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COUNTRY MUSIC

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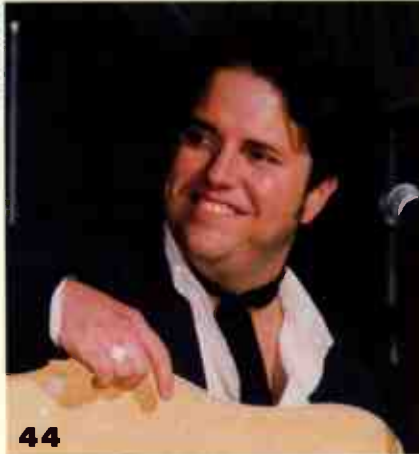
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People

GAVIN COMES TO TOWN

Wonderful **Cyndi Hoelzle** has migrated from West Coast to "mid-coast," Music City, that is, setting up a *Gavin* office right here where it should have been all along. During the evening it was announced that a new, wonderful chart, to be edited by my pal, **Rob Bleetstein**, called "Americana," is being established. This chart will report on airplay of artists not featured on mainstream radio...legends like **Merle Haggard**, **Johnny Cash** and **Waylon Jennings**; rootsy songwriters like **Lyle Lovett**, **Lucinda Williams**, **Emmylou Harris**, **Jimmie Dale Gilmore** and **Nanci Griffith**; and country artists like **Mary Chapin Carpenter** or **The Mavericks** would fit in the format. It thrilled me to know that **Alison Krauss** will be on this chart, which gave me hope for other bluegrassers. Thanks to *Gavin* for the idea, and welcome home to Nashville. *Gavin's* Americana concept was profiled in *Entertainment Weekly* in mid-January. The chart debuted in the *Gavin* issue dated January 20, 1995.

FAREWELL HELEN

The Board of Directors of the Country Music Association hosted a cocktail reception at the CMA honoring the retiring Director of Special Projects (including Fan Fair) **Helen Farmer**. A few who paid their respects: **Jerry and Connie Bradley**, **Merle Kilgore**, former CMA director **Jo Walker-Meador**, **Joe Mansfield**, **Mike Martinovich**, **Roy Wunsch** and **Mary Ann McCreedy**, **Irving Waugh**, CMA's **Ed Benson**, **Teresa George**, **Janet Williams** and **Tom Murray**, BMI's **Frances Preston**, **Roger Sovine** and **David Preston**, Polydor's **Harold Shedd** and **Steve Miller**, Liberty's **Wayne Halper** and Arista's **Mike Dungan**. Other notables included good friend **Tony Conway**, **Rusty Jones**, **Ralph and Joy Emery**, **Danny Davis**, and Hall of Famers **Chet Atkins** and **Eddy Arnold**.

VACATIONERS

Anybody coming our way this year, keep in mind, Music City has some cool acts playing in cool clubs. To learn who is where, spend 35¢ for a newspaper, the

TAMMY & GEORGE TOGETHER AGAIN



No, not that George... When **Tammy Wynette** performed in New York recently, Senior Editor **George Fletcher** met up with the legend at a post-concert party at the trendy *Metronome* club. Also on hand were **Tammy's Number One and Two fans**, CMM publisher **Russ Barnard** and former *Epic* executive **Mike Martinovich** (Fletcher was dubbed *Number Three*). The party, hosted by downtown New York icon **Brandy Wine**, also brought out rockers/Tammy fans **Melissa Etheridge** and **The Go-Go's**.

Tennessean or *Banner*, for complete listings. On a recent night, for example, the fabulous **Del McCoury** was playing *The Station Inn*; the wonderful **Cactus Brothers** were at 12th & Porter; the great **Nashville Mandolin Ensemble**, playing the three B's—**Bach**, **Beatles** and **Bill Monroe**—were at 328. Any night of the week the world's finest songwriters—varying from unknowns to one-hit-wonders to legends like **Don Schlitz**, **Bobby Braddock**, **Jim Rushing**, **Alan Shamblin**, **Carl Jackson** and **Larry Cordle**—can be found sharing their wares at the *Bluebird Cafe*. At *Douglas Corner*, the very entertaining **Marshall Chapman &**

The Love Slaves were doing their bit. **Merle Haggard's** sons, **Marty** and **Noel Haggard**, were at *Barbara's*, and there's dancing at the *Long Hollow Jamboree*. **William Lee Golden & The Golden's** were at the *Bell Cove*, where **Bill Monroe** sometimes shows up. Blowing his horn is **Boots Randolph** at *Mere Bulles*, while funnyman **James Gregory** has 'em in the aisles at *Zanie's Comedy Club*. The *Grand Ole Opry* is every Friday and Saturday night, *Opryland* is seasonal, the *General Jackson Showboat* runs year around. The *Nashville Palace* is always rocking, and down on *Second Avenue* you won't want to miss the *Wild Horse Saloon* and *Hard Rock Cafe*. So y'all come.

WHY THERE ARE COUNTRY SONGS

Some 30 years ago **Bessie** ran a Nashville bar. In walked **Joe**. They fell in love. It ended there, for **Bessie** and **Joe** were married, but not to each other. They kissed, hugged, cried and said goodbye. Each stayed married to their own spouse, but neither forgot the other. Awhile back **Bessie**, who'd moved to *Peoria*, decided to visit her Nashville sister. Since her husband had died, she decided to look **Joe** up. She found **Joe**, also widowed. Still in love, the couple decided to get married where they met, in a bar...*Tootsie's Orchid Lounge*, the famous watering hole for **Willie Nelson**, **Kris Kristofferson**, the late **Roger Miller**, **Patsy Cline** and loads of other country legends. **Don Northcutt**, the *Music Row* Wedding Chapel minister, performed the ceremony, and **Jimmie Lee Morris**, *Tootsie's* house singer, sang the old **Buck Owens** standard, "Together Again." **Joe** is 69 and **Bessie** is 63. It seemed fitting and proper. And this is why there are country songs.

GIRLS, HAVE YOU HEARD!

Just guess who *Fruit of the Loom* has cut a sponsorship deal with? **Alan Jackson**, that's who. The makers of jockey-style shorts are spending a cool 40 mill on an extensive promotional program surrounding the *Fruit of the Loom Country Comfort Tour*, featuring **Alan Jackson**. Most of the warm-blooded women I know would plop down their hard-earned cash to hear the long-legged one sing, and

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

"You'll find the latest selection of country music in our 'New Releases' and 'Top Ten' sections."

Karen



Chely Wright
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Polydor/Nashville



John Berry
"Standing On The Edge"
Patriot



Tracy Lawrence
"I See It Now"
Atlantic



Diamond Rio
"Love A Little Stronger"
Arista



Shenandoah
"In The Vicinity Of The Heart"
Liberty



Trisha Yearwood
"Thinkin' About You"
MCA/Nashville



Wade Hayes
"Old Enough To Know Better"
Columbia



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"Ken Mellons"
Epic



Billy Ray Cyrus
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Mercury/Nashville

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Neal McCoy
"You Gotta Love That"
Atlantic

People

WARINER GOES GOLD



Arista's Steve Wariner has nabbed himself a Gold record for his *I Am Ready* album. Arista prez Tim DuBois presented the mighty-pleased Steve with the plaque. His most recent album is *Drive*.

I'd bet most of "us" would plop down added bucks to see him in those shorts. Oh, well, we can't have it all. Also, Warner Chappell Publishing Co. announced they had bought Jackson's song catalog and signed him as a writer. The price? Thirteen million hillbilly bucks. That ain't farming, folks.

AS I WRITE

As I type, Tammy Wynette and George Jones are in the studio recording a duet album. Rumors are flying like crazy about Tammy's health. I asked Tony (wow) Brown, Prez/MCA Records and producer of this historic recording. Tony told me that Tammy is very thin, but still sings like an angel.

GOD STILL MAKIN' PRETTY BOYS

I've been so hung up on George Strait, Vince Gill, Alan Jackson and their movie-star looks, sexy physiques and hillbilly vocals, that I hadn't busied myself too much with the ring of stars-come-lately lately. Sure, I'd been to concerts and listened to the music, but that was it. Anyway, an across-the-table howdy convinced me when Eye Saw Clay Walker at Jamaica. Nice as they come, generous with smiles and howdy's, Clay tipped his hat to

yours truly just like I was the mama of the Alamo. Clay was dining with Mr. Erv Woolsey and Mr. Danny O'Brien while I had lunch with singer/songwriter Stephanie Davis. Stephanie, who opened shows early in '94 for another pretty boy, Garth Brooks, told me she'd been out to the Brooks plantation riding horses with Garth, his lovely wife Sandy Brooks and Bryan Kennedy. I allowed the last time I was on anything's back (that I'd tell about) was when I was 13, riding a mule bareback and fell off. Ain't rode since.

THE MILLER BAND?

After two years, Dave Gibson announced his departure from The Gibson-Miller Band. Blue Miller and the rest of the band will continue on, with a new name to be announced soon.

IF THIS ISN'T LOVE

Sometime in the past, there was a South Dakota couple whose child had Down's syndrome and had never spoken. One day the parents found the child singing every word to "Delta Dawn," Tanya Tucker's signature song. The couple, who were horse farmers, were so overjoyed they presented Tanya with a magnificent Arabian horse as a gift of gratitude. When Tanya read about Joe Diffie's son, Tyler, also born with Down's syndrome, her big heart went out. Tanya presented Tyler with a horse for Christmas at her colonial mansion in Tennessee. She also threw a party

for her family and the families of Diffie, Delbert McClinton, T. Graham Brown and NASCAR driver Geoff Bodine. A special treat for the kids was riding in Bodine's Number 7 Exide Batteries race car while sitting in Santa's lap. If this isn't love, I don't know what love is. And if you aren't teary-eyed, I don't know why.

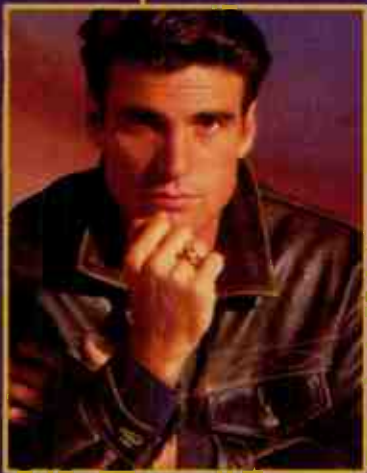
CELEBRATION OF LIFE AND LOVE

When cancer was diagnosed a second time, Dale Franklin of the Nashville Entertainment Association and the Leadership Nashville organization refused any medication except something for the pain. The doctors gave her six months. Her friends decided to celebrate her life. Record producer George Massenburg flew in from LAX. Other noteables in attendance were Tony (wow) Brown, Kyle Lehnig, Rick Blackburn, Paul Worley, Robert Oermann, Jimmy Bowen, Jim Ed Norman, Walt Wilson, David Ross, Kathy Mattea, Roy Wunsch, Stan Moress, Bob Heatherly...you get the picture. Dale started the Nashville Entertainment Association and was Executive Director of Leadership Nashville. She networked mainstream Nashville business and the music industry together...not an easy task. This was novel, indeed. I saw her about six weeks before her death, and she said she was fine as I grumbled about a cold. Though thin, she was coiffed and made up beautifully. Her only survivors were her godson Dylan Jackson Leo (son of record producer Josh Leo) and his wife Rene LaRose. Thanks to businesswoman



Tanya Tucker presents Joe Diffie's son, Tyler, with a gift—his own horse.

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People

Alice Zimmerman and others, Dale was not alone. At 54, she died in Vanderbilt Hospital. Her successor at Leadership Nashville is the lovely and talented **Tabitha Eads**. We send our best to her:

IN HEAVEN?

With **Roy Acuff** looking over two angels, this must be heaven. The angels are the lovely **Mary Chapin Carpenter** and the lady who stares back at me in the mirror. Chapin and I weren't in heaven, but we were pretty close...backstage at the Ryman Auditorium following her wonderful performance at the historic landmark. As fab as her albums are, her live performances surpass the recordings. Triple-platinum for her last album, *Come On Come On*, and already past platinum with her new one, *Stones in the Road*. And a Grammy nominee four times over this year. One fine poet. One fine singer/songwriter.

BUSHES CELEBRATE 50 YEARS

When **Donna** (Mrs. **Richard**) **Sterban** read **Barbara Bush's** autobiography, she realized former **President** and Mrs. Bush's 50th wedding anniversary was coming up. It was her idea that they celebrate at the Ryman Auditorium. Donna called with the request and had an answer in two days. So, Prez, Babs, their five children, in-laws and grandkids traveled to Music City for the do. Barbara, dressed in "Bush blue," with ever-present pearls at



Angelic Mary Chapin Carpenter and Hazel Smith at the historic Ryman Auditorium.

the neck and earrings to match, was stunning. The Prez was just as first-class in his tux. Stars turned out to honor the bubbly, beaming couple. The Oaks hosted the evening, opening the show with "American Made," followed by an a capella version of "Amazing Grace." Other highlights included **Loretta Lynn's** performance of "Coal Miner's Daughter" at the president's request; **Vince Gill's** "Look at Us," **Ricky Skaggs'** "I Wouldn't Change You If I Could" and **Lee Greenwood's** "God Bless the USA." Other

performers were **Lorrie Morgan**, **Amy Grant**, **Roger Whittaker**, **Michael W. Smith**, **Eddie Rabbitt** and **Sam Moore**. Comics **Phyllis Diller**, **Ray Combs** and **Yakov Smirnoff** brought the house down. Tributes were given by **Delta Burke** and her hubby **Gerald McRaney**, actor **Chuck Norris**, **Marilyn Quayle** (filling in for the ailing ex-Vice Prez **Dan Quayle**, who was stricken with appendicitis), former Bush press person **Mary Matalin** (who following the election married **James Carville**, who was a **Bill Clinton** press person), and Dodgers manager **Tommy Lasorda**. Former Tennessee Governor **Lamar Alexander**, who served in the Bush cabinet, played an impressive piano while **Albert Brumley Jr.** performed several of his late father's gospel songs. Lastly, the cast assembled onstage and closed the show with **Irving Berlin's** "Always." A great night in a great city. Proceeds for the show went to the George Bush Library Center at Texas A&M College, the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and MusicCares/NARAS. Did you know the Bushes are only the sixth presidential couple to celebrate 50 years of marriage?

SHINDIG IT WAS

The Warner/Reprise folks called it a shindig, and a shindig it was. **Susan Niles**, who loves seeing her name in this fab mag, was overseeing the action at the new multi-million dollar Warner Bros. establishment on the Row. Brought into Warners new home was a tacky, much-used, rusted trailer. There was a wringer washing machine on the front porch and chickens, ducks, a donkey and goats in the yard amongst numerous tires, painted white, with plastic poinsettias placed inside. Used baseball caps, a jacked-up car, a sofa (actually the front seat of a truck) and hub caps on the porch rounded out the scene. The event was the Gold certification of comedian **Jeff Foxworthy's** album, *You Might Be a Redneck If...* To top this, those Warner Bros. characters served us Krystal burgers, hot dogs, moon pies, beer, RC Cola's, barbecued Spam and a drink they called "moonshine" that had to be a 1000 proof, served from a wash tub with a dipper. I would not have touched it with **Harlan Howard's** tongue! When the time came to present the "Gold," why head honcho **Jim Ed Norman** held an old vinyl record album taped in a denim-covered box. After spraying the record with gold spray paint, Foxworthy came forward and accepted his "plaque," speaking eloquently the language of redneck. It was fun, Cousin Bubba. A different do on a cold night.

GRAND OLE OPR



George and Barbara Bush took to the Opry stage with The Oak Ridge Boys to celebrate the Bushes' 50 years of marriage. A milestone at a landmark, I say.

BRAVE AND FREE

by **Perillo**



Doll shown smaller than actual seated height of approximately 10.

World Radio History

People

TELL 'EM, GEORGE



To the right with a preacher hand pose is the great George Jones, seated by a guy in a baseball cap who happens to be Alan Jackson. The scene, the making of the video for the Jones/Jackson duet, "A Good Year for the Roses." Kneeling, but not praying is director Gerry Wenner, seated are songwriter Jerry Chesnut and the record's producer, Brian Ahern, who also produced all that wonderful music on ex-wife Emmylou Harris at the beginning of her career.

EASTER SEALS CELEBRATION '95

Celebrating 75 years of helping people with disabilities, the National Easter Seal Society is gearing up for its annual TV fundraiser. Formerly known as *The National Easter Seal Telethon*, this year it's known simply as *Celebration '95*. Nashville stars will appear in a segment from Nashville called "Music City Round-Up." Among those participating are Faith Hill, Trisha Yearwood, Suzy Bogguss, Michelle Wright, Joy Lynn White and Dawn Sears. Last year, some \$52 million was raised. The 20-hour show begins March 4th. Check local listings for details.

BERRY MOVED

John Berry has moved from Liberty to the new, Liberty-owned Patriot label. Despite serious illness, this was a breakthrough year for John. Presently he is opening shows for Reba McEntire.

WELCOME OPEL

The "New American Music Tour" set to start in Dublin in April is sponsored by General Motors' Opel line of cars. Singing for Opel are Marty Stuart, Trisha Yearwood and Emmylou Harris. I'd release some secret

memories to the media for a chance to go along on this tour to places like Belfast, Brussels, Paris, The Hague, Glasgow, Birmingham and London. Then the three-some goes to Stockholm and Copenhagen, then onto Hamburg (where our friend



Rehearsing for Celebration '95, Faith Hill chats with Easter Seals Tennessee Adult Representative Beverly Jones.

Bernd Glodek is a disc jockey), Frankfurt and Zurich. The next stop is Milan, then Madrid, then Lisbon. Wow, nine countries. Thanks to the GM people for this boost in Europe.

EYE SAW

Me and Fletcher Foster were having brunch at the Slice of Life when in comes spiked-haired Marty Stuart looking like the mini Man in Black with piano man Mr. Earl Ball. Cute Marty gave me and handsome Fletcher hugs, and we visited a bit, but not enough. Marty's *Marty Party* television shows for TNN have got to be the best. Always has known how to have a good time, that boy has. As for Fletcher, well, he was here for some TV-ing at the Ryman with Clint Black, The Staples, Marty and a bevy of others.

GIBSON BROUGHT HIS GIBSON

Doing research, I came across an article in a 1972 Record World "Who's Who" by Clyde Waynick, whose claim to fame was "barber to the stars." It seems when Webb Pierce was burning up the charts and Faron Young could roar three days without sleep, Clyde was the chief clipper. I wondered what happened to Clyde....

A few days later, TNN Opry announcer Keith Bilbrey called me saying he had done an interview with Don Gibson. Very introverted, Gibson does not do interviews, concerts or have guests over. The interview, according to Keith, took place at a barber shop in Green Hills. While Clyde Waynick cut Don Gibson's hair, Keith asked Don to please come do the Opry. Plot thickens. Bilbrey also arranged for Carolee (daughter of Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper and leader of the Opry's Carolee Singers, who has a radio show on WSM) to interview Don at the WSM studios in Opryland Park. Carolee mentioned to Opry manager Bob Whitaker that she was interviewing Gibson. Minutes before the interview, up drives Whitaker and Opry President, Hal Durham. Both men extended a Grand Ole Opry welcome to the reclusive singer/songwriter. So Gibson comes to the Opry with Clyde the barber and his wife, the lovely and attentive Bobbie. Wearing his hat, the great Gibson sang such self-penned classics as "I Can't Stop Loving You," "Where No One Stand Alone" and "Sweet Dreams" accompanying himself on his Gibson. Thanks to a barber named Clyde, a DJ/host named Bilbrey, a lady named Carolee and a couple of guys who give a flip about the Opry, Gibson sang on the Opry again. Awesome, it was.



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Petersen's 4-Wheel & Off Road “4x4 of the Year” 1994, 1995.

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People

WE WENT GARTHING

With sales of 11 million pieces for his *No Fences* album, Liberty Records hosted a **Garth Brooks**-do at Vanderbilt Stadium Club. At the time, no one seemed to be in anything less than a celebrating mood for the biggest record seller of the hour, even though rumors were running rampant, but no one was at "liberty" to tell if Liberty would continue to be run by present president/CEO **Jimmy Bowen**, or if another party would step in. EMI's boss **Charles Koppelman**, down from the Big Apple for the event, had his lips zipped, but rumor has it that he met with a few people who desired the position in case Mr. B. was moved over to another.

In spite of the rumors, the party was an all-out success. As I looked around the room at the songwriters who have houses and new cars and children with braces on their teeth all because a man named Brooks recorded their song, the count surpassed 20. The following Saturday night at the Opry, Garth was presented with a second plaque for *Ropin' the Wind*, with sales surpassing the 10 million mark. Our Mr. Brooks is the first male solo artist in the history of music with two albums in tandem with sales exceeding 10 million. What's more, *Billboard* lists *No Fences* as the top-selling country album of all time! 'Course the release of Garth's *The Hits* just before the holidays, with 18 songs included, was beyond belief. The first week out, the recording sold 540,000

records. It had passed two million by mid-January. Fans, Garth hasn't changed at all that I can see. He treats me just as good as he did when I first met him and he went and got me a copy of his very first cassette: a chubby-cheeked boy wearing a cowboy hat and carrying a dream.

The rumors all came to naught when, not long after the party, Bowen entered the hospital for cancer surgery of the thyroid. Liberty Senior VP's **Bill Catino** and **Wayne Halper** stepped in while Mr. B. recovered in Hawaii. A speedy get well to Jimmy Bowen.

MAKIN' OUR OWN

Milwaukee ain't got nothing on Music City. We're makin' our own brew, too. Right down on trendy Second Avenue at the Market Street Brewery. It's no wonder the too-cool Mr. **Doug Howard** chose the brewery for his year-end party for Polygram Publishing Company. Some who sipped a few and chowed down on Mexican rations were songwriter par excellence **Bob McDill**; Polydor Records Prez, **Harold Shedd**; Decca Records Sr. VP, **Mark Wright**; legendary record producer **Jerry Kennedy**; **John Brannen**; **Ronny Scaife**; up-and-comer **George Lucas**; songwriters **Gordon Kennedy**, **Lionel Delmore**, **Carl Jackson**, **Kim Richey**, **Rusty Golden**, **Angelo**, **Robert Ellis Orrall**. Also songpluggers **Daniel Hill**, **Doyle Brown**, **Billy Lynn** and **Kirk Boyer**, as well as doers of all great Polygram things **Ms. Milly Catignani**, **Ree Guyer**, **Tabitha Eads**, **Orville Orman** and **Paul Lucks**.

THE OPRY'S MASCOT

Not only does the Grand Ole Opry membership include such notables as **Bill Monroe**, **Marty Stuart**, **Garth Brooks**, **Alan Jackson**, **Clint Black**, **Vince Gill** and **Patty Loveless**, now the world-famous institution has a mascot! Yep, you heard me, "Ole Blu" is a lazy "under the porch," droopy kind of hound dog created out of the plushiest of plush materials by Mighty Star, Inc. Seems the toy-making company has also created a loveable bear named Hooch, a bevy of animals called The Cloggers dressed in Opry gingham, The Butts Family and Opry Kids. These toys will be available for your kids by the time you read this at most department and toy stores. The announcement was made recently in the Opry lobby, where lunch was also served. **Grandpa Jones** attended the event, along with Opry President **Hal Durham**, managers **Bob Whittaker** and **Jerry Strobel**, Opryland's **Tom Adkinson** and **Mike Hyland**.



THE STORK COMETH, AND COMETH, AND COMETH

Waylon Nelson Chesnut arrived recently in Beaumont, Texas, son of **Tracy** and **Mark Chesnut**. The child's name leaves little doubt as to whom Mark favors as singers. The Decca artist is all smiles over his firstborn.

Sarah Catherine is the daughter of **Marty** and **Robin Roe**. Marty is lead singer of **Diamond Rio**.

Delaney Katharine McBride is the daughter of **Martina** and **John McBride**. If Delaney is anything like her mother, the RCA recording artist, she will look and sing like an angel.

Elijah Judd Kelley is the son of **Wynonna**. Grandmother **Naomi Judd** and sister **Ashley Judd** were in the delivery room, as was the child's father, **Arch Kelley III**. Recalling Naomi's song, "Guardian Angels," I knew where Baby Kelley got his name...from great, great, great grandad **Elijah Judd**. A big one, he was, weighing in at eight pounds 15 ounces.

Congratulations to all you young parents. My advice to all of you: Keep their bellies filled, their bottoms clean and dry, and their music country. I expect no problems from these offspring.



Garth Brooks presented copies of his eleven-times platinum *No Fences* plaques to **Lorianne Crook** and **Charlie Chase**, hosts of *TNN's Music City Tonight*.

A Wolf's Pride

by
David Geenty



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People



Celebrating platinum and Gold are John Grady, VP Sales/Mercury; Mike Pulgini, Director of Sales; artist Mr. Sammy Kershaw and Luke Lewis, the label Prez.

PARTY, PARTY EVERYWHERE AND WE ARE THERE

A "sit down" luncheon it was, at the trendy Sunset Grille, where everybody goes to be seen. The do, called "Milestone Lunch," was honoring handsome **Collin Raye** for the platinum certification of his Epic album, *All I Can Be*. Sony VP **Scott Siman** hosted the event, introducing Senior VP **Allen Butler**, who wore dark glasses because, he said, he had a birthday last week and his eyes hadn't cleared up as yet. Butler went on to talk about Collin's vocal prowess and how he'd be remembered as a great singer. Epic's A&R VP **Doug Johnson** hit home and heart when he thanked the songwriters and publishers for the great songs. Collin, very humble and thankful, was gracious and kind...the sign of a true star. Epic also celebrated the fact that, in the same week, three of their artists reached platinum sales—Raye, **Joe Diffie's** *Honky Tonk Attitude* and **Patty Loveless' Only What I Feel**. A month later, Diffie did it again with his latest, *Third Rock from the Sun*. Congrats to all.

It was a Number One party thrown by the ASCAP folks for **Joe Barnhill Jr.** and **Wayne Perry**, writers of the Tim McGraw hit, "Not a Moment Too Soon." Besides the three honorees, there was Tim's producer **Brian Gallimore** and **Mike Curb** who owns Curb Records (Tim's label). ASCAP's **Eve Vaupel**, **Shelby Kennedy**, **Chris Du Bois** and **Ralph Murphy** hosted the event in **Connie Bradley's** absence. She was in Denver at the CMA meeting. And did they put the "big pot in the little one"

when it come to chowing down. Thumb-sized boiled shrimp, buffalo wings fried with a dill dip, fancy sandwiches, fresh veggie and fruit tray, desserts galore and an open bar.

TEN YEARS OF DWIGHT



Celebrating ten years as a recording artist, **Dwight Yoakam**, with producer/guitarist **Pete Anderson**, shows off a commemorative plaque from Warner/Reprise. Dwight played a benefit at L.A.'s Palomino Club, where he was honored for the double-platinum sales of *This Time*, and platinum sales of *Hillbilly Deluxe* and *Just Lookin' for a Hit*.

Last but not least, 'twas a "private do" for one of my very faves, the lovable and talented **Sammy Kershaw**. The Mercury staff assembled at Nashville's City Club to celebrate the platinum status of his first two albums, *Don't Go Near the Water* and *Haunted Heart*, as well as the Gold status of his current record, *Feelin' Good Train*. Sam, in turn, presented the entire staff with gold pocket watches, each engraved with the individual's name.

BMI HONORS HAYES

Roger Sovine, VP of BMI, recently honored **Kendall Hayes** for his writing of "Walk On By," the classic **Leroy Van Dyke** hit that remains the most successful country single since *Billboard's* combined sales/airplay chart debuted in 1958. The song was a multi-million seller in 1961, spending 19 weeks at Number One, 37 weeks total on the chart, and even hitting Number Five on the pop charts. A reception was held for Hayes, a resident of Danville, Kentucky, who is terminally ill with cancer.

EYE SAW

Eye saw **Mark Collie** having lunch at South Street. That South Street Ragin' Cajun hot sauce will do you good, if you don't blister your mouth. **Bill Monroe** told me once that hot sauce kept you from having worms. I'd bet the farm that as of noon today, I have no worms. After three albums on MCA, Collie recently signed with Giant Records. New release soon.

SEZ LARRY

"Once every three or four years God has to tell me to shut up so He can talk to me when I can't talk back," sez **Larry Gatlin** just before he went under at Vanderbilt Medical Center. During a routine physical, Dr. **Robert H. Ossoff**, who takes care of a lot of people we know and love, discovered a couple of "pinhead size" nodules on Gatlin's vocal cords. The 60-minute operation was described as successful. Larry, **Steve** and **Rudy Gatlin** were scheduled to open their 1995 season in Myrtle Beach at the Gatlin Theater on February 27. A total of 200 shows are on tap.

SYMPATHY

We send our love and sympathy to **Scott Siman** on the death of his father, **Si Siman**. Scott is Sr. Vice President/Sony. Si Siman, a country music pioneer, was one of the originators/founders of the *Ozark Jubilee* in Springfield, Missouri, where he resided.

ARE YOU AND CONNIE SMITH MARRIED?

"Married?" responded **Marty Stuart** to host **Bill Anderson**, during the televised portion of *Opry Backstage* on TNN.

"That's the rumor that's been circulating around the Opry backstage," allowed Anderson.

"I'm not married," said Marty discreetly. "But if I was going to marry anybody, it would be her," he added, referring to Opry member **Connie Smith**.

With rumors flying, Marty's reason for hosting the live portion of the Opry on that Saturday night was very special—the induction of **Pete "Bashful Brother Oswald" (or "Oz") Kirby** as a member of the Grand Ole Opry. The 83-year-old stalwart, a member of the late **Roy Acuff's Smoky Mountain Boys** for almost 60 years, had appeared on the Opry with Acuff for 56 years. It was an emotional moment as Marty and **Porter Wagoner** welcomed Oz and his dobro as members. Opry castmates **Bill Monroe**, **The Whites**, **Jimmie Dickens**, **Stonewall Jackson**, **Connie Smith** (whom Marty Stuart hugged lovingly on camera) and others gathered onstage in support of comedian, singer, dobroist, banjoist Oswald, who is much loved by everyone associated with the Opry and Opryland. Among the wires read on the air for Oswald were those from President **Bill Clinton**, Vice President **Al Gore**—whose Tennessee pride showed through, **Dolly Parton** and **Travis Tritt**.

Oz's induction is certainly a feather in the cap of Opry manager **Bob Whitaker** and all the powers that be.

SAWYER BROWN PHONES HOME

Appearing in a series of 1-800-COLLECT ads, **Sawyer Brown** will be seen on the road, trying to keep in touch with home. The phone service will also be sponsoring the boys' new "Faster & Louder" tour. I bet touring country artists contribute quite a bit to the phone companies' bottom lines.

HELLO, INDIANA

Lord willing, at the invitation of radio station manager, **Kay Feeney Caito**, I will attend the Indiana Country Music Expo on April 1 and 2. Hosts for this event are stations **WFMS** (where Kay is employed) and **WGRL**. Since I am a fan, I always look forward to meeting other country music fans. After all, country music is my life and the life of my family. See you there!!

Brother Phelps



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People

BACHELOR NO MORE

Aaron Tippin is giving up his bachelor way of life. He's announced that he will marry his girlfriend and business partner, **Thea Corontzos**, in July—the 15th, to be exact. Did you know he was recently inducted into the South Carolina Hall of Fame? You do now. The native of Greenville, South Carolina, has a new album on RCA called *Lookin' Back at Myself*.

THE BYRD IS GOLD

No, it isn't an eagle. It's **Tracy Byrd**. That's the Byrd that's Gold. His album, *No Ordinary Man*, has sold in excess of 500,000 pieces. And that ain't tail feathers, friends. Celebrating with Tracy at the Byrd Party were MCA prez **Tony (wow) Brown**, manager **Ken Ritter** (Tex's first cousin), MCA's CEO **Bruce Hinton** and co-manager **Joe Carter**. Before this act was conceived, Ken Ritter sat in my office and told me what a great act Tracy was. Mr. Ritter didn't lie, did he?

COUNTRY CLUB OFF THE ROW

Just "Off the Row" on Division, facing Broadway, Music City's newest eatery, the Nashville Country Club Restaurant,



Inducted into the South Carolina Hall of Fame is **Aaron Tippin**. Shown with Tip are Hall of Fame Executive Director **David Godbolt** and South Carolina Secretary of State **Jim Miles**.

opened with a blast. CEO **Thomas J. "Jock" Weaver** hosted the do, which was attended by everybody. King Songwriter **Harlan Howard** and I seated ourselves at separate tables in a glassed-in space on the side, and welcomed notables who had the good taste to enter our sovereignty. 'Course, Jock Weaver ain't no slouch either, being as he served as prez of the Hard Rock Cafe international chain from '86 to '88. Since it was the 25th anniversary of the Nashville Songwriters Association, Jock showed his smarts by presenting the organization a check in the amount of \$20,000 toward the building of

a Songwriters Hall of Fame in the Music Row area. By now you know that by noon each day there ain't a parking space in the Country Club parking lot and not an empty seat in the house. Yep, I'd allow Jock spent the best 20 thou he ever spent.

WHO'S GONNA FILL CHARLIE'S SHOES?

The inimitable **Charlie Monk** hosted the Country Radio Seminar banquet for 25 years. Last year the much loved cynic/funnyman hung up his mike. "Who can do the gig?" we asked. Well, **Jeff Foxworthy** can fill the bill. Yep, that's the only person I know who might fill Charlie's shoes.

GILL THE TENNESSEAN

Vince Gill was named "Tennessean of the Year" by the Tennessee Sports Association. The honor is mainly due for his interest in golf, especially Junior Golf, and for his contributions. Vince will tell you in a minute, he golfs for his living. Music is his hobby. We like his hobby best, don't we? Just so you will know what a great guy Vince is, he probably gives more of himself to more benefits than anyone in country music. If there is a need, somebody always says, "Call Vince."

GIRLS CAN TOO

When ASCAP exec **Connie Bradley** and her buddy, Sony Tree Publishing's CEO **Donna Hilley**, celebrated **Trisha Yearwood's** Number One hit, "XXX's and OOO's," penned by **Alice Randall** and **Matraca Berg**, all I said was, "Girls can too." It's been a long, hard crawl for hillbilly girl songwriters. There's still a ways to go. For instance, out of the 75 charted songs the week I am writing this column, only 11 were written or co-written by females. But we can and we will.

COUNTRY CARES FOR ST. JUDE'S



Alabama's **Randy Owen**, who helped found the Country Cares fundraiser for St. Jude's Children's Hospital, is still involved six years later. To date, \$30 million has been raised for the hospital, and 1995's Radiothons, carried on 150 country radio stations and occurring from January through April, are expected to raise another \$10 million. Owen poses with St. Jude's patients **Marko Miranda**, **Joel Alsop**, **Lori Reed**, **Wendy Davis** and **Lindsey Cook**.

Spirit of the Great Eagle



The Western Heritage Museum presents a magnificent heirloom collector plate by award-winning artist Hermon Adams.

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Record Reviews

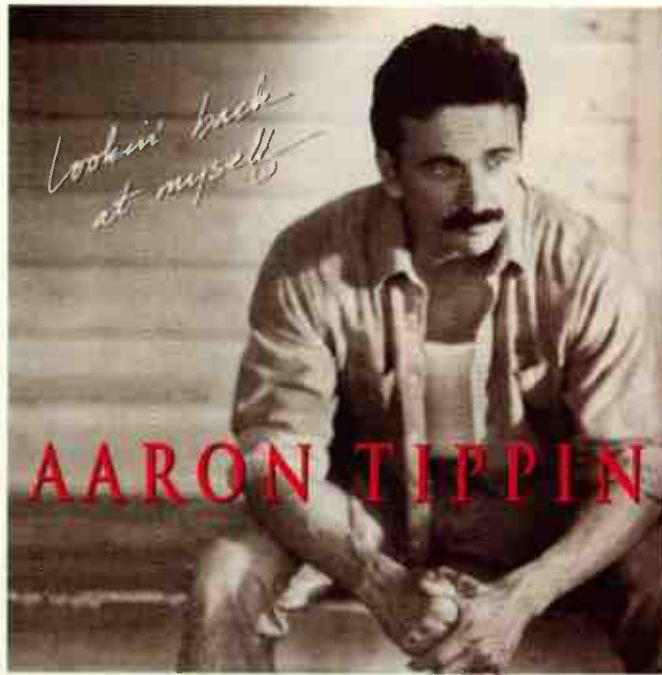
Aaron Tippin

Lookin' Back at Myself
RCA 66420

Aaron Tippin once told writer Bob Allen in an article published in our sister publication, *The Journal*, how his love for country music began. He and some buddies got a Hank Williams tape expecting to have a laugh or two making jest of the hillbilly music within. That music wound up growing on Tippin and starting him down the road to stardom. His first RCA album, with its ample echoes of Hank, did just that, its refreshing directness and natural, unforced aggressiveness reflecting more character than many other new artists of that time. Tippin's later albums were uneven to my ears, mixing good and mediocre enough to leave me wondering if he'd even things out for an entire album.

He finally has. The performances here are never less than inspired. Tippin co-wrote all but one song with various collaborators. Most are excellent and even the three weaker numbers are, at worst, generic. "Bayou Baby" and "Lovin' Me Into an Early Grave" are obviously loaded with dance beats and trivial lyrics and melodies that musically ignorant radio programmers hunger for. The Don Schlitz-Tom Schuyler number, "Mission from Hank," treads old ground (songs with Hank Williams connections) that's been milked dry in recent years.

Blue collar chauvinism, Tippin's stock in trade, dominates the album starting with the opening number. "I Got It Honest" revisits the working class pride Merle Haggard explored in "Workin' Man Blues" with a minimum of macho posturing. Under the tongue-in-



cheek humor of "Country Boy's Tool Box" is a vivid ode to a working class symbol usually ignored by songwriters in favor of booze, souped up cars or trucks. Just as good is the title tune, a realistic, reflective ballad about a man facing and accepting middle age with pride.

Other powerful performances are simple, no-frills love songs like "She's Got a Way of Makin' Me Forget," and "Standin' On the Promises." The ingenious "She Feels Like a Brand New Man Tonight," the tale of a woman on the rebound, succeeds despite the cute wordplay. The finale, the searing "You Are the Woman," will stand as one of Tippin's most powerful and soulful ballad performances. On the chorus, he adds a bit of Slim Whitman-styled falsetto without making it a gimmick.

I still think Tippin's best was his first. Nothing's going change that, but this one stands right behind it.

—RICH KIENZLE

Tammy Wynette

Without Walls
Epic 52481

I loathe all-star collaborations. Everyone comes in to sing along with a star so they can put the names on the front of an album. They've done it twice—and badly—with Frank Sinatra, and though such projects invite ample media attention and hype, rarely do they showcase anyone involved to any particular advantage. *Rhythm Country and Blues* was largely an exception to the rule. Such records rack up a lot of footage on *Entertainment Tonight* and the TNN news shows. Yet they never succeed like real, honest collaborations such as the Emmylou/Dolly/Ronstadt *Trio* album, which grew from friendship and shared musical values.

As Tammy says in her notes to this album, she's been with Epic 28 years, and Lord

knows, she certainly deserves a tribute. Perhaps if Don Was, who's done so much with Willie and Waylon, had handled it, it might have been a resounding achievement and a real artistic statement.

Judging this one on musical merits, I'm afraid I don't hear many. The two solo performances, "If It's the Last Thing I Do" and "What Do They Know," are the album's best moments. The collaborations with various pop icons and contemporary country stars rarely leave the ground.

She and Elton John do try, but fail, to make the Elton John-Bernie Taupin number, "A Woman's Needs," work. The Police's overdone 80's pop dinosaur, "Every Breath You Take," sung with the band's founding member Sting, is simply embarrassing. It makes about as much sense as Emmylou Harris singing with a heavy metal band or Nanci Griffith duetting with rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg.

Joe Diffie should have been an easy blend with Tammy, yet "Glass Houses" is listless and ill-focused. "Girl Thang," sung with Wynonna, fails due to their differences in style. Wynonna's growl and vocal punch holds up over the raucous accompaniment. Alas, Tammy, who never had to fight her low-keyed, Sherrillized backgrounds, winds up overwhelmed. "This Love," sung with pretentious British pop icon Cliff Richard, oozes pomposity. Such a song might have worked for Dionne Warwick, but Tammy? No way, Jose. Many of the same problems plague "All I Am to You," a duet with Aaron Neville.

She's far more comfortable with Lyle Lovett on Lovett's "If You Were to Wake Up," a song that fits her so well she could have recorded it 20 years

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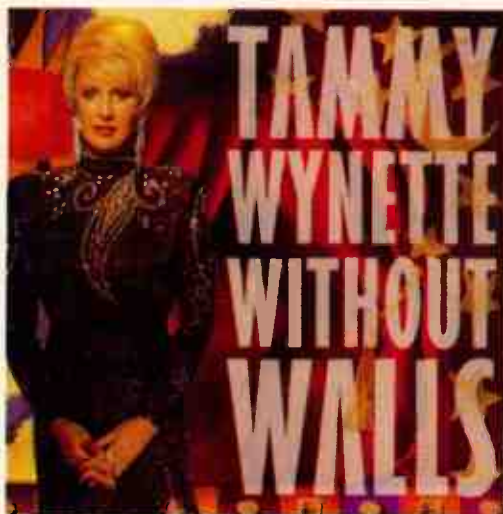
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Record Reviews



ago. Another surprise is her duet with Smokey Robinson on the classic Smokey and The Miracles hit, "I Second That Emotion," sung by both with conviction and ease even though it's not her kind of song, either.

Tammy Wynette's career has always stood for a style that she still owns. It's nice she fulfilled her dreams on this album. Nonetheless, I hope that she's had her fling. The best tribute to Tammy, aside from having some artists do her hits as with the Merle Haggard and Eagles tributes, would be to let her do a straight-ahead album, no moldy pop has-beens, no hype, no superstars (maybe Don Was producing?). That's the setting where she has—and always will be—at her best. —RICH KIENZLE

Billy Ray Cyrus
Storm in the Heartland
Mercury 314-526 081

A recent hit movie like *Pulp Fiction*, with its soundtrack devoted to intriguing second-rate pop (and country) music of yesteryear, made an important point. Yesterday's bubblegum music not only makes for great nostalgia, it's also, at least in retrospect, often as important to the spirit of its time as the so-called classics.

Witness the recent platinum-studded revival of The Monkees.

Along these lines I feel certain that someone somewhere, 50 or 60 years from now, will still be playing "Achy Breaky Heart," even if it is just a few old codgers trying to relive the long-gone times when, as kids, they'd jump up and down on the sofa every time it came on the radio. I wonder how many Travis Tritt songs they will be playing in the year 2055?

I say all this somewhat defensively and with no small degree of astonishment, because I find myself liking *Storm in the Heartland*, Billy Ray Cyrus' third and latest CD, far more than I ever imagined I would. Just as Cyrus' last effort, 1993's *It Won't Be the Last*, was a step up from *Some Gave All*, his bubblegummish 1992 debut, *Storm* moves him yet another tentative notch up the respectability scale. In the course of three albums (records? CD's? LP's? Platters? Disks? What the hell are we supposed to call them nowadays?) the "Achy Breaky Man" has progressed from being a mediocre second-rate singer/songwriter to a *respectable* second-rater.

These 14 new tracks won't win Cyrus any awards, and they barely disguise the fact that he's a pretty ordinary singer. Too often, even his own frighteningly earnest intensity

and the savvy, lean-mean arrangements of producers Joe Scaife and Jim Cotton can't lift him above this deadly limitation—even when he "gives all" to songs by Dave Loggins ("One Last Thrill") or Mark Collie. (Cyrus, Collie and a handful of other writers came up with "Redneck Heaven," a derivative song about a singer who dies and goes to the great beyond and meets Conway and Keith and Hank and Elvis....Gee, what an original concept....)

Yet there are times on *Storm in the Heartland* when Cyrus and the assembled musicians (his own band Sly Dog is assisted by a host of superstar session pickers like Dan Dugmore, Reggie Young and Billy Joe Walker Jr.) actually rise above these limitations and break some new and exciting ground, thus suggesting that ol' Billy Ray may be around a lot longer than a lot of us ever imagined.

"Enough Is Enough" (co-written by Cyrus and "Achy Breaky Heart" composer Don Von Tress, who pops up often as a co-writer and musician on *Storm*) not only has a throbbing beat but also makes a veiled plea for social justice. "I Ain't Even Left" (also co-written by Cyrus) is a lazy shuffle that features some cool electric slide guitar and rousing background vocals from The Oaks. "Patsy Come Home" is a

moving tribute to runaway children. With its straight-ahead arrangement and Cyrus' restrained singing, it's a winner.

These are some of *Storm*'s high points. But, predictably, there's some junk, too. On "Roll Me Over" and "Deja Blue" Cyrus struggles to recreate the artless magic of "Achy Breaky Heart." In so doing he merely demonstrates how hard silliness is to contrive and how rarely the kooky "Achy Breaky" kind of lightning strikes twice.

Okay, okay. I can already hear all you indignant letter writers out there uncorking your pens and sharpening your knives. All you hard-core Billy Ray disciples will want to put me in thumbscrews for not proclaiming that your superhero walks on water and heals the sick with a touch of his hand. On the other hand, all of you out there who hold Cyrus to be modern country music's stylistic anti-Christ will merely think I've lost my mind.

Well, hell, maybe I have. I mean, I'll be the first to admit that Billy Ray has still not completely lived down his critical reputation as Nashville's great purveyor of bubblegum music. But at least on *Storm in the Heartland* it's the kind you actually enjoy chewing rather than the kind that ends up on the bottom of a chair.

—BOB ALLEN

Nanci Griffith
Flyer
Elektra 61681

Nanci Griffith's *Flyer* is her second album for Elektra-New York since leaving MCA-Nashville. It features contributions from members of such rock bands as U2, Dire Straits, R.E.M., Counting Crows, NRBQ, The BoDeans and The Indigo Girls as well as the sort of subtle, introspective lyrics that drive country-radio programmers crazy. As a result, some folks are calling *Flyer* Griffith's final break with

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country music.

Those folks are wrong. The rock-star guests have adjusted more to Griffith than she has to them, and the album's quiet, predominantly acoustic arrangements push Griffith's confessional words and delicate voice to the foreground. And such Nashville session vets as Mickey Raphael, Michael Rhodes and Pat McInerney provide the dancehall rhythms which prevent the album from drifting off into folkie vagueness.

In other words, *Flyer* is precisely the sort of chamber-country-folk music that Griffith, Rosanne Cash, Kennedy-Rose and Mary Chapin Carpenter have been making for several years now. Country music would be smart to claim *Flyer*, for it's one of the smartest, prettiest albums to come along in quite a while. Moreover, it could never have existed without the example of Griffith's Texan mentors, country legends like Willie Nelson, Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark.

Flyer may well be Griffith's best album—not because her lyrics have improved on their already high level but because the melodies are so darn catchy. A song like “Nobody’s Angel,” for example, captures the forlorn loneliness of being single in lines like “I’m grounded and rusty, my dance card is dusty.” What really sells the song, though, is the

striking chorus melody which turns the long “A” in “angel” into a long, despairing sigh. On another song, she tells an ex-lover that he can have “Anything You Need But Me.” You can tell she’s really over him by the way she delivers the kiss-off to a carefree, bouncy bluegrass tune, underscored by Pat McLaughlin’s mandolin.

Griffith wrote or co-wrote all the songs but one (the broken-hearted ballad, “Southbound Train,” by Julie Gold, the author of “From a Distance”). Harlan Howard helped Griffith write “Say It Isn’t So,” yet another variation on the gossips-say-you’re-cheating theme. It’s a fresh take on an old formula, thanks to the intricate detail of the lyrics and the acoustic guitar arpeggios which keep the tune tumbling ever forward. Fred Koller helped Griffith write “On Grafton Street,” a bittersweet Christmas hymn, buoyed by the Irish contributions of The Chieftains and the U2 rhythm section. She co-wrote “Don’t Forget About Me” with her longtime bandleader James Hooker, and the result is a tribute to companionship as catchy and inspiring as Carole King’s “You’ve Got a Friend.”

Peter Collins produced most of the album, but Peter Buck of R.E.M. produced two tunes. One of them, the folk-rock anthem “Time of Inconvenience,” laments an era in which it’s too “inconvenient” to tolerate dif-

ferences or care for the poor. As the song develops an unstoppable momentum, Griffith confesses that she’s as guilty of inaction as anyone. She has always had that knack for taking the universal and making it personal or taking the personal and making it universal. And on *Flyer*, she attaches that verbal magic to melodies too juicy to resist.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

Hank Williams Jr.

Hog Wild
Curb 77690

I guess I don’t know what it all means. So here’s Hank Jr., 64 albums into a career that reads like, well, a country song—a whole *album* of country songs—and the wheels are slipping a little bit. Maybe more than a little bit.

There are two problems with *Hog Wild*. The first is that the wheat/chaff ratio is a little high on the wrong end. I figure out of the ten cuts, there are only three dogs that’ll hunt—“Hog Wild,” “Between Heaven and Hell” and “It’s a Start.” Two other dogs are sniffing around looking for the trail—“Eyes of Waylon,” “Daytona Nights”—but they’re having some trouble. The other five puppies are in the kennel chasing their tails.

I guess that’s not a bad average for these grim days, where

your usual hat act has an anonymous hit, then releases an album that includes said hit, five songs cut to sound just like the hit with minor variations of wording, two sappy ballads about tears, sensitivity or alternative sexual orientations, and two dance cuts with twin fiddles for those ten people who are still carrying the torch for the Achy-Breaky. I thought albums were lame during the old “Nashville Sound” days—Billy Sherrill, wherever you are, I really owe you an apology.

Anyhow, back to *Hog Wild*. Of those three huntin’ dogs, we’ve got the title cut, which is a S.I.H.Jr.—Standard Issue Hank Jr.—Southern rocker, perfectly suited to the man who comes on national television once a week and says, “Are you ready for some footb...a...l...l...l...l...l?” It’s got a mean, piggish sound to it, which is good. One of the great casualties in country music in the Age Of Hat has been the rip-snothing bar meanness that Southern rock can deliver. Sometimes music is dangerous, and Hank Jr. has never forgotten that simple truth. Plus, I’m a sucker for songs that feature a jew’s harp and, somewhere mixed down in the bottom, pig noises.

“Between Heaven and Hell” is the type of ballad that Hank has handled so well in the past—another story of a man trapped at the ugly midpoint of his life. There’s even some good verbal punning—“I’ve been a square, and I’ve been around...” Hank can pull that kind of stuff off. I like it.

Finally, “It’s a Start” is a just plain nasty ex-spousal unit: *There’s a big ole smokin’ crater/Where our house used to be/I spent all my paycheck/Buying up that TNT.../At Least I’m feelin’ better/What the hell, It’s a start...*

You truly believe that Hank Jr. means every word of “It’s a Start,” unlike too many of the new kids on the block, Hank knows this stuff isn’t necessarily parody. Ask one of my



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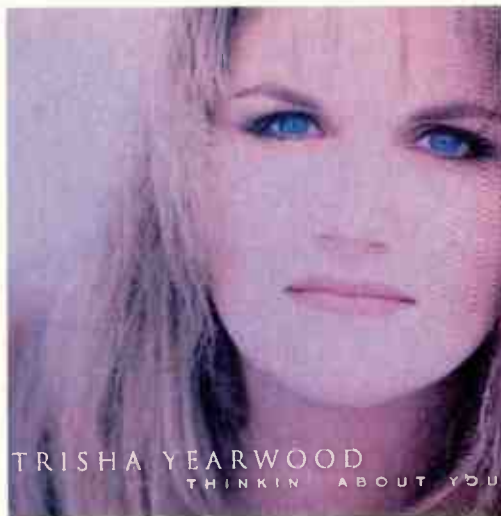
lesser kin, who once blew up a car in downtown Tupelo because the parties involved were messing with his woman and his dog. Life isn't all urban angst.

Now, about that second problem (remember I mentioned a second problem?). Of the three songs that work, only one—"Hog Wild"—was co-written by Hank Jr. The others were written by good writers doing letter-perfect imitations of Hank Jr.'s writing. On the five cuts he wrote, Hank Jr. sounds like he's trying too hard. The writing seems forced, the metaphors too obvious, the feelings too clichéd. In fact, the current world of country music exists because people like Hank Jr. invented it. That is the simple truth. But I think Hank Jr. needs to reinvent himself. He's done it before, three or four times, in fact. Right now, though he seems trapped in a paradigm of his own making—the hard-livin', hard-partyin', honky tonk hero he sings about. He has far more talent than *Hog Wild* suggests, as well as an encyclopedic knowledge of American popular music and the ability to carry off some fascinating transitions.

What the hell, Hank—you've got most of the year before hunting seasons opens. Reinvent country music. It needs it. —MICHAEL BANE

Trisha Yearwood *Thinkin' About You* MCA 11201

Trisha Yearwood must be as tired of all the Linda Ronstadt comparisons as we are of reading them. Sure, there are unmistakable, superficial similarities between the two tall country-pop singers, from their Eaglesque arrangements to their good taste in songwriters, from their big, luscious voices to their smashing good looks. On Yearwood's latest, best album, *Thinkin' About You*, however, she begins to illustrate the differ-



ences between herself and her childhood idol.

Consider, for example, last fall's hit single, "XXX's and OOO's (An American Girl)." Powered by a bouncy, sing-along chorus, the song chronicles the great changes in American womanhood over the past two generations, going from "heels and pearls" to "fix the sink, mow the yard." Ronstadt would have belted it out as a painless, triumphant anthem of progress, but Yearwood finds something more complicated, more troubling, more countrified in the song. When Yearwood sings, "She's trying to make it in her daddy's world," she makes the word "trying" ache a little, to let us know that women's progress hasn't come without a price and is far from complete even now.

This ability to express two emotions at once—in this case, joy at her freedom and pain over its cost—is the mark of a great country singer. It's a talent Ronstadt has never quite mastered, but Yearwood has finally gotten the hang of it on her fifth album. Perhaps it's time to stop comparing her to Ronstadt and to start comparing her to the master of mixed emotions, and the best possible role model for Yearwood: Reba McEntire.

The album's title track, for instance, is a simple ditty about the way a new lover can

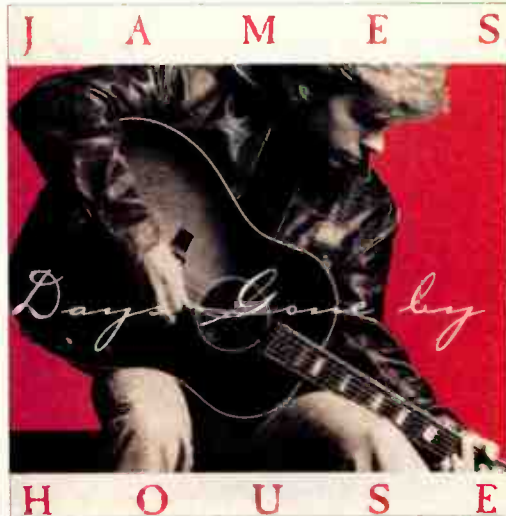
take over your whole mind, but Yearwood introduces a McEntire-ish reluctance into her vocal, as if she wished she could stop thinking about him so much. That little trick gives the tune an internal drama which elevates it from a throw-away infatuation song to something more personal, more memorable. In similar fashion, she makes us understand how an old memory can be both welcomed and feared during the lovely, string-cushioned "On a Bus to St. Cloud."

On Mike Henderson's marvelously twitchy country-rocker, "The Restless Kind," Yearwood is able to make the itchy urge to roam seem like both a blessing and a curse. And she gives the ballad "You Can Sleep While I Drive" a double meaning by projecting not just the desperate need to be with her lover but also the strength to take care of things while he sleeps. Many singers can come on weak, and many more can come on strong, but very few can do both at once.

Yearwood is creating a more complex portrait of the woman in a country song—needy as well as self-sufficient, eager for new freedoms and wearied by them, anxious for love and anxious about it. It's no coincidence that so many of the songs on *Thinkin' About You* were written by women—Matraca Berg, Melissa

Etheridge, Gretchen Peters, Irene Kelly and Alice Randall. As good as the songs are, though, they needed a singer who could evoke that complexity in her performance, and Yearwood is one of the few who could pull it off.

—GEOFFREY HINES



James House *Days Gone By* Epic 57501

Between the traditional honky tonk of Randy Travis and the raucous country-rock of Travis Tritt lies a middle ground of country-pop. At its worst, this is sentimental, easy-listening music—it's as if Barry Manilow had added a steel guitar. At its best, though, as in the hands of a Rodney Crowell or a Kathy Mattea, country-pop marries the storytelling craft of Nashville with the harmonic sophistication of The Beatles.

Crowell is the obvious model on the new album, *Days Gone By*, James House's third attempt to make the transition from songwriter to artist. He doesn't quite rise to Crowell's high standards, but House comes close enough to make this a thoroughly enjoyable example of commercial country-pop. Typical is "This Is Me Missing You," obviously the manufactured product of a

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Music Row co-writing session, but with a pop hook so juicy and an Eaglesque production so energetic that the tune's pleasures are undeniable.

House is best known for co-authoring Dwight Yoakam's "Ain't That Lonely Yet," Diamond Rio's "In a Week or Two" and Ricky Van Shelton's "Wherever She Is." And his songwriting craft is the most impressive thing about *Days Gone By*. He knows how to take an old trick and make it new again. For example, his two "lonesome" songs—"Silence Makes a Lonesome Sound" and last summer's single, "A Real Good Way to Wind Up Lonesome"—avoid the obvious ballad approach and boast a surprising two-step bounce. As a result, the tunes trade in the expected self-pity for a refreshing, defiant rebuke to heartbreak.

Like Crowell, House is a great admirer of Roy Orbison. The best song on House's new album, "Little by Little," was obviously inspired by the operatic crooner in shades, and it builds unstoppably from tentative efforts to forget an old lover to a big, climactic confession of undying love. Orbison's influence can also be heard in the brooding obsessions of such House compositions as "Silence Makes a Lonesome Sound" and "Until You Set Me Free." Producer Don Cook, who was never bashful about

building a big wall of sound with The Mavericks or Brooks & Dunn, gives these songs the Orbison-like grandeur they require.

No one would ever mistake House's voice for Orbison's, however. House does his songs justice with a solid tenor, but he has neither the powerful instrument nor the inimitable style which separate the special singers from the pack. *Days Gone By* is a useful showcase for a talented songwriter and a reliable performer, but songs like "Little by Little" and the title cut need someone like Raul Malo or Chris Isaak who can give these tunes the Orbison-like vocal they deserve.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

Amie Comeaux

Movin' Out

Polydor 314-523 710

It's surprising it took this long for Nashville, currently obsessed with the youth market, to begin signing artists barely out of their teens. You'd have thought they'd have done it a long time ago, since it long ago became a music business tradition. Back in South Philadelphia in the late 50's, music moguls searched the streets for young, photogenic guys they could turn into teen idols. One was Fabian

Forte, whose colorful name and looks landed him a recording contract, appearances on *American Bandstand*, sellout appearances and nine hit records in 1959-60 before he faded. Most of Nashville's new discoveries will also disappear, many having even shorter careers than Fabian.

A few with something to say will endure, and one strong contender is Louisianan Amie Comeaux. Polydor-Mercury exec Harold Shedd started working with her when she was ten, and I have to give him credit. Shedd has never been one of my favorite producers. Much of what he does barely qualifies as mediocre. His work with Comeaux, however, paid off. She's head and shoulders above many young singers today. Though her vocal style is still developing (overtone of Lorrie Morgan and Dolly are obvious), she knows how to use that voice.

Neither the full fold-out poster in the CD insert (have they worked out her merchandising deals yet?) nor the overly slick studio accompaniment detract from her potential. The title number, a song insightfully written by none other than K.T. Oslin, looks at the tribulations and hopes of any young adult's first break with Mom and Dad. She's forceful on both "Takin' It Back" and "One Step Ahead of You," both jabs at arrogant

lovers. The more relaxed "Blue" allows her to stretch out a bit while "Who's She to You" and "I Heard It From My Heart" move her into New Traditionalism with near-perfect finesse. "Oh No Not Love Again" and "Written in the Stars," despite cut and dried themes, sparkle with life and youth.

An even bigger surprise is her mastery of the 50's country-pop ballad "You Belong To Me," by Pee Wee King, Redd Stewart (of "Tennessee Waltz" fame) and Chilton Price. In 1952 the song sold two million records for pop songstress Jo Stafford, but never became a hit for any female country singer. If it ever does, Comeaux's version should be the one. She may lack Stafford's darker, experienced voice, but makes up for it in enthusiasm and sincerity.

Shedd gave Comeaux a major head start and proved his original instincts about her talent were correct. I hope this is just the beginning, and that the music continues to triumph over the marketing as it does here.

—RICH KIENZLE

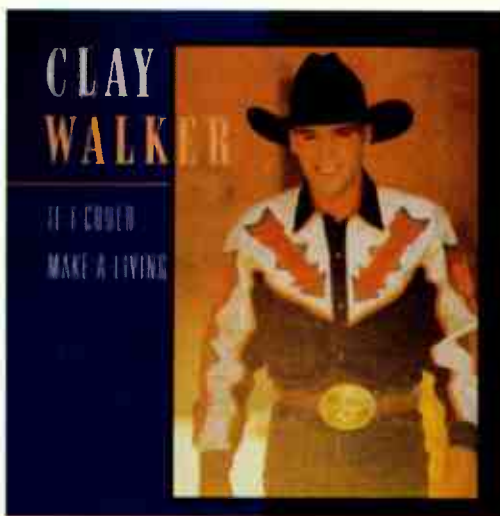
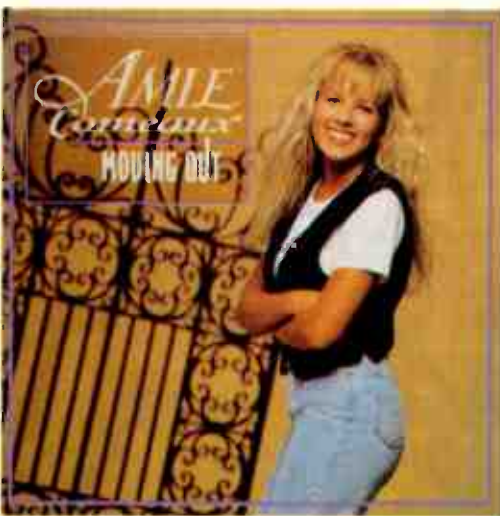
Clay Walker

If I Could Make a Living

Giant 9 24582

After reading my colleague George Fletcher's charming feature on Clay Walker (*CMM*, January/February, 1995), I don't for a minute doubt Walker's earnestness. He's a cute, if somewhat clueless, kid—the kind of sincere, downhome fellow you'd probably enjoy having for a next door neighbor.

That's why I sort of wish I could work up a little more enthusiasm for the boy's music. But my lingering impression is that Walker is not so much his own man as he is one of those "Young Country" Nashville recording artists who probably make George Strait uneasy at times. Judging from *If I Could Make a Living*, Walker's sec-



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ond and latest album, he not only wants to sound like Strait and look like him (right down to the great big belt buckle and the baby face), he wants to be him.

Walker's real curse, besides being mercilessly packaged by the image makers as a second generation Strait, isn't that he's awful. (Now and then he's actually quite good.) It's that he's mostly just generic. Above all, he simply lacks the stylistic boldness and definition of fellow East Texans like Mark Chesnutt or Tracy Byrd. As a singer, he's far more an imitator than an innovator.

Producer James Stroud is often not much help on *If I Could Make a Living*. He seems to spend far too much time pandering to the current country market, pushing Walker into a mushy, over-produced, post-Eagles bal-ladry bag. As a result, on cuts like "This Woman and This Man" and "Down by the Riverside," Walker's boyish, undistinguished voice gives the songs an unintentional honky tonk teen angel kind of twist. (If Stroud really wants to cop a George Strait *shlick* with Walker, he needs to go back and listen to those early Strait albums a little more closely.)

Now and then the squeaky-clean Walker does try to get down in the dust and moan and growl like a Tracy Lawrence or Randy Travis on a more countrified cut like "What Do You Want for Nothin'." Unfortunately he ends up sounding more like a little doggy than a big bad bear. His run at Texas swing on the cliché-ridden "Boogie Till the Cows Come Home" verges on being an unintentional parody—like "Bobby Sherman meets Bob Wills."

Still, there are some cuts on *If I Could Make a Living*—for instance, the fine title track (written by Keith Stegall, Roger Murrah and Alan Jackson) and the nostalgic "The Melrose Avenue Cinema Two" (written by Reese Wilson)—that convince me that Walker may actually survive all the relentless attempts by his label

and manager to "package" him, and may even one day emerge with a voice and style he can call his own.

So if I could say anything to those people who have—forgive the awful pun!—molded Walker into a clay-like George Strait mannequin, it would be, 'For God's sake, give this kid some room to breathe! Give him a chance to grow into his own musical skin! Let him grow a beard, or wear a pony tail or get an earring—anything so he doesn't look like he's 15 years old!'

For the time being, though, I'm afraid this cherubic-looking honky tonk neophyte is doomed to keep churning out the same damnably smooth, relentlessly predictable brand of "Young Country" that makes *If I Could Make a Living* such a forgettable outing.

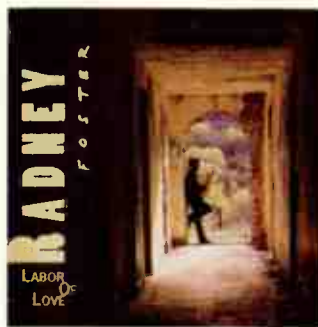
—BOB ALLEN

Radney Foster *Labor of Love* Arista 07822 18757

It's taken Radney Foster a couple of years to follow up on *Del Rio, Texas, 1959*, his fine 1992 debut album, named after the time and place he was born. His first album, which followed a three-album stint with Bill Lloyd in the duo, Foster & Lloyd, also resulted in the Number One single, "Nobody Wins." More recently Foster was back on the radio with his rendition of the Merle Haggard classic, "The Running Kind," which was the lead single from *Mama's Hungry Eyes*, a star-studded tribute album to Haggard.

Labor of Love, Foster's second album, is well worth the two-year wait. Listening to his moving original songs and youthful, impassioned singing I feel the same pangs of excitement I felt when I first heard a young Rodney Crowell or Steve Earle.

The title song is dedicated to the conviction that real love takes a lot of soul-searching and hard work; thus it's an apt



title for his new record. *Labor of Love*, much like *Del Rio, Texas, 1959*, is an intelligently wrought, inspired work, full of earnestness and bravado, with near-seamless arrangements and precious few weak spots.

Foster co-produced *Labor of Love* (along with Steve Fishell, who also offers instrumental assists throughout) and wrote or co-wrote all 12 cuts. Like *Del Rio, Texas, 1959*, this is very much a guitar-driven record, redolent with tasty licks, rides and riffs from the likes of Albert Lee, Lee Roy Parnell, Fishell, Mike McAdam, Bill Hullett and steel player Dan Dugmore (Nashville's newest all-star session steel player).

The instrumental tracks sizzle with a bold, raunchy live feel; yet they're often deftly layered and mixed, offering up subtle new surprises with each listen. Though there are lovely flourishes from Joan Besen's and Pete Wasner's pianos, Foster and Fishell have mainly sculpted *Labor of Love* on the unbeatable, old-fashioned architecture of lead and rhythm guitars, steel, bass and drums.

Everything I've said thus far could easily apply to *Del Rio, Texas, 1959*. The main difference on *Labor of Love*, though, is that Foster has used his two-year sabbatical to mature as a songwriter and take on more complex themes.

Songs like "Precious Pearl" (which features lovely backup vocals from Foster's frequent co-writer Kim Richey), "Walkin' Talkin' Woman" and the title cut explore the never-ending challenge of sorting through tangled emotions to sift love's realities from its

blinding, fool's gold illusions.

"Jesse's Soul" (co-written with Tim DuBois) is an unusually haunting song about the struggle between good and evil and how a man's long repressed blood lust for revenge shatters the Christian piety of his later years. "Making It Up As I Go Along" cuts through the misperceptions of fame and fans' illusions about the "heroes" they hear on the radio. (*People think you know what true love's about/All because you wrote some song*, Foster sings. *There's more to love than just writing it down/We're making it up as we go along*.) "Broke Down" (co-written with Gary Nicholson) is a quirky, light-hearted metaphorical ride down love's fast lane that leaves some poor cowboy stranded on the roadside with a flat tire and a burnt out radiator. Stylistically speaking, it's also a tribute to the lingering influence of Foster's fellow Texans, Guy Clark and Rodney Crowell.

Foster only falters a little when he pays overt homage to influences like Haggard and Buck Owens on a song like "Everybody Gets the Blues (But I Know How to Keep 'Em)," one of a pair of tunes co-written with George Ducas. He's got all the traditional low moaning honky tonk vocal mannerisms down pat; but as a singer he's just a lot more Buddy Holly than he is George Jones. (If you've never heard Foster, Waylon Jennings meets Marshall Crenshaw is the best way I know how to describe him.) Thus his attempts at a beer-soaked hard country drawl sound a little forced and callow.

Otherwise, nearly everything about *Labor of Love* feels right—right down to the intriguing liner sleeve photos of Foster standing on a cliff in Big Bend National Park and staring out across the vast plains of his native South Texas. This one should make it happen for him. With a *Labor of Love* like this, he's sure got it coming. —BOB ALLEN

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Record Reviews

Pete Anderson

Working Class

Little Dog Records 94001

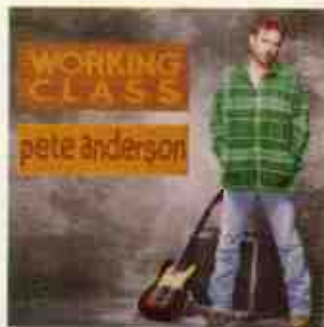
You know, I just liked the hell out of Pete Anderson's *Working Class*. The only way I could have liked it better would be if my mind was still reeling from some jaunt into the mysteries of substance abuse, and, hey, it's the 90's, and we don't do that no more.

Like most folks in country, the first time I saw Anderson was playing guitar with Dwight Yoakam. As it happens, it was at this ratty slam dance punk club in New York City, where Dwight was opening for Husker-Du, whose sound system was cranked up so loud that, honest to goodness, a filling fell out of my tooth. Watching Dwight and the boys blast away while bodies flew through the mosh pit and bounced off the walls, leaving bloody smears, reminded me that inspired lunacy was still loose in the world.

Well, Anderson's keen ear for production was part of the reason that inspired lunacy worked. That same ear has been turned to such other artists as The Meat Puppets and Michelle Shocked, whom Nick Tosches liked but I never much got.

So all of a sudden, here's this purely psychotic record, featuring a boozy barroom rendition of Jimi Hendrix's "Fire" and a guitar instrumental of "Our Day Will Come."

Pete Anderson sings like a man deeply in the grip of some psychotic episode, sort of like the characters in Tom McGuane's movie, *92 in the Shade*, where Warren Oates delivered a soliloquy about dirigibles. Sort of like half the population of the French Quarter at about 3 A.M., just before last call. He always seems to be on the verge of slipping off the edge of the song. He can sound like Brother Lyle, "What About Me," with its perfect refrain of "Enough



about you...what about me?", or Brother Bob Dylan after a bender, a la "She Belongs to Me."

Ya got yer blues, ya got yer gumbo, ya got yer country, plus you've got what has to be the national anthem for the Altered States of America—"Where the Crows Go." I listened to this song six times in a row, and for the life of me I don't understand why I don't hear this on the radio all the damn time. Do yourself a favor—buy this record.

—MICHAEL BANE

Tracy Lawrence

I See It Now

Atlantic 82656

Since he made his debut in 1991 with the Number One single, "Sticks and Stones," Tracy Lawrence has more than held his own. While much of the recent public attention has gone to smoother, more media-savvy Pierre Cardin Cowboys like his labelmate John Michael Montgomery, Lawrence has hung in there with a solid string of Number One hits.

Lawrence's debut album, *Sticks and Stones*, established him as a homespun neo-honky tonker in the rustic redneck Mark Chesnutt/John Anderson mode. (Which is to say, Lawrence seemed (then and now) more the kind of guy you'd find out stacking beer can pyramids and racing a mud bike with oversized tires than posing for sleek Western wear advertisements.) On *Alibis*, his second album, Lawrence drifted into some-



what softer balladry and was, predictably, greeted with platinum-plus sales.

On *I See It Now*, his latest, Lawrence has seized the reins of this musical drift by becoming his own producer (though James Stroud and Flip Anderson also had a hand in producing some of these ten new cuts). As a result, he reclaims the rowdy honky-tonk infused spirit of *Sticks and Stones*—albeit with a somewhat more seasoned and mature outlook which comes with several years of touring, weathering some major career crises and his recent marriage.

For the most part, the arrangements, like the lyrics of these ten songs he's chosen, are austere and feature a lot of honky tonk swagger mixed in with some good old bottom end rock 'n' roll intensity.

The title cut and opener of the new album is a lovely mid-tempo ballad written by Larry Boone and Paul Nelson (who has near a half dozen co-writer's credits scattered throughout). The song is awfully reminiscent of "You Look So Good in Love," George Strait's hit of yesteryear. Which, in some ways, is unfortunate: Though Lawrence deftly sews up the song's emotions of wistful regret and heartache, he simply ain't no George Strait.

"Guilt Trip," the second cut (written by Tim Mensy and Tony Haselden), is a cute little ditty that's good for a couple of listens and not much more. The same can be said for Bobby Braddock's "Texas Tornado." But on "If the World Had a Front Porch," Lawrence finally hits his

stride. He co-wrote the song (with Paul Nelson and Kenny Beard), and with its no-nonsense country arrangement, homespun yet eloquent imagery and timely message, it puts Lawrence on the solid stylistic ground he treads for much of the rest of *I See It Now*.

"As Any Fool Can See" (Nelson and Beard), with its doleful fiddles, heavy bottom end and ragged-edge bitterness, is another vivid example of Lawrence doing what he does best. So is "The Cards" (Nelson and Kirk Roth). This straight-ahead country weeper is full of fine fiddle and steel and twangy down-home double entendres. "I'd Give Anything to Be Your Everything Again" is a similar bull's eye.

To his credit, Lawrence also goes out on a few creative limbs on *I See It Now*. "Hillbilly With a Heartache" is a vibrant duet with John Anderson in which Lawrence lets Anderson steal the show. (It really ends up being about 95% John Anderson with some wallpaper harmonies thrown in by Lawrence for good measure.) "God Made Woman on a Good Day" (Brett Jones and Troy Seals) kicks off with a full-blown gospel intro, then explodes into a growling country-rock celebration of macho sensuality. This cleverly constructed song makes the worthwhile point that, when it comes to love, reverence and lust work best when they're not mutually exclusive.

It's no slam on Tracy Lawrence to point out the obvious: He'll never be a world class singer like George Strait or Randy Travis. His voice lacks either Strait's color or Travis' haunting resonance.

Yet, on *I See It Now*, he hits most of the right notes and hits them with spirit, conviction and confidence. Thus he seems bound to continue the platinum streak he's lately been on.

—BOB ALLEN

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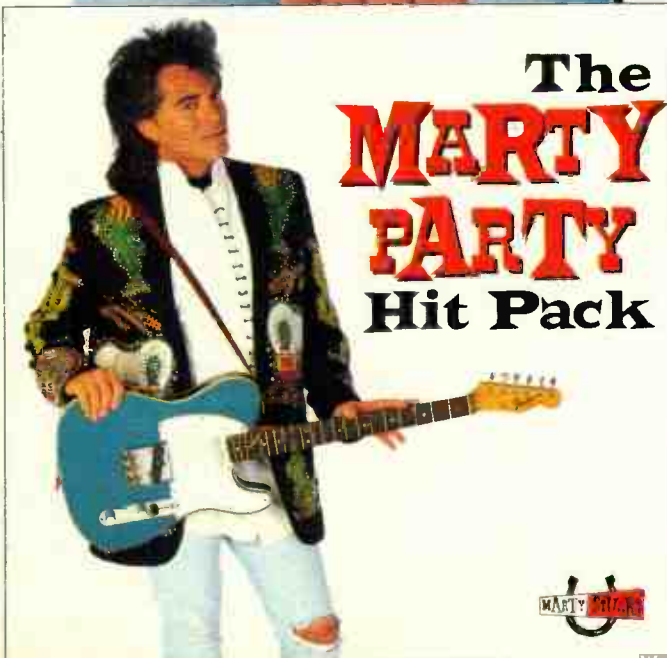
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BROOKS & DUNN

Explosion





From stage show to chart success, everything Brooks & Dunn do is huge these days. And, they're having a good time doing it. Not bad for two guys who were looking for their niche four years ago.

For a few days it's almost as if Brooks & Dunn, the duo that launched a thousand and one boot-scoot line dances, owns Las Vegas. Their name is up in lights on the marquee at Caesar's Palace. Out by the airport a big billboard with their pictures advertising their chic line of Western Wear seems to overlook the entire smog-drenched desert city. Dozens—actually hundreds—of Ronnie Dunn's and Kix Brooks' family members and friends have flown or driven in from their respective home states of Louisiana and Oklahoma to pay homage to these hometown boys made good. Their three shows at Caesar's twelve-hundred seat theater are all sold out.

From the outside it looks like one big carefree vacation blow-out which Brooks and Dunn are being paid handsomely to host: a nonstop party in their own honor and a dream come true for America's most popular honky tonk party band.

But backstage, just before their Friday night show, it's a slightly different story. As their 40-odd road crew members scurry to and fro, B&D prepare for their nightly, pre-show assembly line meet-and-greet ritual with dozens of fan club members and radio contest winners. (Time is short, so there will be no autographs tonight, just two pictures per customer.) And the two stars admit they have the shakes, the withdrawals.

"My voice is shot, the room here at Caesar's is just so unforgiving. The problem is, it doesn't sound like your bathroom shower," a slightly scattered looking Ronnie Dunn moans as he picks disinterestedly at a tuna sandwich and changes shirts. "It's kinda like havin' an acoustical withdrawal, coming off 150 or so dates in coliseums," Ronnie adds with a tired laugh. "We've gotten used to those big round concrete buildings where everything just reverberates for ten minutes. Then, when you pull into a room like the hall here at Caesar's that's small and just as acoustically tight as you can get, it's a weird feeling."

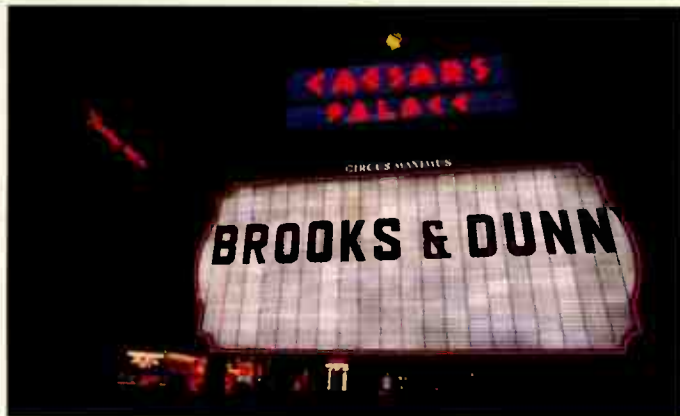
"Two nights before we came out here, we played for about 15,000 people in Kentucky, at Rupp Arena," adds the mustached, always focused-looking Kix Brooks. "When the lights went down and our show cranked up, they'd go nuts. But out here the first night, it was a much smaller crowd, an older crowd. And when we hit the ramp, you could hear a pin drop. I just said to Ronnie, 'Well we ain't in Kentucky anymore!' It's really taken me a while to calm down and settle into it, because you really feed off that tremendous energy you get in a coliseum. It's the ultimate rush, it's what you live for."

B&D will tell you that it's simply amazing just what all a couple of country boys can grow accustomed to in a short

BY BOB ALLEN



As most of their shows do, Brooks & Dunn's Caesar's Palace shows sold out. High energy, musicianship and visual effects all contribute to their success as a rip-roaring stage band. The two lead singers aren't bad looking either.



year and a half. And it's only been about that long since they made the giant step up from opening shows for Reba McEntire to headlining in their own traveling juggernaut of a road show, which ended up the second-highest grossing country tour in the nation last year—second only to Queen Reba herself.

Ronnie Dunn also points out that it's been less than four years (June 1991, to be exact) since B&D's first single, "Brand New Man," hit the airwaves at a time when these two newly allied former solo artists were still tuning up their duo act, playing little fairs in hole-in-the-wall towns in Virginia and wondering in solitary moments: Do I really wanta do this duo thing? Is this really gonna work?

"It's far exceeded both our expectations," says Kix, who flourished as a Nashville songwriter, had minor chart action as a solo artist back in the late 1980's and barely even knew Ronnie Dunn when Arista/Nashville label head Tim DuBois suggested—to both Brooks' and Dunn's surprise—that he and Ronnie team up as a duo.

"It's just been a whirlwind," Ronnie adds. "It just exploded. I don't say this just to say it, but it really hasn't all settled in yet."

The "explosion" Ronnie speaks of

started way back with "Brand New Man." B&D's debut single went Number One, as have "Boot Scootin' Boogie," "Neon Moon" and four more recent B&D singles. *Brand New Man*, their 1991 debut album, sold four million copies. *Hard Workin' Man*, their 1993 follow-up, sold three million. And *Waitin' On Sundown*, their third and latest, released in late 1994, quickly passed the platinum sales mark and surged to Number One in the *Billboard* country album charts. Nearly two months later it was still perched at Number Four, right alongside Mary Chapin's and Alan Jackson's latest and Garth's greatest.

1994 also brought these two-time Country Music Association "Duo of the Year" winners a Grammy award (for "Hard Workin' Man") as well as a TNN/*Music City News* Viewer's Choice award as duo of the year. Thus, in a matter of a few years

Brooks & Dunn has gone from being just another "baby act" to, in the words of Dunn, "this big green woolly monster."

A close-up of the "monster" and how it grew so big so fast is offered by B&D's sold-out shows at Caesar's. The term "high energy" simply doesn't do it justice. Granted, the musicianship is impeccable, if seldom startling. (The fact that gifted longtime guitarist Tommy Lee James, who recently left to pursue his own record deal, was replaced by Tony King, formerly of both Vince Gill's band and the vocal trio, Matthews, Wright & King, gives you an idea of the level of expertise at work here.) Just as important, B&D's show is replete with lasers, smoke machines and many of the visual and auditory enhancements long associated with hard rock bands. Both the music and the overall production are so amiably rowdy, riotously extroverted and eminently danceable that B&D practically defies you to sit still.

All this is not hurt by the fact that both Dunn and Brooks are genuinely handsome, enviably slender and thoroughly likable guys whose charm and physical appeal on stage is undeniable. The once wall-flowerish Ronnie Dunn, always a fine honky tonk singer, has, in the last couple of years, evolved into a poised and accomplished front man who deftly works the audience with his lighthearted charisma, jokiness and sheepish antics. Brooks, though somewhat less the singer, is simply a born showman. Never at rest, he kicks, struts, dances a Cajun two-step, pounds his guitar like a sledge hammer, leaps across the stage and bounces up and down the ramps with the other dancing and leaping bandmembers in helter-skelter patterns that vaguely resemble a flying T-formation. Towards the show's finale, on "Boot Scootin' Boogie," he even pulls a girl up out of the audience to dance with him. Then, in a cascade of multi-colored balloons, he douses the

stage with a smoke-belching leaf blower disguised to look like a flame-throwing guitar. Like Dunn, Brooks puts so much nonstop energy into the two-hour show that it's easy to forget that he and his partner are both 40-year-old family men whose days are not devoted to hard partying, but to the never-ending corporate demands of feeding the woolly green monster that B&D has become.

But, as Kix explains, "When you hit that stage every night, everything else on your



mind goes out the window. When I'm home, I train pretty hard. I've got weights and stair steps, and when I'm on the road, I do a lot of walking every day. But the energy out there doesn't come from being in shape. It comes from the audience, it comes from the show.

"If Ronnie and I were a little more organized and knew what we were up to out there, we'd probably have it a little more choreographed," he adds with a grin. "But for me, half the excitement is not knowing what's gonna happen. It makes it fun for us, and I think the crowd kind of senses it too."

To Ronnie it still doesn't come quite so naturally. He's quick to point out that, in his mind, it was just yesterday that they were opening for Reba and everyone was trying to coax him to move around a little bit up there when he sang. He recalls that when he did finally start moving, it was to keep the people in the front row from seeing how badly he was shaking. These days he seldom stops moving.

When complimented on his remarkable metamorphosis from shrinking violet to front man, he rolls his eyes and waves away the praise. "I'm still not comfortable with it," he insists. "It still feels like I'm really out of character when I'm out there, because I'm constantly just freaked out. People tell me, 'Well, you look so calm and confident out there.'... Well, it's an absolute facade. Every night when we have a show to do, I'm really off center all day thinking about it. It affects me pretty strong. I like to be able to get off by myself and kind of withdraw. It's like the light's on, but there's nobody home." "Ronnie's real shy," Kix observes of his partner. "A lot of people who don't know him well or who see him on stage have trouble believing that. But he really is. It even took me a while to realize it. Like a lot of shy people, if you don't know him, you might take it as arrogance, but it's not. Like we were gonna go meet Merle Haggard"—(B&D participated in the recent Merle Haggard tribute album, *Mama's Hungry Eyes*)—"and Ronnie wouldn't go. Even after all the success he's had, he was just too intimidated. That's a genuine side of him that I've really come to appreciate."

That fact that Ronnie and Kix are such divergent personalities is, according to Ronnie, something that's really helped them weather the storm's eye of sudden superstardom. "Realistically I think it



helps that we're so different, personality wise. Surprisingly, it seems to make it a lot easier when we're dealing with these trying decisions that come along every day that are either gonna pull you closer together or split you up. Right down to things like which song should go on the album or which T-shirt design do we wanta use.

"I think Kix' lack of inhibition is probably the biggest distinguishing factor between us," he adds. "The guy's fearless!

He'll do things that I wouldn't even think about doing—even under the best circumstances! He's just that way. It's just that drive of his, that perseverance, that's gotten him here. Ya know, he's been in Nashville for 12 or 13 years, and that's a long time to withstand rejection and take the hits. Unlike me—I hid in Oklahoma. I wouldn't come up to Nashville for a long time. It scared me to death!" "Hell," Kix kids him, "if you don't play guitar and sing any better than I do, you better have a lot of perseverance!"

"It's just the way Kix was raised," Ronnie points out. "His mother died

when he was four, and his dad was a big pipeline contractor. He was raised around that environment. He carries it with him today, talks about it all the time. Not bragging, but talking about how really ruthless it was. I know, because my dad was in the pipeline business too. They've got a certain macho approach to things. If you hit your hand with a hammer, you just say, 'Well, yeah, it hurts, but come on, we got pipe to load.' And that attitude helps a lot of times, because I'll get bummed out real quick. My feelings are way out front, and I'll read a review or somethin' I don't like and I'll just go off. I call it my 'Okie factor.' I'm ready to just quit the whole business, throw in the towel and go home," he chuckles. "But Kix just goes, 'Hey, man, that's just part of it. Just roll with it. Go!'"

The critics, it seems, have never been as quick to warm to the Brooks & Dunn phenomenon as the audiences have been; at times they've been downright dismissive of the glittery stage show and up-tempo party songs ("Boot Scootin' Boogie," "Rock My World, Little Country Girl").

Some writers (Yours truly occasionally included) have even wondered if the duo was more a trend than a trendsetter. A few (Yours truly pleads guilty once again) have even hinted that their fashion-conscious corporate-country image had its roots planted more in the long gone early 80's Urban Cowboy blip than in the inspired artistry of the mid-80's "New Traditionalist" movement.



Though music is still the primary focus of their shows, Kix says the fans expect more.

And, in a way, B&D all but acknowledge this. About midway through their show at Caesar's, a lighthearted Dunn tells the wildly cheering Friday night crowd, "This is a no-brainer, y'all. Yer dealin' with Brooks & Dunn tonight! It's all about havin' a good time!"

When asked about this later, Ronnie seems mildly embarrassed. "Every night I say that I walk away kind of bristled," he concedes. "That's not where I want to be. I want to be out there for a good time, sure. But I want a lot more depth to go down than that. You can do that through the lyric content of your songs, through interviews, through the way you come off to the public. But I don't want us to be just the proverbial shit-howdy show out there on the road.

Perhaps it's the differences in their personalities that keep Brooks & Dunn on top. Kix Brooks is outgoing and uninhibited, while Ronnie Dunn is the more conservative. It's a pairing that works.



SHERY BAYN BARNETT

"As an artist and a songwriter I've always gravitated toward songs like our single, "I'll Never Forgive My Heart"—a heartfelt straight country ballad which Ronnie co-wrote with his wife Janine and Dean Dillon, and on which he also sings lead. "Those are the songs I gravitate towards," he continues, "the ones with a little deeper message. But they're unfortunately a little harder to sell in today's climate of country music. That's a really tricky thing that's going on right now. We're currently—have been for the last couple years at least—in a real pop atmosphere in country. And I'm not really crazy about it. That's just my Okie country side. I'd like to go deep sometimes, in terms of lyric content. But you can literally be stopped by the market."

Waitin' On Sundown, B&D's third and most recent album, on which B&D wrote or co-wrote nearly all ten cuts, is, like most recent Nashville-produced hit albums, a clear-cut compromise with the market pressures of which Ronnie speaks. But it is also a modest step towards his seemingly earnest desire to "go deep." Sure, there are the requisite good-time two-steppers and line dance fodder, like "Little Miss Honky Tonk" and "My Kind of Crazy." Yet there's also some real substance. Ronnie does some sure-footed, old-fashioned honky tonkin' on "I'll Never Forgive My Heart" and "Whiskey Under the Bridge." "If

That's the Way You Want It" is a sweet slice of Oklahoma swing. On "Silver and Gold" and "You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone" Kix comes off like a delightfully raspy and countrified Jimmy Buffett.

CMM contributor Geoffrey Himes, in a recent review of *Waitin' On Sundown* in this magazine, pretty much summed up the critical acceptance that appears to be begrudgingly coming to B&D: "Brooks & Dunn cover all the bases: country-pop heartbreakers, country-rock dance numbers and traditional-country-roots. Many artists are better than Brooks & Dunn in one of these categories, but few can match the duo's skill at all three."

All that aside, Brooks & Dunn, in another market-savvy move, have just taken

all the glitz, glitter, lasers, smoke and mirrors of their live show to a mind-boggling new level. Ronnie's "big green woolly monster" has just gotten much bigger and much woollier.

Hitting the coliseum circuit in 1995, they've upped the ante, and hopefully the excitement level, with an immense new techno-cutting-edge stage set designed by the same team that did ZZ Top's last hi-tech monstrosity. The riddle goes like this: What's big as a mountain, costs in the substantial six figures, causes a lot of anxiety and takes six tractor trailers to haul? The answer: B&D's new "Steel Canyon," which was eight months and many hundreds of thousands of dollars in the planning, design and construction.

Before hitting the road, B&D and their 40-some man crew spent several weeks rehearsing on the mammoth new stage. Before taking it in front of a live audience, they rented a coliseum in Indiana for a week's worth of dry runs of setting it up and taking it down once a night and figuring out how all the intricate new "bells and whistles" work. "It's huge! It looks like a great big steel mountain!" Ronnie grins like a kid with a new toy. "I walked through it for the first time and went, 'Holy Cow!' There's like this one big giant steer head that's 12 feet from tip to tip of the horns. It goes up in the air on pneumatic tubes and has laser eyes. Its fore-

head opens up, and these lasers shoot out everywhere. It's pretty wild, pretty silly," he laughs. "But it's actually fun."

"We're still trying to keep our music the primary focus," Kix adds. "But our fans show up expecting a little more. There's been enough details getting the thing together to rattle your brain. The lights, the sound, the screen, just a million things. And the cost! But what the hell," he laughs. "The stock market's down right now, and I'd rather invest in something I know a little bit about. But once we got it up and rolling, it was like, 'Forget all the money, forget all the anxiety.' There's just the sheer fun of more or less saying to the people out there every night, 'Hey, y'all, get a load of this!'"

Like any artists riding a relentless super-hot streak, Brooks and Dunn can, and will, grouse now and then about the nonstop pressures and growing pains that come with a speed-of-light success story like theirs: the thousand and one nagging decisions, the never-ending barrage of phone calls and faxes and the gnawing doubt and insecurity of knowing, in Ronnie's words, that, "People, for various reasons, because the songs aren't good enough, or something that you say, will get tired of you. If you're not out there selling something that people feel they have to have almost as a necessity, they'll walk off on you in a second."

They also both agonize from time to time about being away from their kids (Ronnie has three, Kix two), just as any devoted 40-year-old fathers would, whether they're traveling computer salesmen or country stars.

"Especially for me that's just a real hard one," says Kix. "I love the age my children are at right now: five and seven. I just signed 'em up for soccer, and I looked at my schedule, and I'm going to be home for one game. I just get real emotional about that stuff. All their growin' up while I'm away just tears me up. I hate to miss any of it, and I work real hard to get home to see 'em whenever I can. I fly home sometimes just to have a half a day with them. Sometimes if we're out West and we have two days off, out in Dakota or somewhere, where we could just go over to Montana or someplace and have a day for fishing, I'll fly home instead."

Then again, sometimes, when no one is listening, Brooks and Dunn will giggle amongst themselves like a couple of schoolboys sharing a little inside joke:

"Don't tell anybody, but this is fun," Ronnie chuckles. "This is the job we've both dreamed about having our whole lives. Sometimes we'll just break down and say to each other, 'You know what, you couldn't believe the amount of fun I'm havin'!' We don't even want the public to know—they'd hate us, man! And to get paid for it, too!" He shakes his head and grins sheepishly:

"Unbelievable." ■

Newsletter

REVIEWS & FEATURES

Fan Fair Details

As winter recedes and springtime approaches, the thoughts of many are on warm weather, vacations and outdoor activities. And for thousands of country fans, this means Fan Fair. Yep, if you're planning to attend Fan Fair this year, now is the time to get your trip in order. The 24th Annual International Country Music Fan Fair will take place June 5th through June 11th at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds. Tickets this year are \$85, which includes admission to the fairgrounds for shows and booth displays, and passes for some of the other sights Nashville has to offer. Other events taking place during the week that are not part of the Fan Fair package are the Superstar Spectacular concerts at the Opry House, the International Fan Club Organization show, the TNN/Music City News Awards Show, regular Grand Ole Opry shows and TNN show tapings.

For details on Fan Fair tickets, call 615-889-9490 or write Fan

Fair, 2804 Opryland Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37214. The office can also provide information on Grand Ole Opry tickets, and give you phone numbers and addresses for some of the other events. For information on hotels in the area, phone the Nashville Chamber of Commerce at 615-259-4700, or write them at 161 4th Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37219. There are also many tour operators who put together complete packages for Fan Fair, perhaps some even leaving from your local area. Shop around for these, or check in with your local radio station.

For the past several years, Fan Fair has sold out well in advance, so if you do plan to go, don't delay. And if you do take a country music related vacation, whether it's Fan Fair or some other destination, tell us about it. Fellow CMSA members might enjoy seeing your pictures and hearing your tales. Happy spring and happy travelling!

Singing Drywall Man Spots 'Em

Bill Johnson, a member in Greenville, Texas, who performs as Big Bill Johnson The Singing Drywall Man, recently discovered a talented child performer.

I want to tell you about a great talent I discovered at the Celeste Opry in Celeste, Texas. His name is Joe Ben Gilliam, and he is only six years old. His mom and dad, Missy and Tim Gilliam, run the Celeste Opry, and they tell me that Joe Ben has been performing since he was two years old.

Joe Ben recently performed my song, "Move Over Elvis, Billy Ray's in Town," on the Celeste Opry, and the audience loved him. Naturally he did an encore. I'm enclosing a picture of me and Joe Ben Gilliam performing on the Celeste Opry.

I'd also like to let fans know that I am a regular on the Dave Owens and Kathryn Dettman show on radio station KTEM, Temple, Texas. Every Friday morning at 10:15, I perform one of my original songs. Fun fun fun! thanks.

Big Bill Johnson
Greenville, Texas



Little Joe Ben Gilliom and Big Bill Johnson.

local country music stations is the "hot new country," we seldom listen to them anymore. We prefer to listen to our old albums and tapes from real country artists such as Waylon, Willie, George Jones, Emmylou Harris and Merle Haggard, who made country music great but now seem to be all but forgotten.

We are disgusted with most of the current crop of so-called country artists who evidently believe that to be successful they must cater to the rock crowd. Hats off to artists like Randy Travis, Alan Jackson and George Strait who still keep traditional country music alive.

And while we're on the subject of what's wrong with country music today, have you been to any concerts lately where the sound system is cranked up so loud it all but blows your ears off? At a recent John Anderson concert, the sound was so loud and unbalanced that the band almost drowned John out. Whoever made the decision that everyone enjoys being deafened at concerts sure as heck never talked to us or most of the fans we've talked to.

Lon and Katie Leapley
Crestline, Ohio

Classic Steel Guitar

Lewis Shiverdecker, a member in Dayton, Ohio, has had a classic National steel guitar for over 40 years.

I'm enclosing a couple of pictures of my

A Response to Readers Create

Roy Johnson's poem in Readers Create in the September/October issue struck a chord with Crestline, Ohio, members Lon and Katie Leapley.

Roy Johnson's poem in the September/October issue expresses our sentiments exactly. Since about all we hear on our

In This Issue

- Reviews and Features
- Fanzines, Newsletters, Etc.
- Faron Young in Legends
- Collections and Readers Create

Editor: George Fletcher

Executive Editor: Helen Barnard

Art Director: Kathryn Gray



old National Steel Guitar. I've had this guitar since 1952. I purchased it in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, at a pawn shop. It's serial number is 752. I don't really know anything about it, and would love to find out its history. Unfortunately, I never did learn to play it. Perhaps someone out there knows about these guitars.

Lewis Shiverdecker
Dayton, Ohio

Another Thought On Pen Pals

Member Jeannie M. Moody of Cheltenham, Maryland, has read with interest the ongoing debate over the Pen Pals section. She adds her thoughts below.

I spent my Christmas vacation catching up on my reading, and ran across the controversy surrounding the Pen Pals column. I hope it's not too late to add my two cents.

I hope that you keep the age and marital status in the entries. I realized that it could be used for "Personals," but there are other uses for that information. For instance, I quickly found that I have better success writing to women who are close to my age and, like me, married. I have more in common with them. So, by all means, please include that information if it's offered by the writer.

Thanks for a great magazine. I look forward to its arrival and thoroughly enjoy reading it.

Jeannie Moody
Cheltenham, Maryland

Special Report: Publications and Organizations of Interest

The past few years have given rise to a number of small, special interest publications covering various segments of not-so-commercial country music. In this report, we'll take a look at some of them, along with more established publications of this type, and some "mainstream" publications that have included information that CMSA members may find useful. Remember, some of these groups and publications are small, fan-supported organizations, so include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you write for more information. Of course, our favorite publications are *Country Music Magazine* and *The Journal*, which cover the old, the new, the mainstream and the obscure, but you already know about those.

ROCKABILLY LIVES!

Keeping fans up to date on current rockabilly, neo-rockabilly, psychobilly and old-fashioned rock 'n' roll is *Original Cool*. This fanzine includes features, interviews, record reviews, music news and more. Recent articles have put the spotlight on Scotty Moore, Rev. Horton Heat, Big Sandy and His Fly-Rite Boys, Buddy Knox, Brian Setzer, Duane Eddy and even Bill Monroe ("The Father of Bluegrass, The Granddaddy of Rock 'n' Roll"), and others who "keep the 'billy in rockabilly." The bi-monthly publication, edited and published by Sue Smallwood, is a year old, and reaches about 1,000 rockabilly fans. For information, write *Original Cool*, 1533 Sea Breeze Trail, Suite 210, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23452. You can request a back issue by sending \$3.00 along with your note.



January 1993 Poll Results

Alan Jackson	<i>Who I Am</i>
Alan Jackson	<i>"Livin' on Love"</i>

No surprises here: Alan Jackson is your top pick for both albums and singles once again. Alan's fans put him in first place for the eleventh time in a row in albums, and the second time in a row for singles. Nipping at Alan's heels though, in very close voting, is George Strait. He's in second for both albums and singles, with *Lead On* and "The Big One," respectively. Rounding out albums are Vince Gill's *When Love Finds You* in third, David Ball's *Thinkin' Problem* in fourth, and Tim McGraw's *Not a Moment Too Soon* in fifth. The other singles stack up like this: Vince Gill's "When Love Finds You" is third, David Ball's "When the Thought of You Catches Up with Me" nabs fourth, and Lari White's "Now I Know" takes the fifth.

WESTERN SWING SOCIETY

The Western Swing Society, based in North Highlands, California, was founded in 1981 by a group of musicians and fans in order to promote Western swing music. They publish a newsletter, *The Western Swing Society Music News*, hold meetings and stage concerts. Dayna Wills, a niece of Bob Wills, is one of the driving forces behind the organization. Articles cover current Western swing artists, legends like Bob Wills, and even older, lesser-known artists. Most of the group's activities are centered in Northern California, but members are from all over. For information, write The Western Swing Society, P.O. Box 1775, North Highlands, California 95660.

NEWS ROUNDUP

The *Country Music Journal* from Nevada bills itself as "A newsletter dedicated to country music from the past with a little something from the present." And that about sums up the recent issue they sent in. Features included a look at Bob Wills Day in Turkey, Texas, news on the International Steel Guitar Convention and a record review section entitled *Frontier Records*, which focused mostly on classic country reissues, plus some new recordings by traditional artists. Also included are various news items and sources for finding country music products. The newsletter is put together by Jesse A. Morris. For details on this publication, write *Country Music Journal* from Nevada, 1319 South Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada 89104.



CHAPIN'S FANZINE

Mary Chapin Carpenter does not have a regular fan club, so two ardent fans stepped in to fill the void and provide information and fan interaction on their favorite artist. Sally Lindsay and Bobbie Combs publish *WMCC*, "A Fanzine in Appreciation of Mary Chapin Carpenter."

WMCC stands for the call letters of a fictional radio station that would play "All Mary, All the Time." The new publication includes news, tour schedules, concert and record reviews and various tidbits on Chapin and her career. For details, write WMCC, 813-B Cedar Street, Riverton, New Jersey 08077.



COUNTRY WITH THE TWANG
From Concord, California, comes *Twangin'*, a quarterly publication focusing on alternative country music. Of course, these days, many would consider "alternative country" to be "real country." Basically, it's geared toward roots music, folks like Kevin Welch, Iris DeMent, Dave Alvin, Tish Hinojosa, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Billy Joe Shaver, etc. You won't likely find Garth/Billy Ray/Reba in the pages of *Twangin'*, but you might see Dwight Yoakam mixed in among the indie label artists. Interviews, and plenty of record and concert reviews make up the bulk of this 'zine, which is edited by Cheryl Cline. Write her at: *Twangin'*, 2230 Huron Drive, Concord, California 94519. A back issue can be purchased for \$3.00.

TRADITIONAL NEWS

Country Musical Trails Less Traveled is a bi-monthly, 8-page newsletter about older stars and lesser-known traditional artists. A recent issue included a remembrance on Jimmie Rodgers and news on Kitty Wells and Johnny Wright, Kenny Roberts, and an Australian country singer, Buddy Bishop. It's published and edited by Jay Taylor. For information, write Jay Taylor Publishing, P.O. Box 143, Marshville, North Carolina 28103-0143.

RECORD COLLECTORS' SOURCEBOOK

Goldmine Magazine is neither a new publication, nor is it an underground fanzine. What it is is "The Collector's Record and Compact Disc Marketplace."



Montana at Museum

In the July/August issue, we told you about the "Country Music on the Air" exhibition at the Museum of Broadcast History in Chicago. Among the special guest artists appearing at the seminars held during the exhibition was the legendary cowgirl Patsy Montana. Patsy was there for the "Cowboys and Crooners" seminar. Left to right: Big John Howell of Chicago's US-99 radio, Joe Allison (a co-founder of the Country Music Association and Country Music Foundation), Patsy Montana, Ralph Emery and John Aylesworth (co-creator and producer of *Hee Haw*).



This bi-weekly publication includes hundreds of advertisements from leading mail order record dealers, focusing on all styles of music. You name it, and there's likely a dealer advertising in *Goldmine* who specializes in it. The publication also includes in-depth artist feature articles with extensive discographical information. Three recent issues may be of particular interest to CMSA members: The November 11, 1994, issue included a cover story on Jim Reeves, with rare pho-

tos and an extensive discography listing everything from 78's to EP's to LP's and 45's; the December 23, 1994, issue gave similar treatment to Waylon Jennings; January 6, 1995, featured Willie Nelson. You can write to *Goldmine* for subscription information or back issues at 700 E. State St., Iola, Wisconsin 54990-0001. Or you can call them at 714-445-2214. Back issues are \$5.00 each, postpaid. A limited number of those three issues were still available when we checked in with them.

Collecting the Magazine

Members help each other complete their magazine collections.

- Country magazines for sale (four-page list): *Music City News*, *Country Music*, *The Journal*, *Country Fever*, etc. (Specify interests.) Send two reply stamps. **Rick J. Cunningham (RJC)**, Box 661-C, Somersworth, NH 03878-0661
- Have several years of *Country Music Magazine*: 11 issues from 1977, complete '78, '79 and '80, 7 issues from 1974, 10 issues from 1975, all 1976 except February, five from 1981 (including Hank Jr.), all 1984 except May/June. In good condition. **Doris M. Shopu**, 5424 Sepulveda Blvd. #103, Van Nuys, CA 91411-3419.
- For sale: large collection of *Country Music Magazine*. Includes first three issues, Elvis tribute issues, non-dated Hank Jr. issue. May have the ones you need. Best offer takes all. Years include 1972-1980. I'm also looking for '79 issue of *CMM* with Barbara Mandrell on the cover and anything with Barbara after '80. **J. Moore**, 2016 Kinsman Rd., N. Bloomfield, OH 44450.
- For sale: lots of your favorite country magazines. Send SASE for list and prices. **April West**, 324 Crest Ln., Westminster, MD 21157-5808.

Information, Please

Please write each other directly about information or items listed. When corresponding, include SASE. We reserve the right to edit for space and style.

- Wanted: 1991 *People Magazine* with The Judds. And also interested in buying anything else on The Judds. **Amber McGahey**, 3426 Winings Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46221
- Help: I need Hank Williams Sr. 78 rpm's. MGM numbers 12332, 12394, 12438, 12484, 12535, 12611, 12635, 12727, 13489, 13630 to complete my collection. A true Hank fan. **Bob Vogel**, 80 Beaver Grade Rd., McKees Rocks, PA 15136.
- Wanted: Judds fan club newsletters 6/86, 1/87 and 9/87. "The Judds Story" radio show (copy or original), *Country Song Hits* (winter 1986), "Why Not Me" ceramic mug, United Way commercials, "Love Can Build a Bridge" promo commercial, Ralph Emery morning shows, Dolly Parton special 10/87, New Stars Show 1986, *Hee Haw* 1984, "Simple Gift" recording (copy or original), *Terry Wogan Show* (UK) 1987, tour jackets, *The Judds Family Album* 1986/87 tourbook, sun visor, headband, large format cable guide 11/30-12/06 1991 w/Judds on cover. "Why Not Me" and "Heartland" hats, "River of Time" and "Rockin' with the Rhythm" T-shirts and radio shows on vinyl or CD. Also have for sale: press kits of country artists. Collections on Randy Travis, Dolly Parton, Shelby Lynne and Clint Black. Autographed 8x10's on various artists. Send SASE w/three stamps for eight-page list to: **Dana Stein**, 345 East 80th St. #10B, New York, NY 10021
- Looking for gospel records/tapes with country artists, especially Vince Gill and Emmylou Harris. Will buy or send cassette for copy. **Beverly Vansen**, P.O. Box 71433, Los Angeles, CA 90071-0433.
- Collecting any oddities/rarities on Patsy Cline, Jim Reeves and Tammy Wynette, including picture sleeves, newsletters, articles, EP's and imports. Especially

- looking for picture sleeves of Patsy's "Walkin' After Midnight," Jim's "Senior Santa Claus" and Tammy's "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" and "Singing My Song." Also looking for *Music City News* dated 10/67, *Country Music* dated 10/76 and *Goldmine* dated 12/4/87. Also have lots of Patsy, Jim and Tammy records, CD's, 45's and tapes for sale. **Robert L. Chudicek**, 117 Northview Cir., Beaver, PA 15009.
- Wanted: VHS tape of Reba's 1993 fan club party in Nashville. Will provide tape for copy and pay reasonable price. **Susan L. Douglas**, 2807 Lafayette Dr. SW, Huntsville, AL 35801
- I'm collecting anything on country singers Billy Ray Cyrus, Lane Caudell, Andy Childs and Doug Stone. I also collect on other TV stars. I have tons of stars to swap. I have thousands of movie star/country buttons to offer. No inmates, please. **Julie Moss**, 1689-45 N. Main St., Columbia, TN 38401
- Wanted: souvenir pieces of the old Ryman Auditorium stage floor that were sold at the Ryman Gift Shop in blister packs. Will pay good price. **Barry Riderhour**, P.O. Box 490, Faith, NC 28041
- Wanted: VHS tapes of *VideoMorning* or *VideoPM* during Jan.-Feb. 1993. I collect videos and was out of the country. Would especially like Doug Stone, "Too Busy Being in Love," Vince Gill, "Don't Let Our Love Start Slipping Away," Suzy Bogguss, "Drive South," Mary Chapin Carpenter, "Passionate Kisses." Will pay good money. **Emmagean Evans**, 709 East 5th, Ottawa, KS 66067.
- Photos of your favorite country stars. Large selection, close-up, on/off-stage. Magazines, records, Please send SASE. Thank you. **Linda R. Weyandt**, RD 1, Greenfields Apt. C-3, Claysburg, PA 16625.
- Looking for a CD entitled *Signatures: A Songwriters Album*. It is the first in a series of three. I have volumes two and three. I have checked with every shop in the D.C. area, but the CD is out of print and can't be ordered. Will send a postage-paid mailer and pay fair price for the CD. It must be in good condition and have CD cover booklet. Please forward name and address and cost of CD so I can send the mailer and money ASAP. **A.M. Fletcher**, P.O. Box 3013, Merrifield, VA 22116.
- Interested in trading for sheet music and songbooks. Will trade record albums. **Mel Steinmetz**, 1148 Beach 9th St., Far Rockaway, NY 11691
- Desperately seeking: premiere issue of *Country Weekly* magazine. Will pay reasonable price. **Cheryl Walsh**, 28 Gardner St., Peabody, MA 01960-1843.
- For sale: Ernest Tubb new one-hour cassettes from albums 1956-1980. A-1 condition. \$5.00 each. **Leola Nelson**, P.O. Box 38, Jim Falls, WI 54748.
- For sale: country albums by Bob Wills, ET, Conway and Loretta. Patsy, Tammy, Floyd Tillman, Charley Pride, Ray Price, Elvis, Dolly, Porter, Buck Owens, Eddy Arnold, Kitty Wells, Warner Mack, Marty Robbins and many others. Two stamps for list. **Mrs. Mary Baker**, 306 Young St., Nocona, TX 76255.
- Hello Dolly fans! If you love her as much as I do, let me hear from you. I am interested in posters, photos, old LP's—anything Dolly. **Phil A. Lyon**, 3009 Watts Dr., Gardendale, AL 35071

- Various country music collector cards and other country music collectibles for sale. Send SASE for lists. **Kris Mayeda**, 5708 Fresno Ave., Richmond, CA 94804.
- Wanted: VHS copies (SP speed) of the 1991 and 1992 CMA Awards; ABC show *Mike and Maty*, which aired on 10/3/94 and featured Vince Gill, and also an interview show (from '91 or '92) called *A Conversation with Burt Reynolds* featuring Vince. Alan Jackson, Randy Travis and George Jones. Will pay reasonable price and/or supply tapes. **Sandy Lenihan**, 2824 Aberdeen Ave., Covington, KY 41015.
- Wanted: cassettes, LP's etc. by Connie Smith. Send information to **Sylvia Peltz**, 125 W. 6th St., Chulvata, FL 32766.
- Do you love to sing? Are you dreaming of a singing career? Then I want to hear from you. I'm a 24-year-old female who wants to get a group started, but haven't found anyone serious about joining. So, if you're interested, drop me a line. A tape of you singing would be helpful. **Joni Chadwick**, 538 Third St. N. #2, Carrington, ND 58421
- Wanted: Judd photos, tour merchandise, especially interested in T-shirts, tour jackets, TV and radio appearances, trading cards, early promotional and special or unique items, stories of meeting them. Very serious fan. **Darla Chasteen**, RR 1, Box 2250, Cameron, OK 74932-9787.
- Wanted: tape or record of Connie Smith's recording of "Clinging to a Saving Hand." Will pay reasonable price. Want VHS videotapes of: any shows featuring Martina McBride along with her videos for "The Time Has Come," "Cheap Whiskey," "My Baby Loves Me" and "Life #9"; Joy Lynn White's TV appearances and her "Little Tears" and "Wild Love" videos; *Music City Tonight* that featured Lorrie Morgan and family, along with her videos for "Something in Red," "Half Enough," "I Guess You Had to Be There" and "My Favorite Things." Also want VHS tapes of Marty Stuart's "Kiss Me, I'm Gone" and "That's What Love's About" videos and Travis Tritt's "Worth Every Mile" video. Looking for Tritt's first appearance on *Tonight Show* when Johnny Carson was still host. Will send blank tapes and pay postage. **Melissa Phipps**, Rt. 2 Box 332, Clintwood, VA 24228.
- I belong to the Dwight Yoakam Fan club. He sent out a newsletter about his import CD, *La Croix D'Amour*, about a year ago. It's available through his fan club in Germany. I bought one, and it's terrific. Send \$30.00 to: **Elvira Fleiger**, *Shileistr* 19, 8623, *Staffelstrin*, Germany.
- Wanted: VHS tapes of the 25th Annual CMA Awards Show from 10/91 and the 31th Annual Grammy Awards Show which aired 2/25/92. I am interested in Mary Chapin Carpenter's performances of "Down at the Twist and Shout," which can be seen in each of these shows. Will pay fair price and/or supply VCR tapes. **Joseph L. Howard**, 13734-1 Downing Ln., Ft. Myers, FL 33919.
- Wanted: anything and everything on Mary Chapin Carpenter; especially a fan club address, photos (autographed), newsletters, magazines, etc. **Pat Tenton**, 2325 E. Tillman Rd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46816.

- For sale: Mandrell collection. Shirts, caps, jackets, pins, albums, photos, negatives and other items of interest. For list send SASE with two .32 cent stamps. **Nancy J. Winton**, 5362 Hillsboro Viola Rd., Manchester, TN 37355.
- Wanted: 9/7/94 *Music City Tonight* featuring Bob Woodruff and Jeannie C. Riley with Tracy Lawrence as co-host. My husband and I were on the show, and Lorianne Crook took time to mention that we had come all the way from Denmark. We will pay the expenses (i.e., p&h, tape, etc.) and will be forever grateful to the person who might do us this favor. **Pia Kehlet**, 28 Hallandsparken, DK-2630 Taastrup, Denmark/Europe.
- 5000+ graded country albums catalog (four stamps). Lists available: Dolly, Reba, CD's (singles and full-length), memorabilia and radio shows (two reply stamps each). Specify interests. Want lists, too. SASE or FAX wants to (207) 698-5209. **Rick J. Cunningham (RJC)**, Box 661-C, Somersworth, NH 03878.
- Reba items for sale: hats, T-shirts, magazines, newsletters, articles, shows, awards, cassette tapes, etc. Send SASE for list of items. **Stacy Hermann**, 426 N. Nesmith, Sioux Falls, SD 57103-0804.
- For sale: close-up concert photos of Reba, Pam Tillis, Waylon, Judds, Lorrie, Martina McBride, Yoakam and many more. SASE for list and photocopies of your favorite artist. **Richard D. Moore**, 20 Maple St., Hopedale, MA 01747.
- Wanted: complete listing of all Emmylou Harris LP's and CD's along with information/address on purchasing the same. Also interested in purchasing any magazines with cover stories on Emmylou. **J.K. Palmer**, Box 191, Delphos, KS 67436.
- Wanted: fans of Vince Gill who are interested in corresponding with other Vince fans. Send stamp to Vince Gill Networking, c/o **Stacey Ransom**, P.O. Box 271, Sunbury, OH 43074.
- For sale: on/offstage photos of all your country favorites from Fan Fair and other events. Also LP's, clippings, posters, magazines and trading cards. SASE to **Galen Duncan**, 3517 Grier Nursery Rd., Street, MD 21154.
- Wanted: newsletters (copies are fine), VHS videos (award shows, interviews, etc.), merchandise, memorabilia, photos, articles, anything pertaining to Sawyer Brown. Will pay reasonable prices. Also, would like to correspond with other Sawyer fans. Write to me. **Connie L. Duran**, 5513 Creekmont, Houston, TX 77091.
- Billy Joe Shaver material wanted: magazine articles, audio and video tapes, especially 1980 *Austin City Limits*. Also video of other early *Austin City Limits* and Texas music from current Austin Music Network Cable Channel 15. **Barry Brooks**, Box 22, Winthrop, MA 02152.
- Wanted: VHS copy of *Oprah Winfrey Show* 1991 (or thereabouts) with K.T. Oslin and Kathy Mattea. Will pay reasonable price. **E.H. Champagne**, 2425 Nostrand Ave. #304, Brooklyn, NY 11210-4024.
- I have two old collector's books on "Wheeling West Virginia Jamboree," dated 1933-1953 and 1926-1951, in great condition. If anyone wants to buy, contact **Mary Ann Csahok**, 115 Zawe Alley, Duquesne, PA 15110.



Do You Recognize Me?

If you've ever been fat, you know how cruel people can be. They assume you're out of control. That you lack self discipline. That you have no will power.

Hello, my name is Ron Jordan. Perhaps you recognize me. I've had small parts in *Consenting Adults* and *Forrest Gump*. I've also appeared in numerous TV commercials and in print advertising.

A few years ago, however, I wasn't so fortunate. I had a serious weight problem. As a result, I couldn't get work. Romance was out of the question. I was a mess.

Food was an obsession. I'd order two pizzas. Eat one, then eat the toppings off the other. Every donut shop was a temptress. Cookies yelled at me from the kitchen.

I tried 17 different diets — one by one. And failed at all of them.

Finally, I made an appointment with my doctor for counseling. He listened carefully to my history of failure. Then, instead of prescribing another diet, he recommended an entirely different program.

This wasn't a diet. Not at all.

It was a unique *new* weight-loss program researched by a team of bariatric physicians — specialists who treat the severely obese. The program itself was developed by Robert M. Johnson, M.D. of Charleston, South Carolina.

The reason you haven't heard of it before is because it's not available to the public. Not in book stores. Not on TV. It's only been available to doctors.

I started the program on March 23rd. During the nine weeks that followed, my weight began to drop. Rapidly. And I wasn't regaining an ounce.

This time there was no rebound gain. No roller-coaster effect.

The program worked for me for one simple reason.

I WAS ALLOWED TO EAT.

I was encouraged to eat *six times every day*. That's correct. Six times. So I never felt deprived. Never hungry. I could snack in the afternoon. Snack before dinner. I could even snack at night while I was watching TV.

But, how can a person eat so much — and still *lose* weight?

The secret is *not* in the amount of food you eat. It's in the *prescribed combination* of foods you eat in each 24-hour period. Nutritionally dense portions of special fiber, unrefined carbohydrates, and very specific proteins that generate a calorie-burning process that continues all day long.

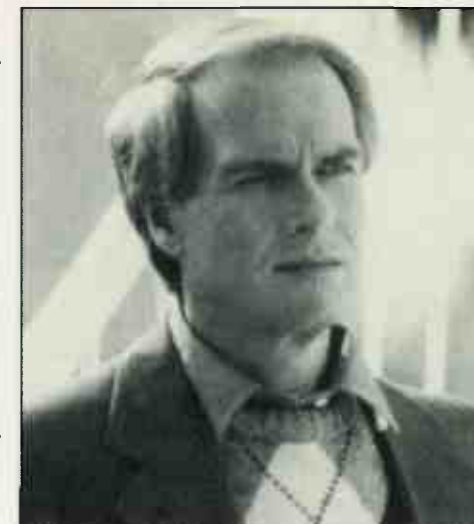
Metabolism is evened out. So fat is burned away during the entire 24-hour cycle. Not just in unhealthy spurts like many diets.

This new program must be the best kept secret in America. Because, up until now, it's *only been available to doctors*. No one else. In fact, The Charleston Program has been used by 207 doctors in the U.S. and Canada to treat more than 62,500 patients. So it's doctor-tested. And proven. This is the first time it's been available to the public.

And it's all good wholesome food. No pills. Nothing strange. You'll enjoy a variety of meats, chicken, fish, vegetables, potatoes, pasta — plus snacks. Lots of snacks.

There are other benefits too ...

- There are no amphetamines. No drugs of any kind.



- No artificial foods. No powders. No chalky-tasting drinks to mix. Everything's at your local supermarket. No special foods to buy.

- You don't count calories. Just follow the program. It's easy.

- It's low in sodium, so you don't hold water.

How do you know it will work for you?

All of us have "eating lifestyles". Our eating habits usually include three meals a day. Plus two or three snacks. We all love snacks. Especially at night.

But most diets try to force us to change all that. They ask us to starve ourselves.

And that's why they fail!

The Charleston Program is different. It allows you to *continue your normal eating lifestyle*. So, when you lose the weight,

you can keep it off. No one's forcing you to change.

Here are some actual results from patients who entered the program ...

Margaret is a 42-year-old waitress. She went from 167 pounds to 139 pounds in just 9 weeks.

"As I began losing, I felt an enormous surge of energy. This is one program I can stick with and still enjoy myself."

Dr. Karl D., a 36-year-old male, went from 237 to 168 in only 6 months.

"I'm not hungry anymore. I'm not tired, either. I feel alive, relaxed and healthy for the first time in years."

Josette C., a 33-year-old female, went from 165 to 119 in four months.

"My husband has started treating me like he did before we got married. It's wonderful ... and I'm not hungry all the time."

This is the first time The Charleston Program has been available outside of a clinical setting. We're very proud of the fact that Green Tree Press, Inc. has been selected to distribute it.

We'll be happy to send you the program to examine for 31 days. Show it to your doctor. Try it for several weeks. There's *no obligation*. In fact, your check won't be cashed for 31 days. You may even postdate it 31 days in advance if you wish.

Choose a day. Start the program. If you don't begin losing weight within five days — and continue losing weight — we'll promptly return your *original uncashed check*. No delays. No excuses.

Or keep it longer. Try it for six months. Even then, if you're not maintaining the target weight you've achieved, we'll send you a full refund. Promptly. And without question. This is the fairest way we know to prove to you how well this new program can work for you.

To order, just send your name, address and post-dated check for \$12.95 (plus \$3.00 shipping/handling) to The Charleston Program, c/o Green Tree Press, Inc., Dept. 745, 3603 West 12th Street, Erie, PA 16505.

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

As your weight begins to drop, do not allow yourself to become too thin. It's not healthy.

It's also very important to consult your physician before commencing any weight-loss program. Show him this program. And be sure to see him periodically if you intend to take off large amounts of weight.

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PULL-OUT
CENTERFOLD
OF-THE-MONTH

TANYA TUCKER

Facts of Life

Personal Data

Given Name: Tanya Denise Tucker
Birthdate: October 10, 1958
Birthplace: Seminole, Texas, grew up in Willcox, Arizona
Family: Parents—Beau and Juanita Tucker; children—Presley Tanita, age 5, Beau Grayson, age 2
Favorite pastimes: Competing in cutting horse contests—National Cutting Horse Association's 1990 Celebrity Champion/1994 KSCS Fair Celebrity Cutting Champion. Enjoys riding her hot pink Harley-Davidson motorcycle.
Musical Influences: Loretta Lynn, Elvis Presley, Jimmie Rodgers, Frank Sinatra, Connie Smith, Hank Williams Sr.
Early History: Started singing at age 6. Recorded first hit, "Delta Dawn," at age 13. By age 15, had a Grammy nomination, a Greatest Hits package, and was one of the first country artists to appear on the cover of *Rolling Stone*.

Vital Statistics

Height: 5'3"
Weight: 110
Color eyes: Hazel
Color hair: Blonde

Recording Career

Record Label: Liberty Records, 3322 West End Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37203

Albums	Release Date
<i>Delta Dawn</i>	1972
<i>What's Your Mama's Name</i>	1973
<i>Would You Lay With Me</i>	1974
<i>Tanya Tucker's Greatest Hits</i>	1975
<i>Tanya Tucker</i>	1975
<i>Lovin' and Learnin'</i>	1976
<i>Here's Some Love</i>	1976
<i>Ridin' Rainbows</i>	1977
<i>You Are So Beautiful</i>	1977
<i>Tanya Tucker's Greatest Hits</i>	1978*
<i>TNT</i>	1978*
<i>Tear Me Apart</i>	1980
<i>Dreamlovers</i>	1980
<i>Should I Do It</i>	1981



<i>Live</i>	1982
<i>The Best of Tanya Tucker</i>	1983
<i>Changes</i>	1983
<i>Girls Like Me</i>	1986
<i>Love Me Like You Use To</i>	1987*
<i>Strong Enough To Bend</i>	1988
<i>Greatest Hits</i>	1989
<i>Tennessee Woman</i>	1990
<i>Greatest Hits Encore</i>	1990
<i>What Do I Do With Me</i>	1991**
<i>Can't Run From Yourself</i>	1992**
<i>Greatest Hits 1990-1992</i>	1993*
<i>Soon</i>	1993*
<i>Tanya Tucker</i>	1994
(Boxed Set)	
<i>Fire to Fire</i>	
Release Date: March 21, 1994.	

*Gold album, 500,000 sold.
**Platinum album, 1,000,000 sold.

Recent Awards

1991 CMA Female Vocalist of the Year
1993 ACM Video of the Year for "Two Sparrows in a Hurricane"
1993 Country Music Hall of Fame's Walkway of Stars induction
1993 Country Music Television/CMT Female Video Artist of the Year
1994 Grammy nominations for Best Female Vocalist and for Best Vocal Collaboration on "Romeo" (with Dolly Parton and others).

Recent Recording & Performance Highlights

Recorded "Already Gone" for *Common Thread—The Songs of The Eagles* project. Recorded "Somethin' Else" with Little Richard for *Rhythm Country & Blues* album. Recorded "Embraceable You" duet with Frank Sinatra. 1994 Super Bowl XXVIII halftime performance. 1994 World Cup Opening Ceremonies performance.

Recent Career Highlights

Selected by Black Velvet Canadian Whiskey as the newest "Black Velvet Lady." National Spokeswoman for the *Black Velvet Smooth Steppin' Showdown*, the first national country dance competition for amateurs. First country artist to be inducted into Hard Rock Cafe's Walk of Fame. Released *Tanya Tucker Country Workout*, a low-impact aerobics video. Introduced the Tanya Tucker Collection Western clothing line. Launched Tanya Tucker's Salsa.

Charity and Benefit Events

National Ambassador for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society
Participation in the 1994 Arthritis Foundation Telethon
Involved with St. Jude's Children's Hospital in Memphis
Public Service Announcements/Doris Kupferle Breast centers
Contributing artist/Coors Literacy
Participant in Recording Artists Against Drink Driving campaign

Pen Pals

Make new friends by mail. Pen Pals is a means of introducing CMSA members who wish to correspond. It is not a "personals" column. Physical descriptions and requests for romance will not be printed. We also reserve the right to edit for space and style. Parent's permission required for those 16 and under.

•Hey! I'm a single, 31-year-old nurse who recently moved from IL to Kansas City. I love country music, especially Marty Stuart, Sammy Kershaw, Pam Tillis and Lorrie Morgan. I also love the "hall of famers." I'd like to correspond with men and women within 500 miles of KC so we can get together for concerts, parties, etc. I also enjoy traveling, motorcycles (Harley's), camping and shopping. **Tonya Richmiller, 9533 Booth Ave., Kansas City, MO 64134.**

•I'm in my 30's and I'm Dean Dillon's Number One fan. (I think I'm his only fan.) Dean fans, please write. Will answer all. **Dawn Hodge, 937 S. Ruddle Rd. #10, Blytheville, AR 72315.**

•I'm a 20-year-old, married college junior. I'd like to hear from females only (20-30 years old) who like country music, classic literature and writing long letters. I'd like to make new friends from around the entire country! No inmates, please. **Amanda Towne, 35 Robin Street #3, Providence, RI 02908-5512.**

•Hi, I'm a 34-year-old, good-hearted country boy from NC. Some faves are: Alan Jackson, Travis Tritt, Reba and Patty Loveless. Enjoy writing letters, children, horses, outdoor life. If you're looking for a sincere pen pal, please write. Will answer all. **Jeff Brookshire, NB-226, 14644-018, P.O. Box 7007, Marianna, FL 32447-7007.**

•Hi, I'm a 27-year-old female. I just moved to WV. I'm looking for pen pals near and far. Everyone welcome. Please, no chain letters. Favorites are Travis Tritt, Aaron Tippin, Reba, Pam Tillis and more. **Caroline Moore, P.O. Box 693, Jane Lew, WV 26378-0693.**

•Hi, I'm 49 and love country music and anything tied to country. Would love to correspond with country lovers. So all you give me a letter. Picture gets mine. I have many interests and hobbies. Guys and gals write. **Betty Munsinger, P.O. Box 1098, Ceres, CA 95307.**

•30-year old male who loves country music, new and old. I am an inmate who made a mistake. Would like to write to other people, male or female. Will answer all. **Vic McConnell #217-049, P.O. Box 69, London, OH 43140.**

•Hi, I'm 43 years old, married and love country music. My favorite hands down is Garth. I am a major fan of his and would love to hear from anyone else who loves him. I also like Tracy Lawrence, Vince Gill and Kathy Mattea. I like to write stories, read, NFL football (Bears and Cowboys), cats, going to concerts and rodeos when I can, John Wayne and Kevin Costner movies and traveling. I would especially like to hear from anyone who knows a lot about the music industry. Will answer all, male or female all ages. No inmates, please. **Lynda L. Becker, P.O. Box 56062, Harwood Heights, IL 60656.**

•I'm a 29-year-old, single female. Would like to make new pen pals and hear from

old ones I lost touch with. I love country music. Favorites include George Strait, Conway, Mark Chesnut and lots of others. Will answer all. **La Vonna D. Hill, P.O. Box 174, Strathmore, CA 93267.**

•I am 49 years old and I love country music. Some favorites are Reba, Billy Ray, Vince, Little Texas, Alan Jackson and Tracy Byrd, to name a few. I'm looking for sincere pen pals who enjoy country music as much as I do. I enjoy going to concerts, writing letters, baseball and collecting pigs. I'd love to hear from anyone who would like to make a new friend. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Kay Mason, Meadowview Apts. #79, Ellsworth, ME 04605.**

•Wanted: any country music fans 15-18 years of age who love to write. I'm a 15-year-old girl, and I'd love to hear from you. A few favorites are John Michael Montgomery, Clay Walker, Little Texas, Diamond Rio and more. Hobbies include skating, swimming, horseback riding, dancing and music. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Wendy Howell, Rt. 13, Box 704-M, Lenoir, NC 28645.**

•I'm a 22-year-old female. I love country music. My favorite is George Strait. I like rodeo, hunting and fishing. I would like to hear from other country fans. **Juanita Nolan, 401 Cedar St., Farmerville, LA 71241.**

•I'm 39 and a single male. I love country music. Favorite singers are Faith Hill, Travis Tritt, Linda Davis, Reba, Patty Loveless, Suzy Bogguss, Hank Jr. and lots more. Like to hear from ladies 37 to 49 who would like to correspond. Keep it country. **Terry Edwards, P.O. Box 110, Cortland, IN 47228-0110.**

•I am a 37-year-old, single female. I am looking for pen pals who are truly in love with the true meaning of country life and music. I enjoy Hank Jr. and Sr., Clint Black, Vince Gill, Alan Jackson, etc. I would love to hear from country friends everywhere, especially in Nashville and Branson between the ages of 34 and 45. No inmates, please. Interests are country music, living and cooking, animals, volunteering for MDA, reading and my job. I welcome letters from country friends who know the values of country music and life. **Debbie-Lynn Albury, 5715 N.W. 113th Terrace, Hialeah, FL 33012.**

•I'm a 44-year-old, single male and love country music. Favorites are Reba, George Strait, Alan Jackson and Brooks & Dunn. Enjoy concerts, swimming, rodeos and the outdoors. **David Teetouls, 300 Walker Springs Rd. #9A, Knoxville, TN 37933.**

•51 years old and married. Long illness; wanting friends and pen pals. Love music of all types. Looking only for friends. Will try to answer all letters. **Mrs. LaDema Williams, 630 McConnell Rd., Marietta, GA 28661.**

•I am a 23-year-old female and single. I am an avid listener to country music, easy listening and old and classic rock. I enjoy fishing and writing to people. I wouldn't mind a few new pals that would like to write to me. Male or female is fine. Any age. Hope to hear from you soon. **Kimberly D. Hedrick, P.O. Box 597, Catawba, NC 28609.**

•I'm a 22-year-old night worker who likes almost all country music. I like to write and receive letters and would love to

have more pen pals. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Dina VanDorsten, 14911 195th Ave. NE, Hawick, MN 56246.**

•I'm a 35-year-old male. I like country nights, camping, traveling and guitar music. Love country music and bikes. **John Street, #892438, Indiana Dept. of Correction, P.O. Box 1111, WVCI, Carlisle, IN 47838.**

•Incarcerated male soon to be released. True blue country boy. Looking for sincere male or female pen pals who love country music. Faves are Reba, Loretta, Patsy, George Strait and many more. Photo appreciated. Will answer all. No inmates. **Kyle Ray Rimel, #890688, Indiana State Prison, P.O. Box 41, Michigan City, IN 46361-0041.**

•I'm 59, happily married, looking for new pen pals. Love all the old traditional greats: Lefty, Hank, Jones, Webb and lots of the newer ones. Hobbies include reading, walking, crafts, traveling, etc. Looking forward to hearing from pen pals across the USA. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Rose Preston, 25 Summer St., East Rochester, NH 03868.**

•I'd like to hear from cowgirls between 18 and 40. I'm 24 and waiting for those letters. Please write soon. No inmates please. **Ricky Martin, P.O. Box 6282, Pearl, MS 39288-6282.**

•I'm a 22-year-old, single country music lover! Would love to have a country pen pal. Some of my favorites are: Reba, Dwight, Garth, Alabama, Loretta, Alan, Clint and lots more. I love to read, write, ride horses and ATC's. So if you're a country man between 21-35 and don't mind long letters, write me about your favorites. Hope to hear from you soon. **Shanon Glor, P.O. Box 291082, Phelan, CA 92329.**

•Hey, cowboys. Are any of you interested in corresponding with a 20-year-old, single college cowgirl from California? Well, here I am. My faves are Clay Walker, Lorrie Morgan and Garth, to name a few. Cowgirls, I encourage you to write, but no inmates, please. So rope your pens and start writing. **Julie Sousa, 8198 Azusa Ave., Dos Palos, CA 93620.**

•Two sisters looking for new pen pals. I'm Teresa, 28, and Vince Gill is my favorite. Karen, 30, is into Harley's (club member) and loves Little Texas. Will answer all who write. **Teresa Ray and Karen Livingston, 4832 188th St. S.W., Lynnwood, WA 98037.**

•Hi, I'm a 16-year-old male. I love country music. My absolute favorite is Wynonna. I loved her in the Judd days, but I love her singing even more now. I also love listening to Reba, Vince, Brooks & Dunn and just about every other country singer. I'd love to hear from any country fan, especially a fan of Wynonna. **Bill Robinson, 134 East Main St., Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426.**

•My name is J.D. I am 34 and work in law enforcement. Enjoy small-town life. Enjoy country and old-time gospel and the new country artists. Favorites are George Strait, Garth, RVS, Clint, Reba, Faith, Lari White and more. Enjoy movie greats John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart. Hobbies are writing poems, horses and sports. Drop a line, will respond to all. Picture gets one of myself. **Jerry David Harrison, 2220 Lincoln Green Dr., Apt. 1801, Arlington, TX 76011.**

•I'm 24, married with child. I am a big country fan, and Alan Jackson is number one in my book. I'm seeking sincere pen pals and will answer all. No inmates, please. **Sheila Easley, 4748 Douglas Ave., Kansas City, KS 66106.**

•I am 15 years old and divorced. I love all types of music, but country is the best. Favorites are Reba, Garth, Alan, Tim McGraw. I enjoy horses, motorcycles (Harley's), rodeos and writing letters. Would like to hear from cowgirls 18-35. **Donald Johnson, #67209, Arizona State Prison Complex, Eymann-P.O. Box 4000, Florence, AZ 85232.**

•I'm a 15-year-old girl who loves most of the country singers. I really like Collin Raye, Suzy Bogguss, Garth, Lari White and many others. I moved from CA to NM and would really like some people to write to. I will write to anyone and everyone. **Jincy Gauder, Star Route, Pietown, NM 87827.**

•I'm a single 20-year-old looking for new pen pals. Favorites are Reba, Tim McGraw, Brooks & Dunn and more. Hobbies are writing, working on new things and more. If you are a country or rock 'n' roll fan, write me soon. Will answer all letters. All ages welcome. **Walter Compton III, 619 Cooper St., Apt. #1, Cedartown, GA 30125.**

•I'm a 27-year-old, stay-at-home mom who is looking for a few new pen pals. I love Travis Tritt, also Marty, Aaron and others. Will try to answer all. Can't wait to hear from you. No inmates, please. **Terri Dunger, 789 Adkins Rd., Burlison, TN 38015.**

•I'm a 54-year-old, divorced female looking for new pen pals. No inmates, please. Love country music. Favorites are RVS, Reba, Linda Davis, Loretta and the late Conway. **Jacklyn Hoesel, 64 South Crest Ave., Cheektowaga, NY 14225.**

•I'm a 24-year-old, single mom looking for a pen pal. Lots of hobbies. Love country music! Would love to hear from you. Will answer as many possible. No inmates please. **Tracy Elminger, 3855 Woodridge Apt. 1, Fairfield, OH 45014-6629.**

•Hello, I am 15 years old. Some favorites are Brooks & Dunn, Travis Tritt, Hank Jr., Alan Jackson, Neal McCoy, Tim McGraw and more. Some hobbies are roller skating, crafting and writing. I'd love to hear from country fans 15-18. Will answer all. Hope to hear from you soon! Your photo gets mine. No inmates. **Christina Cobb, 508 W. Washington St., Highland Springs, VA 23075.**

•Hello there! I am a 28-year-old, married female who loves country music, especially creative singer-songwriters with individuality. My favorite is Mary Chapin Carpenter. I'd like to hear from all fans. I also like Vince, Dwight and Wynonna. **Lisa Sotelo, 3640 Judy Ave., Clovis, CA 93612.**

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By Rich Kienzle

It was a Sunday in January of 1952. Capitol Records producer Ken Nelson was leaving Shreveport, Louisiana, home of KWKH's four-year-old *Louisiana Hayride* radio barn dance program. Over the car radio, he heard a singer who caught his ear. Nelson told the story 40 years later, in 1992, so let him pick it up from there. "I said 'Hey, who the hell is that? He's great!' The announcer came on and said, 'You're listening to the Webb Pierce Show.' And I waited and he said, 'And now Webb Pierce will sing.' I realized the singer wasn't Webb, and I said, 'Turn around and go back to Shreveport.' I went in the radio station, went up to see the disc jockey and told him who I was and just kind of made a little conversation. I said, 'Who's that singer with Webb Pierce,' and he said, 'Oh, that's Faron Young.'

"Hubert Long was in Shreveport managing Johnny and Jack, so I went to him, and I said, 'Would you do me a favor and see if you can get this kid Faron Young to sign a contract?' Hubert took care of it and later managed Faron."

Signing Faron was one of Ken Nelson's many triumphs. Dark-haired, handsome, spangle-suited and proudly hillbilly, Faron in many ways embodied the 1950's country singer. Unlike some of today's "young country" hunks whose greatest assets are captured by photographers, not recording engineers, Faron had a voice to back it up. In the 50's and early 60's he made some of the era's finest music. He started singing much like Hank Williams, but eventually found his own boisterous, rich, full-throated vocal style. His vitality and energy gave his music an edginess, making his records instantly identifiable. Like his friend Webb Pierce, Faron had strong instincts both for discovering important new songwriters and for shrewd business investments. Off-stage, his outspokenness added to his mystique as did his reputation for hard drinking. Car wrecks were one problem; he had other scrapes with the law.

Shreveport, Faron's first conquest as a performer, was also his hometown. Born February 25, 1932, he grew up on a dairy farm near the city. On the farm, he told Bob Allen in a 1980 interview, "I learned to cuss." From childhood on, his first idols were pop singers like Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole. In high school he sang and acted in plays. His dad bought him a guitar, but Faron paid little mind to country until his football coach got Faron listening to Hank Williams and Eddy Arnold.

Faron Young

A handsome hellraiser with a big voice and a head for business, Faron Young cut a wide swath in 50's, 60's and 70's Nashville.

The coach had a country band, and Faron started to sing with them in area honky tonks. After high school and one year of college, Faron quit (in 1951) to sing and write songs fulltime. He met *Hayride* star Webb Pierce, who hated his songs but liked his voice. Pierce took him under his wing, put him in his touring band and helped him land a place on the *Hayride*.

Faron also recorded for the Pacemaker Record and Transcription Company, co-owned by Webb and *Hayride* boss Horace Logan. Young's recordings were leased to Gotham Records of Philadelphia, though they sold little. Pierce and Faron sang and played records on *Red River Roundup* at KWKH for a time, and it was probably here that Nelson heard him. Faron's first Capitol session produced no successes, but Nashville disc jockey Hugh Cherry helped Faron get a guest shot on the Opry in mid-1952. Arriving with his girlfriend Billie Jean Jones, he met Hank Williams there and they double-dated. Hank's attraction to Billie Jean was obvious, and Faron gladly stepped aside so Hank could court the woman who became his second wife. Faron soon became an Opry cast member.

The Korean War put a damper on his euphoria. At age 20 he was a prime candidate for the military draft. That November, he got his notice, though his background led him right into Army Special Services. He performed stateside at military bases with a band called The Circle A Wranglers and recorded musical programs for Army recruiting. For a time his announcer was another young soldier named Leonard Nimoy, years away from the pointy ears he wore as *Star Trek's* Mr. Spock. The Army grabbed him at a good time. The ballad "Goin' Steady," which he'd recorded not long before his induction, became his first national hit, reaching Number Two in 1953. On leave, he still recorded, and was able to make appearances at the Opry as well.

Faron's 1954 discharge left him ready to resume his career. He began a flurry of activity yielding one hit after another. Late in 1954, just as he was discharged, came his classic, "If You Ain't Lovin' (You Ain't Livin')," a 1955 hit for him, revived by George Strait (in a style much like Faron's) in 1988. The lusty "Live Fast, Love Hard, Die Young" became Faron's first Number One in 1955. The next single, "All Right," held the Number Two spot for four weeks in 1955 followed by the Number Five, "It's a Great Life (If You Don't Weaken)." His exuberant 1956 version of Ted Daffan's honky tonker, "I've Got Five Dollars (And It's Saturday Night)," an ode to weekend boozing and

hellraising, with its trademark, stop-time shouted "Hey!," became a honky tonk anthem. Faron knew such things well, as the song reflected his own lifestyle.

More photogenic than many singers at the time, he landed a movie contract with Republic Pictures and made his first film, the B-western *Hidden Guns*, in 1955 playing the son of a sheriff. That him to another title: "The Young Sheriff" (he did a short-lived TV show under that name), later "The Singing Sheriff." He did three more westerns, the last one being *Raiders of Old California*, which paired him with Marty Robbins. Meanwhile his recording career perked on. In 1956 his other big hits were "You're Still Mine" and his version of "Sweet Dreams," the Don Gibson ballad Patsy Cline would later make a standard. "Turn Her Down" made it to Number Nine. He had only one big hit in 1957 with "I Miss You Already (And You're Not Even Gone)," but in 1958 "Along With You" held the Number One position for 13 weeks. Its flipside, "Every Time I'm Kissing You," was Number 10 for two weeks.

Faron made a less impressive film appearance that year in the film *Country Music Holiday* with Zsa Zsa Gabor, Ferlin Husky, ex-boxer Rocky Graziano and June Carter. Filmed in New York City, the plot was murky, the acting straight off a high school stage. The awful teen pop tunes the cast had to sing annoyed Husky, who later griped that the producers hadn't allowed any country songs in the film. Faron remained one of Capitol's top sellers. In 1959 "Country Girl" remained at Number One for four weeks. Early in 1960, the single "Riverboat" (written by Bill Anderson) and its flipside, "Face to the Wall," both made the Top Ten as did "Your Old Used to Be." By now one of Nashville's biggest partyers, a roaring buddy of Patsy Cline's on the road, he was also a regular at Tootsie's Orchid Lounge.

Faron discovered three great songwriters in his time. The first was Roger Miller, whom Faron hired as his drummer in 1958 (he turned down Miller's song "In the Summertime," later Roger's first hit). In 1960 Faron met Willie Nelson, a struggling Texas writer who'd written "Hello Walls," which Faron recorded. Desperate for money, Willie wanted to sell the song to Faron. He refused to buy it and loaned him \$500 to tide him over. When it hit Number One for nine weeks in the spring of 1961, crossing into the pop Top 20, Willie had his first success. Overwhelmed by a five-figure writer's royalty check, Willie strode into Tootsie's and french kissed Faron, a story

both still laugh about. In 1962 Faron had Top Tens with "Backtrack," Willie's song "Three Days" and "Down By the River." Late in 1962, he left Capitol for Mercury Records.

He landed a hit with Mercury right off the bat with "The Yellow Bandana" in 1963, some Top 20's in between and then another Top Ten late that year with "You'll Drive Me (Into Her Arms Again)," followed by "Keeping Up with the Joneses." In July 1963, his business sense surfaced when he and Preston Temple founded *Music City News*. After one hit in 1964, he spent the next several years active, still touring, still carrying on, speaking his mind (he zinged born-again country singer Jerry Lee Lewis, saying that during The Killer's rock stardom, "You didn't give a damn whether country music existed or not.") Amid Faron's singles, he had one Top Ten in 1965 with "Walk Tall," another in 1966 with "Unmitigated Gall," one more in 1969 with "I Just Come to Get My Baby."

Then in 1969 he hit another roll. The first was the honky tonk shuffle, "Wine Me Up," a Number Two single followed by a solid string of Top Tens that would last five years and include "Your Time's Comin'," "Occasional Wife," "If I Ever Fall in Love (With a Honky Tonk Girl)," a remake of "Goin' Steady," "Step Aside," "Leavin' and Sayin' Goodbye," the Number One "It's Four in the Morning," "This Little Girl of Mine," "Just What I Had in Mind" and "Some Kind of a Woman." Amid the hits were other episodes. In the 1960's he'd built an office building on Music Row and hired another struggling songwriter—Kris Kristofferson—to hang drywall at \$1.25 an hour. He had other scrapes, a fight in a Nashville pool hall, drunken performances and a 1970's backstage incident in Oklahoma (he spanked someone else's child) that almost led to charges.

He left Mercury in 1979, the same year he sold *Music City News*. Times changed, and his brief 1980-81 time with MCA Records resulted in only modest sales. From 1981 to 1988, he didn't record at all. His wife had filed for divorce in 1987, citing numerous violent episodes at home. Financially comfortable, Faron became a regular on TNN's *Nashville Now* in the Ralph Emery days. Now he's an elder statesman. Both his musical legacy and his reputation for hellraising speak for themselves. Few of today's young singers will ever equal either.

Albums Available

See For CMSA Members Only page.

Readers Create

Remembering Patsy, Cowboy and Hawkshaw

CMSA member Juanita Snyder of Roanoke, Virginia, wrote this poem back in 1963, after hearing about the plane crash that killed Patsy Cline, Cowboy Copas and Hawkshaw Hawkins. March 5th is the anniversary of their tragic deaths, and Juanita wanted to share her poem with all their fans.

God's Grand Ole Opry

Nobody knew God's gracious plan,
When he called our loved ones from this
land.

He needed angels with voices clear,
To sing in heaven for all to hear.
The Grand Ole Opry was on the air,
So he picked his best with loving care.

There was Hawkshaw Hawkins and
Patsy Cline,
and Cowboy Copas, they were all just fine.
Their outfits they traded for robes of white,
With guitars of gold they sing each night.
Their voices will ring with song above,
To us they left their songs of love.

The whole country was saddened,
By the news they had heard.
How the plane crashed from the sky,
Like a big crippled bird.
No more personal appearances here below.
They're signed for God's Grand Opry show.
—Juanita Snyder

Remember to Forget

Johnnie E. Milton is a member in Tampa, Florida. She's been writing lyrics for years, and says she came up with this one just recently.

Forget Him

I know you've never forgotten his face,
The thrill of his kiss and his fond embrace.
But he's forgotten the love he promised so
true.

Girl, don't you know he's found somebody
new.

Turn deaf ears when they play your song.
Don't lay awake and toss the whole night
long.

Don't think about how close you two were.
Keep it on your mind he's with her.



Ty England
Acoustic guitar
Stillwater
North tracks End

Garth's Former Sidekick

Garth Brooks' former guitar player/vocalist, Ty England, is a favorite of member Debbi Hudley. Debbi's from Vero Beach, Florida, and thinks that Garth's band, Stillwater, is excellent, especially Ty. She's no doubt looking forward to Ty's first solo album, due out soon on RCA Records.



Brooks & Dunn Inspire

Shari Kaye Cloutier, of Fridley, Minnesota, is a CMSA member, and a freelance artist. She draws country artists frequently, in addition to making her own greeting cards. Says Shari, "I love country music, and promote it any way I can." Here's her take on cover boys Brooks & Dunn.

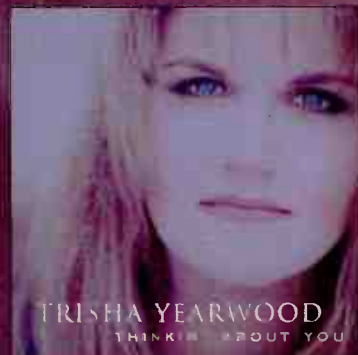
Don't keep remembering the way he
walked.
Try not to think about the way he talked.
Don't try to think of the things he used to
say.
Just remember he left you and went away.

Keep remembering someone else is in
your place.
Don't think of those heart-stopping dimples
in his face.
Forget the times he held you oh so tight.
Remember he's gone, he's with her
tonight.

Try not to think of times in the past.
So many things happen, time moves so
fast.
How many times did he say "I'll leave you
no never."
But now he's with her, he's gone forever.

—Johnnie E. Milton

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World Radio History



MCA
NASHVILLE

A funny thing happened to The Mavericks on their way to pursuing their musical vision—they found radio success. By Patrick Carr



The Mavericks

From Local Heroes to National Stars

Figure this. We're on a street in the South Beach section of Miami, sweating in the winter sun, surrounded by the local flora and fauna—gays on rollerblades, Haitians doing their voodoo shopping, lawyers trying to look like poets, artists trying to look like bikers, tourists trying to look like anything but—and unlikely as it seems, we're wholly involved in the business of country music. There, right in front of us, is a country singer filming an interview that'll end up on network television.

He doesn't have the image of a country singer; doesn't even come close, in fact, being a pale, distinctly urban figure in a baggy black suit speaking with a humorous flair and edgy passion quite foreign to the slow-Southern-manly style of the standard Music Row contender. It's hard to say whose style he *does* approximate, really: a boyish Pavarotti, perhaps, or a hetero-ized Oscar Wilde; there's something of the stage about him, the grandeur, the romance, the gusto. This ain't no cowpoke.

Indeed it's not. It's Raul Malo, the singer/songwriter of The Mavericks, and Raul, as most country radio listeners must know by now, is among other things Cuban by blood and Miamian by birth. His folks left their homeland shortly after Castro seized power, and he was raised in the heart of the South Florida metropolis—raised, however, to the soundtrack of his parents' musical tastes, which ran to classic rockabilly and hard-core country along with the main-

stream pop of the 50's and 60's. That music stirred and compelled young Raul, and very early in life he decided that when he grew up, he very much wanted to be a combination of Hank Williams, Buck Owens, Elvis and Dean Martin.

Which, give or take an idol or two, he now is. Having eschewed most things Cuban ("I hung out with rednecks; I don't know who I thought I was kidding"), he has become Miami's only known significant tributary to Anglo-Appalachian music's ever-broadening stream. Singing in an emotionally charged tenor somewhat reminiscent of Roy Orbison, and surrounded by a band somewhat reminiscent of The Buckaroos, he delivers songs of very high quality—mostly written by himself with or without collaborators like Kostas, Harlan Howard and Al Anderson—and occupies a stylistic niche all his own; although he mines the same motherlode of country tradition worked by Dwight Yoakam and Marty Stuart, his vibrant tenor sets him apart from any of his contemporaries.

Raul is something else, then, and so is his band (though, being a democracy, it's not really "his" at all). For one thing, The Mavericks are by far the best young-"ish" band on the country scene today, ahead of everyone else in both their feeling for tradition and their willingness to work new edges. Then too, the band is a natural unit, formed of its members' own volition on the late 80's Miami club scene rather than slapped together from spare parts by some producer





"I'm a little reluctant to use the term 'ballroom country,' but that's what I have in mind, something very swinging and sophisticated."

or record company executive—you know, a second-string Nashville session jock here, a worn-out L.A. popper there, maybe some boys with tight buns and big hair up front. The Mavericks began when Raul, already working the clubs, paired up with Robert Reynolds, also a lifetime country/rockabilly fan, and drummer Paul Deakin, Reynolds' best friend from childhood, to begin their unique little enterprise: original music in a classic 'billy-bop mode delivered onto a scene dominated by funk, punk, thrash, Eurobeat, the many forms of Latin music, and virtually every other kind of pop *but* country. And that, believe it, was a big "but"; the sound of the white man's blues had receded so far from the local ear that when The Mavericks first worked the South Beach rock clubs, they got away with neglecting to tell people they played country. Paul Deakin remembers their audiences, while liking them a lot, noting that "Gee, this band sure has a lot of *tuang* to it." Or as Raul once noted, "In Miami, I never knew anybody who knew who Waylon Jennings was until I met Bob."

The fourth Maverick these days is buzz-cut guitarist Nick Kane, also a veteran of the Miami scene as well as a former New York glitter rocker and participant in various other American and European musical adventures; he brings a lot of experience and an edge of the blues, his first love, to the band. Before he took over the job, lead guitar was handled by Austinite David Lee Holt (who played on the first MCA album, *From Hell to Paradise*); and on the road, the band also includes Jerry Dale on keyboards. While Jerry is an integral part of the sound, he's not an official Maverick as of this writing.

Altogether, they're an interesting collection. Kane, who rides a Norton and reads military history, is dour and perhaps even twisted ("Take the gibbon from my hair..." he croons through a cloud of Marlboro smoke), but very funny and essentially very decent. Robert Reynolds, or "Bobby!!!" as the girls call him, appears to be a gentle, loving soul inclined towards hugs, peace signs and truly sincere expressions of thanks to Mavericks audiences. He also has the best Maverick hair, and his sex appeal doesn't seem at all diminished by the fact that he's married to Trisha Yearwood. Bobby's a very intelligent guy, but during our two days with the band in Miami, he's literally dumb most of the time. It be-

ing the Mavericks' first trip home to play a local gig since their move to Nashville in '92, many drinks were bought for the boys their first night out in the South Beach clubs, and Bobby didn't consume wisely. Now, riding the bus around the various filming locations for The Mavericks' TV segment, he has that rabbit-in-the-highbeams, I-wish-I-could-just-lapse-into-a-coma look, and can't say anything but "yeah" or maybe "no." One has it on good authority that he isn't like this often, which is a relief; it's hard to watch.

Paul Deakin, Bobby's best buddy, is a different sort of cat. Alert and animated, he seems to function as the main cover-the-bases character in the band. On the day after the big night out in Miami, for instance, it's he who takes me off for an interview while Raul is filming one of his TV bits and Bobby is trying to achieve his coma in the bus. We settle into a hiply hopping little sidewalk bistro next to a store selling men's leather-and-feather underwear (or is it beachwear?), and go to it.

I'm interested in The Mavericks' course through the Nashville system. They have, I've observed, been integrated remarkably smoothly, with virtually every Music Row person of taste rooting for them, and Raul in particular joining the inner circle of the *creme de la creme*—the aforementioned songwriters and others—as soon as he hit town. His

prodigious talent alone wasn't responsible, I figure (for if that were the ticket in, your radio would sound a whole lot different than it does); more likely, the key was talent plus the sponsorship of MCA producer/executive Tony Brown, who signed the band to the label in '92 and has since become the most powerful man in Nashville.

Yes, Paul Deakin agrees, Brown's influence hasn't hurt one bit—but not even Tony could, or can, guarantee country radio airplay, without which no Nashville artist has a prayer of becoming commercially viable as a major-label act. On that front, the bad news is that Tony's prediction—"The Mavericks aren't the norm. We'll have trouble"—came true: No *From Hell to Paradise* single graced the radio waves. The good news is that it all worked out: So far, several singles from *What a Crying Shame* have done well.

Deakin, who can usually be trusted to lay it on the line without too much coloration (unlike Raul, who enjoys a good polemic), explains what happened. "At the end of the year in '93, 'What a Crying Shame' [the first single from the second album] was going to Number One in individual markets, but not at the same time, so it wasn't charting well. I think at that point, most other labels—all of them, really—would have dropped the single, but our radio promotions department at MCA, who I'd say we've been at odds at before, really stuck their necks out. They carried it through the radio freeze into the next year, and then it just started to pick up and pick up and pick up. And that was it. Radio's been great to us lately."

I ask if there was any kind of showdown between The Mavericks and the MCA promotion guys, and Deakin laughs. "No, no showdown. There was a pleading: 'Please, please work the single through the freeze!' They had a meeting about it. They listened to us. Then they really committed themselves."

Deakin views the radio success of "Crying Shame" as a real turning point for the band. If it hadn't worked out, "that would have been it, I think. If they hadn't picked up on us, we'd have been looking for something else to do."

Another crucial factor was Don Cook, who produced *What a Crying Shame* (Raul himself produced *From Hell to Paradise* with help from Steve Fishell, Richard Bennett and Tony Brown). Basically, Cook did a beautiful job of easing the band's edgy sound and sensibilities into a framework acceptable to the main-



CANDACE WEST

stream country ear while retaining their spirit, greatly enhancing the band's own efforts to achieve just that result.

"At first we were skeptical," says Raul. "We were pretty scared. We always thought Don was a mainstream country producer. He was not our first choice. But we hadn't met him; it was just a preconceived notion that he was going to change us, we were gonna hate it, he was going to suck the life out of The Mavericks. Well, it didn't happen that way...he's a pretty hands-off producer, which we love, and that was obvious right from the start when we met him. I think the greatest thing that he does is he lets the artists sound like who they are. So we got along just great.... Sometimes we argue, but he won't force me to do anything I don't want to do."

Deakin echoes those sentiments. "If you listen to a Don Cook record, it doesn't sound like 'a Don Cook record'. It sounds like whoever it is: Mark Collie doesn't sound like Brooks & Dunn, Brooks & Dunn don't sound like Shenandoah. I was very skeptical, too. I thought Bobby and I were going to get thrown off the session. Bobby and I were the rhythm section in there with Brent Mason and John Jarvis and all these, you know, double-scale Nashville heavies, but the way it turned out, they all wanted to be in the band! They do sessions with singers all the time, so they loved being in there for a week with us. They brought our level of playing up. We tracked 14 songs in four days, and 50 percent of them were first takes...and Don's a feeling producer, not a formula man. When we'd come back into the control room for a playback, and Bob or whoever would say, 'I made a mistake there,' he'd say, 'Man, it feels great. Leave it.' That was very cool."

The relationship worked so well, Raul adds, that the next album will also in all likelihood be a Don Cook production. As to its direction, the music Raul is playing on the bus' sound system in Miami, a heady mixture of his mother's favorites—Dino, Tony Bennett, Patty Page, The King, kind of a *Greatest Swingin' Hits of 1959* tape he made himself—offers a big clue. As Raul puts it, "I'm a little reluctant to use the term 'ballroom country,' but that's what I have in mind, something very swinging and sophisticated. I'm very excited; I can't wait to get into the studio, because I can hear it all in my mind already."

All is well, then. The Mavericks have penetrated the mainstream without getting turned into Eagles clones, and we're

all a little richer for it. Certainly The Mavericks are. As Raul puts it, relaxing after the latest in dozens and dozens of interviews about musical categorization, "Well, for starters, we're in a pretty fancy bus"—and that we are; its last leasor was ivory-tinkling *nouveau* lounge lizard Harry Connick Jr., no less—"We've got a Gold record. We've got our songs on the radio, we've got videos being played, and we've got a whole brand new audience coming out to see us. Those are

very basic beer-and-music joint called Churchill's which has somehow survived the neighborhood's transformation into one of America's poorest refugee ghettos, Raul and Bobby and Paul recall their early days for the film camera. It was Churchill's proprietor, Englishman Dave Daniels, who gave them their first break, letting them play for the door proceeds and slowly—well, not *that* slowly, actually—build an audience of old hippies, young punks, open-minded metalheads,



All dressed up with someplace to go: Paul Deakin, Robert Reynolds, Raul Malo and Nick Kane on Reynolds' and Trisha Yearwood's wedding day. Below, Raul with Patrick Carr.



some of the obvious things, and they're quite enjoyable."

Beyond that, who knows? When I ask Raul about new directions he might take, he says, "You know, that's the funkiest, weirdest question I get asked, and I get asked it all the time. Tell you the truth, I don't know how to answer it. I mean, what I do has got me where I'm at right now, and I'm not going to question it or bother to fix it. It's gotten me on Letterman, I've gotten to meet Priscilla Presley, I've gotten to hang with Tony Bennett. I've made friends all over the country. So I'm not going to question it. I want it to keep going, certainly; I don't want it to stop. But if this all stops, then that means it will take me somewhere else. Eventually it will take me to that farm in the country with a bunch of grandkids running around, and me sitting there telling stories about when I used to go on the road, and we were this and we were that, and talking about the big time. And that'll be fine with me."

He has a big, happy grin when he says all this.

For all the world like a vehicle from another planet, The Mavericks' magnificent bus threads its way through the littered back streets of Little Havana, where the boys stop for Cuban coffee and a little more filming, then proceeds to the shattering streets of Little Haiti. There, in a

expatriate Englishmen, exceptionally adventurous tourists, whoever from wherever. So there amid the Haitians, you had a rocking Cuban singing country music from the 50's and 60's in a club run by a Brit, with people from all over the world eating it up and screaming for more. Not your usual scenario, but real. These were people doing it—playing and listening—for the love.

It's that way when The Mavericks play their big Miami homecoming date, downtown in the beautiful old Guzmann Theater. There's only a sprinkling of the band's new, radio-converted fans, and they stand out quite startlingly from the majority, most of whom look like they could have been at Woodstock ('69, that is) and some of whom probably were. After four or five songs though, nobody in the hall cares about what kind of music is being played or who's supposed to be listening to it. The Mavericks, first and foremost, are a classic performing band in the 60's/70's mold, and the energy they bring to the music they love is extraordinary; their show is all passion, power and enjoyment, the kind of deal you just can't find on the modern country circuit, where performance values are most often stated in terms like "staging," "pacing" and "showmanship." This is all just great music played to the hilt. Hank, Roy and Elvis would have loved it. ■

Lorrie Morgan

Country's New

Queen of Heartbreak



It's a magic moment for newcomer recording artist Daron Norwood. Sitting in his publicist's sun-drenched 16th Avenue South office sometime last spring, he's landed a one-on-one audience with Lorrie Morgan, country music's tanned, gorgeous and (at least this morning) barefoot queen of heartbreak.

With a charming mixture of savvy self-promotion and awestruck humility, Norwood, guitar in hand, is making the big pitch to Morgan. He's got a couple of songs he's written that he thinks would be just right for the Keith Whitley tribute album which Morgan was putting together at the time with the help of artists like Alan Jackson, Tracy Lawrence, Joe Diffie and Ricky Skaggs.

As Norwood begins to warble, Morgan, who looks disarmingly exquisite in gold earrings and matching gold ankle bracelet and cigarette case, sits an arm's length away, listening and watching Norwood intently.

"This is my dream come true," Norwood gushes. Morgan, taking Norwood's flattery in stride, lights a cigarette, throws back her head and cackles cynically. "Glad I can make somebody's dream come true!"

When Norwood finishes his ballad, Morgan smiles and applauds warmly. "That's beautiful, Daron!" She playfully makes a fist and waves it at him. "Damn, you're killin' me!"

Norwood quietly basks in Morgan's approval. Then he sings his next song. Morgan seems a little less impressed and a bit more distracted the second time around, and ultimately passes on both songs. Thus, for Norwood, a little bit of magic drains from the moment.

"One of those songs oughta be your next single," Morgan reassures the young singer, politely leavening her rejection with praise as she restlessly wriggles her toes and flicks her cigarette ashes into the ashtray her publicist has fetched for her. Knowing that Norwood's pride may be on the line here, Morgan lets him down easy, leaving the door slightly ajar for a second chance. "Tell you what," she offers, "I do need a tribute song to Keith for this album. Why don'tcha write one. A ballad. Somethin' about Kentucky, blue skies and 'Little Boy Lost.'"

Lorrie Morgan may have learned it the hard way, but it's clear she's very much her own woman: a woman who can say no, and can say it with either a velvet hammer (as

she does with Daron Norwood), or with more formidable weapons from her emotional arsenal. (In this instance, her firmness paid off. Norwood, to his credit, went home and wrote the song Lorrie suggested. "Little Boy Lost," co-written and sung by Norwood, became one of the featured cuts on *Keith Whitley: A Tribute Album*.)

Though she seems in a pleasant enough mood on this particular sunny afternoon, Morgan immediately strikes me as someone you'd best not cross on a bad day: someone who's definitely learned to stand up for herself and call the shots as she sees them. Nobody's pushover, nobody's fool. Her conversation is peppered with good-natured but caustic profanities, and lurking beneath her breezy politeness and easy laughter is a certain edge, a slightly glacial quality. Now and then there are glimpses of what could probably be a ferocious temper under the worst of circumstances. It surfaces like the tip of an iceberg when she's asked about the tabloid press and the field day it's had at her expense while chronicling her short-lived marriage to Clint Black's bus driver; her subsequent romance with super-hunk Dallas Cowboys quarterback Troy Aikman and links with other superstars.

"Those stories are written by heartless people who have no careers, other than ruining other people's lives," she complains bitterly. "They've ruined more relationships than they know."

"I know it's a part of fame," she adds, anger now palpable in her voice. "People who don't know me and wanna hurt me. Or people who go, 'Oh she's been married three times, she must be a blah-blah-blah-blah....' It pisses me off! They don't know what goes on behind closed doors." She shakes her head and laughs a laugh born of desperation. "So shut up!"

Though there's nothing pretentious about Morgan, she does, at times, seem to slip effortlessly into the persona of the tough-talking, hard-as-nails, seen-it-all, done-it-all femme fatale which the tabloids have helped create for her and which she herself has seemed to perpetuate with her sensual come-hither album cover photos and vampish, leggy, Madonna-like publicity stills. There is indeed something in her sharp-tongued manner that suggests this thrice-married singer, who, at age 35, has already been widowed once and divorced twice, is what she appears to be from a dis-

By Bob Allen



tance: a hard-bitten survivor of love's bloody battleground who's occasionally found refuge in cynicism, but has still not let go of her dreams. It's not surprising that she cites Tammy Wynette as one of her all-time favorite singers, noting that, "Sometimes Tammy seems like me in an earlier time."

Yet the more you talk with Morgan and the more you listen to her candidly discuss the lingering impact that the death of her second husband, singer Keith Whitley has had on her, the more her tough-as-nails persona fades into soft focus.

"I'm really not a die-hard, do-it-on-my-own type woman," she insists as she lights another cigarette, smoothes her dress and wistfully hugs her own shoulders. "But losing Keith made me aware of strengths I didn't know I had."

Morgan, despite her heartbreaks, illness (a bout with pleurisy), and exposure to publicity in the check-out counter celebrity rags, has not only survived; by all appearances, she's flourished. Yet the road has never been easy. You can go all the way back to 1975, and the death of her father, Opry star George Morgan, whom she adored and to whom she often turned for guidance. She suffered a similarly devastating blow five years ago when Keith Whitley died suddenly, leaving her alone to raise her two children (Morgan, her daughter from her first marriage; and Jesse Keith Whitley, the son born to her and Whitley).

It has also required great tenacity and very thick skin on Morgan's part to win over Nashville's recording industry which, for years, dismissed her as a second-rate, homegrown talent not meant to rise above her long-time status of perennial guest on the *Ralph Emery Show*.

In the face of such adversity and indifference—and despite persistent unluckiness at love—Morgan's career has begun to shine. With three million-selling albums under her belt, she has made the jump from perennial opening act to headliner. Along the way she's been dabbling in a potential film career: She was nominated for a Cable Ace award for her role in *Proudheart*, a movie produced by The Nashville Network, and her CBS-TV pilot, *Loralie Lee*, was under consideration for some time before being tabled. ("I have mixed emotions about whether or not the pilot succeeds," she admitted at the time. "I don't know if I can handle two careers at once.")

Morgan also walked away with 1994's Nashville Network/*Musical City News* award for Best Female Artist. Her duet with Frank Sinatra on Sinatra's new duet album is considered by many critics to be the best cut of the lot. And she and Queen Latifah shared duties with another aging heartthrob, Tom Jones, when the three of them co-hosted the American Music Awards a few weeks ago. Lately, she has been busy in the studio cutting a few new tunes to round out her "greatest hits" package, due out soon, and has mounted an ambitious touring schedule. Meanwhile, her fine fourth album, *War Paint*, has been certified Gold. The music on *War Paint* vividly captures the intriguing paradoxes in Morgan's personality. There's the rampant sensuality and honky-tonk rowdiness of "My Night to Howl," and the romantic scorn of the title tune (which Morgan co-wrote with Tom Shapiro). Yet there's also the little-girl-lost wistfulness of "If You Came Back from Heaven," a poignant tribute to Whitley, which she co-wrote with producer Richard Landis.

Morgan recalls that she started writing "If You Came Back from Heaven" at home on one of those days, "when you just think, 'If he was just here, if I could just hold him one more time, just reach out and touch him...'" But if Keith walked through that

door right now, what would we do?" she wonders aloud as she gazes out the window. "Would we be shy, or would we start right in where we left off and end up making love on the kitchen floor?"

Morgan's two solid original songs on *War Paint* make you wonder why she waited so long to record her own material. "I've been writing songs since I was 15," she explains. "Hundreds of them. I just never played 'em. Wrote 'em mostly just for myself. Some of them nobody ever heard but me. I played a couple of them, but nobody really took me serious," she says, referring to her previous producers. "My publicist, Susan Nadler, is the one who really believed in them," she continues. "I sang some of them for her one night, and she was in tears. She told Kris Kristofferson, who she knows pretty well, about them, and he listened and was also in tears. Kris told me, 'Lorrie, you're a fool if you don't record them yourself.'"

As I listen to Morgan talk, it occurs to me that 90's ladies like Wynonna and Tanya Tucker and Morgan—perhaps without even intending to—have emerged as pioneers in the ever changing role of the American women. Morgan hesitantly agrees, admitting it's not a role she's consciously aspired to, but one she's comfortable with, all the same. "I get a lot of letters and people telling me after shows, 'You don't know what an inspiration your songs, your story, has been to me...'" Women see some of us," she says, referring to women in the music business, "and they think, 'I can do that, too. I can be a working mom. I don't have to have a man to take care of me, or support me.' And I'm happy about that.

"I don't know, maybe I'm strong, maybe I'm not," Morgan sighs, traces of the vulnerable little girl showing through her tough gal facade once again. "Believe me, when Keith died, I wanted to lay down and die right with him. And as far as him not being here anymore, and me being able to say, 'Well, at least I'm strong now,' I'd

much rather have him back and be considered a weak, wimpy ass." She wipes her eyes; maybe it's all the pollen in the air, maybe it's something else. "When it comes to Keith, I'd trade all my strength to be weak again."

She suddenly shivers. Searching for her discarded sandals ("where's my damned shoes!?" she screeches in a voice that's playful, yet causes everyone in hearing range to scurry around looking under tables and chairs), she steps outside on to a sunny corner of the porch that faces the busy avenue.

"If there's anything I've learned since Keith died, it's that I won't settle," she frowns. "People reach a certain age and they give up on love, and they get afraid of being alone the rest of their lives, or whatever it is we're afraid of, and they settle for someone who's wrong for them. I did it. I did it with my last marriage. You know, you first get divorced or lose someone, and you start off strong, but you end up weak, because no one has come along. That's what happened to me. I settled for something that wasn't right for me, and it wasn't right for him, either."

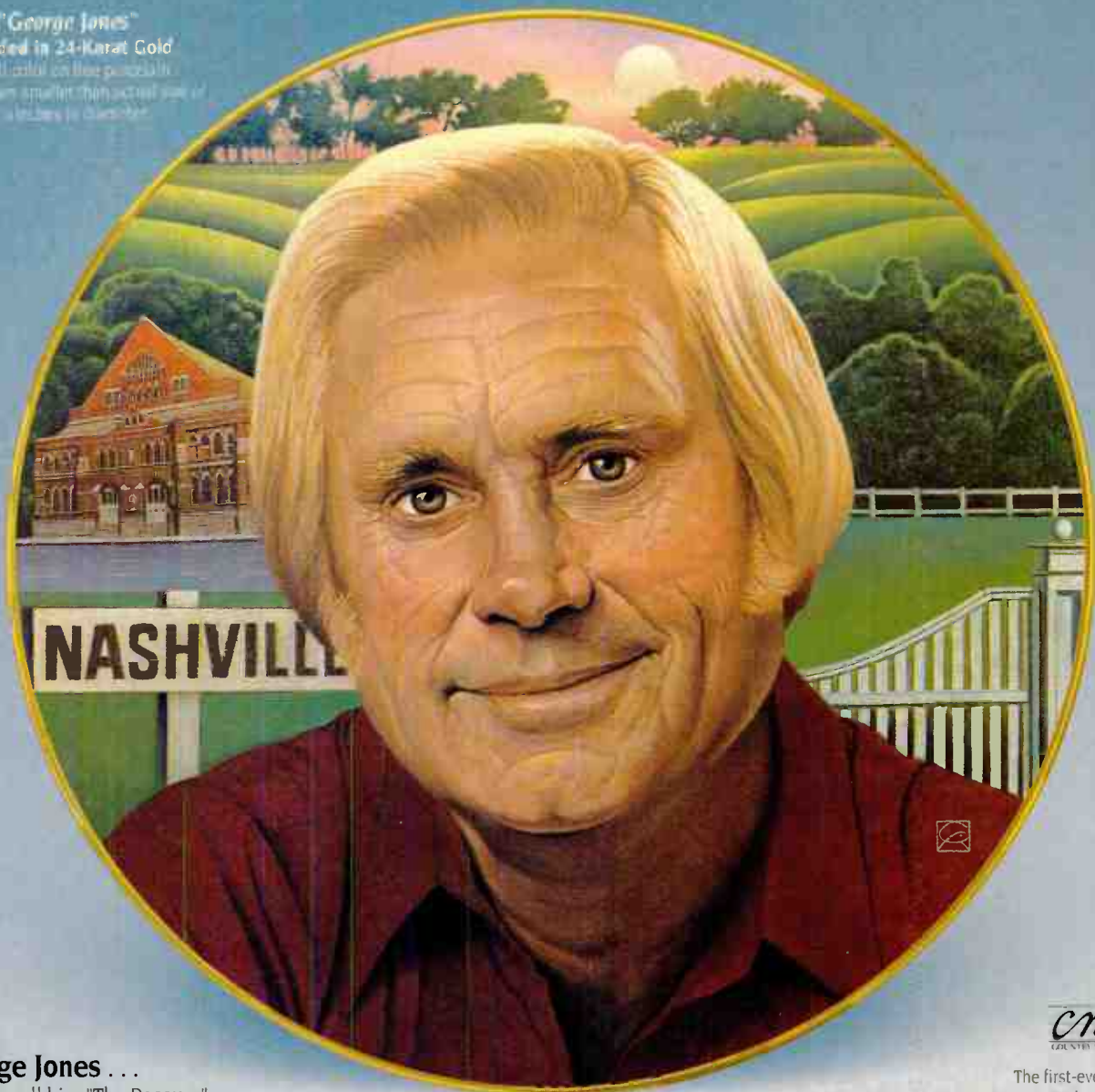
Morgan falls silent a moment and stares out at the traffic rushing down 16th Avenue. "No, I won't settle," she murmurs, shaking her head and taking another cigarette from her case. "I may be the stupidest person in the world, but I really still believe my Knight in Shining Armor will come around. If I didn't, I don't know if I could exist. I'm still very much a woman, and in some ways a little girl. I like being rocked and held, and, in some ways, to feel safe. I want romance in my life, but I don't want...I don't know what I'm looking for exactly." She stares wistfully at the passing traffic again. "Maybe I just want a fairy tale," she gently muses. "And I believe in fairy tales. I really do think they exist." ■



On the set of *Music City Tonight*, Lorrie appeared with daughter Morgan, son Jesse Keith, mom Anna, and sisters Beth and Liana.

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John & Audrey Wiggins: Family Tradition

BY BOB ALLEN

It's an age-old story, how one generation sometimes lives its dreams through the next. It's also the story of John and Audrey Wiggins, the North Carolina-born brother-sister duet team who recently made their major label debut with the Mercury album, *John and Audrey Wiggins*, and the hit single, "Falling Out of Love."

The fact that the Wigginses' father, the late John Wiggins, was a member of Ernest Tubb's Troubadours and an aspiring country artist himself more than 30 years ago has everything to do with the fact that John and Audrey, his two middle children, are where they are today. And the fact that the elder Wiggins died suddenly, right when his son and daughter were on the brink of success, makes what has happened to John and Audrey in recent months all the more poignant.

"Our daddy worked as hard or harder than we did on our careers," says John Wayne Wiggins, 31, who is very much his father's son. "Then right when our music finally took off, we lost him."

"He lived and breathed music. I've never seen anyone quite like him," says Audrey, who is five years younger than her brother John and has been duetting with him since 1979.

"I'm a Christian, and I know Daddy's in a better place," Audrey adds, her voice faltering ever so slightly. "But I think sometimes the Lord will take something big and grand from you, then give you something big. I've seen that a lot."

When you sit and talk a while with the Wigginses, you soon realize they possess an elusive quality—one that's hard to put into words, exactly. You could call it purity, authenticity, wholesomeness, or even plain and simple niceness, and you'd be close. You can hear this same endearing quality in their harmonies. Their music is, at times, intricate—like when they yodel in harmony on "Falling Out of Love."

And John's songwriting ("Falling Out of Love" is one of several tunes on the debut disk he wrote or co-wrote) is often quite polished. Yet at the heart it's all stitched together seamlessly, in a way that's reminiscent of other hit family harmony duos like The Judds or The Kendalls.

A lot of what seems so right about Audrey and John Wiggins has to do with the quieter, gentler world they come from: an extremely rural and extremely lovely corner of North Carolina, just south of The Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Their roots in that country go back at least 200 years, probably further. "We've still got our little family cabin and the home place up there where we grew up and Mama lives and where Daddy's buried," says John. "Our relatives are up there. It's the only place we can still go anymore to get away from everything."

"We've always been a real close-knit family," adds Audrey. "And now, even more so. We crack 'em up at the record label. We'll walk in with my mama, my Aunt Bobbi and our Uncle Mack and our sister. We go do a show, and we've got like 20 Wiggins people following us in. We love it!"

Music was always very much a family affair for the Wigginses. "Mama says that even when John and I first started talkin', we started singin'," says Audrey. "She and Daddy saw something in us from when we were little bitty, and they nurtured that."

John Wiggins Sr. had risen from tour bus driver and mechanic for E.T. to opening act to a start on a solo career in the 1960's when one day he came home from a long road tour and his little son John didn't recognize him. That's when he made the hard choice between career and family and opted to move back to Waynesville, North Carolina, to raise his four kids and become a partner in his brother Bert's paving company.

Several years later, Tubb came





through Asheville, and Wiggins arranged for little John to get up on stage and sing a song with him. In 1979, he did his daughter Audrey one better. He arranged for her to get up and sing a song with Tubb on the stage of The Grand Ole Opry.

"I was 12. God, I'll never forget it," Audrey laughs warmly at the memory. "I had to follow Connie Smith. I still remember the dress she was wearin', because I was standin' there starin' at her. And her great big beautiful voice! I sang 'Lovesick Blues' with The Troubadours backin' me. I was under-age—you were s'posed to be 16 to play on the Opry. But Daddy lied about my age, and Mama put these little inserts in my trainin' bra to make me look older."

John began singing publicly at a very early age. By the sixth grade he was leading his own bluegrass band; and by age 17 he was playing local clubs. Audrey would often make brief appearances with him as "guest yodeler." But the idea of working as a duet team didn't come till later. Not until their father brought home Emmylou Harris' classic back-to-the-basics 1979 album, *Blue Kentucky Girl*, which featured a then largely unknown Ricky Skaggs on bluegrass-flavored harmonies. That same year John and Audrey teamed up and won a first-place prize at the North Carolina Folk Festival with their rendition of the Emmylou Harris/Ricky Skaggs duet, "Everytime You Leave."

John eventually went to work full-time in his father's paving business while he and Audrey honed their duet sound in the clubs at night. Off and on, for the better part of six years they were the house band at a club in nearby Maggie Valley, North Carolina, called The Stompin' Grounds, owned by a friend of John Sr.

Around 1987, at their father's urging, and with money he eagerly fronted them, Audrey and John ventured to Nashville. Audrey got a job at The Country Music Wax Museum; John worked at The Cars of the Stars Museum. But even though they were now in close geographic proximity to Music Row, they were still, career-wise, light years away.

"We didn't have a clue, we didn't know anybody and we had no idea how to get in," John recalls. "But we were so naive we didn't even know we didn't have a clue. Every night we'd drive home from work and wonder, 'What do you need to do to get in this business?' We just got in a rut, it was so frustrating. We'd been going back

home almost every weekend to play at The Stompin' Grounds, and we finally just decided to move back to North Carolina."

John went back to work pouring asphalt and spent the rainy days writing songs under his father's supervision. Every night, he and Audrey would polish their harmonies. Finally their father let them know he thought they were ready to try Music Row again. "So we moved back in 1990 with a fresh attitude," Audrey recalls. "Though we would have liked to have gotten a little house with a back yard for a puppy dog or somethin', we moved downtown here on Music Row and got an apartment."

They made the rounds for a while and got the usual turn-downs. But as fate would have it, their future success hinged on the fact that next door to them was the office of an attorney whose clients included Cotton Eyed Joe Productions, a company owned by producers Joe Scaife and Jim Cotton, who'd been behind-the-scenes players in the careers of Billy Ray Cyrus, Alabama, K.T. Oslin and others.

"We used to practice at night in our kitchen for the acoustics, and he could faintly hear us through the walls. Me and John's never been the kind to throw ourselves on somebody. We never did tell him why we were here. Through word of mouth he heard about us. We made a demo tape and played it for him. He's told us, looking back, how nervous he was. He'd made friends with us, and he was scared to death the tape would be horrible." But the lawyer fell in love with their demo and quickly passed it on to Scaife and Cotton. They, in turn, took it to Harold Shedd, then head of Mercury Records, the Wigginses' label.

On the eve of their first record release, their father was killed in a car accident back in North Carolina. "It was just one of those things," says John. "Mama and Daddy were in a car with another couple, and they were all going to dinner at a truck stop where our little sister was waitressing. On the entrance ramp to the Interstate, our friend lost control of the car. It hit a concrete median and flipped. Our father's neck was broken."

The loss is one reason brother and sister hang together like two peas in a pod. "John and I really went through a lot of hard times together, including the loss of Daddy, and that's made us closer," says Audrey. "We've both remained unmarried for our music. And now that the opportunity's here, we're ready to work hard." ■

Letters

Believing in Billy Ray

Thank you for putting Billy Ray on the cover of your January/February issue. Congratulations to Patrick Carr for adding himself to the list of us who have met him. "... the emotion is honest. There's no doubt whatsoever about that." Aside from "politicians and preachers in his bloodlines," Billy has studied philosophy and has many famous quotes memorized and implanted in his brain. His own, honest conclusion from all of this is "Dreams come true, if you believe."

Sharon Wolford
Manassas, Virginia

Praise for Billy Ray Feature

I want to commend Patrick Carr for his excellent coverage on Billy Ray Cyrus in the January/February '95 issue. He seems to have captured more of him than anyone else has been able to do. For a man that has given so much of himself and has taken so much from the media, this article is truly a breath of fresh air. Keep up the good work, Patrick. I enjoy the magazine very much. The pictures are great and the articles very interesting.

Dottie LeFors
Moscow, Idaho

One of the Best on BRC

Thank you so much for the great article by Patrick Carr on Billy Ray Cyrus (January/February). I think this is one of the best articles done on Billy. The pictures were great. I have been to six of his concerts and each one, I felt, was special. I never realized the talent, besides looks, that this man has—what energy. His music is for his fans. Thank you for a great story and a great magazine. Also loved the story on Pam Tillis.

Pat Miller
Chicago, Illinois

One Little Objection

I wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed the cover story of Billy Ray Cyrus. Yours is in one of the few country magazines that does not slight this wonderful, talented singer. I do, however, object to Patrick Carr's interpretation of Billy Ray's behavior after the show. I have been to two Billy Ray concerts, and his rapport with the audience was amazing. I did not in any way feel "controlled or manipulated." As a matter of fact, I thought it was sweet the way he stayed on the stage and



acknowledged all the flowers and gifts the fans gave him. I have never seen any other performer do that. As a fan attending his show, it made me feel appreciated. Of course, the women go wild when he struts (who wouldn't?), but it is done in a spirit of fun, not "power tripping." So, no matter what anyone says, Billy Ray, we love you just like you are.

Kelly Weaver
Ghent, New York

Battle of the Sexes

I have to question Patrick Carr's perception of Billy Ray on stage after his show. My wife and I have seen Billy Ray nine times in concert. In the 15 to 20 minutes that he was on stage after each show not once did he "wiggle his ass." Not once did he "begin to strip off his shirt." What he did do was walk back and forth across the stage accepting hundreds of flowers and stuffed toys from his devoted fans. He tried to touch as many hands and make eye contact with as many people as possible. That is the rapport Billy Ray has with his fans. Are you sure, Mr. Carr, that you, like most male reporters, see what you want to see when it comes to Billy Ray Cyrus? We have also met several of the artists, but none was as nice or sincere as Billy Ray. He gives his time and money to more charities than you can think of. My wife calls him a "special man." I call him a damn good entertainer and an all-around nice guy.

J.R. Luen
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

BRC an Entertainer Above All

I enjoyed reading your cover story about Billy Ray Cyrus featured in the January/February issue of *Country Music*. Billy Ray brought me to country in 1992. I read your article more than once because there seemed to be much between the lines. You seemed to realize the electricity between BRC and his fans at the concert, yet you seemed concerned that he could be a bad Pied Piper. Why? After all, Billy Ray is an entertainer, no more and no less.

Frances Childress
Kingsport, Tennessee

The Ol' Double Standard?

I read your article on Billy Ray Cyrus in *Country Music*. It became clear to me that you were struggling within yourself as to whether you should let yourself go and enjoy his performance. I realize he appeals more to women, for obvious reasons, but can't you guys just let us have him as he is? We love his music and the way he delivers it. Lorrie Morgan can slink around in a cat suit, or Faith Hill can appear in a slip lying on a sofa, but heaven forbid if Billy Ray shakes his butt. That's entertainment.

Gail Blevins
Baltimore, Maryland

Still Hooked on Willie and More

I enjoyed Russ Barnard's "Willie Nelson's Family & Friends" (November/December). Aside from Willie's classic songs, made famous by Patsy Cline, Ray Price and Faron Young, I became familiar with Willie in the early 70's. In 1975, I acquired *The Redheaded Stranger* and was hooked. Wore that album out. Willie, and folks like Waylon, Jerry Jeff, Guy Clark, etc., helped take me through the rest of the 70's and the 80's. I can't put it any better than Russ, but I have a lot of fond memories wrapped around Willie—his concerts, his songs, his records. Willie is Willie. And I'm sure glad he is. While I'm in the writing spirit. Cash's *American Recordings* is a true work of art from another great. I agree with Patrick Carr's list of country high points for 1994 and parrot his desire for "less crap, more music." Finally, John Morthland's 20 Questions with Jerry Jeff Walker was well done. And to Geoffrey Himes who reviewed Robert Earl Keen's *Gringo Honeymoon*, that is a fine album!

Ted Fiskevold
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

Never Tired of Willie

We enjoy the magazine very much. Especially enjoyed Willie Nelson (November/December 1994). He will never grow old to us! Would you do an article on Billy Ray, Jamie O'Hara, Ronnie McDowell, T. Graham Brown and the new one, Amie Comeaux?

Jean Bennett
Dallas, Texas

Billy Ray cover last issue; see record review on Amie this issue.—Ed.

Willie's Friends

Tonight I saw a group presented by Willie Nelson on TNN, The Hayes Country Gals & Pals. They were great. Their harmonies were excellent. Could someone let me know where to get a tape of theirs? Also, I got Waylon's new *Waymore's Blues*. Now I can say I have the two best tapes out in '94, Haggard's *1994* and *Waymore's Blues II*. I wish they would get airplay.

Sheila Richardson
Buckfield, Maine

They just might. See People for a report on Americana, the new radio format and chart for roots music.—Ed.

Thanks for Clay

Thank you, *Country Music*, for the article on Clay Walker in the January/February issue. I've been getting your magazine for over a year and finally, I get an article on Clay. Please thank George Fletcher for doing a superb job.

Nicole Moe
Conroe, Texas

Ball and Logan Have the Goods

I read the article about David Ball in the January/February 1995 issue of *Country Music*. This is the third article that I have read about this artist, and the third time I have read the same information: David Ball recorded some songs for RCA, a few singles were released, and that was it. I have in front of me an RCA album, 9777-1-R, released in 1989, titled *David Ball*. The album is a Canadian release, so perhaps it was released only in Canada. It is very enjoyable. What attracted me to it initially was one song, "I Was a Born with a Broken Heart," because this song was recorded on the Curb label in 1988/89 by an artist Josh Logan. The LP by Logan has not been matched by anything coming out of the Nashville music factories that promote hunks, eye color, buns, etc., while exceedingly talented singers, such as Logan, are dumped. David Ball possesses the uniqueness that is absent in country music today, and the more people who speak out for him, the greater the chances that he, too, won't be swept under the carpet. Anyone know the whereabouts of Josh Logan, and if any other recordings by him are available?

Charlie James
Pierrefonds, Quebec, Canada

David Ball & Good Ole Country

Have just finished reading the January/February issue and want to thank you for the feature on David Ball. He is one honky tonk country music original who I'm sure all country radio stations will air. It's good to know there are still some good ole country boys and girls out there, as well as good ole country music stations. It's us old hillbillies who have stuck by Loretta, Wanda Jackson, George Jones, Jean Shepard, etc., all these years. Will the new fans be fans of the "new country" artists 20 or 30 years from now? I doubt some of them will. *CMM* and *The Journal* are great.

Virgie Warren
Flushing, Michigan

Ball Good All Around

Hooray! At last, a great story on David Ball. What a treasure he is to all of us who enjoy our country music without all the fuss and frills that so many burden us with. And the fact that he is easy to look at and has a great sense of humor only adds to his appeal.

Margo Sireika
Desert Hot Springs, California

Sawyer Brown Article Hits "Mark"

Thank you so much for the article on Sawyer Brown. When I read it, I couldn't help getting flashbacks of the first time I met Mark Miller, with his shy smile, quiet voice and extreme politeness. This article hit exactly on the way Mark is. I'm glad Sawyer Brown is finally getting recognized as more than just a party band and are given the credit they deserve for being the hardest working band in country music.

Marcia Clay
St. Cloud, Minnesota

Crowell Number One

Thank you for the article on Rodney Crowell in the November/December issue. Rodney appeared at Melody Fair in Tonawanda, New York, this summer. This was his first appearance here in about five years. The crowd loved him, and he received a standing ovation. I think Rodney is the number one singer and songwriter (in country music).

Elaine Stekle
Alden, New York

'Bout Time for Gill

Thank you for your very well-written and much overdue article and cover story about Billy Ray Cyrus. Thank you for the absolutely wonderful and stunning centerfold of Vince Gill. It's about time!

Ramona Wulff
Hopkins, Minnesota

Garth Pull-Out Fit for Wall

I am a 15-year-old who loves country music—always have, always will. My main country singer is Garth Brooks. I wanted to let you know how happy I was



CHEVROLET presents the COUNTRY MUSIC QUIZ

Answers to these questions can be found by reading this issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Answers will be published in the May/June 1995 issue.

1. At what famous Las Vegas casino did Brooks & Dunn recently appear?
2. Name the lead singer of the band The Mavericks.
3. In what TNN movie did Lorrie Morgan star?
4. John and Audrey Wiggins' father worked with which country legend?
5. How many platinum albums does Tanya Tucker have?
6. Chevy's new Full-Size Pickup has an all-new interior. It's still built like a rock, but more comfortable than ever. What type of luxury seating is available?

ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ:

1. 14
2. Sun Records
3. Neon Armadillo
4. "Thinkin' Problem"
5. Dollywood
6. Chevy's new S-Series ZR2 Extended Cab 4x4 Pickup Truck puts out 191 HP.

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when I got my November/December issue and Garth was the pull-out poster. I took him out and hung him on my wall right away. Thank you!

Tanya Mrdutt
Downing, Wisconsin

A Welcome Strait Review

Just got through reading another wonderful record review (January/February), and I thought I would, after all this time, thank your magazine for all the positive emphasis on George Strait. As a "Strait" fan since 1983, I never felt that Nashville gave him the credit he deserved, but y'all always have. This is particularly welcome in this age where radio is dumping everyone who's been around longer than a few minutes or so. Thanks for continuing to portray the real heart of country music.

Millie Meeks
Memphis, Tennessee

Atkins—Man of the Times

Rich Kienzle's review of the album *Simpatico* (January/February) contains several statements regarding Chet Atkins which I feel are way off. At age 70, Chet still has a career as an instrumentalist precisely because he has changed with the times. If he were still playing only in the style of his 50's records and nothing else, he would not have a recording contract and the visibil-

ity and impact that he still does. Each year guitarists of all styles, both amateur and professional, come to Nashville to the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society convention to play and listen to all types of fingerstyle music. I believe that Chet Atkins denigrates his early material because he is a modest person who tends not to toot his own horn. He still plays some of the old songs and styles, along with newer material both on record and in person. The comments regarding the "slick jazz fusion/new age muzak" are similar to the debate regarding new country/top country and traditional country displayed in the Letters to the Editor in the same issue. Different people like different things. I enjoy the magazine and appreciate the opportunity to read about my favorite country music performers.

Ray Bohlken
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Dolly Better and Better

I am writing to let you know I think your review of Dolly's *Heartsongs* last issue was a true and realistic review. As I read it, all the things you said hit home. I felt the same way. The album is really a great "country" album, the kind of album no country music fan should overlook, doesn't matter who you like. Dolly keeps getting better as the years go by. Please do a cover and interview with Dolly. It's been a long time.

Nancy Allen
New York, New York

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Exception to Whitley Review

I am writing to express my opinion of Bob Allen's review of *Keith Whitley, A Tribute Album* (January/February). This is the best tribute album to come along in awhile, and I think if anyone wants to hear what country music is, I recommend it. I think Keith would have been pleased, especially with the emotions each artist put into recording Keith's songs.

Linda Wall
Winder, Georgia

RVS Punishing His Fans

I always look forward to receiving *Country Music* and look for any article on RVS. I agree with Mr. Morthland (January/February), the last two cassettes have been a great disappointment to me. RVS sings the tearjerker songs best, like "Somebody Lied," "Life Turned Her That Way," etc. The first time I heard him sing those songs, I said he had the most beautiful voice I ever heard. But since he quit drinking, I think he is punishing us for that because he hasn't done well since. I am in his fan club and will buy *Love & Honor* with tongue-in-cheek because I know it won't be as good as his first few releases. Maybe he needs Tony Brown for a manager. Keep up the good work.

Gladys Adams
Galena, Kansas

Shelton Review a Pleasant Surprise

At last, a half-decent record review for Ricky Van Shelton! I've subscribed to this magazine for several years, and there have been times when I felt you weren't giving Ricky a fair deal. What a pleasant surprise. I agree with the majority of Mr. Morthland's review. Part of the problem in the past, though, hasn't been the songs and production so much as radio doesn't seem to want to play his records. Those who program should realize that there are people out here that listen to someone other than Alan, Vince and Garth.

Linda Shahangian
Jefferson City, Missouri

Lovely Loveless Review

I have been a subscriber for at least six years now and must commend you on a fine magazine. I'm also a big fan of Patty Loveless. Michael McCall's review of *When Fallen Angels Fly* in November/December couldn't have been more accurate. McCall knows good quality when he hears it. Also, Emory Gordy Jr. has done an outstanding job of producing Patty's last two albums. Sure hope to see more of her in future issues. Anything in the making?

Todd E. Wise

Winchester, Virginia

Before too long.—Ed.

Amen! to Final Note

Amen to Patrick Carr's Final Note (January/February). I'm 50 and grew up listening to the Opry as well as 50's rock 'n' roll, but give me a man or woman who can pick and sing anytime over someone who wears tight clothes and wiggles.

Netagene Houghtaling
Tampa, Florida

Final Note Fires 'Em Up

Thank you for the Final Note in the November/December issue of *Country Music*. "Less crap, more music"—we sure agree at our home. In our area, the radio stations want to play over and over the boot-stomping, loud, yelling, gimmick songs. What is wrong with the ballads? Of course, a lot of the great ballads are on CD's of artists who are over 40, and that is another problem with radio play. The struggling new artists on independent labels must feel as though they're beating their heads against a brick wall. Keep up the good work. *Country Music* is a good magazine.

Barbara & Bob Hutsler
Ravenna, Ohio

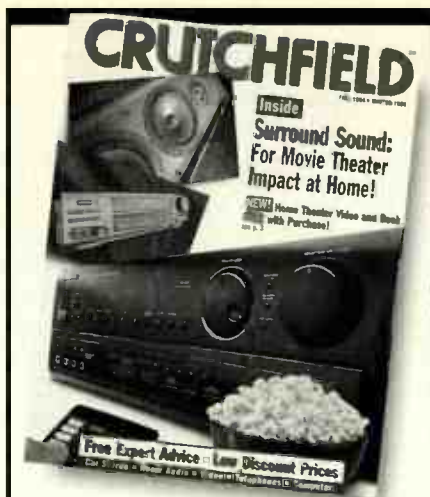
Just Three Things

Three things: 1) Amen to Patrick Carr's "Less Crap, More Music." 2) Thanks for the honest, on-the-mark album reviews. 3) When will you be published monthly?

Lori Ryner

Winterset, Louisiana

1) Glad you like. 2) Yer welcome. 3) Never satisfied!—Ed.



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Resurrecting Tootsie's

I have just read with great interest in the January/February '95 issue your article in *People* on the resurrecting of Tootsie's Orchid Lounge. This past July we had the great pleasure of visiting Nashville for six days. We did and saw many things, but nothing compared to the two times we visited Tootsie's. It was wonderful to sit in the place that I had heard so much about as a child when listening to the Grand Ole Opry with my mom and dad. You could almost feel the presence of the artists there.

Virginia Whittemore
Boykins, Virginia

See *People* this issue for more on Tootsie's.—Ed.

What About Dottie?

On January 22, they showed the movie about the life of Dottie West. I went through the January/February issue from cover to cover and I found nothing about the late, great Dottie West. I thought surely you would have done something about her along with the movie. Do you reckon you could do an article on her, cause she seems to be forgotten in your magazine.

Frank Coffin
Stuart, Florida

We ran a *People* item and photo from the filming in November/December.—Ed.

The Delivery, Not the Material

I have been a country music fan for 35 of my 40 years. It is interesting to read the letters from the new wave of country music fans that say they don't like the old country music. But it is not the music they don't like, it's the artists. Since 1990, songs such as "Oh Lonesome Me," "The Race Is On," "Grand Tour," "A Picture of Me Without You," to name a few, have made the Top 40. They also made the Top 40 back in the 50's, 60's and 70's. If you listen to the original and the remake back to back, about the only difference is the voice and quality of the recording. I like both old and new artists, but some of the new ones, like The Tractors, are missing something. A fiddle and steel guitar, maybe?

Jerry L. Graves
Laconia, New Hampshire

Wigginses Wow 'Em

I am not a fan club member of any one (artist), just a fan of good music. John and Audrey Wiggins have the best release I have heard in a long time. Please tell us more about them, future plans. I urge everyone to listen to every song. They're all winners.

Mrs. Margaret Cockrel
Rome, Georgia

Wiggins feature this issue.—Ed.

The Letter is "T"

I have one letter for you. That is "T," as in T. Graham Brown! I am a city born and raised female, and "T," as we city folk call him, was the reason I started to pay attention to country music. After seeing him perform "Poor Side of Town" on *Music City Tonight*, I was hooked. So, please, do an article or something on the man.

Collette Dix
Bowie, Maryland

Cover Chapin Carpenter

I'm a huge fan of Mary Chapin Carpenter. I would love for you to do a feature on her. I'm 14 and she is such an inspiration to me. I'd like to know why no one ever does anything on her. In my opinion, she's the best singer around.

Katrina Hensley
Lilburn, Georgia

Coming soon.—Ed.

Pure Country?

Is country music in short supply that the singers have to look to other fields for material? *Rhythm, Country and Blues* and the music of The Eagles and Lynyrd Skynyrd. Now The Beatles? What's next? The Monkees?

Helen Busch
Hemet, California

Anne Murray did once record "Daydream Believer"....—Ed.

Good Music Lives On

I agree with some of the other readers in that I would also like to read more about older artists like Conway Twitty, Patsy

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Cline and Hank Williams Sr. Just because they are not alive doesn't mean their music died with them. I also agree that there should be more women centerfolds.

Sandi Watt
Midland, Texas

Garth Draws 'Em In

In regards to the opinion written in the November/December issue, there are a lot of us who enjoy Garth's music. My mom was absolutely dead-set against country music until she saw Garth in concert. Now she not only has his CD's, but many other country-Western artists as well. She also has a subscription to this magazine. Garth definitely opened the closed door to country music and, like my mom, we all fell in. Garth kept me a fan. Yes, I too would like to see more female artists. After all, variety is a spice of life.

Andrea Groom
Lake Park, Minnesota

Country 101 for Today's Fans

To "today's" country fans: I understand how you feel, but my mama always told me that a person must be well-rounded. This also applies to music. What you're listening to on the radio is people who look alike, sound alike and are generally coming out of the record labels just like a

factory churns out plastic toys. They have no soul, no substance and are absolutely not original. Get some of the legends' and originals' music and listen carefully and closely to it, because from what I saw in your letters, you don't know much about country music. Now, don't get mad. This is only for your sakes. Most of the rock 'n' rollers and hot new cowboys will be forgotten someday, and you won't know what to do. That's why you need a basic education in the basics of country music. You may see the light.

Alicia Matheny
Fairmont, West Virginia

Where's Grady Martin?

Could you tell me, what has become of the great Grady Martin who played with Willie Nelson's band? I have missed him when I see the band or hear anything about them. I think he also played for Elvis.

Joan Long

Clarksville, Tennessee
Martin, who played with Little Jimmy Dickens among others, retired from Willie's band in 1994.—Ed.

Mavericks Hot

When are you going to do an article on The Mavericks? They are the hottest group in country music today, as far as I'm concerned. I'm anticipating the re-

lease of their latest album and new video.

June Stortz
Perryville, Montana

To answer your question, "Now."—Ed.

Letters a Favorite

Thanks for a great magazine. I have been a subscriber since 1975, and it just keeps getting better. Great articles and pictures. One of my favorite sections is Letters. It's nice to hear what people across the country like. And I agree with most, especially the ones who think we need to hear more of the old (real) country music. We are fortunate here in southwest Wisconsin to have a great country station, WGLR, in Lancaster. They do a good job of mixing the old with the new.

Rosalie Korvars
Fennimore, Wisconsin

Sweeps Winner

The winner of our August/September 1994 \$1000.00 Renewal Sweepstakes is Omar Simpson of Fort Madison, Iowa. Congratulations! More Sweeps winners to be announced soon.

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Albums

1. Garth Brooks *The Hits*
2. Tim McGraw *Not a Moment Too Soon*
3. The Tractors *The Tractors*
4. Jeff Foxworthy *You Might Be a Redneck If...*
5. Alan Jackson *Who I Am*
6. Brooks & Dunn *Waitin' On Sundown*
7. George Strait *Lead On*
8. Mary Chapin Carpenter... *Stones in the Road*
9. Reba McEntire *Read My Mind*
10. Joe Diffie *Third Rock from the Sun*
11. Clay Walker *If I Could Make a Living*
12. Alabama *Greatest Hits, Volume 3*
13. Vince Gill *When Love Finds You*
14. John Michael Montgomery . *Kickin' It Up*
15. David Ball *Thinkin' Problem*
16. John Berry *John Berry*
17. Pam Tillis *Sweetheart's Dance*
18. Tracy Lawrence *I See It Now*
19. Tracy Byrd *No Ordinary Man*
20. Reba McEntire *Greatest Hits, Volume 2*
21. Billy Ray Cyrus *Storm in the Heartland*
22. The Mavericks *What a Crying Shame*
23. George Jones *Bradley's Barn Sessions*
24. Wade Hayes *Old Enough to Know Better*
25. Blackhawk *Blackhawk*

Singles

1. Pam Tillis *Mi Vida Loca (My Crazy Life)*
2. Reba McEntire *Till You Love Me*
3. Alan Jackson *Gone Country*
4. John Berry *You and Only You*
5. Sawyer Brown *This Time*
6. Brooks & Dunn *I'll Never Forgive My Heart*
7. Doug Stone *Little Houses*
8. Tim McGraw *Not a Moment Too Soon*
9. Collin Raye *My Kind of Girl*
10. Patty Loveless *Here I Am*
11. Tracy Byrd *The First Step*
12. Mary Chapin Carpenter... *Tender When I Want to Be*
13. Mark Chesnutt *Goin' Through the Big D*
14. Wade Hayes *Old Enough to Know Better*
15. John Anderson *Bend Until It Breaks*
16. George Strait *You Can't Make a Heart Love Somebody*
17. Diamond Rio *Night Is Fallin' in My Heart*
18. Neal McCoy *For a Change*
19. Travis Tritt *Between an Old Memory and Me*
20. Toby Keith *Upstairs Downtown*
21. Tracy Lawrence *As Any Fool Can See*
22. Shenandoah and Alison Krauss *Somewhere in the Vicinity of the Heart*
23. Clay Walker *This Woman and This Man*
24. Clint Black *Wherever You Go*
25. Rick Trevino *Doctor Time*

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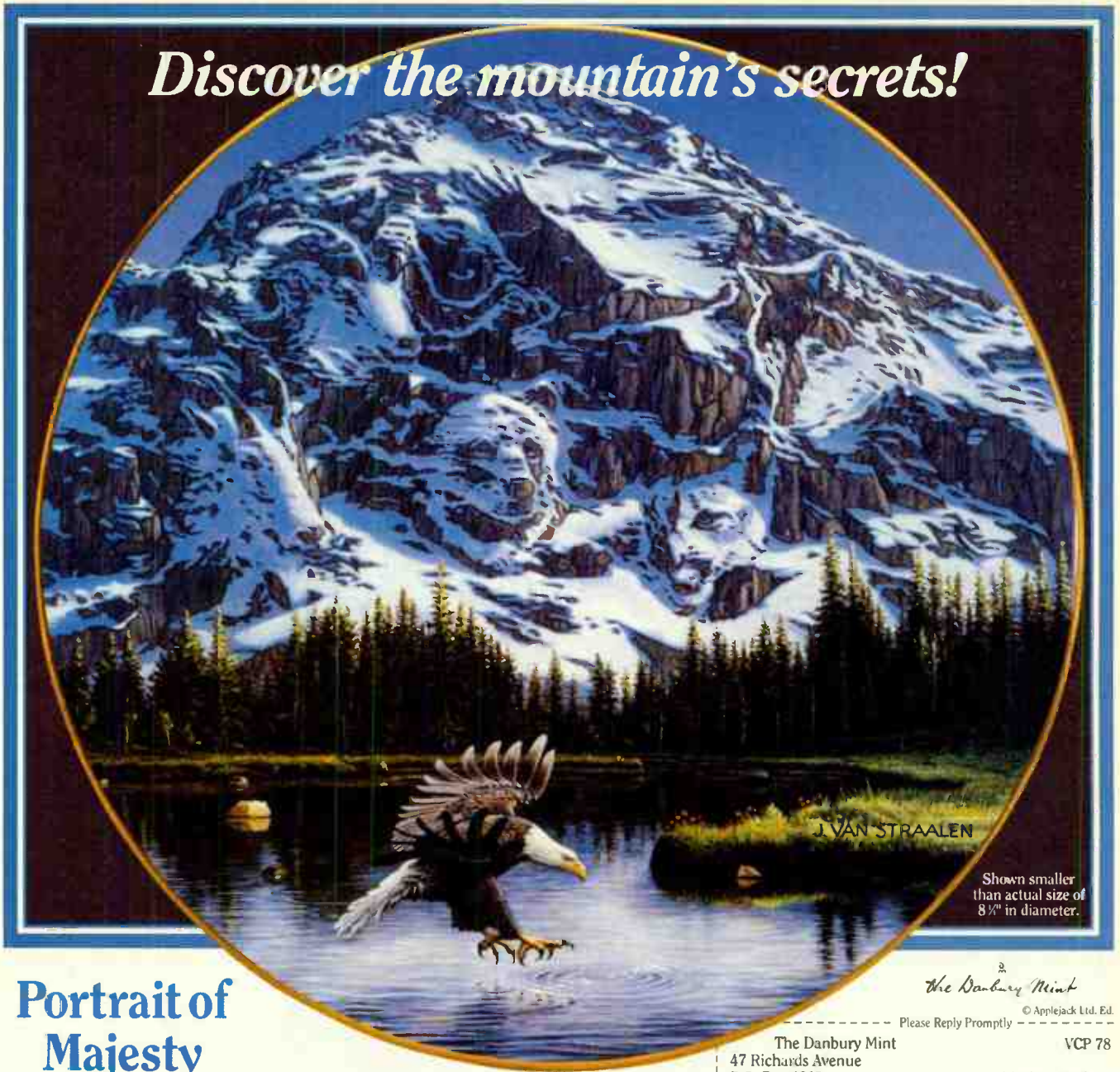
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1 So, how are you doing these days?

I've got my own theater now, Michael. I built one with a partner three years ago. I sold out to him, and then I built me a new one, which I'm in now. It's 2,700 seats.

2 Boy that's big for Branson, isn't it?

Yes, it's big. The Palace has 4,000 seats; the Shenandoah has 3,000, and ours is the next biggest. But I have a recording studio and a TV studio in mine.

3 That's great. I take it Branson is still going great guns.

It's increasing every year in tourists. I think we're up to six million people now. Hopefully, according to our publicity and advertisements, by the year 2000 we hope to have 10 million people in here.

4 Yes, but are they all going to go down that same road?

(Laughter.) No, they're building roads just as fast as they can build them.

5 So how much recording are you doing?

You know, I'm not doing all that much anymore. The last thing I did was a gospel album I'm selling at the theater, and I'm almost to 200,000 sales. And I get to keep it all; I don't have to give it to the record label or anything. It's a double album, 22 songs in it. And I get to do a recitation on that album.



20 Questions with MEL TILLIS

by M...M...Michael Bane

6 Boy, sounds like you've kinda got it made.

I'm telling you what, I've been a blessed man all my life. I guess this is the icing on the cake, to have your own venue and do anything you want on stage. The first half of my show, I do Mel Tillis. I do my songs, my hits, and then I do a lot of comedy.

7 You always liked that comedy, didn't you?

Yeah, I love it. Folks, they want to hear me talk, so I lay it on them. And the last half normally I do a production. The year before last I did a tribute to Roger Miller. I did "King of the Road," I dressed up like a clown. We did a lot of his hit songs, then we did about 30 minutes of *Big River*. I played Huckleberry Finn, if you can imagine a 60-year-old Huckleberry Finn. We did the raft scene and the whole bit. It thundered and lightened on stage—we had a rain curtain. We can do all kinds of productions. This year, our last half will be written and produced by Sol Illison, who produced Tony Orlando's show. We're doing "How the West was Sung."

That's a cool idea.

Yeah, I ride out on a horse. A live one.

8 I would really like to hear you do "River in the Rain" from *Big River*. I'll bet you'd do a great job.

We did it on a raft; we had low fog on the stage, and then, behind us, we had scene of a river boat, and it looked like we were there out on the river in the rain. I had my little grandson out there with me, dressed up like Huck Jr., he's only two-and-a-half years old. He stole the damn show. I had an African-American on there with me, he played Jim. People cried when they saw it.

9 Do you ever miss Nashville, the hectic part of the record business?

I miss the competitive part of it. I'm sorry that I'm not allowed to compete. I miss that.

10 *These days, with the hat-of-the-week, nobody is allowed to compete unless they're 27 years old with a good butt.* I was talking to Faron Young yesterday. I said, "Faron, I haven't seen you on *Music City Tonight*. He said, "I ain't been on there. They called me 15 times." He said, "First of all, I can't stand that Charlie Chase and that girl." And then he said, "And them guys with their hats on and their jeans too tight," he said. "To hell with them."

11 *You must feel really great about Pam though.* Oh, yes, I really do. It's just a wonderful feeling.

12 *Did you ever figure when she had short skirts and funny-colored hair that she would ever wander back to country music?*

Well, I had hopes. I stayed on her pretty hot and heavy all the time. I said, "You need to come back to your roots, darlin'." And finally, when she did, her first album was a hit. And her first single was Number One. So I think she learned her lesson. It takes all that to grow. I sent her to the University of Tennessee, and she stayed up there six months and came back. That's when I hired her in my group, as a Stutterette. Then she went out to San Francisco and got into jazz out there. I think she did some gigs with Ramsey Lewis. She came home and got into commercials and writing and backup vocalist. But she finally came to her senses. Music can change to fit her too, you know. I sorry to say this but I feel like radio is dictating what they play on the air, and they are dictating the records and the music. I don't think that's healthy.

13 *Not to sound too petty, but it's getting hard to tell who's who...*

I don't know who it is, it's phony. They're making a hell of a lot of money. I don't suppose you can criticize. But the songs are in and out, and you don't have time to put a judge on anything. I don't know;



Mel's new theater—artist's rendering above—is the third largest in Branson. It gives him the freedom to do his own thing. A little singing, some comedy, a production number. He's happy. Back in 1976, when he was named Entertainer of the Year by the CMA—at right—he thought he was doing well. Little did he know. He says he's been blessed.



I'm perplexed. It takes young ears to listen to it. A good song, every now and then, will break through. And those are the songs that will be around 15 to 20 years from now. But most of the songs, I feel, are radio inspired—they're commercial songs. And they're in and out.

14 *Are you writing songs anymore?*

No, Michael. Well, every now and then I'll come up with one. I'm not into that anymore. I've got me a computer and I'm into writing. I've got me some stories started, some fiction, and I've got to do another autobiography. But I've got me a novel, a fiction—the name of it is *A Goat Named Guano*.

15 *Okay, Mel, I'll bite. What's it about?*

It's about a cowboy who finds a goat in a cave, and he finds a whole lot of bat do-do in

there, and he gets rich. He credits the goat for making him rich, because he was standing on tons and tons of bat shit. He mines it out there, and he gets rich and he takes the goat and the horse—the horse can talk, the reader can understand him—but the cowboy can't hear him. The horse doesn't like the goat. He said the first damn chance he gets he's going to drop kick his ass clean from Billings, Montana, to Portland, Oregon. So I'm into that.

16 *It's hard to imagine you sitting at the computer writing novels.*

God almighty, I can do anything I want to with my characters. You know, I can get him laid, I can get him to do anything I want.

17 *Have you ever talked to Pam about writing?*
A little bit.

18 *What did you tell her?*
She'd ask me about the title. I usually start with the title when I write a song.

I remember that.

It's just like writing a paragraph—you get a topic, your main topic, and then go from there. It can be in the middle, at the beginning or at the end.

19 *Did you start with the title when you started this novel?*

No. That's not always the case, you know. I found out a lot of that shit that I learned in school about writing doesn't apply.

20 *You know what? Sounds to me like you're the guy who beat *The System*.*

Yeah, well, when I was Entertainer of the Year, I thought I was really making money. I had no idea. I had no idea that at this stage of my career I could double, or triple, what I made then. It's amazing. Really.

VOTE

MEMBERS POLL/MARCH 1995

Your opinions can help influence record companies, radio stations, record stores, concert promoters, managers and performers. As a CMSA member, you have a 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. In the boxes below, write the numbers of any of the albums on the Top 25 list in this issue which you bought in the last month.

3. For any albums you bought in the last month not on the Top 25 list, write performer's name and album titles in the space below. (Attach a separate sheet if you need more room.)

Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

4. List numbers of your five favorites from Top 25 in this issue.

Singles (list 5 numbers)

Albums (list 5 numbers)

Your Favorite Artists

5. Who are your top three all-time favorite country artists?

Your Favorite Songs

6. What are your top three all-time favorite country songs?

Your Favorite Album

7. What is your all-time favorite country album?

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: March Poll, *Country Music Magazine*, 329 Riverside Avenue, Suite 1, Westport, Connecticut 06880.



Faron Young Special

Two collections of Faron Young's original hits are available, and which one you want depends mainly on your pocketbook. The first of them, *All Time Greatest Hits* (Curb 77334), features ten of his biggest Capitol recordings: "Hello Walls," "Live Fast, Love Hard, Die Young," "Sweet Dreams," "Goin' Steady," "Country Girl," "Alone With You," "I Miss You Already," "Riverboat," "The Comeback" and "Your Old Use to Be." Available on cassette or CD. Regular price \$9.95 cassette, \$17.95 CD. Members' price \$7.95 cassette, \$15.95 CD.

For the hardcore Faron fan, Bear Family's *Faron Young: The Classic Years 1952-1962* (BCD 15493) features his complete 1952-1962 Capitol output on five CD's, a total of 157 recordings. If he recorded it for Capitol, it's here, including the hits, gospel material and his pop LP (done in Hollywood with full orchestration), *The Object of My Affection*. The set comes with an excellent 45-page booklet complete with rare photos. Regular price \$149.95. Members' price \$139.95.

Unfortunately, none of the original recordings of Young's later material are currently in print, but Step One Records does have three cassettes available which feature 1989 re-recordings of some of these hits. *Greatest Hits Volume 1* (SOR-0043) features ten songs: "Sweet

Dreams" and "Wine Me Up" among them. *Volume 2* (SOR-0044) has 11 songs: "Hello Walls," "Three Days," "If You Ain't Lovin' (You Ain't Livin')" and "Unmitigated Gall" among them. *Volume 3* (SOR-0045) features another 10 songs, including "Four in the Morning" and "Live Fast. Love Hard. Die Young." Though these aren't the classic recordings, they are bargain priced. Cassette only. Regular price \$7.95 each volume. Members' price \$5.95 each volume.

A Different Poll

Take a look at the Members' Poll this time. Instead of asking you about product usage or other marketing information, we want to know your all-time country favorites: top three artists and songs, and your one favorite album. This should lead to some interesting responses, and we'll print the results in future editions of the *CMSA Newsletter*.

Buried Treasures Special

CMSA members are entitled to discounts on all products offered in Buried Treasures. Members may deduct \$5.00 off the sets on Elvis, Bob Wills and Asleep at the Wheel. Take \$2.00 off everything else. Include membership number if taking discount. See complete ordering instructions in Buried Treasures.

Essential Collector Special

CMSA members may also take \$2.00 off the price of each item found in Essential Collector. Include your membership number, and see ordering details on the Essential Collector page.

How to Order

To order items listed on this page, send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 030495N, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Include \$3.00 postage and handling per order. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 additional postage.

CLASSIC PHOTO

At the Jackie Gleason Pro-Celebrity Golf Tournament in 1972, Faron Young met up with two other outspoken personalities: Gleason and boxing legend Muhammad Ali. See the Newsletter for more on Faron Young.



NEW TROY-BILT® CHIPPER/VAC™!

Chipping Chute feeds branches into blade spinning at 3,600 rpm.



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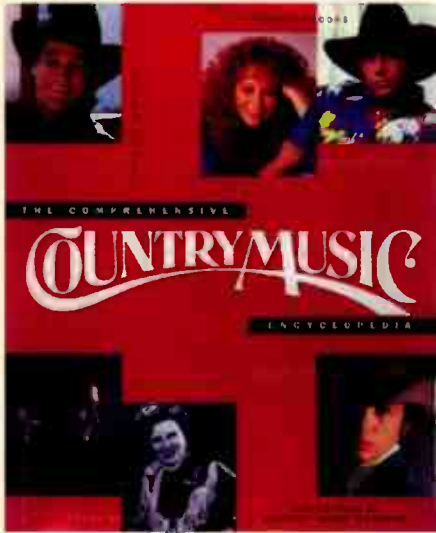
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EDITOR'S CHOICE

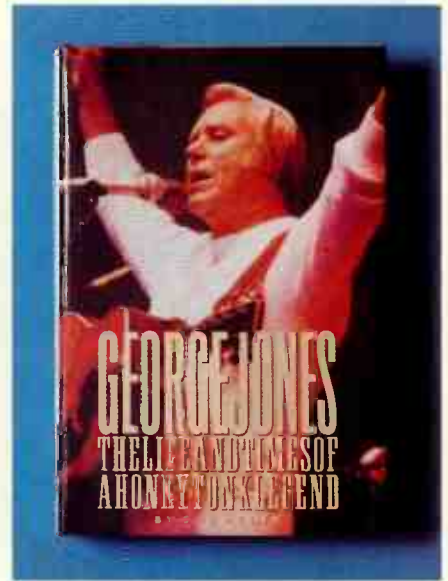


NEW! COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE'S OWN COMPREHENSIVE COUNTRY MUSIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Country Music Magazine's own *Country Music Encyclopedia* is the best reference book available on the subject. In 680 entries—from Acuff to Zydeco—you'll find the

answers to all your questions on country music's past, present and future. It's also lavishly illustrated with OVER 600 photographs...including many rarely seen.

Just to give you a little history behind this great volume, in 1974, just two years after *Country Music Magazine* was born, we published the *Country Music Encyclopedia*. There was nothing else like it at the time. In fact, up through the 1980's, if you had asked the Library of Congress for recommended reading on the subject of country music, the two books always mentioned first were the *Country Music Encyclopedia* and another book we published, *The Illustrated History of Country Music*. But 20 years have passed. Not only has a lot happened in country music since 1974, but old "facts" have been discovered to be incorrect, new facts have come to light, and, most importantly, the young and relatively inexperienced *Country Music* staff of 1974 has become mature, experienced and America's absolute authority on the subject of country music. So, recognizing the need for an up-to-date book of this kind, rather than simply revising the original, we decided to start from scratch and produce a completely new book. Ask for Item #B1S/G1B, \$25.



GEORGE JONES BOOK AND VIDEO THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A HONKY TONK LEGEND

In his tumultuous life, George Jones has been like two men running in opposite directions. He's the only country singer to have had a Number One hit single in each of the last four decades. His voice, some say, has a quality so powerful that it's "felt," not merely heard. The other Jones is a man who drank whiskey like water, shot at his best friend and destroyed his own home in a fit of rage. This newly revised book, written by *Country Music's* own Contributing Editor, Bob Allen, explores both sides of this complex man. We follow him through his impoverished boyhood in Texas, his stint on the honky tonk circuit, his rise to stardom and descent into alcoholic hell, including his stormy marriage to and divorce from Tammy Wynette. This captivating biography brings readers up to date as Jones stays clean and sober, finds true happiness in his fourth marriage and achieves the status of the Grand Old Man of country music. Hardcover, 306 pages, illustrated. Request Item #B2Y, \$19.95.

GEORGE JONES GOLDEN HITS VIDEO—50 MINS.

This video presents Jones talking about his greatest hits and footage of him performing these songs at the time each one was released. You're taken into a time capsule that allows you to see the career of this "living legend" as it unfolds. Some of the 14 songs included are "White Lightning" (Feb. 9, 1959), "Golden Ring" (June 5, 1976), "Bartender's Blues" (January 7, 1978), "She Thinks I Still Care" (March 3, 1962), "Walk Through This World with Me" (January 21, 1967), "The Door" (October 26, 1974), "I Always Get Lucky with You" (May 7, 1983) and "He Stopped Loving Her Today" (April 12, 1980). Ask for video #V3T, \$19.95.



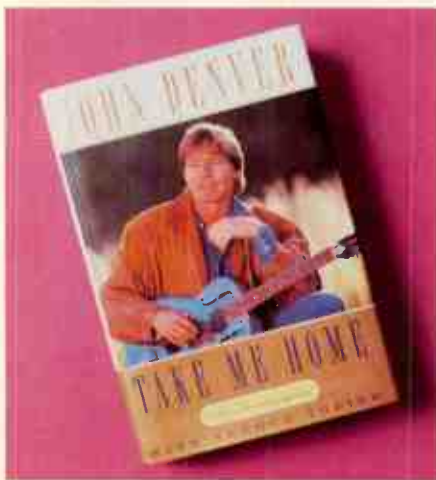
FOUR OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S BEST SONGBOOKS

These songbooks offer something for every country music lover: There's *George Jones Very Best* with 28 of his biggest songs. It includes the words and music to such hits as "I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair," "Same Ol' Me," "White Lightning," "She Thinks I Still Care" and more. Item #B3D, \$14.95. For those who want more variety, *Today's Country Highlights* gives you the best of the best with 48 numbers made popular by your favorite artists. You'll find "Can't Even Get the Blues," "Honky Tonk Moon," "If My Heart Had Windows," "Leavin' on Your Mind" and more hot hits and unforgettable classics. Item #B3Y, \$17.95. Bob Wills fans won't want to pass up this *Greatest Hits* anthology. You'll find words and music to 47 numbers including "Honeysuckle Rose," "A Big Ball in Cowtown," "Time Changes Everything," "Oklahoma Hills" and more. Item B3K, \$16.95. *Cowboy and Western Songs* features 200 Western classics with lyrics, music and guitar chords. Organized into 14 sections by theme, you'll find such classics as "Down in the Valley," "The Old Chisholm Trail," "Lay Down Little Dogies," "Home on the Range," "Little Joe the Wrangler" and many other cowboy songs, both popular and more obscure. A treasure for Western music lovers. Item #B3H, \$29.95.

Nashville Warehouse

BRAND NEW! JOHN DENVER: TAKE ME HOME (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

This book presents the journey of Henry John Deutchendorf Jr., son of a U.S. Air Force officer, who began a career in the 1960's as an aspiring folk musician. Denver highlights everything from his early days with the Chad Mitchell Trio—years plagued by financial difficulties and nights spent in airport terminals—to his success with top songs like "Take Me Home, Country Roads," and his hit song, "Leaving on a Jet Plane," recorded by Peter, Paul and Mary. He talks about his first marriage to Annie Martell, life as a father and the effect his career had on his personal life. He talks of his involvement with the EST movement, his self-reflection in the 70's and his second, volatile marriage to Cassandra Delaney. Don't miss the rich story of John Denver—environmentalist, musician, humanitarian and man. 288 pages, illustrated, Item #B3W, \$22.00



BRAND NEW! COUNTRY MUSIC ACCESSORIES

These pieces are sure to be a great addition to your country-Western jewelry collection. There's the gold cowboy hat earrings with stars, Item #J1A, or the cowboy boot earrings in silver with a turquoise-colored stone at the base, Item #J1B. Or choose the gold cowboy boot earrings with turquoise enamel, Item #J1C. Each pair sells for \$5.95, or get one in each color and style, for \$15.85 and SAVE \$2.00. We're also offering the rhinestone-studded small guitar pin, ideal for a jacket or blazer, for only \$13.95, Item #J4A. And there's the guitar-emblem necklace, Item #J4B for \$5.95. Buy both the pin and necklace for \$17.90 and SAVE \$2.00.



THE "I LOVE COUNTRY MUSIC" BASEBALL CAP

You've probably seen our top-selling "I Love Country Music" T-shirt (page 63 of this issue). Now you can get the same popular design on a baseball cap. The "I Love Country Music" cap comes in midnight black with the words "I Love Country Music" and the image of a guitar and banjo in white. The words "Country Music" and "love" are highlighted in red. The cap is 100% polyester, with lining inside the top front and mesh in the back. It's adjustable and ideal for any season. A great gift item for any country music lover. One size fits all adults. The cap costs only \$6.95. Ask for Item #G2N.



BRAND NEW! COUNTRY MUSIC T-SHIRTS

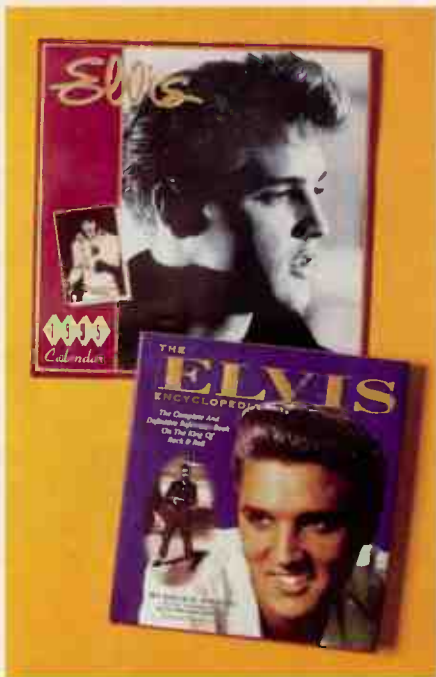
These high-quality, popular country music T-shirts are Hanes 100% cotton, which makes them sturdy and guaranteed to last. You can get the Billy Ray Cyrus T-shirt in white with Billy Ray on the front (as shown) and "Achy Breaky Heart" on the back. The Billy Ray white T-shirt is Item #G5P. Travis Tritt fans will love the Travis Tritt T-shirt in black with his name and tour itinerary on the reverse side. Tritt T-shirt is Item #G5X. And don't miss the Dwight Yoakam T-shirt in black with the album cover shot from his popular

1993 release, *This Time*, on the front. The album title is on the back with a schedule of tour cities. The Dwight Yoakam T-shirt is Item #G5Z. You can get each T-shirt for only \$15.95. All of these T-shirts are concert quality—without the concert price. Order men's sizes M, L or XL. There's also the Billy Ray Cyrus baseball cap (not pictured) with the standard Billy Ray Cyrus logo in white or black. The white Billy Ray logo cap is Item #G5R. The black cap is Item #G5S. Each cap sells for \$13.95. Order any two items and take \$2.00 off of your total.

Nashville Warehouse

NEW! THE ELVIS ENCYCLOPEDIA AND 1995 ELVIS PRESLEY CALENDAR

The Elvis Encyclopedia, The Complete and Definitive Reference Book on the King of Rock & Roll, is just as it states—the first complete and authentic reference volume that contains all there is to know about Elvis. It's compiled by his stepbrother, David Stanley, who traveled and lived with Elvis at Graceland for 17 years. After talking with fans and fielding questions about Elvis, some of which even he couldn't answer, Stanley knew what he had to do: put together a reliable sourcebook on the life and person of Elvis Presley. The result of his work includes every relevant, interesting and amusing event in Elvis' 42 years. You'll find reproductions of documents such as Elvis' birth certificate and over 250 photo-

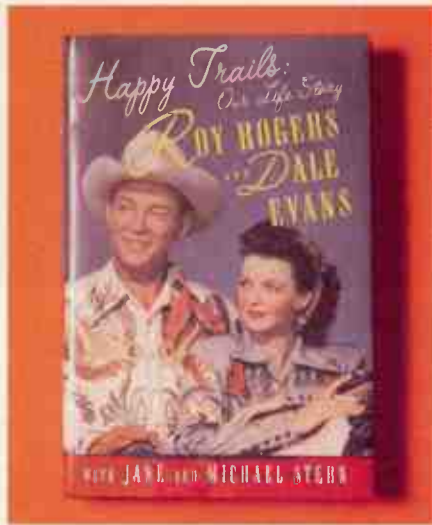


graphs—some never published. There are also short biographies of more than 100 family members and friends plus comprehensive lists of songs, tour dates, recordings, films and an insider's section that relates intimate information about Elvis' pastimes, general preferences, his drug use and more. Whether you're a die-hard fan, or an Elvis trivia buff, you won't want to miss this new book. Request #B1V, \$29.95.

THE OFFICIAL 1995 ELVIS PRESLEY WALL CALENDAR

Here is your absolute last chance to get this year's new 1995 Elvis Wall Calendar. It features twelve fabulous, high-gloss photos of "The King" during the early years of his legendary career. It measures 12" x 12" and opens up to a big 12" x 24". Don't miss this bestseller. Request #G6F, \$10.95.

IF YOU ORDER BOTH THE ENCYCLOPEDIA AND CALENDAR, CHECK THE BOX ON THE COUPON TO GET A BESTSELLING 60 MIN. ELVIS PERFORMANCE VIDEO WORTH \$19.95...FREE!



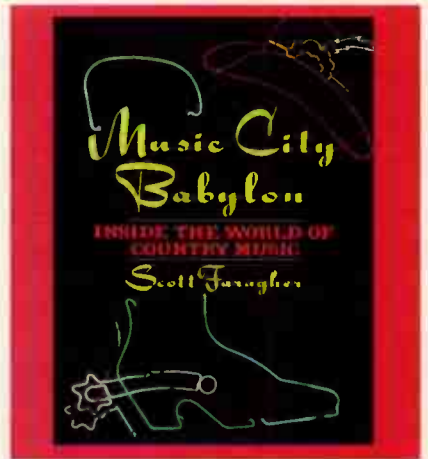
NEW! HAPPY TRAILS: ROY ROGERS AND DALE EVANS (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

Roy Rogers and Dale Evans are true American icons. They were childhood heroes to millions who grew up in a more innocent and romantic time. In their new autobiography, *Happy Trails*, these two living legends finally tell their stories.

Tracing his life from his Midwest childhood, through his early years with the Sons of the Pioneers, to his almost instant box office success as a singing cowboy, *Happy Trails* follows the life and career of Roy Rogers and parallels it with that of Dale Evans, a singer and dancer who initially had no intention of becoming a Western movie actress. The story of their 50-year love affair will appeal to all who long for heroes in real life as well as on the screen. Hardcover, 256 pages, 32 pages of black and white photographs. Ask for Item #B5M, \$23.

MUSIC CITY BABYLON

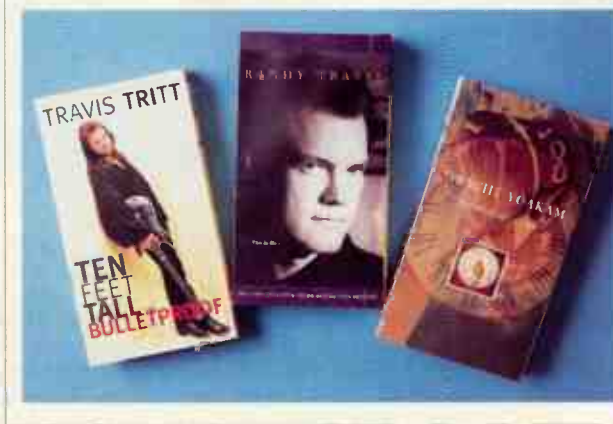
Author Scott Faragher is a talent agent who has represented stars like Waylon Jennings, George Jones, Billy Ray Cyrus and Ray Price. For the past 20 years he has juggled talents and temperament, kept his clients happy and loyal and persuaded his customers to pay top dollar, while fending off shark-like competition. Now he takes you deep inside the business to paint you a picture of country music behind the scenes that you have never seen. Why did Loretta Lynn fire her agent of 14 years the week before Christmas with only two weeks' pay? How did Billy Ray Cyrus go from \$2,500 to \$150,000 a night as the result of one hit song? It's all here. This expansive 420-page, illustrated volume is \$19.95, Item #B6E.



THREE HOT NEW COUNTRY VIDEOS: TRITT, TRAVIS AND YOAKAM

Here are country music's best-selling new videos. First, there's Travis Tritt's *Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof*. This 40-minute video features nine great songs including "t-r-o-u-b-l-e," "The Whiskey Ain't Workin'," "Outlaws Like Us," "Foolish Pride," "Take It Easy," "Anymore," "Lord Have Mercy on the Working Man," "Can I Trust You With My Heart" and "Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof." For Travis ask for

Item #V3W, \$19.95. Next, there's Randy Travis' *This Is Me*. This 40-minute video features eight songs including "Heroes and Friends," "Better Class of Losers," "If I Didn't Have You," "Look Heart, No Hands," "An Old Pair of Shoes," "Cowboy Boogie," "Wind in the Wire" and "Before You Kill Us All." For Randy ask for Item #V9T, \$19.95. Finally, there's Dwight Yoakam's *Pieces of Time*. Also 40 minutes,

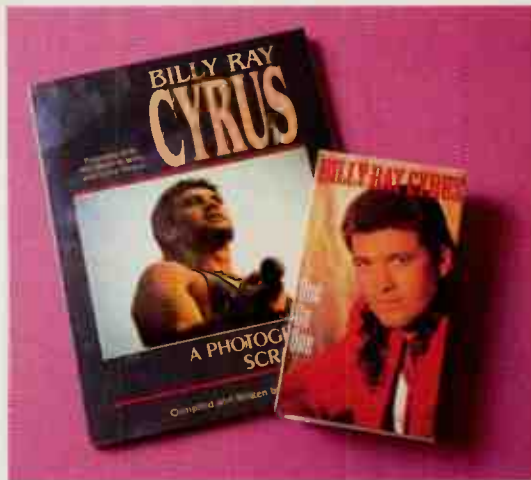
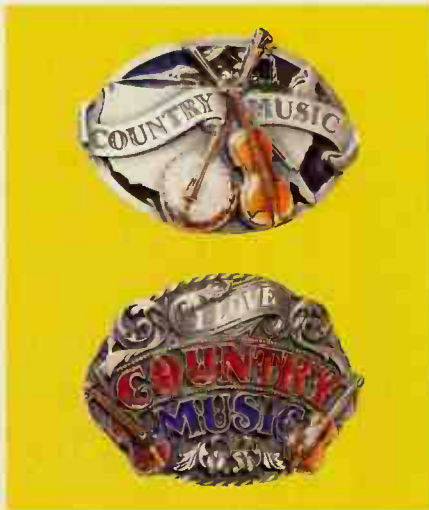


this video features eleven songs including "Suspicious Minds," "The Heart That You Own," "Turn It on, Turn It Up, Turn Me Loose," "Takes a Lot to Rock You," "You're the One," "It Only Hurts When I Cry," "Ain't That Lonely Yet," "A Thousand Miles From Nowhere," "Fast as You," "Try Not to Look so Pretty" and "Pocket of a Clown." For Dwight ask for Item #V9P, \$19.95.

Nashville Warehouse

COUNTRY MUSIC BELT BUCKLES

The buckles below are our most popular-selling country music accessories. Each of these buckles is made of genuine, high-quality pewter. The "I Love Country Music" buckle features two small fiddles with the words enameled in red, white and blue. The "Country Music" buckle features a fiddle and a banjo inlaid over an outline of the USA. Each sells for \$9.95. When you order, the "I Love Country Music" buckle is Item #G6J and the "Country Music" buckle is Item #G7L. For you fans who like country dancing, we also offer a pewter "Two-Step" buckle (not shown). It shows a two-stepping couple on a dark red background with the words "two-step" embossed across the bottom. When ordering ask for Item #G7M. This buckle also sells for \$9.95. Finally, we have a limited quantity of our original *Country Music Magazine* logo buckle (not shown). This six-ounce buckle is Item #G6C and sells for \$9.95. Order any two buckles for just \$17.90 and SAVE \$2.00. When ordering any combination of buckles include item number for each.



THE BILLY RAY CYRUS SCRAPBOOK

This photo-filled book is the most intimate look at Billy Ray that you'll find. The author traveled to Billy's hometown of Flatwoods, Kentucky, and visited with the friends and family who know him best.

There's over 325 photos (some even taken from BRC's old bedroom walls) and personal, detailed captions chronicling his life and career. Fans are calling it "the bible on Billy Ray." Billy Ray says, "Man you really hit the nail right on the head. Pictures don't lie!" Softcover, 159 pages. Ask for Item #B4J, \$19.95.

BRAND NEW BILLY RAY VIDEO!

One on One, a 25-minute video, gives fans an inside look at the artist and offers insight into the everyday life of Billy Ray. You'll get exclusive private footage, clips from concert tours, plenty of songs

and more. Item #V4L, only \$14.95.

THE NEW 1995 BILLY RAY CYRUS PHOTO CALENDAR!

Here's your last chance to get the 1995 Billy Ray Cyrus Calendar—a big 12" x 12" with 12 color photos. Item #G3G, \$11.99.

COUNTRY MUSIC T-SHIRTS AND DIAMOND CHIP WATCH

If you're a die-hard country music fan, show it off with the widely recognized *Country Music Magazine* logo on a 100% cotton Champion T-shirt. It comes in navy blue or red. The logo is in white. Or pick our other bestselling "I Love Country Music" T-shirt in navy blue only. They are \$10 each. For the *Country Music* logo T-shirt in navy blue, ask for Item #G2P. For red, ask for Item #G2Q. The "I Love Country Music" is Item #G2O. Order sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL.

Also get the *Country Music* diamond-chip logo watch (not shown). The *Country Music* logo is in gold on a black background. This 24-karat, gold-layered watch contains a genuine diamond chip. This accessory sells for only \$19.95, Item #G4L.



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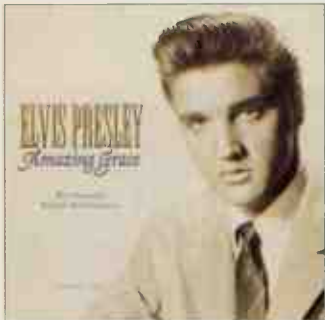
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SIGNATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> YES, I ordered the Elvis Calendar and Encyclopedia, send my FREE 60-Minute Elvis Performance Video (G5F).				
Add \$3.00 postage and handling for first item and \$.95 for each additional item.					
TN residents add 8.25% Sales Tax/Canadian orders add \$3.00 extra.					
This Offer Expires On 7/31/95!					Amount due \$

Buried Treasures

by Rich Kienzle

Elvis Presley: Given the dramatic improvement in quality of the Elvis reissues coming from RCA, it's only appropriate that similar attention be devoted to his gospel sides. Gospel was Elvis' first love and remained important to him onstage, offstage and on records from the beginning to the end. *Amazing Grace: His Greatest Sacred Performances* (RCA 66421) runs the gamut of 55 songs from 1957 through 1972. Beginning with his first, four-song gospel EP, it also includes his three best gospel LPs: *His Hand in Mine* from



1960, *How Great Thou Art* from 1967, and 1974's *He Touched Me*. The 1965 hit single, "Crying in the Chapel" (which he'd recorded five years earlier), is also included along with two 1974 performances, "Why Me Lord" and "How Great Thou Art," from live shows.

Bar none, the finest moments come at the end of disc two. Five never-released songs were recorded in 1972 during the shooting of the documentary, *Elvis On Tour*; the five numbers capture one of Elvis' legendary informal gospel jam sessions. Elvis often had such songfests over the years to warm up before recording or to unwind at Graceland. Here, he and some of his touring musicians, including J.D. Sumner and The Stamps, James Burton on acoustic guitar and Charlie Hodge on piano, fly through "I, John," "Bosom of Abraham," "You Better Run," "Lead Me, Guide Me" and a medley of "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"

and "Nearer My God to Thee." His years of familiarity with these songs make these performances among his most natural ever recorded. One only hopes RCA finds more such tapes, which round out a perfect package.

Charles Wolfe's gospel expertise makes for enjoyable notes, packed with insight into Elvis' gospel roots and the two groups that influenced him the most: The Blackwood Brothers and The Statesmen.

Texas Swing: Crazy Kat has a brand new collection of obscure Texas Western swing from the 40's and 50's. *Wanderers Swing: Texas Dance Hall Music* (KRZ 11) features 27 incredibly rare recordings from tiny, obscure Texas labels. While some songs work better than others, the best are outstanding, particularly the title tune, recorded by Rip Ramsey and his Texas Wanderers in 1948. Among the other fiery swing numbers are Grouchy and The Texas Pioneers' 1953 version of the fiddle tune, "Beaumont Rag." The blues numbers comprise some of the best selections. The Lone Star Playboys' "Banjo Boogie" manages to make even a four-string banjo sound bluesy. Another high point is Texas Bill Strength's 1950 recording of "Black Coffee Blues." Still other welcome inclusions are pioneering swing fiddler Shelley Lee Alley's 1945 "Low Down Blues" and Jerry Irby's 1951 "Trouble in Mind."

Most songs are medium tempo honky tonkers like the Miller Brothers' "Shadows on My Memories" and Jimmie Revard's "Holdin' the Sack," a 1940's performance that harkens back to Revard's 1930's swing recordings. Some less impressive tracks bog the set down, while Tommy Elliott and The Line Riders' "Sold Out Doc" is more hillbilly than swing. One interesting inclusion is the first-ever 1950 recording of "Release Me," by Eddie Miller and his Oklaho-

mans. Though sloppy musically, its historic value makes it a worthy inclusion.

Asleep at the Wheel: Asleep at the Wheel was three years old when the group recorded its first album, *Comin' Right at Ya*, in 1972 for United Artists. From 1975 to 1979 The Wheel recorded a series of marvelous albums for Capitol which won critical acclaim and a couple of well-deserved Grammys. *Still Swingin'* (Liberty CDP 30284) is a three-CD boxed set covering both the UA and Capitol periods. Disc one is a "best of" collection. It features high points from all AATW albums, including two unissued mid-70's recordings: an invigorating version of Moon Mullican's "Well Oh Well" sung here by Chris O'Connell, and Bob Wills' "Spanish Two Step." Among



the other selections are the group's original "Take Me Back to Tulsa" from the first album and "The Letter that Johnny Walker Read" from their classic 1975 album, *Texas Gold*. The original rockabilly version of AATW member Leroy Preston's "My Baby Thinks She's a Train,"

later a hit for Rosanne Cash, is in many ways as good as hers. The band's Grammy-winning "One O'Clock Jump" is also included, along with other selections from later Capitol LP's (all of which should be reissued on CD).

Disc two is an amazing chronicle of the band at its best. This material was recorded at a 1977 concert at Knotts Berry Farm in California, where the Original Texas Playboys were doing a live album. Capitol wisely left the tapes on when AATW was performing but never issued the results (the band later did a live album in Austin). This particular grouping, with Lucky Oceans on steel, Floyd Domino on piano, Leroy Preston on vocals and other excellent players, was one of the best versions of the band.

Unfortunately, Liberty made one unwise decision: reissuing the 1994 *Tribute to Bob Wills* CD as disc three. Fans who already own that set will justifiably feel short-changed, and using it elbowed out much more excellent Asleep at the Wheel material from the UA and Capitol years.

The booklet is excellent, with many rare photos, though Ray Benson's own recollections are the strongest portion.

Answer Songs: Bear Family CD collections often cover the entire career of a single artist. *And The Answer Is... Volumes 1 and 2* (BCD 15791 and 15793, respectively) is a different kind of collection entirely, and quite a departure. It's immensely appealing, though more like what you'd see K-Tel marketing on TV, with each volume compiling various original country hits, each one with its "answer" song. Today, "answer" songs aren't as popular as they once were, giving this set added value as a historical document. Volume 1 covers 28 songs, most from the 50's, beginning with Hank Thompson's 1952 "Wild Side of Life" and its famous "answer": Kitty Wells' ground-

breaking "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." Though some answer songs came from stars like Kitty, most were recorded by obscure artists whose producers were trying to get them noticed. In some cases, the tactic worked. Some pairings are important in other ways as well. Webb Pierce's classic "Back Street Affair" precedes Kitty Wells' "Paying for That Back Street Affair." Patsy Cline's "I Fall to Pieces" is followed by Gerrie Lynn's "I'll Pick Up the Pieces." Jean Shepard and Ferlin Husky answered their own megahit, "A Dear John Letter," with a hit answer, "Forgive Me John." After Hank Williams' "Jambalaya" comes Goldie Hill's "I'm Yvonne (From the Bayou)."

Volume 2 covers 30 songs (15 pairings) from the 60's and 70's. Tommy Tucker follows Johnny Cash's 1958 Sun hit, "Ballad of a Teenage Queen," with his 1960 "Return of the Teenage Queen." Following Jim Reeves' "He'll Have to Go" is Jeannie Black's "He'll Have to Stay." Bobby Bare's "Detroit City (I Wanna Go Home)" is followed by Shirley Ray's "Why Don'tcha Come Home." Margie Singleton answered Leroy Van Dyke's "Walk on By" with "I'll Just Walk on By." Kenny Rogers' "Ruby Don't Take Your Love to Town" was answered by Geraldine Stevens' "Billy, I've Got to Go to Town." Following Roger Miller's "King of the Road" is "Queen of the House," which launched Jody Miller's career. Connie Cato's "Goodhearted Man" answered Willie's "Good Hearted Woman," while Waylon's original version of "Only Daddy That'll Walk the Line" was answered by Jean Shepard's "Only Mama That'll Walk the Line." In another first for Bear Family, both CD booklets also feature complete lyrics for each song.

Bob Wills: Bob Wills' career was fading in the mid-1950's. Western swing, by then a declining regional phenomenon, was still popular in Texas and the Southwest, though many of the dancehalls Wills once ruled were closing. He could still draw crowds, though nothing like

those of the 30's and 40's. Then in the late 50's, The Playboys began upgrading with musicians like steel guitarist Gene Crownover and guitarist (later vocalist) Leon Rausch. When Wills signed with the Hollywood-based Liberty Records, he'd reunited with original Playboy vocalist Tommy Duncan, whom he'd fired in 1948.

The Wills-Duncan Liberty recordings became the last excellent recorded material before his first stroke. Liberty's



three-CD boxed set, *Encore* (CDP 30275), a 57-song sampler, covers 44 of the 57 Liberty recordings and a sampler of later songs. Wills had two hit singles for Liberty: "Image of Me" and "Heart to Heart Talk," both sung by Duncan and both included on disc one.

Many others here were re-makes of Wills favorites like "Take Me Back to Tulsa," "Dusty Skies," "Maiden's Prayer" and "Time Changes Everything." The producers didn't ignore some lesser-known Wills favorites, either, for "Trouble in Mind" and "She's Killin' Me" (both originally recorded by Wills in the 30's) show up on the first two discs. Disc three consists of a few live Wills performances from the 60's, previously issued on a two-LP Capitol set.

I can't understand why material from the 1974 *For the Last Time* album, Wills' final recording, was included, since Liberty has already reissued it on CD. Two unissued tracks from those sessions should have been included instead.

The booklet by Charles Townsend, whose pioneering 1976 Wills biography fueled interest in Wills, is misguided. Townsend has always preferred Wills' 30's and 40's period in Tulsa over all others. Nevertheless, it's amazing that, on a compilation of Liberty material, he barely discusses the Liberty recordings at all (he discusses Wills' earlier period with Columbia in far greater detail). Though the booklet features part of Bob Pinson's Wills discography, which he spent decades compiling, Pinson receives no credit.

Webb Pierce: For years, Webb Pierce's early pre-Decca recordings for the Four Star label have been available in awful packages complete with overdubbed instruments. Not so well known (except to Pierce collectors) are his 1950-

51 recordings made between his Four Star and Decca contracts. At that time Pierce owned Pacemaker Records in Shreveport, and not only recorded for it, but recorded other *Louisiana Hayride* art-



ists as well. *Webb Pierce and his Southern Melody Boys 1950-1951* (Krazy Kat KRZ 16) brings some of those obscure and rare recordings together for the first time. Material by other Pacemaker artists include songs by Cliff Grimsley, steel guitarist Shot Jackson and Tillman Franks and Pierce duets with early associate Buddy Attaway and Webb's first wife Betty Jane.

Pierce wasn't nearly as musically well-defined in these days as he was at Decca. He was feeling his way, recording everything from "Drifting Texas Sand" and "Hawaiian Echoes" to Jimmie Rodgers' "California Blues." He made his first recording of Rodgers' "In the Jailhouse Now" during this period; his 1955 re-recording of it for Decca became his biggest hit. At Pacemaker Pierce also sang on Tillman Franks' recording of "Hayride Boogie," a song that he re-worked in 1956 into his hit, "Teenage Boogie." Though nothing here is musically profound, these recordings offer a look at this little-known aspect of Pierce's career.

Phil Tricker's notes aren't bad, though he's incorrect that Shot Jackson's steel guitar instrumental, "Steeling the Mood," was a version of the big band favorite "In the Mood." Tricker, a self-proclaimed honky tonk scholar, also didn't realize Pierce's "Have You Ever Had the Feeling" is the melody of Bob Wills' instrumental, "Blue Bonnet Rag," with lyrics.

How to Get These Treasures

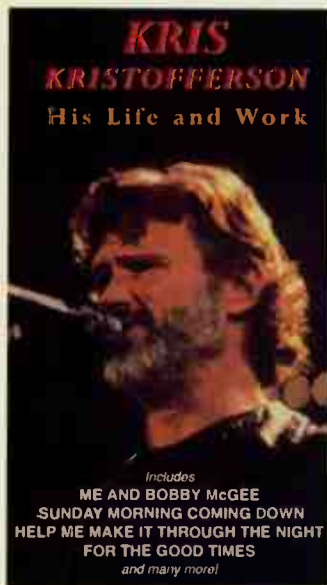
Available in formats shown at prices shown: Elvis Presley, *Amazing Grace: His Greatest Sacred Performances* (RCA 66421), a 2-CD or 2-cassette set, \$29.95 cassette, \$44.95 CD/Various Artists, *Wanderers Swing: Texas Dance Hall Music* (KRZ 11), CD only, \$19.95/Asleep at the Wheel, *Still Swingin'* (CDP 30284), a 3-CD boxed set, \$49.95/Various Artists, *And The Answer Is... Volume 1* (BCD 15791) and *Volume 2* (BCD 15793), available on CD only, \$24.95 each CD/Bob Wills, *Encore* (CDP 30275), a 3-CD boxed set, \$49.95/Webb Pierce & His Southern Valley Boys, *The Unavailable Sides: 1950-1951* (KRZ 16), CD only, \$19.95. Send check or money order payable to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 030495, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.95 postage and handling. Canadian orders, add an additional \$3.00 postage. **CMSA Members, see For Members Only page for discounts.**

Offer expires June 30, 1995

Essential Collector by Rich Kienzle

▪ Videos ▪

Kris Kristofferson: Willie and Waylon have both been profiled in video documentaries, and Kris Kristofferson merits similar treatment. Unfortunately, *Kris Kristofferson: His Life and Work* is a mixed success, outstanding at its best, confusing and pretentious at worst. The program's flow seems to have been done to satisfy someone's idea of "art," not examining his life in a logical order; meandering in many directions before looking at Kris' early days. Kristofferson himself, filmed in Nashville, accounts for some great moments as he reflects on an old apartment building he lived in. Standing by the only visible portion of Columbia's old Quonset Hut studio, he remembers working there as a janitor in the late 60's. Interviews with Johnny Cash, with Kris' song publisher Bob Beckham, and Monument



Records founder Fred Foster (for whom Kris made his first successful records), are highly revealing, as are comments from Willie Nelson and Kris' fellow actors, Dennis Hopper and Harry Dean Stanton. At one point, a clearly embarrassed Kris sings the right-

wing "Vietnam Blues," a pro-Vietnam song that was among the first songs he got anyone to record.

All this alone would have been a terrific hour-long documentary. Sadly, the pseudo-art "dream sequences," showing a bearded, guitar-toting vagabond, as Kris sings one of his classics, detract from the program and aren't even clever the first time. Also, a disproportionate amount of time was spent on Kris' social activism. Certainly his work with the late Cesar Chavez's California farm workers merited mention, but not the lengthy segment it received. While many Kristofferson film appearances are ignored, too much time is spent discussing his role in the disastrously incoherent film, *Heaven's Gate*, one of Hollywood's biggest and most celebrated money-losers.

Bob Wills: *Still Swingin': The History of Bob Wills and Western Swing Music* doesn't really live up to its title. Nor does it succeed as a definitive documentary of either Wills or Western swing. Instead, this video's strength is as a tribute, showing the connection between Wills and his latter-day practitioners, namely, Red Steagall (who hosts the program), Tracy Byrd and Asleep at the Wheel. Exploring the hard details Wills' life, or the many facets and aspects of swing throughout the Southwest, could fill a couple of VHS tapes. Centering this program around Tulsa's venerable Cain's, the dance hall that served as Wills' headquarters from 1934 to 1943, provides an excellent context. Preserved by its current owners much as it was in Bob's heyday, the place clearly deserves national monument status.

The best musical moments are musical excerpts from Wills and The Playboys' early 40's appearances in various B-westerns, including *Take Me Back to Oklahoma* with Tex Ritter. Another segment pro-

files 50,000 watt KVOO, the legendary Tulsa radio station that broadcast Bob and later Johnnie Lee daily for a total of 24 years. Comments from former Playboys add color about Bob himself. Steagall, Asleep at the Wheel's Ray



Benson, and Tracy Byrd all discuss their relationship with Wills' music and perform swing numbers, though Byrd's offstage enthusiasm outweighs his band's onstage ability to swing. In all, it succeeds nicely in celebrating Wills' legacy.

Paul Yandell: Guitarist Paul Yandell is known best today as a 20-year recording and performing associate of Chet Atkins, with whom Yandell often appears onstage. Before joining Chet, Yandell spent five years with another formidable fingerpicker, Jerry Reed. Yandell (pronounced like "handle"), also toured with The Louvins in their heyday, and played on many of their hits. His video, *Fingerstyle Legacy*, though not well-structured, shows off Yandell and his technique to fine advantage. At the beginning, he pays heartfelt tribute to great finger and thumbpickers of the past, beginning with Kentucky pioneer picker Kennedy Jones and moving through Ike Everly, Mose

Rager, Merle Travis and Chet, paying added tribute to lesser-knowns like Odell Martin.

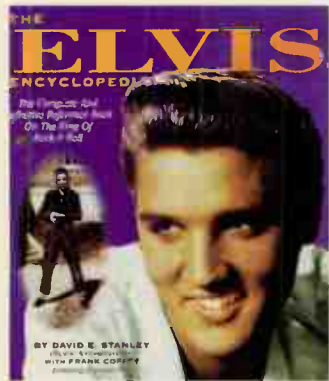
After a brief introduction by Chet, Yandell, playing alone, performs such favorites as "After You've Gone," "Oh, By Jingo" (a song originally made a fingerstyle favorite by Chet), "Georgia Camp Meeting," "St. Louis Blues," "Sweet Ala Lee," "The Perfect Song" and "Going Home." On many of these numbers he plays uncannily as Chet did when he recorded several of these songs in the 50's. Following the performance, Yandell gives 32 informal lessons in various finger and thumbpick riffs of his own, as well as trademark licks from Chet, Merle and Jerry Reed, whose style merits an entire video. Without the split-screen tricks used by instruction specialists like Homespun Tapes, this is clearly not aimed at beginners but at experienced pickers. Yet Yandell's informal way grows on you, as if he's showing a lick to a friend. The video ends with a photo montage of Yandell's own career. Accomplished pickers will find a lot of great ideas here from a guy who worked with all of them. Aspiring thumbpickers will need to learn the Travis-Atkins style first before this video would help.

▪ Books ▪

Elvis Presley: David Stanley, one of two stepbrothers Elvis acquired after their mother Dee married Vernon Presley in 1960, has certainly made a nice career off the experience, having, along with brother Ricky, become one of Elvis' inner circle and bodyguards. Both were part of his entourage, and part of the drug abuse that swirled around Elvis in the last years of his life. It's tough to chastise Stanley for exploiting the connection since people far more distant from Elvis have done likewise. Stanley's *The Elvis Encyclopedia* doesn't differ from similar books. It features a chronologi-

cal biography, sidebars, summaries of even Elvis' most morose films and lists of record releases, yet its primary value lies in its beautifully reproduced photos, some common, others rare.

Stanley's judgment gets screwy at times. In a section titled "His Inner Circle," he features profiles of Presley intimates including Elvis' parents, Sam Phillips, Carl Perkins and members of the Memphis Mafia as well as (really!) Elvis' twin brother Jesse, who died at birth. Stanley explains that Elvis fantasized about Jesse's life and thought he could converse with his deceased brother. Why is Norman Taurog, director of such "quality" Elvis films as *Tickle Me* included? Because, says Stanley, "he and Elvis worked together and were good friends." Right. Stanley turns weird in this section discussing Red and Sonny West, the Elvis intimates and bodyguards whose 1977 book, *Elvis: What Happened*, writ-



ten with bodyguard Dave Hebler, upset Elvis by detailing his drug abuse firsthand. The remark that "the Wests claim...the (book's) purpose was to get Elvis to seek help, not to destroy him, but within two weeks after it was published, he was dead" leaves one wondering. Does Stanley, who in the book claims to have cleared drug paraphernalia from near Elvis' body before paramedics arrived, mean the book, not drugs, killed Elvis?

Cowboy Singers: *Saddle Serenaders*, by Guy Logsdon, Mary Rogers and William Jacobson, is an ambitious and largely successful reference work covering considerable

ground. The heart of this beautifully illustrated book are 225 brief biographies of performers encompassing traditional and modern cowboy singers, Western vocal groups and Western swing bands and artists. Guy Logsdon's expertise on Western music is well known. Rogers and Jacobson publish a magazine on cowboy music. Included with the biographies are old and new photos, along with striking color reproductions of old movie posters, sheet music, black and white publicity photos and ads, much of this material never before published.

The biographies run the gamut, featuring birthplace and birthdate, death dates, real names (as well as stage names) and other facts. The obvious, such as Gene Autry, Carl T. Sprague, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, Ray Whitley, Jimmy Wakely, Tex Ritter and Patsy Montana are covered, as are legendary cowboy singers Eddie Dean, The Sons of the Pioneers and that group's individual founding members. Modern profiles include latter-day Western singers like Don Edwards, Sourdough Slim, The Sons of the San Joaquin, Riders in the Sky and Rusty Richards. Entries on folk singers with cowboy connections, such as Oklahoma native Woody Guthrie and New York-born Ramblin' Jack Elliott, are included, as are bios of Jimmie Rodgers and Emmett Miller, the singer-yodeler who influenced Bob Wills, Milton Brown and Tommy Duncan. Profiled in Western swing along with those three are the other three Wills Brothers—Johnnie Lee, Luke and Billy Jack—as well

as Leon McAuliffe, Hank Thompson, Tex Williams, Spade Cooley and Merl Lindsey. Few errors appear though some omissions show up. The 14-song CD with songs by various artists, including Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston, is entertaining, yet the book is the real prize.

■ Recordings ■

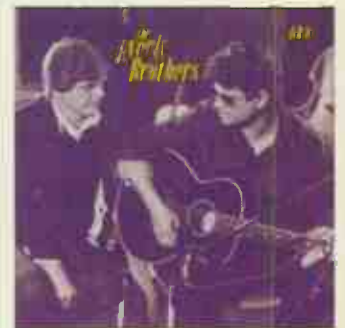


Bobby Bare: Not everyone needs a lavish Bear Family boxed set. Sometimes, a good greatest hits package is the way to go, and the high points of Bare's early period are covered on the 21-song *The Best of Bobby Bare* (RE 2043). It begins with Bare's first hit record from 1958, "The All American Boy." Recorded for the Fraternity label and released under the name of Bill Parsons, it was inspired by both Bare's own 1958 Army induction and Elvis'.

The remaining 20 songs all come from his 1962-1970 period with RCA Victor. The hits, from the Mel Tillis-Danny Dill composition "Detroit City" through "500 Miles Away from Home" to "Miller's Cave," the pop standard "Have I Stayed Away too Long" and "Four Strong Winds," are here. Strangely enough, his 1965 Top

Ten hit "It's Alright" isn't included (some labels won't allow reissues to use every song they might want). Other Bare hits from this period include "Just to Satisfy You," written by Waylon and Don Bowman, as well as "(Margie's at) The Lincoln Park Inn," "The Streets of Baltimore" and "The Game of Triangles," which teams Bare with Liz Anderson and retiring Porter Wagoner vocalist Norma Jean. Top 20 hits, among them "Charleston Railroad Tavern" and "God Bless America Again" and the Top 30 1970 duet with Skeeter Davis, "Your Husband, My Wife," round out the set, along with some LP cuts.

The Everly Brothers: In 1984, a year after The Everly Brothers reunited following a ten-year separation, they began their first studio album in years. *EB '84*, produced by British rocker Dave Edmunds, who knew The Everlys' entire musical past, placed them in a contemporary setting with songs from The Everlys, Edmunds, Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney, among others. The album itself retained all the best aspects of their past, from



their Kentucky harmonies to the rockabilly grit of their classic Cadence hits. Edmunds also used top-notch musicians like guitarist Albert Lee, who's worked on and off with The Everlys ever since. Not only did they tackle Bob Dylan's "Lay Lady Lay" (which he'd tried to get them to record in the 60's), they managed to record two tracks that became chart singles: McCartney's song, "On the Wings of a Nightingale," and "The First in Line." Not an album one would have immediately thought of for reissue, yet a worthy one nonetheless.

How to Get These Collectibles

Videos: Kris Kristofferson, *His Life and Work* (V6H), \$19.95/Bob Wills, *Still Swingin': The History of Bob Wills and Western Swing Music* (V4S) \$19.95/Paul Yandell, *Fingerstyle Legacy* (V4T) \$29.95. **Books:** David Stanley, *The Elvis Encyclopedia* (B1V) \$29.95/Guy Logsdon, Mary Rogers and William Jacobson, *Saddle Serenaders* (B4W) \$19.95. **Recordings:** Bobby Bare, *The Best of Bobby Bare* (RE 2043), available on CD only, \$19.95/The Everly Brothers, *EB '84* (RE 2040), available on CD only, \$19.95. Send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 030495EC, P.O. Box 290216, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.95 postage and handling per order: Canadian orders, add \$3.00 extra for postage. **CMSA members, see For Members Only page for discounts.**

Offer expires June 30, 1995

Country Music VIDEOS



HANK WILLIAMS

Hank Williams Tradition - 60 mins.
In the *Hank Williams Tradition* traces Hank's life story through rare film clips, music and revealing interviews with friends and fellow performers such as Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl and Chet Atkins. Included are performances of many of Hank's greatest songs by today's top country artists, who also tell how Hank inspired their careers. There are also five hit songs performed by Hank himself. Item No. V2M - \$19.95

DWIGHT YOAKAM

Just Lookin' for a Hit - 30 mins.
Dwight's first video features "Honky Tonk Man," "Guitars, Cadillacs," "Streets of Bakersfield," "Long White Cadillac" and more. There's also an interview and performance footage. Item No. G1E - \$19.95

KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS

Best Pickins (NEW) - 30 mins.
Their new video features "Dumas Walker," "Walk Softly on This Heart of Mine," "Oh Lonesome Me," "It's Chittin' Time," "Only Daddy That'll Walk the Line," "Dixie Fried" AND MORE! Item No. V9N - \$14.95

AARON TIPPIN

Call of the Wild - 25 mins.
This video features "You've Got to Stand for Something," "I Wonder How Far It Is Over You," "There Ain't Nothin' Wrong with the Radio," "My Blue Angel" AND MORE! Item No. V3R - \$14.95

NEAL MCCOY (NEW)

You Gotta Love - 45 mins.
This young star's career really took off with his RIAA Gold *No Doubt About It*, which yielded two Number One country singles (the title track and "Wink") and the top five "The City Put the Country Back in Me." This video includes "You Gotta Love," "For a Change," "Y-O-U" and eight more. Item V4N - \$19.95

CONFEDERATE RAILROAD

Notorious - 35 mins. (NEW)
Included on this debut video are "She Took It Like a Man," "Queen of Memphis," "Trashy Women," "Daddy Never Was the Cadillac Kind," "Elvis and Andy," an exclusive live version of "Old Yeller" and three more hits, plus interviews. Item No. V6J - \$19.95

JIM REEVES

The Story of a Legend - 50 mins.
This is the Jim Reeves story from his deep rural roots in East Texas and his years as an aspiring baseball player, to his years as one of the most universally popular singers of the late 50's and early 60's. This program also features Jim singing hit songs like "Four Walls," "Am I Losing You," "He'll Have to Go," "I Love You Because" and "Welcome to My World." Item No. V2P - \$19.95

JIM REEVES

Golden Memories - 50 mins.
Here are some of Jim's biggest hits in a never before released collection of his most memorable television performances. Each song is performed in its entirety. This video is the most requested item by Jim Reeves fans and collectors. Item No. V4G - \$29.95

LITTLE TEXAS (NEW)

Kick a Little - 40 mins.
Here is The Academy of Country Music's Vocal Group of the Year in their debut home video, featuring the hits "What Might Have Been," "God Blessed Texas" and six more, plus behind-the-scenes interviews in the studio and on tour. Item No. V9S - \$19.95

GEORGE JONES

Live in Tennessee - 54 mins.
Taped live from the Knoxville Civic Coliseum, you'll see George thrill the audience with 15 of his biggest hits including "I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair" and the #1 country song of all time, "He Stopped Loving Her Today." There's also "The Race Is On," "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes?" "Bartender's Blues," "One Woman Man," "Once You've Had the Best" AND 8 MORE! Item No. V1X - \$24.95

THE STATLER BROS. (NEW)

What We Love To Do - 40 mins.
Celebrating their 30th anniversary this year, this is their first video in over a decade. It features "Elizabeth," "My Only Love," "What We Love to Do," "Atlanta Blue," "Maple Street Memories," "Guilty," "Small Small World," "You've Been Like a Mother to Me," "Let's Get Started If We're Gonna," "Break My Heart," "Sweet and Sweeter," "Whatever," "Only You and You Alone" and "Nobody Else." Item No. V6A - \$19.95

TAMMY WYNETTE (NEW)

In Concert - 60 mins.
This re-release is the only Tammy Wynette video available. It features 24 hits including the classic "Stand By Your Man" and "D-I-V-O-R-C-E," "Take Me to Your World," "Til I Can Make It on My Own," "I Don't Want to Play House," "Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad" and 18 more. Item No. G1F - \$19.95

TRACY LAWRENCE (NEW)

I See It Now - 40 mins.
He might just be country music's hottest new male performer. Included here on his debut video are: "Sticks and Stones," "Today's Lonely Fool," "Runnin' Behind," "Alibis," "Can't Break It to My Heart," "My Second Home," "I See It Now," "If the Good Die Young" and "Renegades, Rebels and Rogues." Item No. V9O - \$19.95

PATSY CLINE

Remembering Patsy - 60 mins.
Now Patsy's musical legacy lives on in this acclaimed video from Hallway Productions. This heartfelt celebration features 17 great songs and 10 rare television appearances never seen on video. You'll meet Patsy through her intimate home movies, personal letters and fond reminiscences of Loretta Lynn, George Jones, Eddy Arnold, Patsy's husband Charlie Dick and others. It is a collector's gem. Item No. V1E - \$24.95

VINCE GILL

I Still Believe in You - 24 mins.
Recently named 1994 CMA Entertainer of the Year, Vince Gill has joined the esteemed ranks as one of country music's premier entertainers. Here's your chance to enjoy this popular star on his only home video performing: "When I Call Your Name," "Never Knew Lonely," "Pocket Full of Gold," "Liza Jane," "Look at Us" and "I Still Believe in You." Item No. V1M - \$19.95

MINNIE PEARL

The Life and Legend - 60 mins.
This is the only authorized life story video of Sarah Ophelia Cannon. Never before has her story been told in such remarkable detail with hilarious excerpts from her best performances. The story of her childhood and her harrowing experiences on the road are truly astounding. Item No. V2O - \$19.95

MERLE TRAVIS

Rare Performances - 60 mins.
Here are 35 years of rare film and television performances (1946-1981) plus a booklet that gives you a personal interview, a biographical essay and many rare photos. Just some of the songs included are "No Vacancy," "Spoonin' Moon," "John Henry," "Mus'rat" AND MORE! Item No. V5D - \$19.95

HANK WILLIAMS SR.

The Show He Never Gave - 86 mins.
This movie permits the haunted singer to play one final show, during which all his fears and passions—all his genius—tumble out for us to see. "Sneezey" Waters plays the self-destructive superstar and admirably performs 23 songs. Adding to the movie's authenticity is the audience of supporting characters who populate the mythical roadhouse where Hank confronts his life. Item No. V2L - \$19.95

MARTY ROBBINS

Super Legend - 120 mins.
This memorable video features 18 performances: "El Paso," "White Sport Coat," "Devil Woman," "Ribbon of Darkness," "Don't Worry 'Bout Me," "This Time You Gave Me a Mountain" plus Marty's Grammy-winning song, "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife." It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and movies. Item No. G2A - \$39.95

WEBB PIERCE

Greatest Hits - 52 mins.
Shortly before his death Webb personally created, from rare filmed performances, a compilation of his greatest hits, narrating and providing background on the songs, their writers and their origins. This program contains 17 great Webb hits including "Wondering" and "More and More." Item No. V2R - \$19.95

BILLY RAY CYRUS

Live on Tour - 60 mins.
This 14-song onstage performance includes: "Should I Stay or Should I Go," "She's Not Cryin' Anymore," "Wher'm I Gonna Live," "Someday, Somewhere, Somehow," "Could've Been Me," "I'm so Miserable," "Only Time Will Tell," "Achy Breaky Heart" AND MORE! Item No. V2B - \$29.95

REBA MCENTIRE

In Concert - 71 mins.
Here is Reba McEntire on stage doing his like "Love Will Find Its 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" and "Rumor Has It." Item No. V3E - \$19.95

WAYLON JENNINGS

Lost Outlaw Performance - 60 mins.
The master recording of this memorable concert was never released and had been forgotten in the vaults of RCA since 1978. Now we bring it to you in its entirety, as it was recorded on August 12th at the Grand Ole Opry. Here is the "Outlaw" period in all its glory, with eight Number One singles including "Luckenbach, Texas" and "Good Hearted Woman." Item No. V4D - \$19.95

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Love, Peace and Happiness

I've been rousing some rabble, it seems, getting you all stirred up about Young Country versus whatever the other stuff is supposed to be called these days (NonYoung Country? Country Country? Demographically Undesirable Country?).

Judging from the mail, more than a few of you non-scootin', musically overeducated, lifetime country music fans aren't very happy about how "your" radio stations have been taken over by a shifting parade of Western-imagined young adults singing half-assed rock, pop and disco music. Many of you also seem confused about why that's happened.

First let's get the "Why?" of it cleared up. The short answer is "money." The longer answer is "lots of kids with money," plus lots and lots of other people who don't really like country music, but go bananas for rock/pop/disco when someone's dressed it up in cowboy clothes. If you were in the radio business (as opposed, I guess, to the radio hobby, or the radio passion), you'd have to be crazy not to give those folks whatever they wanted, and to hell with anyone else. That's just the way of the world, and, as a person identifying him-or herself only as "A Today's Country Fan" wrote in a letter we published last issue, "They [radio stations] must not—hear us—must not go back to twang city, and you'll just have to put up with it. We don't want it. Sorry."

Well, Sir or Ms., that's fighting talk, so excuse me while I select an assault weapon and get busy tracking you down...No. Just kidding. One steps out of the path of overwhelming force; one does not confront it.

What, though, does one do then? Or, putting it another way, how can those of us unthrilled by "Today's Country" learn to be content with our new status as demographic undesirables?

That question, I must admit, has been really bothering me, particularly since I started writing this column. Often I've felt stuck on a kind of Country Identity Crisis carousel, forced to go round and round and round and round, numbed by idiotic conundrums—What's not to like about Faith Hill? Why *shouldn't* Lynyrd Skynyrd end up in the Country Music Hall of Fame? Is Johnny Cash too punk, or too retro?—until I somehow make sense of it all. But sense takes too long, so I've settled for peace. Here's how I've done it, my very own three-point Country Peace Plan:

ONE. I've decided to forget about country radio—not just refuse to listen to it,

but close the door to my mind whenever I catch it trying to sneak in. I'll go on getting my music from tapes, CD's, and the countryish shows broadcast by my local listener-supported radio station, WMNF in Tampa (Kelly Willis yes, Faith Hill forget it, Vince Gill maybe). I'm very lucky to have that resource, I know. Most people don't. WMNF's kind of country/folk/roots-rock programming is spreading, though (the radio industry even has a chart and a name for it: Americana), and it just may have reached the airwaves around you.



Sayonara, Faith.

TWO. I've paid attention to the dialectic of change. In this I've been helped by the old aphorism that change is the only constant, and by Bob Dylan, whose words from back in the days of my own passionately arrogant youth have been suggesting themselves:

Come mothers and fathers throughout the land,

And don't criticize what you can't understand.

Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command.

Your old road is rapidly aging.

Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand

For the times they are a changin'.

So sayonara, Faith. Boogie on, Garth. I'll be out of your way, over here on this other road I've been building.

THREE. I've paid attention to the broader, longer view, and in that I've been helped by the realization that mass romances with rural and/or Western images and values have been a periodic feature of American urban culture ever since the Civil War. We've had three of them in the last thirty years alone: the hippie-era Back to the Earth movement, the Urban Cowboy fad, and whatever this one ends up being called. They wear out after a while, and things get back to normal, by which I mean a state of perpetual flux.

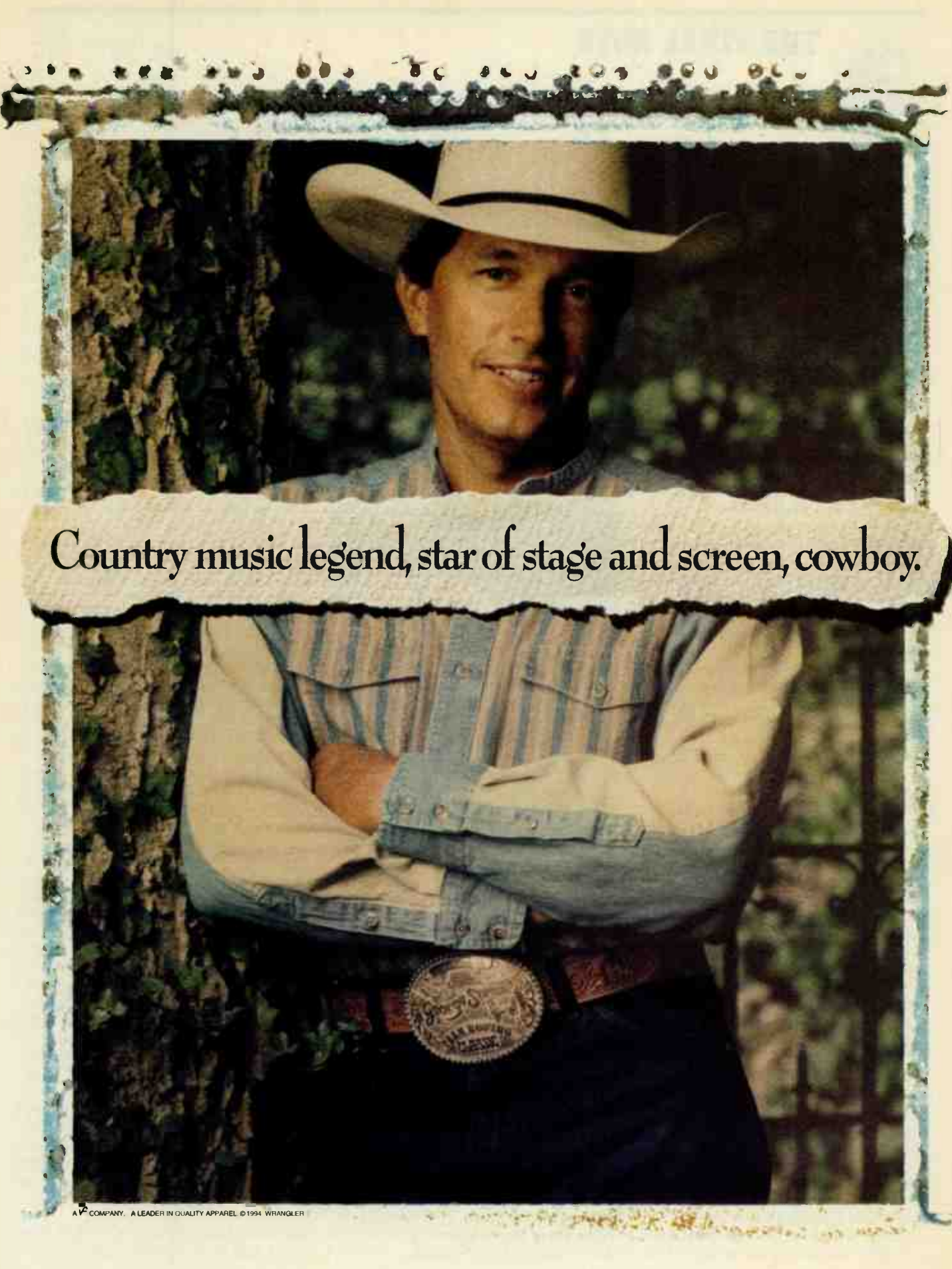
I've also found broad-view solace in my own words in the forthcoming new edition of *The Illustrated History of Country Music*:

"In the mid-90's, the radio mainstream wasn't a promising source for the deepest gifts country music had always offered, the time-perfected elegance of its old song forms and instrumental combinations and the almost magical way in which those formulae could transform pain, drama, tragedy, and hardship into beauty. ...That, however, meant very little to the true progress of the music, because off the most heavily beaten track, up the many tributaries to country's main stream, a great deal of truly inspired and inspiring music was being made. Never, in fact, had there been such strength and vitality evident almost everywhere on the scene." Furthermore, I guarantee you, all those tributaries wouldn't be doing so well if the main stream weren't so powerful. Unlike in nature, the flow goes both ways.

And that's the truth of it, despite all my fretting and bitching (and yours, too). Today, great new country music is being recorded and released at a very healthy rate. A decade ago, or even two decades ago at the peak of the Outlaw movement, the most we could expect was five or six really first-rate new albums a year; now we're seeing one a month, or even more. This month, for instance, there's Heather Myles' *Untamed* (Hightone HCD 8059) and the Alison Krauss collection, *Now That I've Found You* (Rounder CD 0325). They're hard to find, but there are ways, this magazine for one.

So what do you say, fellow cranks, music lovers and keepers of the flame? Want to walk with me away from the fight? Wonderful music is all around us, and life can be sweet. Peace and love, y'all. ■

Editor-at-Large Patrick Carr has been with CMM since September 1972.



Country music legend, star of stage and screen, cowboy.

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