersatz hoopla and self-congratulatory hustle and bustle that typifies such affairs and touched even the most jaded and cynical heart that day.

"I was speechless," Gill recalls nearly two years later. "Because it was...you can tell when people are there just because they're paid to be there, or because it's the thing to do. And it was just neat that people were there who didn't need to be. It just somehow meant more that I had those friends."

Gill suddenly emits a good-natured, adolescent-sounding half-chortle, half-giggle, a tactic he relies upon when he thinks maybe the conversation is becoming a little too profound or the questions a little too intrusive. "You know," he adds with a shrug: "the one who dies with the most friends is the one who wins."

If so, then it's safe to say that Music Row's favorite underdog and perennial "also-ran" may eventually end up with yet another Number One finish, since there are indeed few people held in such high esteem by their peers as he is. Judging from what you hear from those who know him, this 35-year-old, Oklahoma-born singer is seemingly a man without pretense or conceit; a man whom stardom has not changed a whit.

But then again, a lot of the hoopla must be old hat to him. Though it did take him seven or eight years as a solo artist to get his first hit records, he's been around, either in the spotlight, or right on its fringes, for years. In his early 20's he was already lead singer for the nationally successful country-rock band Pure Prairie League. And long before he had his own first Number Ones, he enjoyed a certain security in knowing that he was in incredible demand by the stars (many of whom have been his friends for years) as a session singer and guitarist.

Since the early 1980's when he first arrived in Nashville, Gill has contributed vocals and guitar licks to the studio sessions of Reba McEntire, Emmylou Harris, Conway Twitty, Patty Loveless, the rock group Dire Straits, close friend Rodney



Crowell, his pal Rosanne Cash and more than a hundred other artists of note.

As Gill himself casually points out, he never had to struggle or starve as a musician. His music has always afforded him a darn good living. And then again, his wife, Janis Gill of Sweethearts of the Rodeo, has a pretty good job herself. All in all, he insists he was quite happy, serene and secure even before "When I Call Your Name" catapulted him to headline status.

"I really don't feel any different now as a person than I did when I was 18 and I moved away from home and went to California," he shrugs. "It feels exactly the same. I might look a little older, but I don't think I do.

"I love being *normal*. That's my goal, is to stay normal. And I learned a long time ago that no matter how good you are at something, there's always someone out there who's better. There's nobody on this earth who can't be replaced."

As he reflects on the mysterious and often blinding power of celebrity, Gill leans his 6'3" football player's frame against the console of Masterfonics, the Nashville studio where he cuts most of his hits. "One Last Chance," a soulful track from his still-untitled new LP (which consists entirely of tunes written by Gill himself, sometimes with co-writing assistance from A-string songwriters like Don Schlitz and Max D. Barnes) booms through the huge studio speakers. Vince listens and confers on the final sound mixes with a young engineer who scribbles on a clipboard and fiddles authoritatively with the knobs and levers on the sound board.

Always meticulous, and this time well ahead of schedule, Vince and producer Tony Brown recorded and mixed the LP in just under a month's time, and well in advance of its slated October release. For this, the final week of mixing, Gill has been back in the studio every day to supervise the last round of post-production fine-tuning.

One gets the impression from the slow, deliberate way that he goes about things, from his leisurely stride and his air of patient unflappability, that Gill—star or not—tends to do things very much his own way, and at his own pace. There are some who will tell you that's the reason it took success so long to catch up with him. He shrugs and laughs it off when it's pointed out that his wife Janis once called him the most disorganized person she ever met.

"Got her fooled, don't I!?" he chortles again as he kicks back on the sofa in the small studio lounge just as the video to "When I Call Your Name" happens to flash on the the big TV in the corner. Then he adds in a slightly less frivolous tone: "I take my career very seriously, but I don't let it consume me, or ruin my life, or give me ulcers. You gotta laugh it off or you'll drive yourself crazy. And, believe me, I've had plenty of practice laughing it off, with records that didn't do too good. Otherwise,

it would have driven me nuts.” The fact is, during his earlier six or seven-year run as a solo artist with RCA Records, there was very little for Gill to laugh about. The three LP’s he did for that label—*Turn Me Loose* (1984), *The Things That Matter* (1985) and *The Way Back Home* (1987)—generated scores of rave reviews, and won Gill a cult following, along with the Academy of Country Music’s 1984 “Best New Male Vocalist” Award. Yet they resulted in only a handful of piddling Top 10 and Top 20 singles—“Cinderella,” “Oklahoma Borderline,” “If It Weren’t for Him” (a duet with Rosanne Cash)—and did little in terms of building the ground-swell necessary for a successful solo career.

“There were some who’d given up on me, and, in their defense, rightfully so,” he admits without bitterness. “If you’re given so many chances and you still don’t deliver, it doesn’t really matter what the reasons are. But I always knew I had enough talent that there was always somebody out there who’d say, ‘Well, yeah, I’ll make a couple records with you, maybe we can get a hit.’”

But since teaming up a couple of years ago with MCA label head/staff producer Tony Brown, his long-time friend and ex-bandmate from Rodney Crowell’s *Cherry Bombs*, Gill has blossomed like a late-blooming rose. *When I Call Your Name*, his 1989 MCA debut LP, proved just the right vehicle for focusing his talents. Spurred by the massive popularity of the LP’s hit title song (which became his first Number One single and went on to win him several CMA Awards and his first platinum LP), *When I Call Your Name* quickly out-sold all three of his previous RCA platters combined. Three years after its release, it is still in the country album Top 50, and the title track is still his most requested song.

Leaning back on the sofa, sipping his soda and staring at a Shenandoah video on TV like a 12-year-old watching Saturday morning cartoons, Gill admits that his versatility has, in the past, maybe sometimes been a slight encumbrance. He concedes that it’s perhaps part of the reason that it took so long for the record-buying public to catch on to him. Gill, after all, not only sings, writes and plays a mean guitar; he’s also adept on a half-dozen or so other stringed instruments. Owing to his remarkable versatility and stylistic range, he’s probably the only living person who has been invited both to join the Grand Ole Opry (he became a member in 1991) and to tour with a world-famous English rock band. (His friend, Mark Knopfler of Dire Straits, with whom he’s worked in the studio, offered him a spot on the band’s recent tour; in deference to his solo career, Gill



Vince with wife Janis Gill.

respectfully declined.)

“When somebody like George Strait comes out, you know exactly what he does,” Gill points out. “He’s wonderful at it, and he doesn’t vary from it. But I’m different. I play guitar and do a lot of different things and go in a lot of different directions.” He taps softly on his forehead: “I have all sorts of things knocking on my door. And I think on the last couple of LP’s I’ve had room to stretch. *When I Call Your Name* has several different pockets. There’s contemporary ballads, a bluegrass-flavored waltz, a little Western swing, even some upbeat Buck Owens stuff. Me and Tony were honestly searching. We just said, well, you know, let’s cut a little bit of everything and see what, if anything, we get successful with. In hindsight, I’m really glad it was with ‘When I Call Your Name.’ It’s much more country than some of the other stuff.”

But Gill knows as well as anybody that the overwhelming success of “When I Call Your Name,” the single, had to do with a lot more than just style. Co-written by Gill and Tim DuBois, the song’s lyric of devastating loss and Gill’s heartfelt rendering of it touched a chord of universal empathy. Gill still seems slightly awestruck when he recalls a show in West Virginia when the song brought 6,000 people to their feet, and he could feel the emotion rush through the audience and back at him, like electricity.

“I still cannot describe what happened that night,” he shakes his head in amazement, fumbling for words. “I’ve even seen it described in print, but it still doesn’t get....” He shakes his head. “I

don’t...it was just a feeling that was unbelievable. There was just so much emotion, almost like a religious experience, I guess. It was just so moving. It wasn’t that anybody was doing anything, per se—you know, clapping or...Whatever it was, it was just unbelievable. I can’t describe it.

“People have come to me with story after story about what the song means to them,” he adds in wonderment. “And they’re all different. My sister called me the other day and told me she went to a friend’s funeral and that was one of the songs being played at the funeral. You know, she just showed up at this funeral and there’s her little brother’s song playing. I can tell you, it shocked her!”

“I’ve never thought about the song in the sense of the passing of someone else,” he adds softly. “But that’s what’s great about a song lyric: It can mean something different to everybody.”

Maybe someone else could have had a hit with “When I Call Your Name,” but it’s doubtful that anyone could have wrung as much understated, rueful pathos out of the song as Gill did. His resolute tenor can sound both boyishly tender and achingly ethereal. It has remarkable range and an effortless precision, and sets him apart in a country world over-populated by growling baritones. (As a singer, he is to someone like Travis or Black what Emmylou Harris is to, say, a gutsier Bonnie Raitt or Wynonna Judd.)

When asked when he first began to realize the dimensions of his God-given talent, Gill hesitates and emits that boisterous, adolescent-sounding chortle again.

“Ah, boy, I dunno,” he replies, gazing wistfully at the TV. “I wish I could say it was when I was 16 and I sang this song to this girl and she fell in love with me or somethin’... (Chuckle.) But I do remember riding in the back of the car one day with Mom and Dad when I was young, and for the first time I noticed that little quiver, that little vibrato, in my voice, and I thought, ‘Wow! I’ve never heard that before!’”

The son of an attorney who is now a federal appellate judge, Gill recalls that, “my parents were both musical and they were always very supportive of me.” Early on, he excelled at music. “All I know is that I’ve been blessed with great ears, and I seem to be able to hear things right—at least to sing and play them”.

He was also a stand-out at athletics. During his high school days back in Norman, Oklahoma, he kicked a few 45-yard field goals for the football team, and became an avid golfer, which he remains today. “I’ve had as low as a plus-one handicap—scratch golfer. Now it’s two or three—not bad for a musician.”

But somehow even his love of golf never quite eclipsed his musical drive. Somewhat of an over-achiever, he also joined a bluegrass outfit called Mountain Smoke during his high school years. "You can still hear a lot of bluegrass influence in my music."

Performing at local festivals, he began meeting national newgrass headliners of the day. When Sam Bush and Dan Crary invited him to join their band, The Bluegrass Alliance, he moved to Kentucky, where he also played briefly with Ricky Skaggs.

Another call came a year later, from Byron Berline ("one of the greatest fiddlers in the bluegrass world"), and he moved to the West Coast and joined Berline's group, Sundance, for a two-year stint.

"I did all that purely on my gut. It was never planned or analytical," Gill insists. "It all just happened. I went out there to the coast, and one of the first places I played with Sundance was at The Troubadour. In the audience was Dolly Parton, and Emmylou, and Rodney, and Guy Clark and Joe Stafford. It was like *bang*: Right off the bat I got to play with some of my favorite musicians on the planet."

He next did a stint with the country-rock group, Pure Prairie League. (He sang on "Let Me Love You Tonight," a 1980 Top 20 pop hit for the band best known for the song "Amy"). Then he joined Rodney Crowell's now-legendary back-up band in 1982. At the time the Cherry Bombs' line-up also included Emory Gordy Jr. (who would later produce some of Vince's RCA releases) and Tony Brown. (Ironically, Brown, who was briefly an A&R man at RCA, was responsible for first signing Gill to that label in 1983 but left for greener pastures at MCA before the two of them got an opportunity to work in the studio. That chance wouldn't come for six or seven more years.)

In 1977, while he was still out West, Vince also met a gorgeous young songstress named Janis Oliver who was already singing with her sister Kristine in local clubs under the name Sweethearts of the Rodeo. He and Janis first crossed paths one night at a Redondo Beach club where they were both performing.

"I was 19," Gill laughs. "And, yeah, I guess it was love at first sight. Janis was a striking-looking woman. Still is. She's unique-looking, a sort of classic beauty. She's got those Slavic features. How could you *not* love that face...those almond eyes... But she wouldn't go out with me then. Wouldn't go out with me for another three years. (*Chortle.*) I think she thought I was too much of a hillbilly."

Much has been made of the see-saw effect of the two Gills' very separate musical careers. (It's significant that they've never sung on each other's records, though Vince has dueted with Reba, Patty Loveless and Rosanne Cash, among others, and has a duet LP with Loveless on the way.) Back when he was still floundering at RCA, Sweethearts of the Rodeo were riding high in the charts. One year, they were even head-to-head nominees in the CMA's "best duet" awards category. But now the shoe is on the other foot, so to speak: Vince is in the hot seat, and The Sweethearts' popularity has cooled. The press has, of course, reflected at great length on the irony of it all.

"Janis and I have been married for 12 years and two weeks now," says Vince. "There have been some bad times—noth-

"It's a great feeling to know that I've got a family in country music that will be with me for the rest of my life."

ing major. Nothing that you don't find in any marriage.

"I had a happy life even before my hit records," he adds. "I don't know anybody who would tell you different. I've been playing the same four chords for a lot of years now, and I don't have to be king of the hill to enjoy it.

"For us all this is normal," he insists with another shrug. "When I first married Janis, I was in Pure Prairie League, and we did 250 dates a year. Sure, our daughter Jenny is seeing a lot of coming and going with her mom and dad, so it's obviously hard on all of us at times. But I think there's a pretty good understanding there within all of us, that this is our job. This is what we've gotta do."

The only time Gill actually bristles in the course of our conversation is on the subject of golf. He is, admittedly, almost fanatical about the sport, and—by design—lives next to a golf course. He enjoys hanging out with his friends on the professional circuit, and admits that he still occasionally fantasizes about a professional career. "It's the only thing besides music that I'm good at, and I honestly believe that if I'd worked on golf as hard as I worked on my music..." But, he explains, "You can only play the hand that's dealt you. I was out there record-

ing and releasing records, but I wasn't having hits. So I had time on my hands, and people maybe said, 'Oh, he's out playing golf again; he doesn't care about his career.' I even heard one guy say about me, 'Oh, I don't think he wants it bad enough.' But that was never the case. I was just never the kind to freak out and get in your face about why my record wasn't doing any better. It doesn't do any good.

"The fact is, despite my 'laid-back, whatever-happens-happens' attitude, I'm pretty driven," he insists. "Performing is a lot of fun for me, but I'm pretty intense about it. I'm sometimes pretty hard on the people who are out there singing and working with me. But I'm sure they'll tell you I'm equally hard on myself. I work real hard, and I get upset if I don't sound like I should."

The evening following our interview is a Friday night—the end of the week for most of us, but just another work night for Gill, as for most in his business. He's scheduled to appear on the televised portion of the Opry both this evening and the next, to do a couple of songs with his band.

He opens his brief segment around 9:30 with a lovely rendition of "When I Call Your Name," which elicits audible sighs of appreciation and a spray of flashbulbs from the unusually reserved crowd.

"This is a special place for me," he tells the Opry audience. "The Opry to me is about family. It's a great feeling to know that I've got a family in country music that will be with me for the rest of my life. I've got someone from my own family here tonight I want to bring out and sing a song with me: my pal, Jenny Gill."

To the crowd's utter delight, Vince brings out his 10-year-old daughter and hands her a microphone. Jenny, a pretty girl who's obviously inherited her dad's shy giggleness, yet seems wise beyond her years, duets with her father on a song he wrote about her with Guy Clark called "Jenny Dreams of Trains." It's soon apparent that the younger Gill has also inherited her parents' near-perfect sense of pitch.

The audience simply eats it up, and Vince, the proud dad, is himself just as obviously caught up in the tenderness of the occasion. "I love that kid," he says with a misty-eyed smile as they finish the song and Jenny scurries offstage.

All in all, it's the perfect gesture, and just the sort of thing we've come to expect from Vince Gill. It's utterly sincere and completely appropriate for the occasion—a special moment not only for the audience, but for a 10-year-old girl, and her father, a very special man. ■

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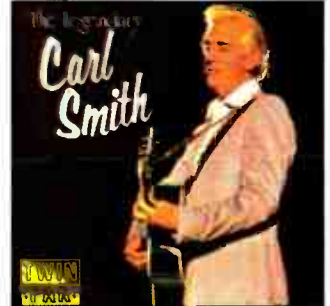
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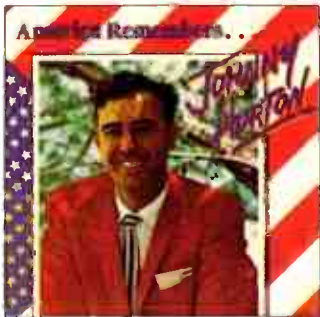
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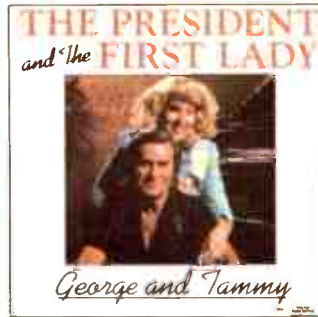
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KITTY WELLS & PATSY CLINE

I Fall to Pieces (Patsy Cline) • Making Believe (Kitty Wells) • Crazy (Patsy Cline) • Talk Back Trembling Lips (Kitty Wells) • Today, Tomorrow and Forever (Patsy Cline) • Big Truck Driving Man (Kitty Wells) • Someday You'll Want Me to Want You (Patsy Cline) • Walking After Midnight (Patsy Cline) • 12 MORE! Cass. Tape Only. No. CASS36



ROAD MUSIC

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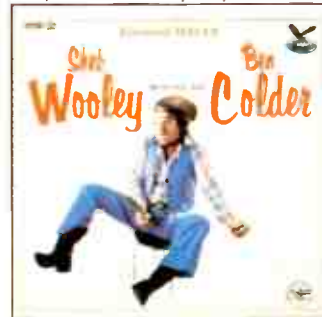
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Waterloo • Life to Go • Read Between the Lines • A Wound Time Can Erase • I Washed My Hands in The Muddy Water • Why I'm Walkin' • I Can't Get Enough of You • My Hero And The Plastic Radio • Things To Think About • Love Gets All Over Me • Of Blue • Lovin' The Foul Out of Me • Shake 'Em Up, Roll 'Em • Herman Schwartz • 6 MORE! Cassette Tape Only. No. CASS33



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Elizabeth • Flowers on the Wall • Atlanta Blue • Don't Wait on Me • I'll Even Love You Better Than I Did • Guilty • Oh Baby Mine • One Takes the Blame • My Only Love • Hollywood • Do You Remember These • I'll Go to My Grave Loving You • Class of '57 • Do You Know You Are My Sunshine • Who Am I to Say • Charlotte's Web • 2 MORE! LP No. LP38/Cassette No. CASS38



RED SOVINE

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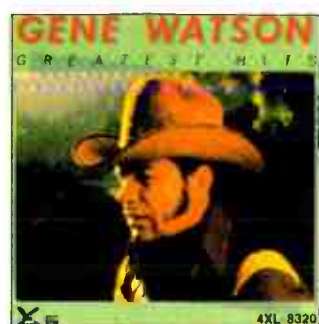
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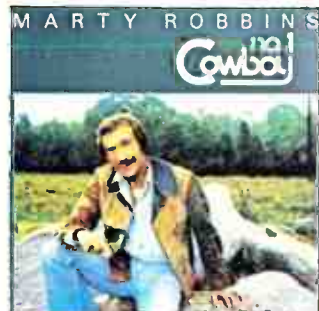
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PATSY CLINE

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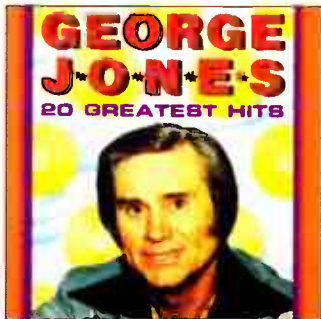
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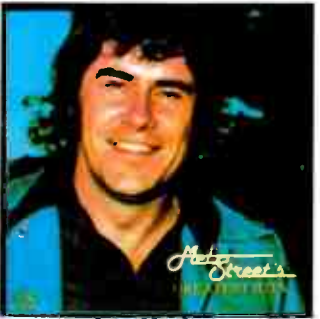
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JOHNNY CASH

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Tracy Lawrence Catches On

By paying attention and sticking to his vision, this young man has made a name for himself in a very short time.

◆◆◆ *By Bob Millard* ◆◆◆

The first thing I notice upon entering the small Atlantic Records conference room where Tracy Lawrence is waiting, is that he is taller, huskier and simply a better-looking guy than he is in his publicity photos.

There are reasons for this disparity.

"Those pictures, all that was done right after I got shot," he explains. "I've put about 25 pounds back on since then."

Tracy Lawrence almost didn't live to see his first two singles, "Sticks and Stones" and "Today's Lonely Fool," go Number One. Early last year, right after finishing sessions for his album, *Sticks and Stones*, Lawrence was walking an old friend back to her room at a Music Row-area motel when they were accosted by four punks waving pistols. Tracy jumped them. His friend ran for help while the attackers emptied their guns at Tracy in that dimly-lit alley behind the motel. He caught one really bad wound in the leg and was laid up for months.

"I've told that story so many times that it's just become something that happened," he says. "Another day at the office, you could say. It happened, I dealt with it, I'm lucky I lived through it, and I guess if the need ever arose again, I'd do it again."

Though he put his life on the line for an old friend, he doesn't consider himself a hero. He's just a guy who has been very, very lucky in a lot of ways, surviving being shot being just one.

Tracy Lawrence was born in Atlanta, Texas, a farming town of about 2,000 near Texarkana. His mother and stepfather, the town banker, raised him, his three sisters and two brothers in Forman, Arkansas, in the Red River bottoms on the other side of the border. He made all his best friends by the time he was six—including the woman whose life he risked his own for be-



hind the Nashville motel.

"I was always independent," he explains. "I had one really good friend that I ran around with a lot. As a matter of fact, he works for me now. We've been friends since kindergarten."

As soon as he graduated from high school he left home, moved around Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma with bands. He drifted in and out of college for a couple of years, partied hard, chased rich girls and came close to marrying a couple of them. In general, he searched for himself in what he now calls "all the wrong places." After a while, he discovered that money, especially somebody else's money, wasn't what life was all about.

"And it hit me hard, all at once, and that had a lot to do with when I decided to come to Nashville," he says. "Seems like I was always searching for something, but I was always looking for it outside myself. When I finally came to the realization that the only way to be happy is to be happy with yourself, things started changing for me."

He decided to stop messing around with regional bar bands and get serious about his music. His parents were late in supporting that decision.

"You know, my parents kept wanting me to grow up and get a real job; to quit chasing rainbows around," he says without a trace of resentment. "For someone from little old Forman...it was just such a far out thing to even dream that nobody ever dreamed it was possible." When they finally realized that Tracy cared more about his music than college, they encouraged him to get serious, to move to Nashville.

Though he had moved a lot previously, Nashville was the first place he'd moved where he had no contacts. He hit Nashville late in 1990 with few resources other than a tremendous self-confidence. He remembers the day he arrived here with startling clarity.

"It was September 2nd, 1990, a Monday night and it was about nine o'clock," he recalls. "I hit that I-265 bypass and saw that Nashville skyline...and felt like I was home."

After years of singing five nights a week, Lawrence was a seasoned vocalist. In Nashville, he began earning a living entering and winning singing contests at open mike nights all over Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky, just as he had competed in jamborees around Forman, Arkansas years earlier.

Because he was observant, he got lucky. He met smart, honest people who showed him the ropes, which he quickly learned. His record contract came relatively fast—another piece of luck. "Sometimes I feel guilty about it, it all came so quickly," Lawrence admits.

His recording sessions ran smoothly, once everybody involved understood that this lanky, loping, then-23-year-old knew his music, knew his mind, and would get the music his way, no compromises considered. His reputation as a *wunderkind*, a music business wiz kid who learns fast and makes many of his own decisions, brought a reporter down from *The Wall Street Journal* to interview him the same day he talked with me.

"People have been very surprised with how involved I am in my career and how headstrong I am when it comes to knowing what I want, exactly how I want to get it, and not taking any crap off anybody," he says.

This might sound like the braggadocio of a spoiled overnight success, but it's not. At the Number One party for "Today's Lonely Fool" later that afternoon, where booze was flowing and one would expect tongues to be loosened, people who work with him had nothing but genuine admiration for him. The consensus was "He's a really nice guy."

"I've really had to earn a lot of the respect I've gotten in this business because of my age," he says. "But, I paid a lot of attention and I learned fast. I learned the only way you can set yourself apart from the crowd is to be yourself. ■

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Trisha Yearwood is an authentic phenomenon, a woman singer who has helped rewrite the books on women singers. With her singles, "She's in Love With the Boy," "That's What I Like About You" and "The Woman Before Me," from her debut album, Trisha Yearwood, produced by Garth Fundis, she's catapulted herself to true star status. Opening for Garth Brooks didn't hurt either. 20 Questions caught up with Yearwood backstage on the set of TNN's American Music Shop, where Emmylou Harris was appearing and Yearwood was nervously waiting to sing with one of her idols. With her sister's new baby crying in the background, she sat on a high stool, drank juice and agreed to answer 20 Questions.

BRANDEE ST. NICHOLAS



by Michael Bane

20 Questions with Trisha Yearwood

.....

Banker's Genes

1 Are you still in shock from the past year?

The last six months, yeah. So much has happened, and it seems like every day, something new happens. When we were on the road, I didn't even know what day it was. There's so much that has happened that my life has totally changed, and it's hard to remember, sometimes, that time in the past.

2 You started out a demo singer like Janie Fricke, didn't you?

Well, she did a lot of jingles, too. When you sing demos, they try to get you to sound like certain people, and I really fought that. I tried to sing every song like I would do it, because I think it was more believable like that. The hardest thing about it was you might be singing eight or 10 songs a day that you had to learn on the spot, or have to learn in the car on the way to the next gig. Immediately, when you walked out the door.

It was like some kind of test. Sometimes I'd walk out the door and couldn't tell you what I'd sung. And they might be great songs, but you'd be so concentrated on the next session you couldn't

think about what you'd done. The people doing the demos are paid by the studios, so they want you in there quick and out of there quick. So you go in, play the harmonies and leave. It was hard to give it the time and attention.

3 That kind of routine must be death on your voice.

No, it was more like exercise for the voice, so I didn't have any trouble. In the beginning, I was singing at night in the clubs, and that was really hard. I'd perform until 2 in the morning, then have a 10 o'clock session in the morning. I smelled like I'd smoked a carton of cigarettes before I went to bed. Eventually, I got enough demo work so I could do that full time.

But it's a great learning ground. I learned what kinds of songs I wanted to do, and I met a lot of songwriters. But it's tough. You get used to being quick. You get used to going in, doing your part, creating a harmony you can snap on real quick. And you get better as you do it, because you get used to being really, really fast.

4 Did that make the first album any easier?

Well, that's kind of funny. I was paranoid. Because it was my first album, I wanted it to be perfect, and I was almost too careful. But what was interesting was that several of the vocals we used were the ones we first laid down. I was so used to doing that! And there's a feeling you get when the musicians are in the room that you don't get when they're gone.

5 I'll bet that makes you a record producer's dream!

We didn't spend that much time in the studio. My producer, Garth Fundis, figured we actually spent about five recording days. That's pretty good.

6 That comes out to about 100,000 or so records sold per day in the studio?

Well, yeah—so far! We're approaching platinum, so they

tell me, and I'm just amazed at that. (*The album did go platinum, in a record eight months.—Ed.*) I heard all the time when I was starting out that women didn't sell records, and not to expect to do as well as somebody like George Strait, because I just wasn't going to. So it's been really neat for me to see that it's possible.

7 *I always hate it when women singers start out singing up-tempo stuff, then sink into a swamp of ballads. You're not going to do that, are you?*

Well, ballads are easier to find, I guess. But there's got to be a good mix, 'cause you just get bored and depressed with all the slow songs. Of course, touring with Garth Brooks, we had about 30 minutes as opening act, so we kept the show "up" for that reason. Because it wasn't a long show, we didn't want a lot of ballads. But I love the audience response to up-tempo. They've got more energy, because you've got more energy. It's just logical.

8 *The first show with Garth—were you nervous? The Universal Amphitheater in Los Angeles! Yeah—real nervous. I'd been used to singing in front of five people in the studio, and then, all of a sudden, here I am in front of 6500. And it's in L.A., where I thought the audience probably wouldn't be as receptive and they wouldn't really clap for you.*

My single had been out for maybe a month and a half, and I thought, these people aren't here to see me. They don't know who I am, and they're not going to like me. But they were great. They recognized the single. It was really good experience, and it could have been horrible.

9 *That show was an earth-shaker, then.*

Literally. I did get an earthquake when I was there. My first trip to L.A., and they have an earthquake. Natural disasters follow me around.

10 *At least you can say the earth moved for you once...*

That's true! I can say that!

11 *When you went on the road for the first time, was it like you imagined it would be?*

Yes and no—having never done anything like that before in my life. Everybody says it's hard, it's difficult, and it is. I see that side of it.

But for me, it was neat, especially the first time, because I'd never been to most of those places, and I got to look out my window and see America. I'd never done that before.

I sat up in the front of the bus like a little kid, looking out. I mean, I'd never been to...New Mexico, places like that.

12 *Talk to me about girl singers. When you were growing up, learning to harmonize, who did you idolize?*

Emmylou Harris was somebody I definitely listened to. I listened to Linda Ronstadt a lot—she's probably my biggest musical influence, and those were probably most of the songs I sang growing up.

I listened to country—Patsy Cline, Kitty Wells, everybody. But I also listened to the country men—George Jones, Merle Haggard, Elvis...

13 *I like your Elvis watch...*

Thank you. Actually, it used to belong to the head of marketing at MCA Records, and I've always wanted it. He told me, "Well, Trisha, if your record goes Gold, you can have the watch." On the day the record went Gold, I called him up and said, "I want my watch now."

14 *What's your favorite Elvis movie?*

Viva Las Vegas with Ann-Margaret. I like them all, though, especially the cheesy ones. They're all good, for different reasons. Some of them are cheesy, but it's Elvis, so it doesn't matter.

15 *Did your parents think it was strange for a reasonably normal girl from Monticello, Georgia, to want to be a country singer?*

I look back now, and I know how hard it must have been for them to be so supportive of something they knew absolutely nothing about. And the odds of making it are astronomical! But they just believed it, and they said if that was what I wanted, to go for it. They always taught us that whatever we wanted, we should go for. They're probably the biggest reason I'm here, because they always encouraged that.

16 *But you also went to college and got your degree first. What did you learn in college?*

Well, I've always felt I was too normal to be an artist. I think I'm a pretty logical person; I was always interested in the business side of things. I didn't know if I was creative enough, because most people are either one thing or the other. But I didn't expect to walk into Nashville and be "discovered" on some street-corner somewhere. I felt like music was a business like anything else, and there could be a plan. So that's what I did. Looking back, it looks like I knew what I was doing, but I really didn't. I just kind of jumped in and started doing something. School was a way to get to Nashville, and I wanted to finish my education. I think it gives you a sense of accomplishment, no matter what you do for a career.

17 *Was there ever a Plan B if the music business didn't work out?*

I think I probably would have done something else if I hadn't made it, because I wouldn't have been able to be in the music business and not do what I want to do. I made good grades; I graduated with honors, so I had a good education, and I felt like I could have done something else.

But I never planned not to

do this. I don't know what else I would have done. You really have to believe in yourself, and I really felt like I could do it. I didn't know how I was going to do it, but I felt like if I wanted it that bad, it must be right.

18 *Your father's a banker. Do you have banker's genes?*

Yeah, I guess so. I'm careful because the people you hook up with, hopefully they'll be long-term. You've got to have people around you that you can trust, that you feel comfortable with. If you can trust them, it's so much more comfortable. But you don't blindly trust people. You can't. Your name is on it, and you have to take the responsibility.

19 *Are there any miracles lying around that you'd like to happen to you?*

I would like to be a country singer who's basically around for a while. After the first album, my biggest fear was being a trivia question: "Who had the Number One single and made country music history and was never heard from again?" But, you know, Michael, I'm starting to feel better now. It's not all going to go away. I just want to keep putting out records that I feel like are quality. Keep doing that, and not worry so much about what radio wants. We didn't do that on the first album, and it worked out okay. There's no easy way, but you have to be true to yourself first, and, hopefully, have something other people want to hear.

20 *So, basically, it's safe to say that Trisha Yearwood is not only going to escape being a trivia question, but is having fun?*

Yeah. What's not to like? You get up every single morning and do something new. You get to meet people you've dreamed of meeting your entire life, and you even get to sing with some of them. I mean, I've said this before, but it's still true. You get to be Cinderella every day.

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Here is the complete, true story of America's Troubadour. From his birth in depression-era Texas, the early influence of Jimmie Rodgers, the first recording sessions, early radio shows and Hollywood movies, to the Grand Ole Opry, over 40 years on the road, and sales of over 20 million records. This fascinating video biography features classic performances and Ernest's top hits. It's a must for serious country music fans. Item No. V2N-\$19.95

BILL ANDERSON *Video Scrapbook - 60 mins.* **NEW!**

Here are 60 minutes of fascinating memories, hosted by Whispering Bill himself. It starts off with a home movie revealing an infant with a strong sense of rhythm, and takes us through his early singing career, time as a D.J., start with Decca Records, days hosting the Bill Anderson Show (meet some truly entertaining guests), even videos from his game show career. It's great music, fun and the unmistakable personality of Whispering Bill himself. Item No. V1B - \$19.95

HALL OF FAME COLLECTION *4 Full Tapes - 120 mins. - Special Reduced Price - SAVE \$5.00!*

Here is a real treat, four complete shows from the early days of the Opry, each one hosted by one of country music's biggest names. There's Ernest Tubb with guests Webb Pierce, George Morgan and Marty Robbins just to mention a few. Carl Smith with Jim Reeves, The Carter Family and others. Faron Young with June Carter, Ernest Tubb and Marty Robbins again. And Little Jimmy Dickens with Cowboy Copas and a whole bunch of other great stars. The best part is, you see them in their prime doing such fabulous songs as: Ernest Tubb - *Two Glasses, Joe, Letters Have No Arms, Dear Judge/Marty Robbins - Poor Unlucky Me, Pretty Mama, Tennessee Toddy/Faron Young - If That's The Fashion/A Place For Girls Like You/Jim Reeves - My Lips Are Sealed; Bimbo; Down In The Caribbean/Carl Smith - Satisfaction Guaranteed; Darling, Am I The One, AND MUCH MORE!* Item No. V5W-If Ordered Separately - \$39.96. - NOW \$34.95 For All Four!

GARTH BROOKS *Live TV Special - 85 mins.* **NEW!**

Here is the brand new video that everyone has been waiting for, Garth's NBC special complete with additional interview and backstage footage. There are fifteen hit songs, including: *Not Counting You/Rodeo/Two Of A Kind, Workin' On A Full House/We Bury The Hatchet/The Thunder Rolls/The River/What She's Doing Now/Papa Loved Mama/If Tomorrow Never Comes/Friends In Low Places/Shameless, AND MORE!* Item No. V3H - \$29.95

WAYLON JENNINGS *Waylon - 60 mins.*

Hallway Productions is right on the money again, with this true story of this renegade, outlaw, legend. From his early days as Buddy Holly's protege to his battles with the Nashville system, good times and bad, this is a memorable portrait featuring rare never-before-seen footage and over 20 classic songs and performances. Included: *Honky Tonk Hero/Cold Hearted Woman/ Luckenbach, Texas/The Eagle/Amanda, AND MORE!* Item No. V3Q-\$29.95

STATLER BROTHERS *Brothers In Song - 19 mins.*

They are unquestionably one of country music's brightest attractions. *Brothers In Song* features the videos of some of the Statler's biggest hits, including the nostalgic *Sweeter And Sweeter*; the wedding day memories of *My Only Love, Voted Song of the Year* for 1985; and the touching *Elizabeth* voted Song of the Year for 1984 by Music City News. There is also *Whatever; Atlanta Blue and Guilty.* Item No. G2B-\$19.95

TAMMY WYNETTE *In Concert - 60 mins.*

It's the first lady of country music coming to you live on stage in this brilliant performance from the Capitol Music Hall in Wheeling, West Virginia. Here's just a partial list of hits you'll hear: *My Man/Turn Around/You Light Up My Life/I Don't Wanna Play House/Makin' Love/Til I Can Make It On My Own/Amazing Grace/Will The Circle Be Unbroken/D-I-V-O-R-C-E/Stand By Your Man, AND MORE!* Item No. G1F - \$29.95

THE JUDDS *Love Can Build A Bridge - 60 mins.*

Follow the Judds as they pack up cameras, crew and loved ones and set off to Sedona, Arizona to shoot the world's first video performance in 3D. You'll also be treated to interviews and scenes from their last tour together as The Judds. Songs featured include: *This Country's Rockin'/Born To Be Blue/Rompin' Stompin' Blues/Love Can Build A Bridge.* There's even a special added bonus...a visit to Naomi's recent wedding. Item No. V8V - \$29.95

LORETTA LYNN *In Concert - 61 mins.*

For strictly music lover's among Loretta's fans, here she is in living color onstage at Harrah's in Reno. It's a one-of-a-kind performance featuring: *You're Lookin' At Country/ Take Me Home, Country Roads/Out Of My Head And Back In Bed/Pregnant Again/One's On The Way/I Saw The Light/Foggy Mountain Breakdown/Don't Come Home A Drinkin'/They Don't Make 'Em Like My Daddy/Coal Miner's Daughter, 11 MORE!* Item No. G6D - \$39.95

ALABAMA *Pass It On Down - 28:24 mins.*

Witness the extraordinary display of talent that has made Alabama one of today's most acclaimed country music groups. Contained on this chartbusting new video is: *Pass It On Down/Song Of The South/Tar Top/She And I/High Cotton.* Plus a seven minute special on the making of *Pass It On Down.* You may have seen this new video advertised on TV. Here is a chance to order yours. Item No. V4L-\$14.95

TANYA TUCKER *Tanya Tucker - 22:07 mins.*

Talented...spunky...a young country music superstar who has retained her superstar status even as country music has grown to become the number one music of the 90s. No video collection is complete without Tanya Tucker. Included are: *Walking Shoes/Love Me Like You Used To/ Strong Enough To Bend/Daddy And Home/Don't Go Out Just Another Love, plus live interview footage taped by Dick Heard T.V. Productions.* Item No. V7T - \$19.95

RANDY TRAVIS *Forever And Ever - 45 mins.*

He has sold millions of records, won numerous awards. He is one of the youngest performers to be invited to join the Grand Ole Opry. And now this country music superstar comes to you on what promises to be one of the hottest videos of the year. Eight great hits in all: *Forever And Ever, Amen/I Told You So/Promises/It's Just A Matter Of Time/ He Walked On Water/Point Of Light/Cool Water/The Storms Of Life.* Item No. V4K-\$29.98

MARTY ROBBINS *Super Legend - 120 mins.*

This memorable video features 18 performances: *El Paso/ White Sports Coat/Devil Woman/Ribbon Of Darkness/Singing The Blues/I Can't Keep From Cryin'/Don't Worry Bout Me/This Time You Gave Me A Mountain, and many more, including Marty's Grammy winning song, My Woman, My Woman, My Wife.* It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and the big screen. **PLUS A LOT MORE!** Item No. G2A - \$39.95

MARTY ROBBINS *The Best Of His TV Show - 55 mins.* **NEW!**

Take a return visit to Marty's first syndicated TV show, (1968-1969.) Thirty-nine shows have been edited into this classic collection of back-to-back performances. There are 21 songs along with a bunch of humorous excerpts: *I Can't Help It (If I'm Still In Love With You)/Take These Chains/ Lovesick Blues/Low And Lonely/Are You Sincere/Long Gone Lonesome Blues/Tumbling Tumbleweeds/El Paso/ Running Gun, AND MORE!* Item No. V8B - \$29.95

ANNE MURRAY *Doing Some Of Her Best - 29 mins.*

She has been a country music legend of sorts for years. Few can match her distinctive voice and stage presence. Now you can meet this special lady through rare interview footage and hear her perform these great hits: *Time Don't Run Out On Me/Who's Leaving Who/Are You Still In Love With Me?/Now And Forever (You And Me)/Flying On Your Own/If I Ever Fall In Love Again (Duet With Kenny Rogers).* Item No. V6R-\$19.95

COUNTRY VIDEO HITS OF THE 90's *15 Great Performances - 56 mins.*

Here are the best of the best, including: *A Better Man by Clint Black/I Watched It All by Lionel Cartwright/Simple Man by The Charlie Daniels Band/Give A Little Love by The Judds/Out Of Your Shoes by Lorrie Morgan/Crazy In Love by Conway Twitty/It Ain't Nothin' by Keith Whitley/ Don't Toss Us Away by Patty Loveless/Cry, Cry, Cry by Marty Stuart/When I Call Your Name by Vince Gill, AND MANY MORE!* Item No. V6B - \$19.95

DWIGHT YOAKAM *Just Lookin' For A Hit - 30 mins.*

Few can dispute the impact that this young star has had on the country music scene. And what better way to enjoy Yoakam Country than with his first Warner video featuring: *Honky Tonk Man/Guitars, Cadillac/Little Sister/Always Late With Your Kisses/Streets Of Bakersfield/Long White Cadillac.* There's even a Yoakam interview as well as performance footage from the I.R.S. label hit *The Cutting Edge.* Item No. G1E - \$19.95



Country Music VIDEOS



ALAN JACKSON

Here In The Real World - 25 mins.

Here are Alan's three #1 smash hits, *Wanted/Here In The Real World/Chasin' That Neon Rainbow*. Plus, a pair of live performances: *Dog River Blues* and *Home*. There's also his first big song *Blue Blooded Woman*. *Here In The Real World* clearly reveals Alan's humble, unpretentious manner combined with genuine talent and striking good looks—all the elements that have made him one of country music's hottest stars. Item No. V3L-\$19.95.

KEITH WHITLEY

I Wonder...Think Of Me - 30 mins.

On May 9, 1989, near the completion of his *I Wonder Do You Think Of Me* album, Keith Whitley passed away. One of his last conversations was of how much this record meant to him. He lives on in our hearts with this wonderful tribute featuring: *Don't Close Your Eyes/I'm No Stranger To The Rain/Ain't Nothin' When You Say Nothing At All/Homecoming/Hard Livin'...* plus a tribute by Country Music Television's Stan Hickock. Item No. G1C-\$19.95

LORRIE MORGAN

Something In Red - 18:27 mins.

RCA proudly presents perhaps their fastest rising female star on one of their hottest selling new musical videos. Featuring on this great new video are all of Lorrie's biggest hits. Including: *Trainwreck Of Emotion/Dear Me/Out Of Your Shoes/We Both Walk A Picture Of Me (Without You)* ...plus the opening and closing music, *Something In Red*. We strongly suggest you do not miss this rapidly rising star. Item No. V1J-\$14.95

K.D. LANG

Harvest Of Seven Years - 60 mins.

It's a great tape featuring rare live performances and videos of: *Friday Dance Promenade/Bopaleal/Polly Ann/Pine & Stew/Hanky Panky/Johnny Get Angry/Don't Be A Lemming Polka/Pay Dirt/Turn Me Round/Three Cigarettes In An Ashtray/Crying/Honky Tonk Angels/Trail Of Broken Hearts/Pullin' Back The Reins/Ridin' The Rails/So In Love/ Barefoot*. This popular new video even includes some candid moments at home with K.D. Item No. V8R - \$29.95

KENNY & DOLLY

Real Love - 60 mins.

Their first names speak for themselves. Individually or together, they are world class performers, Grammy Award winners whose music defies any easy categorization. Real Love is the best of both worlds, with generous helpings of solo numbers and duets. Including: *Islands In The Stream/Two Doors Down/Baby I'm Burning/Appalachian Memories/9 To 5/Crazy/Sweet Music Man/A Little More Love/The Stranger*, AND MORE! Item No. G4I - \$29.95

SAWYER BROWN

Greatest Hits - 40 mins.

They are a testament to the philosophy that hard work is rewarded. After more than ten years together, they have become one of the top concert draws in the country. This Greatest Hits video will give you an idea of why. Featured hits include: *Betty's Bein' Bad/Shakin' My Baby's Gone/Somewhere In The Night/When Love Comes Callin'/Out Goin' Cattin'/Step That Step/Heart Don't Fall Now/Did It For Love/The Race Is On*. Item No. V4G-\$19.95

TRAVIS TRITT

It's All About To Change - 55 mins.

Here is one of country music's hottest young stars, second only to Garth Brooks for albums sold in 1991. Here's your chance to watch Travis perform all his hit videos. Included are: *Country Club/Help Me Hold On/Put Some Drive In Your Country/Drift Off To Dream/Here's A Quarter (Call Someone Who Cares)*. There's also exclusive interview footage and musical excerpts from: *I'm Gonna Be Someone/All I'll Ever Be/Bible Belt*. Item No. V1V - \$24.95

REBA

In Concert - 71 mins.

Now enjoy all the excitement and charisma of perhaps today's number one country music lady. Included are: *Love Will Find It's Way To You/Can't Even Get The Blues/Somebody Should Leave/One Promise Too Late/Let The Music Lift You Up/Whoever's In New England/Sweet Dreams/You Lie/Cathy's Clown/Oklahoma Swing/Rumor Has It/What Am I Gonna Do About You/I Know How He Feels*, AND MORE! Item No. V3E-\$19.95

REBA

For My Broken Heart - 22:41 mins.

Reba fans, this is your lucky day. We also have her much anticipated brand new video ready to send out to you by return mail. You'll be among the first to bring country music's current reigning queen home for a private screening. Featured on this potential chartbuster are: *Rumor Has It/You Lie/Fancy/For My Broken Heart/Is Their Life Out There*. Whether or not you have ordered either of Reba's past videos, you don't want to miss this one. Item No. V5M - \$19.95

RICKY VAN SHELTON

To Be Continued... - 35 mins.

Ricky has topped the album charts in three out of three tries, and he's scored seven #1 singles-so far. *To Be Continued...* features every one of his videos plus two live performances and a fascinating interview. Included are: *Crime Of Passion/Someone Lied/Life Turned Her That Way/It'll Leave This World Loving You/Hole In My Pocket (Live)/Living Proof (Live)/Statue Of A Fool/It Meant Every Word He Said*. Item No. G5W-\$24.95

RAY PRICE/JIM REEVES

(With Ernest Tubb) - 60 mins.

Shot from 1954 through 1956, this classic collection features: R. Price: *Crazy Arms/One Broken Heart Don't Mean A Thing/Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes/You Done Me Wrong/Sweet Little Miss Blue Eyes/Run Boy*; J. Reeves: *I've Lived A Lot In My Time/Then I'll Stop Loving You/Yonder Comes A Sucker/Down In The Caribbean/Bimbo/Mexican Joell'm Hurtin' Inside*; E. Tubb: *Dear Judgell'm With A Crowd*. 24 IN ALL! Item No. V1S - \$39.95

MERLE HAGGARD

The Best Of Merle Haggard - 60 mins.

"I have selected some of my favorite songs for this video...and I hope they will be your favorites too." Merle Haggard. You be the judge: *My Favorite Memory/Stay Here And Drink/Mama's Hungry Eyes/Today I Started Loving You Again/Old Man From The Mountains/Kern River/If I Could Only Fly/When Times Were Good/Honky Tonk Night Time Man/Big City/Okie From Muskogee/Footlights*, AND 7 MORE! Item No. G3F-\$19.95

MARTY ROBBINS

(With Ernest Tubb) - 60 mins. NEW!

Here is another fabulous collection from 1954 through 1956. This one features: M. Robbins: *Singin' The Blues/Time Goes By/I Can't Quit/Pretty Words/My Castle In The Sky/Don't Let Me Hang Around/Pretty Mama/Call Me Up Gossip*; E. Tubb: *Walkin' The Floor Over You/So Many Times/So Doggone Lonesome/Tomorrow Never Comes/Don't Look Now/It'll Step Aside/They'll Do It Every Time/Two Glasses*, 26 IN ALL! Item No. V2G - \$39.95

SHENANDOAN

Greatest Video Hits - 20 mins. NEW!

This group's gospel harmonies and down-home Southern charm are what set them apart. Those qualities more than shine in the band that was named the 1990 Vocal Group of the Year by the Academy of Country Music. This, their first home video, features the rollicking Church On Cumberland Road, the shuffling Next To You, Next To Me, the languid Sunday In The South, plus the heartbreak of Ghost In This House. Don't miss it! Item No. V8F - \$19.95

CHARLEY PRIDE

An Evening With... - 48 mins.

Listen to the rich baritone sounds of Charley Pride, the Country Music Association's 1971 Performer of the Year. Included in this noteworthy live performance are: *Kiss An Angel Good Morning/Kawliga/So Afraid Of Losing You/Oklahoma Morning/It's Going To Take A Little Longer/Crystal Chandelier/My Eyes Can Only See As Far As You/Me And Bobby McGee/Louisiana Man/Cottonfields Back Home*, AND MORE! Item No. VIC - \$19.95

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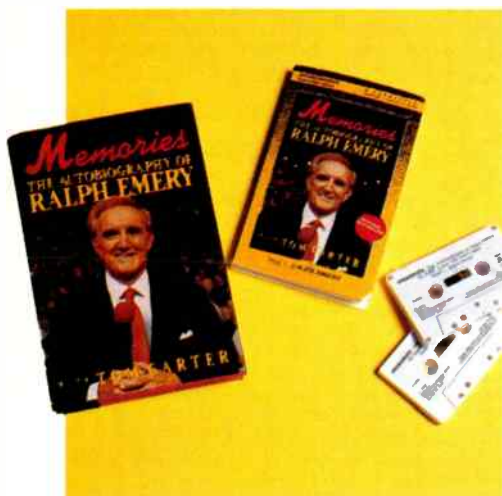
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EDITOR'S CHOICE

RALPH EMERY—MEMORIES (AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND AUDIOCASSETTE)

Ralph Emery is not a singer, songwriter or musician. He doesn't produce concerts or record albums. And yet, over the course of his 40 years in broadcasting, Ralph has launched the careers of enough great performers to fill a veritable Country Music Hall of Fame—and supported them through good times and bad. For four decades, Ralph has introduced the American listening public to performers such as Dolly Parton, Loretta Lynn, Johnny Cash, Patsy Cline, Barbara Mandrell, Tom T. Hall, Jimmy Dean and hundreds of others. Now, in his autobiography and audiocassette, *Memories*,



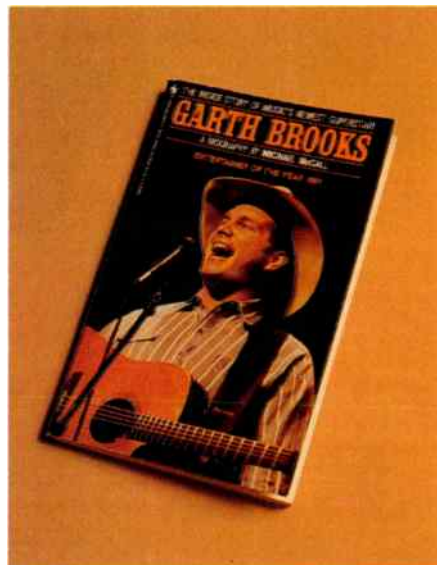
Ralph documents these years.

A lot has happened to that humble Tennessee farm boy in his climb to the pinnacle of success as America's premier country music DJ and the host of TNN's *Nashville Now*: four marriages (including one to Skeeter Davis), an addiction to amphetamines and alcohol, life with an alcoholic father, enrollment in broadcasting school, relations with many famous country music stars, his arrival on the *Nashville Now* set and finally, his full contentment as husband and father. His autobiography is an uplifting, rags-to-riches story with a feast of celebrity anecdotes, both humorous and touching. The book, *Memories*, is 273 pages long, including 16 pages of photos of Ralph with many country music stars (along with President Bush), and it sells for \$19.95, #B5S. The audiocassette consists of two tapes totalling three hours of listening enjoyment, and sells for \$14.95, #G9N. It's one thing to read this hot book (listed on the *New York Times* best-sellers list), but to hear Ralph actually say, "...It would be easier if I never knew who my daddy was," makes one feel the agony of that lost relationship. Just imagine, Ralph speaking directly to you!

GARTH BROOKS BIOGRAPHY

As of this writing, Garth Brooks' album, *Ropin' the Wind*, has been Number One on *Billboard's* Top Country Albums list for some 30 weeks—it's been Number One on the pop charts for almost as long. Garth's two previous albums, *Garth Brooks and No Fences*, sat at the top of the charts at Numbers Two and Three for 81 and 152 weeks respectively. With all this hoopla, including all his awards and an NBC-TV special, it is no wonder an unauthorized biography on Garth hit the press so quickly.

Garth Brooks, the book, is an interesting and lively portrayal of all that has happened to Garth since childhood. You'll read about the positive influence his parents had on his life and career; his very close relationship with his siblings and how they've helped his music career; how he met Sandy, his wife, in a nightclub, after she punched her fist through a wall; his athletic days in college and his high-spirited antics in high school; the good times with his first band back in Oklahoma; his struggles with trying to make it in the music industry; and finally, his success as we see it today. Michael McCall, the author, spoke with Garth's old classmates,



teachers and coaches, among others, to give us an inside look at this superstar. *Garth Brooks* is 186 pages long, includes 16 pages of photos, a discography and sells for only \$4.99, #B8K (paperback only).

EXPRESS TRAX SING-A-LONG TAPES

Now you can step into the country spotlight with the *Express Trax* Sing-a-Long tapes. These high quality, chrome tapes are recorded by top studio musicians in the songs' original keys. The back-up band plays real instruments, such as the fiddle and steel guitar—no synthesizers! One side of the tape is all instrumental so that you can be the lead singer; the other side includes both instruments and vocals. These tapes are great for parties, talent competitions, night club performances or just having fun. Both amateurs and professionals will enjoy singing with the background tracks—each song is a big hit in country music. Package #17 in-

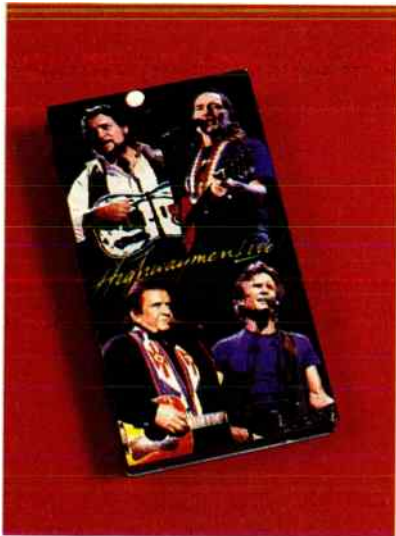
cludes: "Here's a Quarter (Call Someone Who Cares)"/Travis Tritt, "Shameless"/Garth Brooks, "Dallas"/Alan Jackson, "Born Country"/Alabama, "Love Me"/Collin Raye, "Forever Together"/Randy Travis, "Lovin' Blind"/Clint Black, "Look at Us"/Vince Gill, "Anymore"/Travis Tritt, "What She's Doin' Now"/Garth Brooks, "Keep It Between the Lines"/Ricky Van Shelton and "Somewhere in My Broken Heart"/Billy Dean. Package #29 includes: "Maybe it Was Memphis"/Pam Tillis, "Except for Monday"/Lorrie Morgan, "Is There Life Out There"/Reba McEntire, "Eagle When She Flies"/Dolly Parton, "Jealous Bone"/Patty Loveless, "For My Broken Heart"/Reba

McEntire, "What Do I Do With Me"/Tanya Tucker, "She's His Only Need"/Wynonna Judd, "Like We Never Had a Broken Heart"/Trisha Yearwood, "That's What I Like About You"/Trisha Yearwood, "I Can't Make You Love Me"/Bonnie Raitt and "Down at the Twist & Shout"/Mary-Chapin Carpenter. Each package gives you 12 hit songs on two cassettes. Only \$19.95 for each package, #PKG17 or #PKG29—please specify which when ordering.



HIGHWAYMEN LIVE!

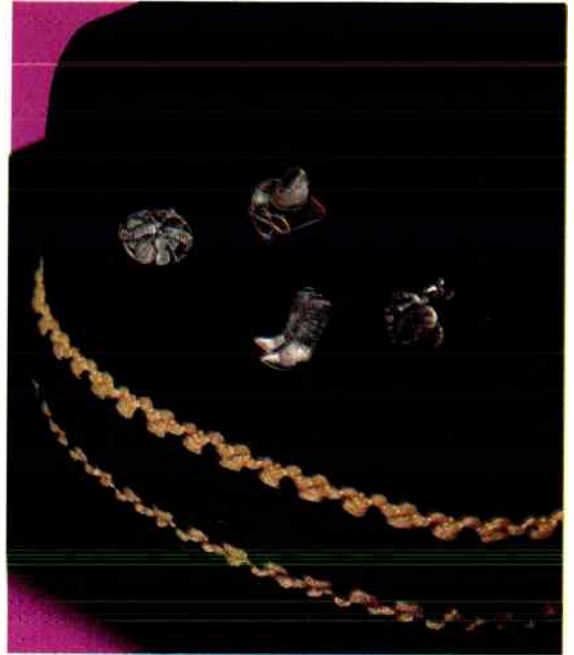
Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson are four highly talented men—they are truly among the great stars (I hope you didn't miss their centerfold in the July/August 1991 issue of *Country Music*)! In 1984, these legendary stars collaborated on the album, *Highwayman*. Never before had such legends of country music gathered for an album of this caliber. With the release of their second album in 1989, *Highwayman 2*, these giants embarked on an historic tour. Between them, they are responsible for many of the biggest hits in country music history. Now, with their *Highwaymen Live!* video, filmed in 1990 at Long Island's Nassau Coliseum in New York State, you can capture them accompanying each other on 25 classic



performances. Included on this special video are: "Highwayman," "Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys," "Trouble Man," "Amanda," "Ain't No Good Chain Gang," "Ring of Fire," "Folsom Prison Blues," "Help Me Make It Through the Night," "Best of All Possible Worlds," "City of New Orleans," "Always on My Mind," "Silver Stallion," "Last Cowboy Song," "Living Legend," "They Killed Him," "Me and Bobby McGee," "Ragged Old Flag," "Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way," "Night Life," "Desperados Waiting for a Train," "Big River," "Boy Named Sue," "Why Me (Lord)," "Luckenbach, Texas" and "On the Road Again." In addition, *Highwaymen Live!* includes interview segments where The Highwaymen share their candid thoughts and tell anecdotes about each other and their music. Approximately 98 minutes long, *Highwaymen Live!* sells for \$39.95, #V2A.

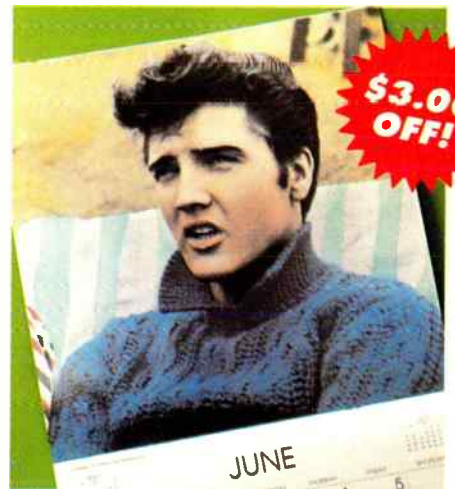
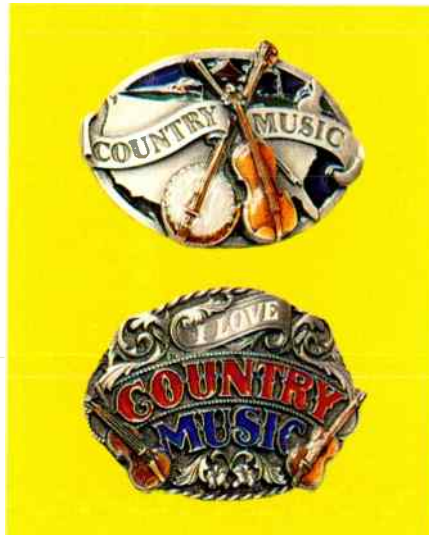
PEWTER HAT PINS

To match the bolos we have for sale, why not decorate your cowboy hat with some great-looking hat pins—don't forget your baseball and golf cap, too. And ladies, you can also wear the pins on your collar, scarf or even your purse. First there is a country music pin (#G7E) decorated with a fiddle and banjo—we also sell this exact pattern in a belt buckle! Next is the ever-so-popular bronco rider (#G7G)—the detail is incredible. Third is a cowboy hat (#G7K) with its unique curled-up rim and spurs. Finally, there is the cowboy boot pin (#G7O) with its intricate design. Each pin sells for \$4.98, or save over 24% and buy all four of these pins for just \$14.98. What a buy!



COUNTRY MUSIC BELT BUCKLES

Look at these gorgeous belt buckles made out of genuine pewter, with vibrant enamel colors highlighting the words "Country Music." You can't help but notice the intricate detailing. These buckles will wear handsomely on your belt—the publisher of *Country Music Magazine* loves his! The "I Love Country Music" buckle is nicely accented with a bronze fiddle and guitar; the "Country Music" buckle shows off a white marbled banjo and a bronze fiddle. Each belt buckle costs only \$9.95, or save money and buy two for \$17.90. "I Love Country Music" belt buckle, #G6J; "Country Music" belt buckle, #G7L; both belt buckles, #G6J/G7L.



ELVIS 1992 WALL CALENDAR

Wow! Look at dreamy-eyed Elvis Presley captured on 12 months of the 1992 Elvis Wall Calendar. All 12 glossy, close-up pictures of Elvis are 12" x 12", and the entire calendar opens up to 12" x 24". Scattered throughout the calendar are facts about Elvis' life and career. For example, do you know when Elvis performed four sold-out concerts at Madison Square Garden or when he graduated from high school? Find out the answers to these questions on your Elvis 1992 Calendar. It sold for \$9.95, but now we're selling it for only \$6.95—\$3.00 off! (#G6X) And, for a limited time only, for every calendar you order, we're giving you FREE another old collector's edition Elvis calendar (#G2E). Don't miss out on all these great pictures! When ordering, include both codes.

Nashville Warehouse

LORETTA LYNN: HONKY TONK GIRL

This authorized video biography, *Honky Tonk Girl*, is a lively and personal portrait of Loretta Lynn, touching on everything from her early life of poverty in Butcher Holler to the peak of her career. You'll follow Loretta from rural Kentucky—where you see old photos and live scenes of her homeplace—to the clubs of the Northwest, from her first appearance on the Grand Ole Opry to her acceptance speech as the 1972 Country Music Entertainer of the Year. Loretta helped change attitudes in our society by singing and writing about women like herself who married too young, got pregnant too often and never had enough money to make ends meet. Through hit after hit, Loretta never changed much from the spunky, honky tonk girl heard on her first record. *Honky Tonk Girl* features her singing "I'm a Honky Tonk Girl," "Coal Miner's Daughter," "Don't Come Home a-Drinkin' (With Lovin' on Your Mind)," "Wings Upon Your Horns," "You Ain't Woman Enough," "Fist City," "One's on the Way," "I Lie," "You're Lookin' at Country" and lots more. Besides Loretta, you'll see Patsy Cline singing "Walking After Midnight" and a duet by Loretta and Conway Twitty. *Honky Tonk Girl* costs only \$29.98, #V8A, and is 60 minutes long.



COUNTRY FASHION JEWELRY

Can't you just see yourself or your friends in these beautiful earrings and brooch! When I was in Nashville in June, I bought myself a pair of the guitar earrings—they look great with my new boots! The violin brooch (#J1X) is gold with rhinestone clusters—it's a class act. The guitar-shaped earrings (#J2A) are also gold with rhinestones, and with emeralds, too—they look great with the brooch. And how about those adorable gold boot-shaped earrings (#J5F) with rhinestone posts? Each item of jewelry sells for only \$7.98, or save money, make a set and buy two pieces for only \$13.98—\$2.00 off! Please note these earrings are for pierced ears only.

LEGENDS OF COUNTRY MUSIC VIDEO

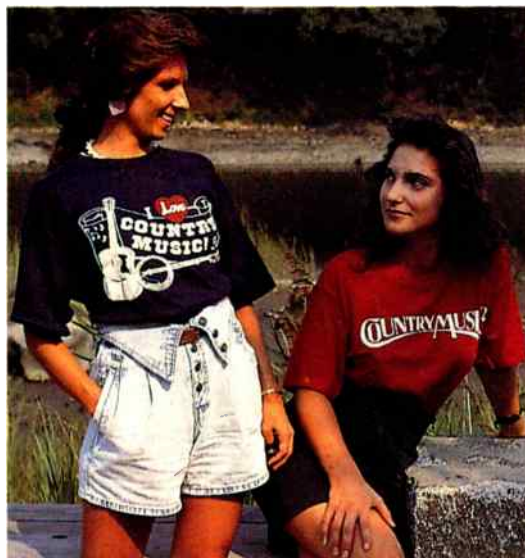
"This video is among the most important historical country music videos on the market today," says Rich Kienzle in *Essential Collector* (*Country Music*, January/February 1991). I couldn't say it any better myself! *Legends of Country Music* consists of live performances by the Opry stars, filmed in the 1950's. Opry greats who took part: Ernest Tubb, Webb Pierce, Ferlin Husky, The Wilburn Brothers, The Louvin Brothers, Marty Robbins, Carl Smith, Ray Price, Bill Monroe, Cowboy Copas, Faron Young, Hawkshaw Hawkins, The Jordanaires, Chet Atkins, The Carter Family and lots more!



Captured in beautiful color, *Legends of Country Music* covers 28 hit songs including: "Tomorrow Never Comes," "Solemn Old Judge," "Crazy Arms," "I Hear a Voice Calling," "I Need Your Love So Bad," "Little Liza Jane," "Gone and Left Me Blues," "I Love You So Much It Hurts Me," "Got Five Dollars and It's Saturday Night," "How Could Anyone So Pretty Be So Dog-Gone Mean," "I Don't Believe You've Met My Baby," "If You Feel Like You're in Love," "John Henry," "I'm Walking the Dog" and much more. Wouldn't you just love to see how all your favorite Opry stars looked 40 years ago and hear those great original songs! *Legends of Country Music* is 60 minutes long and costs \$39.95, #V1W. A definite treasure!

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE LOGO T-SHIRT

You're familiar with our *Country Music Magazine* trademark. Now you can get this famous logo on a comfortable, 100% cotton T-shirt. Made for us by Champion, these T-shirts are the same top quality they provide to most professional sports teams. The classy *Country Music* logo is printed in white across your favorite color: red or navy blue. Melissa models our red T-shirt, and that's me, Robin, wearing our best-selling "I Love Country Music" T-shirt. It comes in navy blue only. We are offering these T-shirts at the low price of \$10.00 each. *Country Music* logo T-shirt, #G2P-navy blue, #G2Q-red; "I Love Country Music" T-shirt, #G2O-navy blue. Please indicate shirt size (S,M,L,XL) and product code.



Nashville Warehouse

GARTH BROOKS VIDEO

It's new! It's hot! It's Garth! Someone finally came out with a fantastic compilation of Garth's most popular videos. Included in the set, titled *Garth Brooks*, are "If Tomorrow Never Comes," "The Dance" and "The Thunder Rolls." In "If Tomorrow Never Comes," Garth's real wife, Sandy, plays his "video" wife—a special touch. "The Dance," already well-known, will definitely go down in history, partly because it includes so many famous and well-loved people, everyone from John Wayne to Keith Whitley. Garth has said many times that if something ever happens to him, "Please play 'The Dance' video." And then there's "The Thunder Rolls," which has stirred up so much controversy. Interestingly, Garth explains the creation of this video and his purpose in making it. An additional surprise—the original last line to the song was cut from the recording. It is included in the video! In addition to the videos, you get live clips of Garth performing "Friends in Low Places," "Much Too Young (To Feel This Damn Old)" and "Not Counting You." Garth's video runs 30 minutes and costs \$19.98, #V2D—definitely worth every minute!

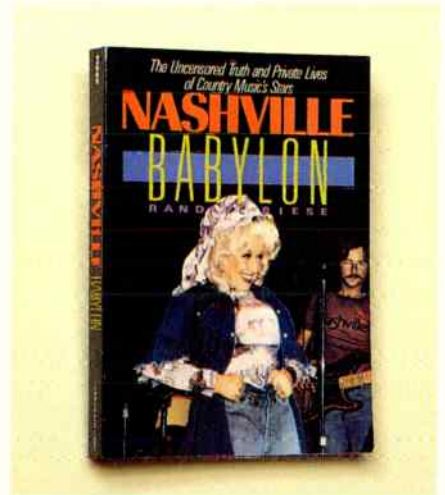


GENUINE PEWTER BOLOS

I just love these new bolos in genuine pewter with glossy enamel colors! The pewter horse happens to be my favorite, with its intricate detailing of the mane and bronze face. Then there are those classy looking cowboy boots—the vamp is painted in a lustrous black enamel. It's amazing to see the detail that went into sculpting the boot shaft and straps. These must be Tony Lamas! And you definitely cannot go without a cowboy hat bolo. This bolo is truly unique—they've painted a red band around the black enameled hat, and the rim curls up. Also, a pair of boot spurs leans on the rim for an extra touch. Each bolo costs only \$9.95, or save money and buy all three for just \$25.95—a savings of \$4.00! The horse bolo is #G5J; the cowboy boots are #G5L; the cowboy hat is #G5N.

NASHVILLE BABYLON

Nashville Babylon brings the private lives and secret lies of country music's most notorious characters out of the closet and bedroom and into the spotlight. Extensively illustrated with revealing photographs, this is a fascinating collection. If you are curious about the deaths, marriages, adulteries, prison-mates, drugs and murders that surround some of the best-known country music stars, you'll love this book. You get to read stories about Barbara Mandrell's life-threatening accident, Johnny Cash's struggle to overcome drug addiction, Loretta Lynn's psychic powers, Tammy Wynette's unfortunate marriages, the grizzly murder of Opry star, Stringbean, and how Spade Cooley killed his own wife, to name a few. To quote Jerry Lee Lewis, "You scared of me? You should be. Why do you think they call me the killer?" This fascinating, behind-the-scenes look at Nashville, its music and its stars—whose lives are often more lurid than the lyrics they record—is entertainment at its best. This 275-page book sells for \$12.95, #B4C.



NASHVILLE WAREHOUSE EDITOR'S CHOICE

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Letters

A Message from Merle Kilgore

Dear Bob Millard:

I just finished reading your great article on Hank, "The Exception to the Rule," in the May/June issue, and I just had to drop you a line to tell you it was truly wonderful! You covered everything perfectly!

Our entire office staff read the article and were in complete agreement with me that your article was Hank.

I am forwarding Hank's copy on to him. He's punching cows in Montana right now and getting rested up for the second half of tour season.

Best personal regards,
Merle Kilgore
Paris, Tennessee

Hank Jr.—A Style of His Own

In regard to the Hank Williams Jr. interview in the May/June issue, my hat is off to *Country Music Magazine*. It was long overdue for a Bocephus interview. Thanks for giving him a chance to tell the public what he is really about. There's a misconception about Hank Jr.; some people go to his concerts expecting to hear Hank Sr., but Hank Jr. has a style of his own. So if you want to be entertained, do yourself a favor and go see a Hank Williams Jr. concert. He is the best by far!

Lisa and Darrell Viator
Carencro, Louisiana

Won't Part with Hank Photo

I just received my first copy of *Country Music Magazine* with Hank Williams Jr. on the cover and story inside. I would not take \$1,000 for the photo, as poor as I am. It is already in my album. I am not a young teen but a middle-aged lady who loves Hank Jr. very much. I go to his concerts when he comes to Richmond, Virginia, which is 80 miles from home. Best of luck to Hank Jr. and his very pretty wife.

Betty Vanlandingham
Callao, Virginia

Bocephus Feature a Real Kicker

This North Carolina redneck says "way to go" with the May/June 1992 issue featuring Hank Williams Jr.! You all done good! It came on the heels of a Bocephus/Patty Loveless/Doug Stone concert down here. They really blew it out, as did your story. A real kicker!

Ray Jones
Sanford, North Carolina



Bocephus the Entertainer

It's great to see the article on Hank Jr. in the May/June issue. Garth Brooks may be the Entertainer of the Year now, and Hank could swing on a rope, smash guitars and throw water, but he's too busy playing his guitar, piano, bass, banjo, fiddle and drums. It seems many people forget that Hank was entertaining us long before Garth ever came along. Bocephus will always be Entertainer of the Year, in my opinion, and the greatest country artist of all time.

Kevin Krebs
Didsbury, Alberta, Canada

Jackson's Icing on the Cake

My roommate and I attended the Alan Jackson/Randy Travis concert in Topeka, Kansas, on March 6th—both of them put on an excellent performance. It was the best concert I have ever been to! I thought that was great, but that same week I pulled the March/April issue of *Country Music Magazine* out of my tiny mailbox to find Alan Jackson's face on the cover. What a surprise. That put the icing on the cake! The feature article on him was great, and so was the pull-out poster of Vince Gill.

I enjoy reading this terrific magazine to myself and my roommate. I just want you to know how relaxing you make college life for me now. My mom couldn't have given me a better Christmas present.

Kim Miller
Emporia, Kansas

Jackson's All Country

Thank you for the article in the March/April issue on Alan Jackson. I am a country music fan and an Alan Jackson fan. I like his music, the way he sings and the way he looks. You never have to wonder if an Alan Jackson song will be country or pop/rock. It is always country music. He looks good in anything he wears, and you never see him looking like he is wearing his underwear—like some of the other country singers. Alan Jackson is what country music is all about.

Frankie Price
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Jackson—A True Legend

I just put the March/April issue of *Country Music Magazine* down. I was excited to see Alan Eugene Jackson on the cover and thrilled to read the article.

I feel (like a lot of other *Country Music Magazine* fans) that Alan Jackson will be around for the long haul—a true legend in the making. The reason for this is evident; he is truly humble, and has a remarkable ability in maintaining a human (not super-human) perspective on life. I think it's also refreshing to know he does not forget who he writes and sings those superb songs for and why. Could you publish the address to join the Alan Jackson fan club?

Donna Buttles
Houston, Texas
Write the fan club at: P.O. Box 121945,
Nashville, Tennessee 37212.—Ed.

Alan is Awesome

I would like to thank *Country Music Magazine* for the wonderful article on Alan Jackson in the March/April issue. I'm one of his major teenage fans who recently saw him in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, while touring with Trisha Yearwood and Randy Travis. Alan is just too awesome with those tight jeans, blonde hair, blue eyes and that white cowboy hat—who couldn't love him? And if he's out there reading this, all I can say is that he'll always be my all-time favorite—it's just too bad he's married.

Autumn Mentzer
New Castle, Pennsylvania

Oh-So-Sweet Jackson

Thanks so much for the great article on Alan Jackson in the March/April issue. How sweet he is! I just want to tell Alan

how proud I am of him. He is so very talented—one of Nashville's finest artists, songwriters and, yes, hunks—who always thinks of his fans. No wonder country music is so popular.

My favorite two songs are "I'd Love You All Over Again" and "Someday." What beautiful lyrics! Keep up the good work, Alan, and hurry back to Monroe, Louisiana!

Nancy Webb
Monroe, Louisiana

Reba Centerfold Right Choice

Thanks for the pull-out poster of Reba McEntire in the May/June issue—you definitely made the right choice, again! Reba is my favorite country singer, and it's no wonder. She has a voice that cannot be matched. She has the perfect country twang! She's true country in my book. I look forward to her third centerfold in *Country Music Magazine*! Also, Reba should star in more movies! She's great!

Diane Mills
Corbin, Kentucky

Big Thanks for Gill Centerfold

Thanks for the March/April issue with the centerfold of Vince Gill. My daughter and I love him. Last October we saw him in Yuma, Arizona. My four-year-old daughter waited outside Vince's bus for almost 30 minutes, wanting to see him. When he noticed her, he asked her onto his bus and talked to her 15 or 20 minutes. She was so happy! It's nice to know that someone so busy can take a few minutes to make a little girl smile.

The Middleton Family
Prescott Valley, Arizona

Love the Bad in Tritt

O-o-h-h-h, Nelly! Did you get the good side of Travis Tritt, or what? Personally, I don't think there is a bad side to that "bad" boy's style and looks! I loved the pictures and article in the May/June issue. But hey! This doesn't cut it. Where do good girls like me meet bad boys like that?

Tomasita Trimm
LaPorte, Texas

Recognition for Tritt

I was beginning to believe that Travis Tritt was going to continue being uncelebrated. I was glad to see the article on him in the May/June issue. Thank you.

I believe Travis should also be mentioned when people discuss the new country of late, along with Clint Black, Alan Jackson and Randy Travis. Tritt's contribution to country music has only just begun, as has his recognition. Thank you for finally joining the bandwagon.

Tina Phillips
Ashtabula, Ohio

For more on Tritt, see our first feature on the boy back in the September/October 1990 issue.—Ed.

A Hero—Roy Rogers

Thank you so much for putting my hero, Roy Rogers, in the March/April issue. He has been my hero for as long as I can remember. I think he is a true cowboy. He made movies with morals and values—never with blood and guts. I think he is a true gentleman cowboy. I hope to see more on Roy Rogers.

Connie Kendall
Mocksville, North Carolina

K.T. Oslin Shines

The story about K.T. Oslin in the March/April issue was really special. That woman has so much character and class that it even shines on the printed page. I can't think of many people, much less entertainers, who stand for a point of view without a lot of excuses. Her music's so real to me. I feel as though I know the people she writes about. My favorite song is "Momma Was a Dancer."

Regina Smithwick
Portland, Texas

K.T.—Heart and Soul

A tremendous thanks for the article on K.T. Oslin in the March/April issue of *Country Music Magazine*. I've never had the chance to see K.T.'s live show, but I must say her performances on television are just great. Her appearance on *The Carol Burnett Show* was truly one of her best (especially her duet with Carol). K.T. really knows how to deliver her songs well and catch the hearts and souls of her audience. Keep it up, K.T.!

By the way, if "Bobby" won't go for a ride with K.T., I would be more than happy to.

Jimmy Howson
New Marshfield, Ohio

K.T. Not Country

When K.T. Oslin says she doesn't like the sound of the steel guitar, what she is really saying is that she does not like country music. After all, isn't it the steel guitar and the fiddle that make country music country?

I have never cared for K.T.'s music, and she certainly hasn't said or done much to win me over. Step into the 1990's, K.T.—the Urban Cowboy days are over and traditional country music is here to stay.

Robert Horgan
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

Yeh, Willie's Okay

Thank you for printing a story on Willie Nelson in the March/April issue. I had to hear that he's okay after his IRS problems. I thought that we would never hear of him again. I hope in the future he will do more albums and prosper well. Thank you again for telling people that he is surviving.

Mark Bierfeldt
Killbuck, New York



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COUNTRY MUSIC

QUIZ

Answers to these questions can be found by reading this issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Answers will be published in the September/October 1992 issue.

1. Randy Travis recently filmed a TNN special on which Hawaiian island?
2. What is the name of Rodney Crowell's brand-new album?
3. What was Vince Gill's first Number One single?
4. To which label is newcomer Tracy Lawrence signed?
5. KLF's recent pop smash, "Justified and Ancient," featured lead vocals from which legendary country lady?
6. What's the name of the current Marty Stuart/Travis Tritt tour?
7. Which prestigious consumer magazine selected the Chevy Turbo-Diesel pickup as its 1992 Best Buy Award Winner?

ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ:

1. Five
2. "Don't Tell Me What to Do"
3. George Jones
4. *Holding My Own*
5. Johnny Cash
6. *For My Broken Heart*
7. Chevy's shift-on-the-fly system is known as Insta-Trac



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- Electrician
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A Poem for Willie

The enclosed poem is for Willie Nelson whose story in the March/April issue I found touching:

Worry not, gifted one,
 God is on your side,
 as are your fans and all your friends,
 in our love abide.
 Your gift of song forever gives,
 the thundered sky that threatens you,
 won't stay forever black.
 Worry not, keep the faith,
 we'd like for you to know,
 that through these words,
 straight from the heart,
 our warmest wishes flow.

Jan Renfrow
 Oceanside, California

Set the Record Straight on Lawrence

Come on, Hazel, make up your mind. In the People section of the March/April 1992 issue of *Country Music Magazine*, you called Tracy Lawrence "a native of Atlanta, Texas." Then in the May/June 1992 issue you again spoke of Tracy but as "the Kentucky native." Please set the record straight. Since the fact is that he was born in Atlanta, Texas, I guess that makes him a native of that town.

However, it is also a fact that he grew up in the small town of Foreman, Arkansas, and graduated from high school there. While that small town may not have too many things to brag about, they are tremendously proud of Tracy. So why not give them their due, too?

Kathy Pond
 Deer Park, Texas

(native of Foreman, Arkansas)

Get the goods straight from the horse's mouth—see feature in this issue.—Ed.

Captivated by Emmylou

I have been following Emmylou Harris' career almost since the beginning, and wish to inform Hazel Smith that Emmylou's first Warner album was *Pieces of the Sky* and not *Elite Hotel* as stated in the People section in the May/June issue. The former came out in early 1975 as opposed to the latter's late 1975 to early 1976 release date. Her first major hit, "If I Could Only Win Your Love," was on the album, *Pieces of the Sky*.

I first heard Emmylou singing harmony for Linda Ronstadt on the 1974 hit recording of Hank Williams' "I Can't Help It If I'm Still in Love With You," and have been captivated by her voice ever since.

David T. Wong
 Martinez, California

Even Warner Brothers was wrong on this one, but CMM had it right back in a July 1975 review of *Pieces of the Sky*: "This is superb debut album." Thanks for the reminder.—Ed.

The Final Story on Restless Heart

I am writing in regards to the article on Restless Heart in the People section of the May/June issue, in which Hazel Smith makes reference to the band's changes. Ms. Smith needs to get the rest of the story. Restless Heart will not find a new lead singer. They now have four lead singers. For the last eight years the vocal talents of the four remaining guys have been hidden in the tight harmonies that have become Restless Heart's trademarks. Now each one is stepping forward and taking their turn in the spotlight.

Patsy Figueroa
 McKenzie, Tennessee

RCA sez you're right.—Ed.

Meeting Lorrie Morgan

My son, Micheal Snider, fours years old, met his favorite singer, Lorrie Morgan, at Billy Bob's Texas on February 8th. This picture is backstage and is a memory that will never be forgotten.

Paula Snider
 Fort Worth, Texas



Lorrie Morgan and Micheal Snider at Billy Bob's Texas.

Superstar Merle Haggard

Thanks for the article on Merle Haggard in the March/April *Newsletter*. The young artists are great, but the superstars are still the Merle Haggards. He's been on top for 30 years and has done it all. He is so talented—even his voice is still strong. Let's have more articles on the greats, and don't forget to keep it country. Leave the pop stars to pop.

Dorothy Gilbert
 Wichita, Kansas

Fan of Ferlin Husky

You really made my day when I opened my *Country Music Magazine* and there was a great special on Ferlin Husky in *Legends* in the May/June *Newsletter*. I have always been a great fan of his. I have been a country music fan for 20 years, and I will continue to be one for another 20 years. You are doing a fine job.

Merry Stacey
 Cincinnati, Ohio

Cheated by Hee Haw

Every Saturday for 20 years I have tuned in to *Hee Haw*, always knowing that I can, for one hour, enjoy good music, good people and good, clean fun—the same old familiar faces and the same old corny jokes. It's not the same now. I feel cheated. The producers are trying to attract a younger audience, but what about us older fans? I guess all good things have to end. I just never thought *Hee Haw* would. It has for me.

Judy Michael
Napoleon, Missouri

Asking About Johnny Horton

I have a couple of questions on the late Johnny Horton. I think he was married to Hank Williams' second wife. Are there any videos on him? Also, there was a biography of him a few years ago—can I still get this book? I think it was called *The Singing Fisherman*.

James Oliver
Jacksonville, Florida

Horton did indeed marry Hank's wife, Billie Jean. No videos are available, and the book is now out of print.—Ed.

Keep the Awards Country

My impressions of the Academy of Country Music awards:

1) Keep the shows in Nashville. We don't need the Hollywood hype!

2) We want to see country people—not Delta Burke, Lisa Hartman (excuse me, Clint), etc.

3) I was furious when the great Randy Travis was brought on as a presenter with Lee Horseley and Randy did not get to say a word! That was a kick in the face for all of Randy's fans.

Norma Jean Kemp
Eaton, Ohio

Dolly Rates Four Stars

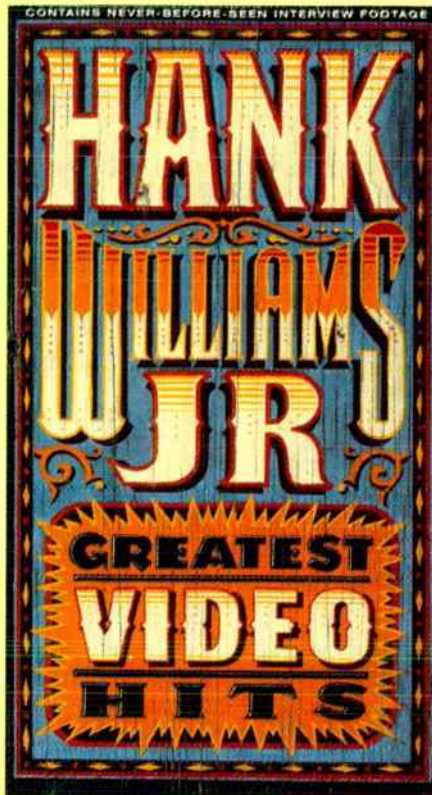
I just wanted Dolly Parton to know that her movie, *Straight Talk*, was the funniest movie I've seen this year. It wasn't violent nor was a woman getting raped or beaten, but most of all it wasn't bloody and gory. It's a movie for the family or a date. The guy that went with me didn't think he would like it, but he ended up laughing through the whole movie. In my book the movie gets four stars.

Susan Green
Kingsland, Texas

How is Doug Stone?

How is Doug Stone doing? We missed him at the Academy of Country Music awards show. I'm sorry to hear about his surgery. How old is he? He seems so young to have a triple by pass! We wish him a speedy recovery!

The Lays
Montgomery, Minnesota
Stone, 35, should be back at work by the time you read this.—Ed.



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Latest in our series of special postcards is this one at Eastertime from Dr. Fran Lustig, a longtime subscriber from Czechoslovakia. His message, "This is coming just to say, 'Have a Happy Easter Day!' Keep country style!"

A Friendly Hello from Ireland

Being from Dublin, Ireland, I had taken advantage of the St. Patty's Day holiday by going to County Clare, Ireland, for the golf. I met some Americans from Bing-hampton, New York, who were to be in the parade in Dublin, but had likewise stopped in County Clare for some golf. In the bar there the singer does mostly American music. The Yanks were surprised to find that American country music has fans in Ireland. One fella had a copy of *Country Music Magazine* he had acquired to pass the time on the long flight. I enjoyed the Letters from people. They might be interested to know that this very form of American music is loved and appreciated outside the U.S.A.

Michael A. Connelly
Dublin, Ireland

Feature the Instruments

I was wondering if you could do a feature article on the musical instruments of country music, i.e. pedal steel, dobro, fiddle, etc., with photographs of the instruments. Interview a producer or two and ask them when and why the instrument is used in the music and have photos and short interviews with the studio musicians who are considered to be the best at playing these instruments.

This request is based on my continued interest in country music and reading interviews with Clint Black and others who refer to using the dobro, and my having no idea what this instrument looks like or the sound it produces.

Faith C'Dealva
Santa Monica, California

It's Not in the Hat

I am sick and tired of hearing such acts as George Strait, Mark Chesnutt and Garth Brooks referred to as the "Hat Acts." I feel that whether or not an artist wears a hat makes absolutely no difference in the quality of music that artist puts out. In my opinion, one of the reasons these artists wear hats is because their heroes wore hats. Many of the greats were known for wearing hats. Some of these were Ernest Tubb, Hank

Williams, and what about the singing cowboys like Roy Rogers? I wish there was some way to make people see that the *hat* doesn't make the man.

Troy Briggs
Decatur, Illinois

Generations of Country Fans

Many thanks for a very interesting magazine. I have been a country music fan since the 1940's, but the music has certainly changed down through the years. You used to be able to know all the singers. Now there is so much great talent out there and so many singers that I can't keep up with all the names, but I certainly recognize the music.

I have enclosed a picture of my daughter, Debbie Robinson, from Amarillo, Texas, and the group, Canyon, when they appeared in Amarillo. Debbie is a second generation country music fan, and her children are an upcoming third generation.

Lois Hileman
Ulysses, Kansas



Debbie Robinson and Canyon.

Don't Edit Those Videos

I am writing in regard to Country Music Television's recent policy of editing videos which have a dramatic introduction. The wiser policy might have been for CMT to wait for this current fad of making mini-movies to fade—as all fads do. Besides, what is the matter with this form of video? No video moved me so much in 1991 as "Feed Jake." Cut out the beginning and you cut out the heart of this video.

Robin Sue Lehmann
Aurora, Colorado

Coverage on Wynette/Clinton

I am disappointed at the lack of coverage in *Country Music Magazine* on the Tammy Wynette/Hillary Clinton affair. I find it shocking that a debate has sprung up as to whether Mrs. Clinton was justified in attacking Tammy's song, while your magazine remains silent. I read *Country Music Magazine*, in part, to find out what current country news is happening. But along comes the most exciting political skirmish involving the First Lady of Country Music, and the possible future First Lady, and what do we hear of it in your magazine? Not one word. Do you feel your audience—that is, fans of country music such as myself—lack the intelligence or political involvement to follow such a debate? That's the message your silence implies.

David Benjamin
San Francisco, California

We sometimes miss late-breaking news due to the length of time between issues. But I did make one sarcastic reference to the Tammy/Hillary affair, page four, May/June 1992. See below for more on Tammy.—R.D.B.

Pop for Tammy Wynette

Tammy Wynette has a smash hit again! But why has *Country Music Magazine* failed to acknowledge her exposure on the Pop, Dance and Hits of the World charts? The tremendous accomplishment of our First Lady of Country Music deserves your attention, at least Hazel Smith's! Tammy is now the first country artist to reach the Top 10 of *Billboard's* Hot 100 since Kenny and Dolly's 1983 smash Number One hit, "Islands in the Stream."

Gary Beck
San Francisco, California

See People in this issue. And stay tuned for a Tammy feature.—Ed.

Let's Hear More on Wariner

I would like to mention one entertainer who has not received a lot of press in his career. That entertainer is Steve Wariner. Mr. Wariner has repeatedly proven his abilities as a talented musician, writer and singer in the time that he has been involved in the music industry. Of course, those who have followed the career of this talented man know of his accomplishments, but I would appreciate seeing a feature on him anyway.

Becky McCoy
Eads, Tennessee

Family Reunion with The Judds

Wynonna and Naomi Judd are heaven's blessings for all of us to share. They have deeply touched my family in so many ways. One is, for the first time in my adult life (I'm 31 years old), my mother and her two sisters came to my home for Super Bowl Sunday. I had two TV's set up, and I surprised them with The Judds

final concert tape—they had the den and their own TV. You should have seen their faces. It was a sight to see all right—three sisters who hadn't been together in 18 years. I thanked the Lord and The Judds as I watched them cry, weep, sing, laugh and hug each other.

Donny and Crystal Massey
Sacramento, California

Let Down by The Judds

I am sick and tired of hearing how wonderful The Judds' final tour was. I saw the only California concert at the Glen Helen Park in Devore. My boyfriend and I arrived at 2 P.M. to an already long line. The concert started at 7 P.M., and we had to endure Merle Haggard and The Texas Tornados. Billy Dean was the only decent singer. Finally, at 11 P.M., The Judds came on. At 11:40, Naomi said, "Well, it was great, California—goodbye!" The whole audience thought she was joking. One encore, and at 11:45, they were off the stage. If The Judds were ever to tour again, this is one extremely disappointed fan who wouldn't waste her money.

Dawn Lester
Hesperia, California

Collin Raye Makes Wedding Day

I wanted to write *Country Music Magazine* to show my sincere appreciation to Mr. Collin Raye. Mr. Raye took the time to send a copy of his sheet music for his song, "Love Me," to my fiancée and me, along with an autographed picture and some kind words of encouragement and best wishes for our upcoming marriage and life together, so my brother Michael could sing it for us on June 6th.

Scott Lowell
Greeley, Colorado

Tippin Song Tops

I realize that reviews are simply one person's opinion, but I wonder if George Fletcher (Record Reviews, May/June), received a different copy of Aaron Tippin's *Read Between the Lines* than the one I have. How could anyone possibly review this wonderful effort without even mentioning the most moving and haunting ballad on the album, "My Blue Angel." The raw emotion, heartfelt singing and tear-jerking lyrics create a mood piece worthy of generous praise. Aaron Tippin is one of the most honest, real performers I've seen in a long time.

Cheryl Leaf
Grassy Meadows, West Virginia

No Dust on Tippin's Album

I really enjoyed George Fletcher's record review, in the May/June issue, of *Read Between the Lines*—Aaron Tippin's latest album. He almost, but not quite, bestows the praise upon it that it deserves. It's the only cassette that I've bought in the past two months that isn't

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195	Pirates of the Miss.
199	Restless Heart
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189	Nitty Gritty Dirt Band
237	Ricky Skaggs
250	Vince Gill
128	Desert Rose Band
239	Emmylou Harris
143	Highway 101
248	Alan Jackson
132	Don Williams
259	Tammy Wynette
245	Glen Campbell
241	Carlene Carter
255	Jerry Reed
249	Wayne Newton
219	Steve Wariner
252	Barbara Mandrell
242	Sawyer Brown
247	Bellamy Brothers
251	Anne Murray
170	Lorrie Morgan
246	Charlie Daniels Band
238	Holly Dunn
240	Randy Travis
244	Kenny Rogers
243	Mark Chesnut
204	Roger Miller
260	Forester Sisters
294	Trisha Yearwood
317	Wynonna Judd
279	Lionel Cartwright
301	Kathy Mattea
288	Clint Black
311	Merle Haggard
356	Hank Williams Jr.
324	Doug Stone
407	Brooks & Dunn
147	Marty Stuart
231	Mark O'Connor
190	Gene Watson
153	Dwight Yoakam
112	Kevin Welch
257	Garth Brooks
166	Robin Lee
212	Diamond Rio
185	Baillie & the Boys
206	Shenandoah
111	Roy Rogers
113	George Jones
138	Conway Twitty
254	Reba McEntire
226	Travis Tritt
329	Oak Ridge Boys
118	Hal Ketchum
273	Jerry Clower
278	Mark Collie
281	Billy Joe Royal
299	Roy Kennedy
300	McBride & the Ride
309	Sandi Patil
310	Davis Daniel
146	Exile
216	Gary Stewart
150	Joe Diffie
201	Delbert McClinton
109	Suzy Bogguss
126	Willie Nelson
174	Waylon Jennings
232	Johnny Cash
115	K.T. Oslin
222	Chet Atkins
234	k.d. lang
141	Rosanne Cash
821	Becky Habbas
841	Tracy Lawrence
845	Dean Dillon
823	Bill Anderson
824	Louise Mandrell
777	Sammy Kershaw
822	Mary C. Carpenter
843	Texas Tornados
825	Sweethearts of Rodeo
842	Little Texas
846	Starter Brothers
844	Pam Tillis
826	Collin Raye
555	Johnny Rodriguez
261	Dolly Parton
285	John Anderson
267	Marty Brown
296	Earl Thomas Conley
302	Neal McCoy
272	Fox Brothers
304	Billy Dean
283	Tonya Tucker
329	Marina McBride
290	Lee Greenwood

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801	Tennessee/KY
802	Illinois/Indiana
803	S. California
804	Texas
805	Colorado
806	Pennsylvania
807	New York
808	New England
280	Maryland/VA/WV
298	Ohio
417	North Carolina
323	Florida
198	Alabama/Miss.
305	SC/Georgia
130	Missouri
284	Michigan
286	Wisconsin/Minn.
316	Washington/OR
291	Arkansas/LA
312	Iowa/Nebraska
325	Arizona/NM
400	Oklahoma/Kansas
221	N Dakota/S Dakota
233	Wyoming/ID/MT
228	Nevada/Utah
230	N. California
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collecting dust! The majority of the songs are so strong and well-written ("If I Had It to Do All Over," "The Sound of Your Goodbye," "Born with a Broken Heart" and "My Blue Angel," in particular) that they tend to overshadow the ones that are a little paler in comparison. Go barf if you must, but I like this album—the whole album. There ain't a speck of dust on it!

Roxanne Johnston
Hibbing, Minnesota

Right on the Mark Chesnutt

It's not often that I find I agree with the reviewers. Generally they miss the mark by several miles. But Bob Allen's review of Mark Chesnutt's second release, *Longnecks and Short Stories*, in the May/June issue, is right on the mark and, for the most part, we agree. Like Mr. Allen, I cited Bobby Harden's "Old Country" and the Ron Peterson/Howard Harlan piece, "Uptown Downtown (Misery's All the Same)," as outstanding. In fact, I feel that Mr. Chesnutt's delivery of "Old Country" makes it a candidate for a classic country love song; it touches all the senses, fills the imagination and leaves the listener longing for more.

Jana Pendragon
Long Beach, California

Powerful Strait Review

Geoffrey Himes is right on target with his review in the May/June issue of George Strait's new album! *Holding My Own* proves that George is the most versatile artist in country music, and this album is a powerful showcase for his talent. I especially appreciate the unobtrusiveness of the background vocals because I can hear George's voice.

To put it simply, George delivers—without engaging in all the hype others deem necessary. I'm sure he'll still be around quietly going about his business long after those others have faded from the spotlight of their own publicity. I'm proud to be a Strait fan and will continue to support him with my wallet and my "pen" for as long as I am able to do so.

Patricia J. Geria
Harbor City, California

Loves Strait Review

Hi! I just read the May/June issue of *Country Music Magazine* and loved the George Strait review especially. I have his new album, *Holding My Own*, and love it. I hope a few of his new songs get him back up to Number One on the charts. I think the DJ's should be playing his "Faults and All" and "Trains Make Me Lonesome." I personally love both of them. He is Number One with me! I saw him again in Houston, Texas, in February and loved the concert.

VRH
Pekin, Illinois

Marty's the Bond

Thank you so much for the wonderful reviews of the new albums by George Strait and Wynonna, in the May/June issue. There is a common bond between these two albums that was not mentioned and most people probably do not realize. That bond is the sensational Marty Stuart. Marty co-wrote a song on each of these albums and plays guitar on Wynonna's as well. I am an adamant fan of Marty Stuart and Travis Tritt and had the opportunity to attend two No Hats Tour concerts. Being a new subscriber, this was my first issue, and words cannot describe my feelings when I read the article about my two favorites. What a welcome to *Country Music*! I can't wait to see a Marty Stuart and Travis Tritt centerfold.

Linda Parker
Cedar Creek, Texas

You got it!—Ed.

Eloquent Wynonna Review

Does Bob Allen write well or what?! His record review in the May/June issue of Wynonna Judd's debut album, *Wynonna*, was composed so eloquently and with such depth and detail that I re-read it several times. It was that good.

Wynonna grabs you and doesn't let go from beginning to end. From the self-affirming "What It Takes," to the soulful "Live with Jesus," *Wynonna* appeals to your every emotion and compels you to do everything from dancing to crying. In concert, as on her album, Wynonna exudes a stunningly, powerful presence and performance while Naomi's aura surrounds her throughout. Thanks for the great review.

Kristine Litten
Riverview, Michigan

Wynonna—The New Queen

I wanted to write and say thanks for the review on Wynonna's new album, *Wynonna*, in the May/June issue. I totally agree with Bob Allen. Wy has got what it takes and is the new Queen of Country—move over, Reba. I'm sorry, but Wynonna is awesomely talented with a voice that'll make you slap your granny. She's just that good. Every song is hot. No wonder she's rackin' up the charts and radio. Go ahead, Wynonna, show 'em what a red-headed woman can do!

Dean Davis
Union, South Carolina

Update on Anniversary Letters

Keep those cards and letters coming! We're saving them for publication in upcoming issues. Thanks for all received so far. They're interesting reading!

Send Letters to the Editor to *Country Music Magazine*, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Mark your envelope, Attention: Letters. We reserve the right to edit for space and style.

FOR CMSA MEMBERS ONLY



Mel Tillis Special

While the definitive Mel Tillis collection has yet to be released, a couple of reissues touch on certain segments of his career. Columbia's *American Originals* volume on Mel Tillis covers a sampling of his Columbia sides. The ten tracks here are "I Ain't Never," "Lonely Street," "Sawmill," "Walk On Boy," "Take My Hand," "Loco Weed," "Tupelo County Jail," "No Love Have I," "Heart Over Mind" and "I'm Tired." This volume is available on cassette (FCT 45079) or CD (CK 45079). Regular price \$11.98 cassette, \$16.98 CD. CMSA members' price \$9.98 cassette, \$14.98 CD.

The second item available is *The Great Mel Tillis* (Hollywood 187). This item includes both hits and non-hits, mostly from his mid-60's Kapp Records period. Nine cuts are included: "Stateside," "Not in Front of the Kids," "Wine," "Home is Where the Hurt Is," "Above Suspicion," "Buried Alive," "Ode to the Little Brown Shack Out Back," "Guide Me Home My Georgia Moon" and "Mr. Dropout." Available on cassette or CD. Regular price \$9.98 cassette, \$12.98 CD. Members' price \$7.98 cassette, \$10.98 CD. Remember to include your membership number if taking your discount, and include all product codes. See ordering information at the end of this page.

Buried Treasures Special

Once again Rich Kienzle has found an interesting variety of reissue material for his Buried Treasures column. Columbia Country Classics' latest release, *The Essential Johnny Cash*, is a 3-cassette or 3-CD set covering all the essential tracks. Regular price is \$34.98 for cassettes, \$45.98 for CD's. But members pay only \$29.95 for cassettes and \$39.95 for CD's. And the discounts don't stop there. The complete Jimmie Rodgers collection, Bear Family's 6-CD boxed set, *The Singing Brakeman*, is regularly \$169.95, but members save \$40.00 and pay just \$129.95. Bear's Faron Young set, *The Classic Years* (5 CD's), is \$149.95, but

members save a whopping \$50.00 (a 33% discount!) and pay only \$99.95. Last but not least, members may deduct \$2.00 off the price of any of the volumes in the MCA Hall of Fame series. Include membership number when taking discounts. Follow instructions in the How to Get These Treasures box.

Essential Collector Special

CMSA members are also entitled to a discount on items listed in Essential Collector. Members may deduct \$2.00 off the price of each item ordered from this section. There are videos on Johnny Cash, Webb Pierce and The Judds; books on Stonewall Jackson, Rick Nelson and *Billboard Magazine's* country charts; and a gospel recording from Jerry and Tammy Sullivan. You must include your membership number, and follow ordering instructions in the box on the Essential Collector page.

Anniversary Readers Poll

Last issue, the Poll was open to all readers, and the response was overwhelming—we're still knee deep in ballots. So far, we've tabulated the members' choices for their Top Five Favorite singles and albums (Question Three)—and Alan Jackson is tops once again. Look for the list of the members' Top Five in its usual spot in this issue of the *Newsletter*. By next issue, we'll have all of the tabulations completed, and we'll publish the highlights in the *Newsletter*. The results should be most interesting. If you are a CMSA member, be sure to get your vote in for the July Poll.

On a related note, next issue marks the 20th Anniversary of *CMM*. It's not too late to send in your letters—see Russ Barnard's Letter from the Publisher on page 4 of the May/June 1992 issue.

Become a CMSA Member

If you've read this page, you've probably noticed several of the benefits CMSA membership offers you—discounts on products, your chance to have your opinions heard by answering the poll, and the *CMSA Newsletter* which features stories, photography, artwork and songs created by members, plus Collections, Legends of Country Music and more. To join, and take advantage of these benefits, see instructions on the poll.

How to Order

To order any of the items listed on this page, send your check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 070892N, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Include \$2.00 postage and handling for first item ordered, \$.95 each additional.

MEMBERS POLL/JULY 1992

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 Poll. We'll publish the results, and forward them to those involved in the business of country music who are interested in what fans are thinking and doing.

Bought Any Good Records Lately?

1. Did you buy any albums (records, cassettes or compact discs) in the last month? Yes No
How many records? _____ cassettes? _____ CD's? _____

2. Which ones did you like best? List performers and album titles.

Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

3. List the numbers of your top five favorites from the Top 25 in this issue.

Singles (list 5 numbers)

Albums (list 5 numbers)

Tell Us About Yourself

4. How old are you? 45-49
 Under 18 30-34 50-54
 18-24 35-39 55-59
 25-29 40-44 60 or over

5. Are you male or female? Male Female

6. Check the 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.

- Under \$15,000 \$30,000 to \$34,999
 \$15,000 to \$19,999 \$35,000 to \$39,999
 \$20,000 to \$24,999 \$40,000 to \$45,999
 \$25,000 to \$29,999 \$46,000 to \$49,999
 \$50,000 or more

Do You Do These Things?

6. Check any of the following activities you or anyone in your household participate in:

- Attend car races Take photographs
 Attend country music shows Fishing
 Do-it-yourself home repairs Use a video camera

Who Can Vote

Only CMSA members are eligible to vote. If you are a member, write your membership number here _____

If you are not a CMSA member but would like to join and vote immediately, enclose your check for \$16 for a one-year CMSA membership (you get an extra year of *Country Music Magazine*, too).

Fill out poll and mail to: July Poll, *Country Music Magazine*, 329 Riverside Avenue, Suite 1, Westport, Connecticut 06880.

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Essential Collector

by Rich Kienzle

■ Recordings ■

Jerry and Tammy Sullivan: Most country gospel music tries to compete with secular country, with similar production values, even videos. One-time gospel acts like The Oak Ridge Boys and Amy Grant opted for secular stardom. It wasn't always that way. The music's true roots are in the music sung at southern "brush arbor meetings," revival services held outside, often in the woods. Early string bands often performed gospel, and today, Ricky Skaggs and traditional bluegrass acts still do.

Mass audiences have eluded Jerry Sullivan and his daughter Tammy, descendants of The Sullivan Family—until now. Known mainly in bluegrass and gospel circles, the duo don't come on with a big band, light show or smoke bombs—just Jerry on guitar, Tammy on bass. Marty Stuart met Jerry with The Sullivan



Family in 1970. They remained in touch. Now, with help from Marty and his producer Richard Bennett, Jerry and Tammy have a showcase to present their talents to the masses with *A Joyful Noise* (CMF-016).

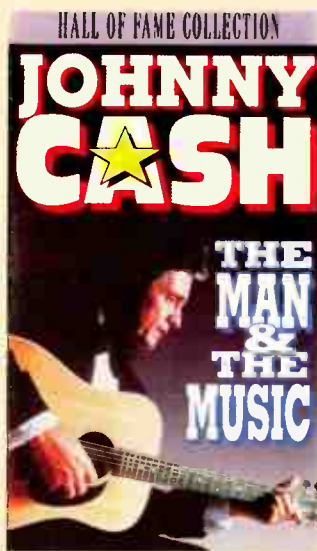
With help from Cowboy Jack Clement and company, Stuart and Bennett have created an exquisite setting for The Sullivans, mixing traditional gospel with eight new numbers penned by Marty and Jerry that have the ring of ancient hymns. All of them, from "He Called My Name," "Gospel Plow" and "The Gates of

Zion" to "Think About That Promise," deserve to become gospel standards. Emmylou Harris recorded "Get Up John," the Bill Monroe mandolin instrumental with Stuart-Sullivan lyrics, on her *Live at the Ryman* album. Tammy Sullivan, whose powerful voice could give her a career in secular music if she wanted it, is featured on the traditional stand-out, "What a Wonderful Savior Is He." If it sounds as if this was a labor of love for Stuart, his liner notes drive the point home even more so.

■ Videos ■

Johnny Cash: *The Man and The Music* is a long-overdue reissue of one of the best documentaries ever made on a country singer. Its timing was particularly opportune, for it was shot during 1968 and 1969, at the very moment that Cash burst beyond the world of country into the national mainstream. The cameras follow Cash into the recording studio (including one 1969 session with Bob Dylan), on the road and performing for prisoners and for Indians (plus a subsequent visit to Wounded Knee). He's shown backstage at the 1968 Country Music Awards (the shows were as glitzy and uptown then as they are now) where his *Folsom Prison* LP won Album of the Year.

At one point he sings a song he'd just written, an early version of his 1970 hit, "Flesh and Blood." Other interludes show him visiting with his parents, together with his sister, Reba Hancock. One of the best moments chronicles a visit to his hometown of Dyess, Arkansas, visiting with friends and taking a trip back to the original Depression-era house he and his family lived in during the 1930's. In another segment he visits Dyess service station owner Frank Huff, the inspiration for his song "Cisco Clifton's Fillin' Station" (available on *The Essential Johnny*



Cash, reviewed in this issue's Buried Treasures). Much has happened to Cash in the past 23 years, both good and bad. For both old fans and younger ones who know him only as Rosanne's father, this video explains why he occupies such an honored place in American music.

Webb Pierce: Right now, only a Bear Family boxed set chronicles the career of Webb Pierce. No domestic reissues exist and none are planned. The only other Webb material around is a video titled *Webb Pierce: The Legend*. Taken from what appear to be 1970's TV appearances (judging at least from the outfits), it features Webb performing 16 songs, including most of his biggest hits. Among these are "In the Jailhouse Now," "Wondering," "More and More," "There Stands the Glass," "Slowly," "I Ain't Never," "Memory # 1," "Cowtown," "Honky Tonk Song," "Tupelo County Jail" and "Someday." On most tracks he's backed by an all-star band that includes fiddlers Vassar Clements and Gordon Terry and former Drifting Cowboy steel guitarist Don Helms. Two less interesting numbers are a version of "Rocky Top" sung by daughter Debbie and another by longtime associate Max Powell.

Webb clearly taped his spoken introductions later, for the video shows him older and thinner, probably as a result of his battles with cancer. It would have been interesting to hear him discuss his career in detail, as he once did with the late Archie Campbell on TNN's old *Yesteryear in Nashville* series. If nothing else, such comments would have placed the music in some kind of context. At least what's here is something, though Webb isn't always 100 percent accurate in his descriptions. For example, he characterizes "Slowly" as the first record to feature the pedal steel. It was the first hit recording featuring pedal steel done in Nashville, but Speedy West was using pedal steel on country recordings in California in the late 40's.

The Judds: Finally out on home video, The Judds' last concert, held on December 4, 1991, was a major-league event following their farewell tour. Now *The Judds: Their*



Final Concert chronicles the entire last show, with the emotions and good times that marked the end of this phenomenally successful act. Their big hits are all here, and at times other artists joined

them onstage. They perform Elvis' "Don't Be Cruel" with The Jordanaires. Carl Perkins joins them for his "Let Me Tell You About Love," and they end the evening with "Love Can Build a Bridge," aided by the Christ Church Choir. The beautifully photographed, beautifully produced video otherwise speaks for itself.

■ Books ■

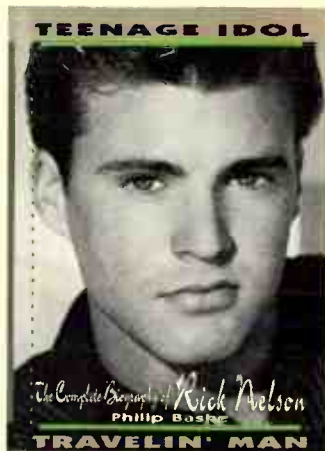
Stonewall Jackson: There's nothing fancy about *From the Bottom Up: The Stonewall Jackson Story*. It was edited by Billy Henson from Stonewall's own taped comments, and appears to have been typed on a typewriter instead of typeset like most books (and this magazine). Spelling errors are frequent. However, Stonewall's character, grit and determination come through on every page. Though his rise to fame, becoming a member of the Opry without even a hit record, was storybook-like, much of his early life was a gothic horror story.

His interest in combating child abuse came from firsthand experience. Stonewall's life began in North Carolina, where his dad died shortly before he was born. His mother married a man who became Stonewall's stepfather from Hell. He, his mother and his brothers lived in Georgia with a violent, abusive drunk whose assaults on Stonewall and his brothers were commonplace. Their mother, who also felt her husband's wrath, couldn't afford to leave. Today's child abuse laws would put this alleged "man" in prison for a long time.

Stonewall eventually moved back to North Carolina and, at age 16, joined the Army. Discharged for being underage, he did better in the Navy. After his discharge in 1952, he spent time in South Carolina and Georgia and began getting serious about music. He'd played guitar and written poems since boyhood. In addition to chronicling his early days, the bio details his fateful trip to Nashville and subsequent stardom. As down to earth as his music, he's candid about his temper and stubbornness

(which helped end his association with Columbia Records) and his wilder days touring with a hard-drinking George Jones. The weaknesses in this book's production are far outweighed by the sheer honesty throughout—the very same strengths that have always characterized Stonewall's best music.

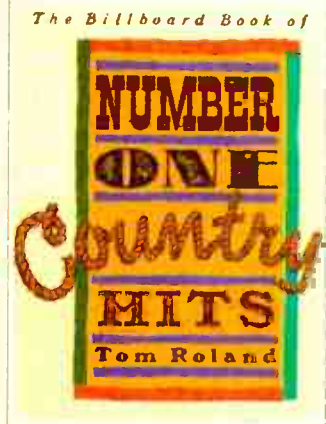
Rick Nelson: A second Rick Nelson biography has surfaced. *Teenage Idol, Travelin' Man*, by Philip Bashe, is a richly detailed biography of an artist who had a far greater impact on rock (and country) music than many realize. Indeed, some of this information reflects new research. Bashe takes the view that Nelson's image needs revamping, that somehow Nelson's been



tainted by past writings on the subject. That's true to a point. Because of the squeaky-clean image left over from his family's 1950's TV series, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, he's been easily dismissed as a musician. This ignores the fact that many of his

peers feel that he recorded rockabilly on a par with the best Sun material by Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis. This particular point is nothing new. Rick's music's been praised for years. But Bashe collects some interesting anecdotes from those who made the recordings (one of Rick's early rhythm guitarists was a struggling studio picker named Glen Campbell).

Bashe does an even better job chronicling the complexity of Rick's relationship with his father, Ozzie Nelson, the former big bandleader who turned a situation radio comedy starring him and his wife into a television classic. Ozzie, used to being in charge, held Rick on a tight leash. Rick usually complied, but at other times simply ignored Ozzie and did what he wished. His moves toward progressive country rock in the early 1970's were timely, but freespending habits and troubles with his wife, Kris, combined with Ozzie's death, left Rick without guidance. He drifted aimlessly. His career continued, though on a far more modest level. Strapped for cash, he had to play venues that were far beneath his stature. Still, things were looking up at the end. He'd all but solved his financial problems by the time he died in a 1985 plane crash, and interest in his music seemed to be on the rise. Rumors that drug use aboard the plane caused it to catch fire, killing Rick, his fiancée and several musicians, have been proven false, and Bashe makes that point as well.



Billboard Book of Number One Hits: Did you know that Brent Maher and Don Schlitz wrote "Rockin' With the Rhythm of the Rain" for The Judds after Maher observed his friends, the Judd family, rocking on the front porch of their house? If that sounds like an interesting story, there are 847 more just like it in *The Billboard Book of Number One Country Hits* by Tom Roland. This huge book details the stories behind the recordings that reached Number One on the *Billboard Magazine* country charts from 1968 to the end of 1989. An unbelievable 848 recordings are covered, every single to top the country charts in those 21 years. Each is profiled in the order it hit, from Merle Haggard's "Sing Me Back Home" to Ronnie Milsap's "A Woman in Love."

Roland has combined brief biographical information on each artist with stories of how any why each song was written, and how it got to the artist if the song was written by someone else. The stories are often fascinating and occasionally funny. You probably didn't know Conway Twitty's wife Dee despises "Tight Fittin' Jeans." And "Snap Your Fingers," Ronnie Milsap's 1987 Number One, was written in 1962 by legendary Nashville session guitarist Grady Martin and songwriter Alex Zanetis for rhythm and blues singer Joe Henderson (who had a Top Ten pop hit with it). Despite a mediocre introduction that oversimplifies the entire history of the music, Roland has done his homework admirably.

How to Get These Collectibles

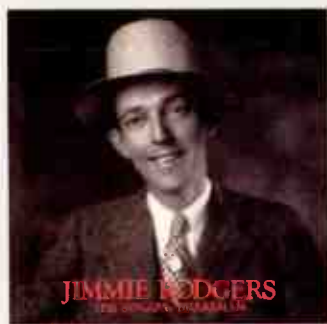
Books: Stonewall Jackson, *From the Bottom Up—The Stonewall Jackson Story* (B2R) \$12.95/Philip Bashe, *Rick Nelson, Teenage Idol* (B4Q) \$22.95/Tom Roland, *Billboard Book of Number One Hits* (B3C) \$19.95. **Videos:** Johnny Cash, *The Man and The Music* (V9D) \$19.95/Webb Pierce, *The Legend* (V9K) \$39.95/The Judds, *Their Final Concert* (V7H) \$29.95. **Recordings:** Jerry and Tammy Sullivan, *A Joyful Noise* (CMF-016), available on cassette or CD. Cassette \$12.98, CD \$19.98.

Send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 070892EC, P.O. Box 290216, Nashville, TN 37229. Add \$2.00 postage and handling for first item, \$.95 each additional. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 extra. For customer service call 615-868-6866. **CMSA Members, see For Members Only page for discounts.**

Buried Treasures

by Rich Kienzle

Jimmie Rodgers: *The Singing Brakeman* (Bear Family BCD 15540) is the complete, definitive Rodgers package of all time. The 145 songs included on six CD's begin with his first recordings done during the legendary 1927 "Bristol Sessions" that put The Carter Family and others on record for the first time. It ends with the final session done in a New York City recording studio in



May 1933, just days before his death from the tuberculosis that had plagued him throughout adulthood.

Recently, Rounder Records reissued all Rodgers' recordings in a series of CD's—using Bear Family tapes, so there's little difference in the selections. But the Bear compilation is superior, in part because they managed to further improve the sound by using a computerized noise processing program known as the CEDAR system. Two tracks included here, the obscure comic skit, "The Pullman Porters," and the complete soundtrack (badly worn but audible, with dialogue and all) to Rodgers' 1929 short movie, *The Singing Brakeman* (released in 1930), are not on the Rounder CD's.

The 60-page booklet with notes and discography by Rodgers biographer Nolan Porterfield is a treasure in itself. Aside from Porterfield's excellent text, it includes many never-before-published Rodgers photos, including one taken during his railroading days and some candid which

show him more relaxed than usual. Many old ads, Victor Records memorandums, and color reproductions of record covers and labels are included. More importantly, also included are early record sales figures (the "Blue Yodels" were among his top sellers) and the recording session sheets for all the numbers.

What more can be said about the material? Over 60 years after its creation, it remains a vital body of work that crosses generational lines and is the inspiration of many trends that continue today. In some cases, multiple takes of certain numbers are included. Eight of Rodgers' biggest numbers, including "Mule Skinner Blues," "T for Texas" and "In the Jailhouse Now," with 1955 accompaniment overdubbed by Chet Atkins and members of Hank Snow's Rainbow Ranch Boys also appear (along with the original versions) for the sake of completeness. Given the beautiful presentation, this is the set to have.

Johnny Cash: If Bear Family's Johnny Cash Sun and Columbia boxed sets are too dear for your pocketbook, there's another way to get a complete overview of Cash's career. Columbia Country Classics' *The Essential Johnny Cash: 1955-1983* (C3K 47991) compiles 75 songs on three cassettes or CD's. It begins in 1955 with "Hey Porter" and runs through all the high points, ending with Cash's version of Bruce Springsteen's "Highway Patrolman." You can safely assume that all the big hits from the Columbia years are here, and since you know what they are, there's little point in mentioning the titles.

Compiler Gregg Geller prudently added non-hits that were significant parts of Cash's repertoire as well, including his tribute to a real-life landmark of his youth, "Cisco Clifton's Fillin' Station," Merle Travis' "Dark as a

Dungeon," The Rolling Stones' "No Expectations," "Rockabilly Blues" and "When the Roses Bloom Again." Of the four live tracks, two come from *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison* and two from the follow-up, *Johnny Cash at San Quentin*, including, of course, "A Boy Named Sue."

Geller wisely avoided Cash's brief mid-70's period of mediocrity. He resumed with the excellent 1976 novelty hit, "One Piece at a Time," which ended that dry period. The 32-page booklet is a disappointment, with a pedestrian bio by Arthur Levy. *Musician Magazine* editor and rock journalist Bill Flanagan provides an additional essay which adds little to the collection. Like too many rock writers, Flanagan falls flat trying to write about country, concluding at one point that "John and June are sophisticated people," because they can converse about a variety of subjects. We already knew this; Flanagan obviously didn't. Not surprisingly, Cash's own brief essay at the end says far more in fewer words.



MCA Hall of Fame: MCA's most recent volumes in their Country Hall of Fame series, covering material recorded for Brunswick, Decca and Kapp Records, include three fine collections and two less impressive sets, with recording information and notes by Country Music Foundation staff members. Artists covered this time are Roy Rogers, Uncle Dave Macon, Grandpa Jones, Hank Thomp-

son and Bob Wills. Each volumes is available on CD or cassette.

Roy Rogers: Given the recent Rogers tribute album, this (MCAD-10548) is a particularly welcome collection. It begins with two of Roy's Decca recordings as a member of The Sons of the Pioneers—the pop-Western standard "I'm an Old Cowhand (From the Rio Grande)" and "Moonlight on the Prairie"—then goes on to 14 Rogers solo recordings from 1940 to 1942, most with accompaniment similar to Gene Autry's recordings of the period.

Roy concentrated on Western film and mainstream country numbers, like Jimmie Davis and Ted Daffan's "New Worried Mind" and "You Waited too Long" and the Fred Rose tunes, "I'm Trusting in You" and "Don't Waste Your Love on Me." None of the tracks here were big hits for Roy (the one Decca number that was a hit, "Think of Me," is strangely absent), but they do reflect the high quality that marked his music then as now.

Uncle Dave Macon: Decca Records' 14-track reissue of Grand Ole Opry veteran Uncle Dave Macon's Brunswick recordings appeared in 1966—before country reissues were common—and has been out of print ever since. This new MCA collection (MCAD-10546) reissues 12 of the 14 songs from the 1966 LP, with four more songs added.

Most of these songs were cut from 1926 to 1929, with one number added from 1934. Many, like the brutally satiric, anti-automobile "From Earth to Heaven" (Macon owned a mule wagon transportation company) and "Late Last Night When Willie Came Home," feature accompaniment from guitarist Sam McGee. Two 1929 recordings feature Macon accompanied on guitar by Fiddlin' Sid Harkreader, another early Opry

veteran. (For some reason, most likely through an editing error, annotator Charlie Seemann incorrectly states that the Macon/Harkreader recordings were done in 1924.) Other numbers feature Uncle Dave with The Fruit Jar Drinkers (Sam and Kirk McGee and Mazy Todd), including "Go Along Mule," the political tune "Governor Al Smith" and "Sleepy Lou." This collection nicely compliments other Uncle Dave reissues.

Grandpa Jones: Though Uncle Dave's and Grandpa's sounds were similar since both sang and strummed five-string banjos, Grandpa developed his style independent of Uncle Dave. Without question, Grandpa's essential recordings are those he cut for King Records from 1946-1952, most of them unavailable. This set (MCAD-10549), covering his 1956-1958 Decca recordings, includes one of only two chart hits he had in his entire career: the satiric, Elvis-inspired "All American Boy," a pop hit for Bobby Bare (who recorded it under the name Bill Parsons).

Grandpa cut 14 other songs for Decca, including remakes of well-known King material like "Mountain Dew" and "Eight More Miles to Louisville." The rest were Grandpa originals and novelties like his parody of Johnny Cash's "Don't Take Your Guns to Town," called "Don't Bring Your Banjo Home." One tune, "Falling Leaves," is issued here for the first time. Since he cut only 15 songs for Decca, a never-before-heard live version of "Cindy" from a Grand Ole Opry performance on December 8, 1956, has been added to round out the set.

Hank Thompson: Hank Thompson's great days were past when he signed with Dot Records in 1968, so there's ample reason to question the need for a Thompson collection from MCA. Only four songs ever broke the Top Ten. The 16 songs on this collection (MCAD-10545) include three of those hits "On Tap, in the Can or in the Bottle," "Smoky the Bar" and "The Older the

Violin, the Sweeter the Music." None of them were on a par with his magnificent Capitol sides. Aside from two marginally interesting unreleased tracks, most of the remainder, including remakes of old hits, come from 1970's albums like *Hank Thompson's 25th Anniversary Album*, *Kindly Keep It Country*, *The Thompson Touch* and *A Salute to The Mills Brothers*.

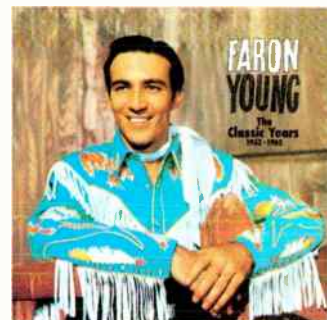
Except for "It's Better to Have Loved a Little" and "I'll Sign My Heart Away," most of this material is undistinguished and mediocre, such as the silly "Mutiny on the Monotony," which was unreleased and should have remained so. And for annotator John Rumble to conclude his mediocre notes by saying that "Even after forty-five years of recording, Thompson's best may be yet to come" is simply absurd, and sounds like the kind of awful hyper-ridden notes that graced albums in the 1950's. Aside from Hank's membership in the Hall of Fame, there was no earthly reason for this album to exist.

Bob Wills: It's well-known among collectors that Wills' Decca and Kapp recordings, except for a handful of performances, were among his weakest. He signed with Decca in 1956 just after leaving MGM Records, and The Playboys had lost many of the high quality of musicians of the past, making for uneven performances. The boom days of Western swing were wan-

ing as TV cut into the dancehall business. Not surprisingly, MCA's Wills package (MCAD-10547), features little that's worthwhile, the exceptions being the excellent honky tonker, "It's the Bottle Talkin'," and his heartfelt tribute to rock 'n' roll, the Bill Haley-ish "So Let's Rock." When Bob cut the Kapp material in the mid-to-late 60's (his 1969 stroke ended his association with the label), he was working as a solo performer. Though he brought a few Texas pickers to his sessions, they were dominated by Nashville studio musicians, few of whom—ex-Playboy fiddler Johnny Gimble being an exception—played his music right. Wills later told his biographer, Charles Townsend, "that damn bunch in Nashville just ruins my music." The evidence is here. Only "Big Balls in Cowtown" sounds like Wills. Pioneer Wills researcher Bob Pinson's notes are excellent, but again, did we need this collection?

MCA is mistaken in confining their country reissues to Hall of Famers. They reportedly had a Webb Pierce package planned for release when he was nominated for the Hall of Fame, only to shelve it after he failed to be elected in 1990. They likewise ignore non-Hall of Famer Bill Anderson, whose best-known work should have been reissued long ago, and whose fans would love to see it. I wish MCA Nashville would re-examine and broaden their efforts.

Faron Young: Faron Young spent a decade with Capitol Records, from 1952 to 1962. Capitol's Ken Nelson, visiting Shreveport, heard Faron filling in for Webb Pierce on Webb's KWKH radio show and signed him. Though Faron first recorded for Webb's Pacemaker label, his career soared with Capitol. During that decade he had 42 chart hits, 25 of them Top Ten. Several became standards: "Goin' Steady," "If You Ain't Lovin'," "Live Fast, Love Hard, Die



Young," Don Gibson's "Sweet Dreams" and Willie's "Hello Walls." For hardcore Faron fans, *The Classic Years* (Bear Family BCD 15493) has it all, 157 songs on five CD's, though not chronologically arranged like most Bear collections.

Faron left very little unissued material, and though his primary focus was on hard country, he recorded a bit of gospel and an entire pop album, *The Object of My Affection*, in 1958. All his performances had verve and gusto, and as time went on, his own style developed, going beyond the heavy Hank Williams stylings of his early recordings. The 48-page booklet, written by Colin Escott from Otto Kitzinger's research, features interesting information, such as the fact that Faron's announcer on the radio show he hosted during his stint in the Army was none other than actor and fellow enlisted man Leonard Nimoy (Spock of *Star Trek* fame). The booklet also includes a variety of photos and complete discographical data. My sole complaint is that the recordings are not arranged in chronological order, making it difficult to follow along with the discography while listening.

How to Get These Treasures

Available in formats shown at prices shown: Johnny Cash, *The Essential Johnny Cash* (CK 47991) three-cassette or three-CD set \$34.98 cassette, \$45.98 CD/Jimmie Rodgers, *The Singing Brakeman* (BCD 15540) six-CD boxed set \$169.95/Faron Young, *The Classic Years* (BCD 15493) five-CD boxed set \$149.95/MCA Hall of Fame Series: *Roy Rogers* (MCA-10548), *Uncle Dave Macon* (MCA-10546), *Grandpa Jones* (MCA-10549), *Hank Thompson* (MCA-10545) and *Bob Wills* (MCA-10547), each volume available on cassette or CD, \$12.98 each cassette, \$19.98 each CD.

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TOP 25

Singles

1. Billy Ray Cyrus *Achy Breaky Heart*
2. Ricky Van Shelton ... *Backroads*
3. Collin Raye *Every Second*
4. Doug Stone *Come In Out of the Pain*
5. McBride & The Ride *Sacred Ground*
6. Travis Tritt *Nothing Short of Dying*
7. Sawyer Brown *Some Girls Do*
8. Diamond Rio *Norma Jean Riley*
9. Trisha Yearwood *The Woman Before Me*
10. Rodney Crowell *Lovin' All Night*
11. George Strait *Gone As a Girl Can Get*
12. Shenandoah *Rock My Baby*
13. Alan Jackson *Midnight in Montgomery*
14. Wynonna *I Saw The Light*
15. Brooks & Dunn *Neon Moon*
16. Joe Diffie *Ships That Don't Come In*
17. Ronnie Milsap *All Is Fair in Love and War*
18. John Anderson *When It Comes to You*
19. Reba McEntire *The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia*
20. Randy Travis *I'd Surrender All*
21. Suzy Bogguss *Aces*
22. Michelle Wright *Take It Like a Man*
23. Hal Ketchum *Past the Point of Rescue*
24. Garth Brooks *Papa Loved Mama*
25. Mark Chesnutt *Old Flames Have New Names*

Albums

1. Billy Ray Cyrus *Some Gave All*
2. Garth Brooks *Ropin' the Wind*
3. Garth Brooks *No Fences*
4. Wynonna *Wynonna*
5. Garth Brooks *Garth Brooks*
6. Reba McEntire *For My Broken Heart*
7. Alan Jackson *Don't Rock the Jukebox*
8. Travis Tritt *It's All About to Change*
9. Brooks & Dunn *Brand New Man*
10. Hal Ketchum *Past the Point of Rescue*
11. George Strait *Holding My Own*
12. Lorrie Morgan *Something in Red*
13. Aaron Tippin *Read Between the Lines*
14. Trisha Yearwood *Trisha Yearwood*
15. Sawyer Brown *Dirt Road*
16. Doug Stone *I Thought It Was You*
17. John Anderson *Seminole Wind*
18. Diamond Rio *Diamond Rio*
19. Suzy Bogguss *Aces*
20. Tanya Tucker *What Do I Do With Me*
21. Sammy Kershaw *Don't Go Near the Water*
22. Collin Raye *All I Can Be*
23. Vince Gill *Pocket Full of Gold*
24. Tracy Lawrence *Sticks and Stones*
25. Mark Chesnutt *Longnecks and Short Stories*

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