

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE STARS, MUSIC & TRADITION

COUNTRYMUSIC

JUNE 2003

TERRI CLARK
On the right track

STEVE WARINER
Goes it alone

The life and death of
JOHNNY PAYCHECK

STEVE HOLY
His secret crush

CHRIS CAGLE
Righting wrongs

ALISON KRAUSS
Don't call her perfect

VINCE GILL

On love, success and happiness –
and how he finally found all three

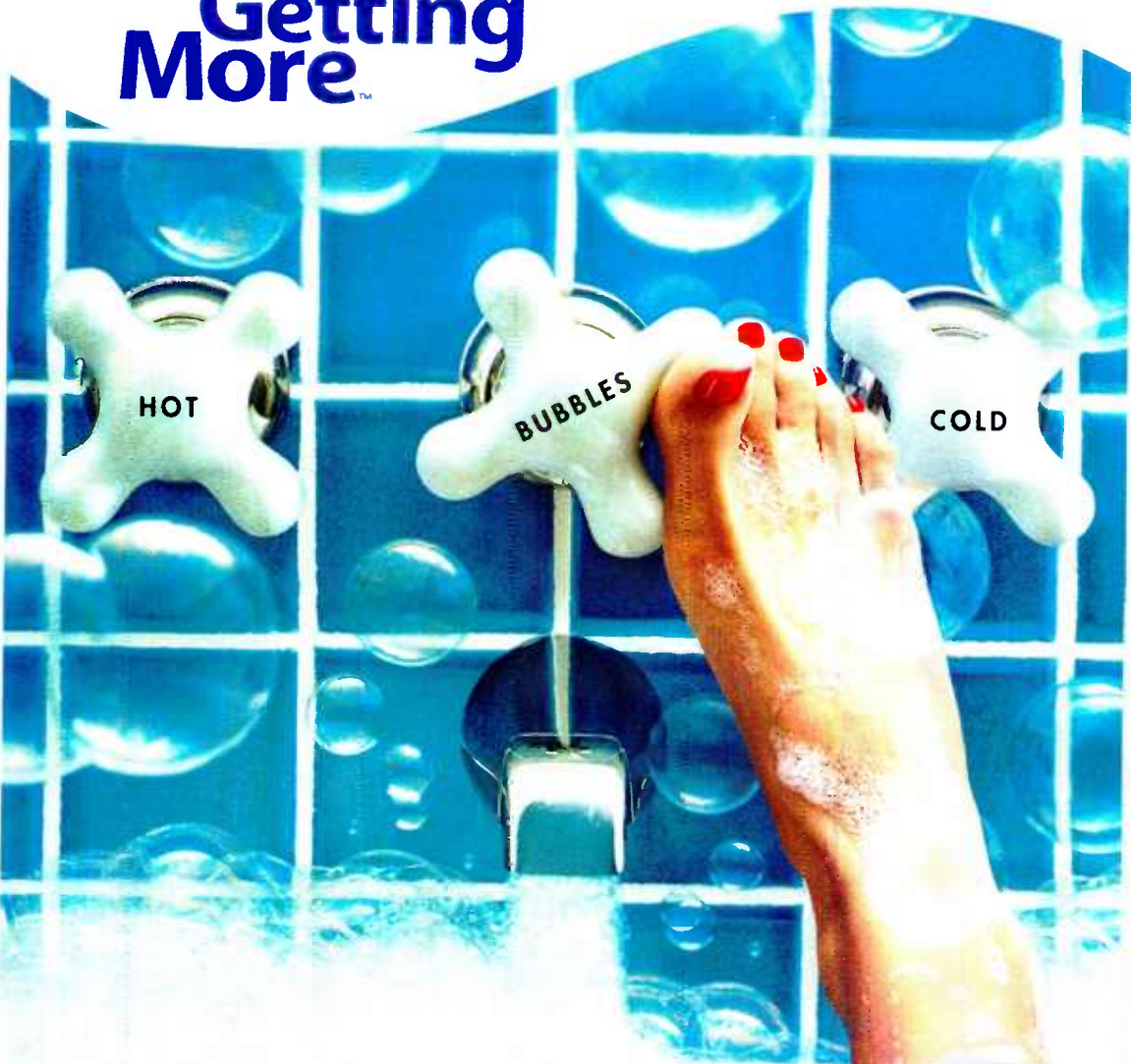


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June is bustin' out all over, as the old song goes. I don't know about the month itself, but that's certainly true of our June issue that you hold in hand. We're packed so full of country music information, photos, insights, opinions, interviews and other goodies that I'm amazed we're not popping staples!

You won't want to miss our special section on country's Top 100 Songs of All Time. No doubt some of your favorites made the list, voted by a panel of industry insiders and entertainers. And just as surely, some of your favorites didn't. Read all about it, and let us know how strongly you agree or disagree. (And watch CMT's *Top 100 Country Songs* special, for which our story is the official companion piece, on June 8.)

Our cover story on Vince Gill features the most revealing, emotional interview you've ever read with this soft-spoken superstar, who generally prefers to let his music do the talking.

This month's *Journal* is devoted almost wholly to the late Johnny Paycheck, whose passing marks the end of one of country's last links to a true "outlaw" past.

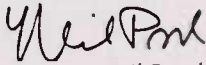
Terri Clark talks about changing Nashville's initial perception of her as a novelty act. Steve Wariner talks about starting over. Alison Krauss talks about her relentless pursuit of perfection. Chris Cagle talks about how music has sustained him through troubled times. Pam Tillis talks about stripping – and sorry, that's all I can tell you. You'll have to read the rest for yourself.

And, beginning right now, we're adding even more regular features that you'll be seeing in every issue. Check them out:

- ★ **Living (page 89)** will give you some timely insights into what the stars are reading, watching, buying and thinking
- ★ **Looking Good (page 73)** will take you inside country music's "look," whether it's Western-cut shirts, miniskirts, hairstyles or blue jeans.
- ★ **What's New (page 95)** will keep you up to date on all the gadgets, gizmos, collectibles and other consumer products that we think you'll either need, want or simply enjoy reading about.

As I say, we're packed so full we're about to pop – in a country way, of course!

Enjoy, and thanks for joining us.

Yours in country music,

 Neil Pond
 Editorial Director

CONTRIBUTORS

Meet this issue's esteemed guest stars

★ When Johnny Paycheck passed away recently, we turned to Editor-at-Large **ROBERT K. OERMANN** to write about his life. The dean of Nashville's music journalists, Oermann has been published in more than 100 national periodicals. His seven books include the award-winning *Finding Her Voice* and *A Century of Country*. Oermann's recent projects include writing the autobiography of Brenda Lee and liner notes for the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtrack. He's also one of the judges on the USA Network series *Nashville Star*.



★ "Music is sacred," says Message in the Music columnist **HOLLIE WOODRUFF**. "Writing this column helps give me a deeper appreciation that everything and everyone has a sacred story." A native of Lubbock, Texas.

Woodruff initially moved to Nashville to pursue a career in the music industry. While working in song publishing, she followed a different calling and is now in her third year of working on a master's degree at the Vanderbilt Divinity School. She's written the Message column since it began one year ago this month.

★ **ALANNA NASH** had interviewed Vince Gill on the phone and met him in person, but she'd never sat down with him for a lengthy one-on-one talk until now. "I know this sounds corny, but it really was like visiting with someone I'd known for years," she says of this month's cover story. Nash, whose biography of Col. Tom Parker comes out this summer, also profiles Chris Cagle and Alison Krauss for us this month.



★ "Grace under fire" is a term you don't hear or see in action anymore," admits Seattle-based writer **BETSY MODEL**. "but it perfectly describes Terri Clark." When not chasing down busy celebrities for *Country Music*, the former NPR/BBC correspondent produces work for more than 30 domestic and international publications.

COUNTRYMUSIC

JUNE 2003

36 COVER STORY:

Vince Gill

He had success without happiness, then happiness without success. Finally he's got both.

18 Top 100 Country Songs

It takes a lot of nerve to whittle down country's history to 100 songs. CMT will unveil their choices for the 100 best country songs this month – and we've got the list. Has your favorite made the cut?

42 Terri Clark

Exploring her artistic side, Clark lost fans by getting too deep. Now she's resurfaced with a better balance between creative expression and commercial sensibility.

46 Alison Krauss

So you think her voice and musicianship are pure perfection? She'll be the first to disagree.

60 Steve Wariner

The nicest guy in country music thumbs his nose at the big labels – and goes it alone.

64 Jeannie Kendall

With the passing of her dad and lifelong singing partner, Kendall bravely steps back into the spotlight.

70 Chris Cagle

A difficult childhood steeled Cagle to survive the struggles of making it in Nashville.

74 Bill Carlisle

Goodbye to a *Grand Ole Opry* legend, one of the last of the all-around entertainers.

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GEORGE WOODRIDGE/CONTEMPORARY

THE Journal

OF TRADITIONAL COUNTRY MUSIC

Remembering a rebel: The tumultuous life and gritty music of Johnny Paycheck ... "Everything Is Beautiful" ... History resonates within RCA Studio B ... Begins on page 51



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PAMELA SPRINGSTEEN/REXUS

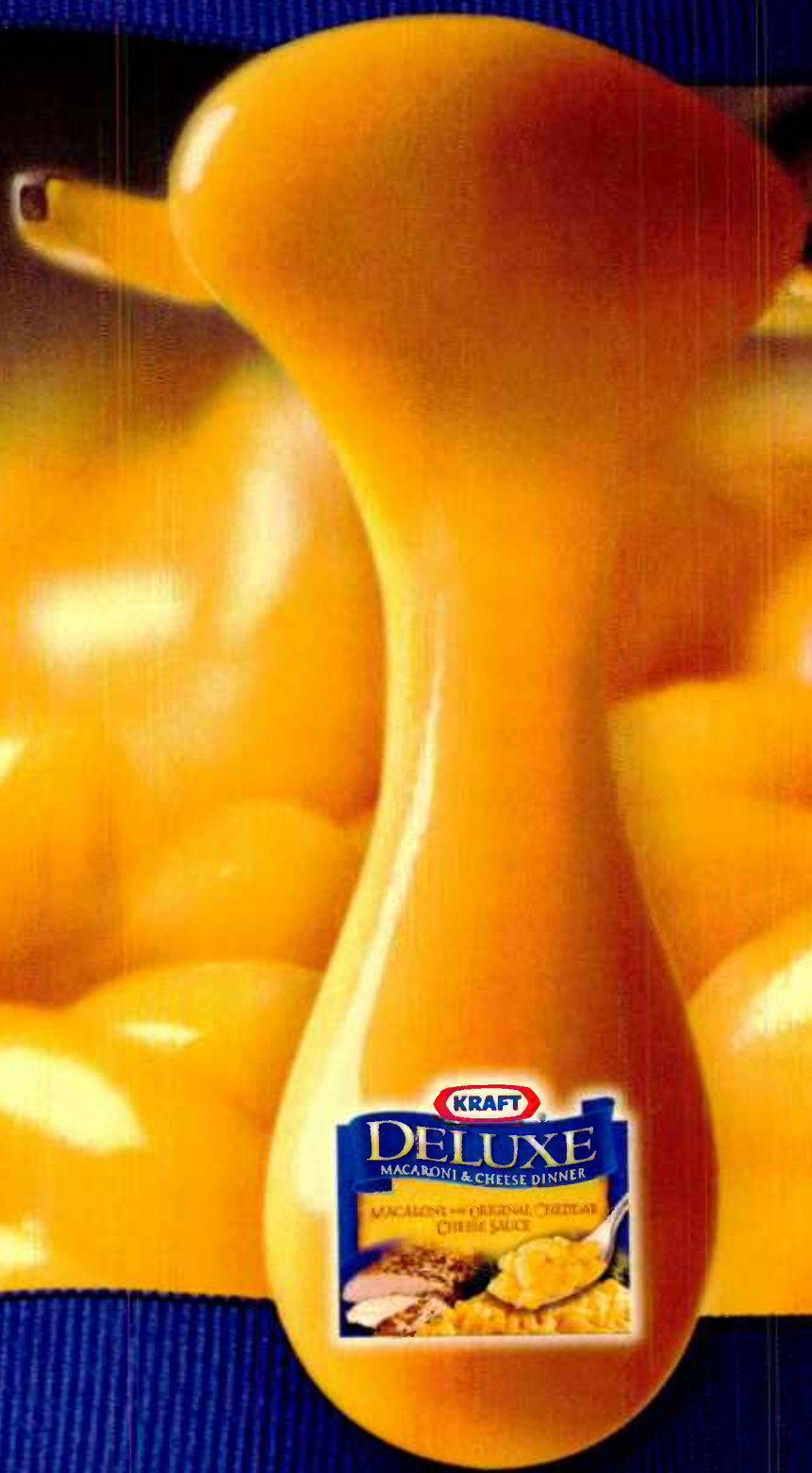
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LETTERS

SEEING RED

I want to applaud Hollie Woodruff for her wonderful article on Tim McGraw's "Red Ragtop" (*April/May*). Since this song has been released his longtime fans have been defending him for choosing to record it. Deejays, critics and others attacked Tim on the song because they did not "get it." Hollie is the first writer I have seen who *finally got it*. Tim sings story songs. Some are wonderful love songs, some are about family, some are of memories and some are of learning experiences, which is exactly what "Red Ragtop" is all about. So thank you, Hollie, for setting the record straight.

DENISE LEE

BALDWINVILLE, NEW YORK

COE DEPENDENT

It's about time that country music's finest singer/songwriter, David Allan Coe, is finally acknowledged (*April/May*). He has been overlooked for more than 30 years, while country music radio stations pollute the airwaves with mediocre talent. If it is pure country music with heart and soul you are looking for, David Allan Coe is talent with a capital T.

PATRICK RUANE

ASHTABULA, OHIO

GET TO KNOW HER

I was so excited to see a feature on Tanya Tucker (*February/March*). She is my favorite country artist and, to me, still has the most original and talented voice out there. Her new CD is great, and while I was expecting a few more upbeat tunes, Tanya can sing anything and she performs a great ballad. She's not getting enough exposure on the radio and it isn't right. New listeners are really missing out if they don't know who Tanya is.

DONNA PEINE-METZGER

WENTZVILLE, MISSOURI

I wanted to say how much I enjoyed the Tanya Tucker show at the Strawberry Festival in Plant City, Florida. Tanya sounds as good as ever and I hope her new album and single do well. Thanks Tanya, for giving us more of your music. The crowd loved you.

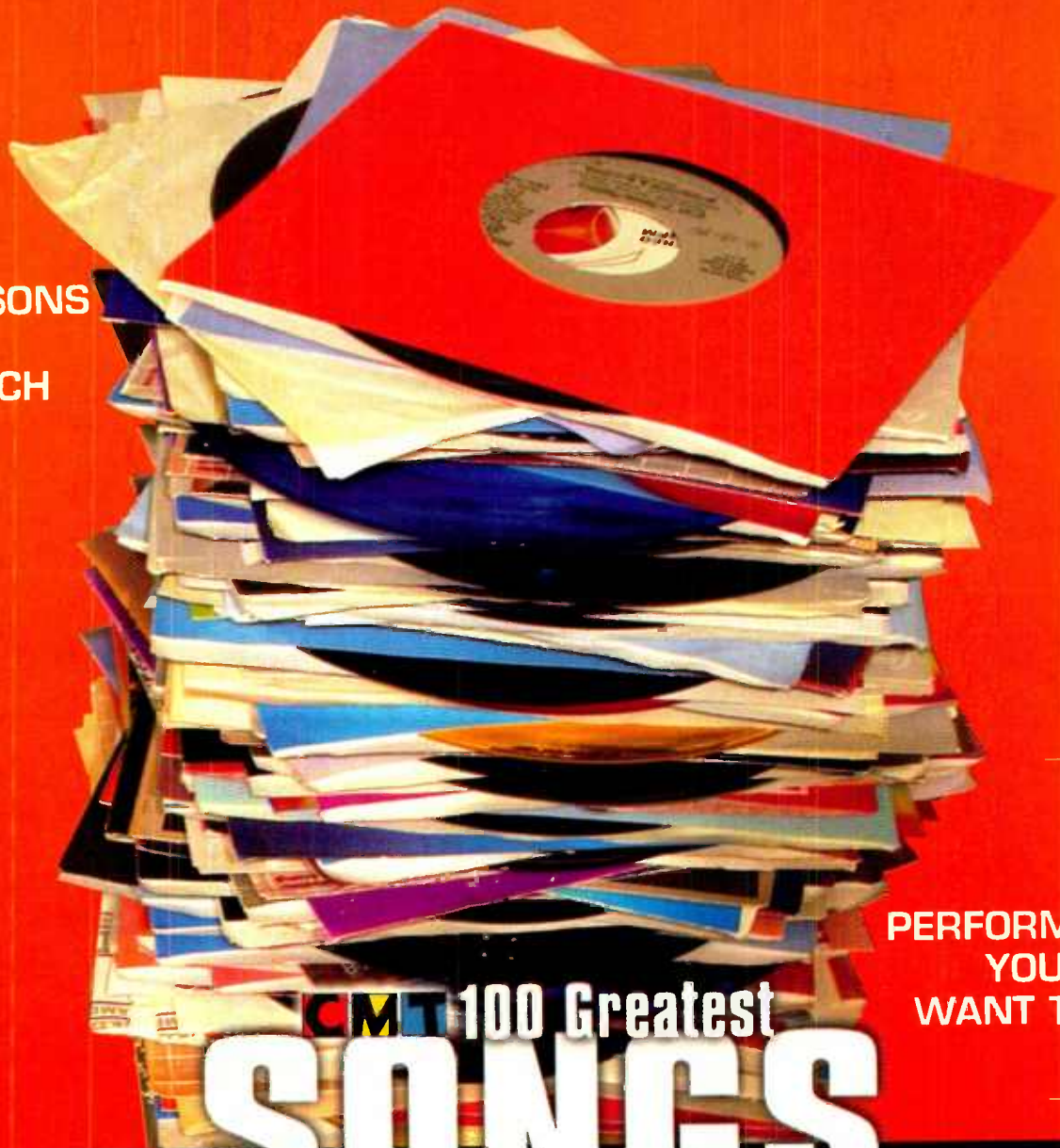
MARGARET EASTON

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA



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LETTERS



NEW TRICKS

Thank you so much for the article on Trick Pony (*February/March*). Heidi, Keith and Ira have a real passion for what they do and it shows when they perform. It's amazing how this group has come together to form something we've never seen before, when it seems like everything has already been done. This is only the beginning for Trick Pony, and I look forward to seeing a lot more of them.

ASHLEY ELIZABETH CASPER
WYOMING

MIXED FAITH

I love the article on Faith Hill (*February/March*). I am a big fan of hers and look up to her as a role model. I am getting tired of people putting her down just because she sounds pop. She has a great voice and I love that she and Tim put their family first and don't let fame go to their heads.

MELISSA A. KALTSAS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

I read all the letters in *Country Music* about everyone picking on Faith Hill. Well, I'm picking on her too. I don't blame her for doing commercials or for going with pop music, but not under the implication that she's country. She's not. She lives in the South and she got her big break with country music, but she broke loose pretty quick. She looked like all the rappers on the Grammy show in that mini outfit. I thought it was tacky, trying to imitate Shania or Cher.

BETTY STEELMAN
BURLINGTON, KENTUCKY

Who cares if a gorgeous female performer shows her navel? Who cares if she wears men's shirts? Get real, people. Faith Hill did not cross over to pop, her

music did. And what about all the others who have done the same thing, like Conway Twitty or Johnny Cash? Dolly Parton or Crystal Gayle? Faith and her husband, Tim McGraw, are a great team, and if you don't like a performer, then you don't have to go to her concerts or buy her CDs.

KENNETH FRENETTE
LODI, CALIFORNIA

She may look and sound like a pop star, but Faith Hill is back and better than ever. No matter what her songs sound like, she'll always be a country music artist. People can complain all they want, but let's face it – she's part of country music and its history.

DAVID BERGLUND
ROSSVILLE, ILLINOIS

Something has happened to female country singers, if the only way they can make it in country music is to dress in their underwear and look cheap. The last videos of Deana Carter and LeAnn Rimes were pathetic, and so was Alison Krauss, to my surprise. That's not her. The guys know how to dress. They look country and know how to sing country songs. Tracy Byrd, Joe Nichols, Randy Travis, Keith Urban – they're country and that is what will keep country music alive.

NADINE GREEN
LAFE, ARKANSAS

RIGHT MOVES

The article in *Country Music* is one of the very best ever written about the Sloan dancers (*February/March*). It was so good to see pictures of both Ralph and me with our dance team. The extremely well-written story was entertaining as well as being factually correct. I felt that the Sloan

dancers accomplished something no other dance group ever has or will again. Credit belongs as much to the loyalty and dedication of team members as it does to their leaders. Fifty years of dancing on a radio show ... time to go to the house.

MELVIN SLOAN
LEBANON, TENNESSEE

SHINING DIAMOND

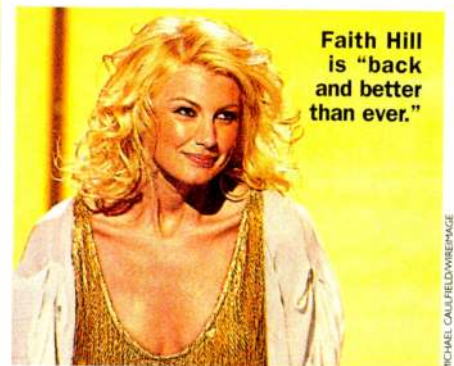
I was so disappointed with your review of Diamond Rio's newest album (*April/May*). You don't have to be a fan to appreciate Diamond Rio's sound, their dynamics or their amazing ability to play. Assuming that they are "a long-standing band being pushed to reexamine itself" because of other crossover bands was a downright insult! Next time, please choose you reviewer more wisely. This band deserves better.

SHAWTEL COLEMAN
EDGEWATER, FLORIDA

OPRY NEEDS HELP

If you're like me and truly love the *Grand Ole Opry*, you don't like the way it's going since Roy Acuff passed. Singers who can't sing a note are made members just to draw crowds, because *Opry* officials think they're sexy. The *Opry* needs to send out talent scouts to the mountains and rural country areas to find good talented singers and comedians like Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Grandpa Jones, Bill Monroe and Loretta Lynn. Bring the *Opry* back to its former glory.

BENTON KENNEDY
ANGIE, LOUISIANA



Have a comment? A complaint? A compliment? Send your letter by e-mail to letters@countrymusicmagazine.com or by regular mail to *Country Music magazine*, 118 16th Ave. S., Suite 230, Nashville, TN 37203. Mark envelope: Attention: Letters. We will not print any letters that do not contain a name and contact address. We reserve the right to edit.



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COUNTRY ON THE TOWN

PARTIES • PEOPLE • NEWS • HAPPENINGS



MICHAEL CAULFIELD/WIREIMAGE (2)

Faith Does NY

▲ **FAITH HILL** donned a micro-mini for her performance on the Grammy Awards in New York City and hobnobbed backstage with fellow nominees **KID ROCK** (above) and rapper **QUEEN LATIFAH**.



RICK DIAMOND/WIREIMAGE



LARRY HILL (2)

Fighting Words

▲ **DARRYL WORLEY** showed his colors and sang his hit "Have You Forgotten?" at a rally supporting U.S. troops in Nashville's Centennial Park.



RICK DIAMOND/WIREIMAGE



MICHAEL CAULFIELD/WIREIMAGE.COM (2)

Contenders

◀ Heavyweights in their own right, **ROBIN WILLIAMS**, **BILLY CRYSTAL**, **REBA McENTIRE** and **LEE GREENWOOD** took the stage for Celebrity Fight Night IX with **MUHAMMAD ALI**. **ROD STEWART** (right) shared a few good-natured jabs with **LEE GREENWOOD**.



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LARRY HILL

An Open Book

▲ **CHALEE TENNISON** treated third- and fourth-graders at Nashville's McGavock Elementary School to a story during Read Me Week. **MICHAEL PETERSON** and **LITTLE BIG TOWN** also volunteered for the encourage-kids-to-read program.



PATRICIA PRESLEY

Folk Honors Stanley

▲ Bluegrass legend Ralph Stanley received another well-deserved honor – the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Folk Music Alliance. Fellow bluegrass musician David Holt presented the award plaque to Stanley at an Alliance ceremony in Nashville.



BETH GWINN

Decking the Hall

▲ **BRENDA LEE** joined **EDDY ARNOLD** and his wife, **SALLY**, to unveil the lifetime of memorabilia Arnold recently donated to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum.



GETTY IMAGES

Slam Dunk

▲ **TIM MCGRAW** held court at the NBA Jam Session's celebrity game during the 2003 NBA All-Star Weekend at the Georgia World Congress Center.



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Is This Seat Taken?

▲ Singer **PATTI LABELLE** cozied up to **WYNONNA** during the MusiCares Person of the Year tribute to rock superstar **BONO** at the Marriott Marquis in New York City.

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THE INSIDER

WITH HAZEL SMITH

IDENTITY CRISIS

Steve Holy stood in an airport waiting to board a plane when a young, attractive female college student struck up a conversation about music. Miss Hottie allowed that her favorite music was country and her favorite song was "Good Morning Beautiful," the Holy hit that spent five weeks at No. 1. Holy, a polite Texas fella, obligingly nodded with a gentle smile. "That's my song," he said.

"Mine too," said Miss Hottie.

"No – it's *really* my song," Steve explained. "I sang it."

"Steve Holy sang that song, and *you* are not Steve Holy," Miss Hottie sassed back.

After providing evidence, the singer finally convinced her that he indeed *was* Steve Holy. Then they both had to go off and board different planes. Don't you know her face was at least a little bit red.

HANK DONE IT THAT WAY

After finishing his first set on the *Grand Ole Opry* at the Ryman Auditorium, **John Michael Montgomery** stepped out the back door, down the steps across the alley to the back door of Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, the renowned beer joint whose front door opens on Broadway.

John Michael sipped a tall, frosty one, just like **Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Faron Young** and many others used to do after an *Opry* performance. Then the star and his band climbed onto Tootsie's tiny stage and performed for a surprised but very happy crowd. Needless to say, the small

Mourners gather at the 1963 memorial service in Nashville.



★ CANDLES IN THE WIND

A candlelight vigil commemorated the 40th anniversary of the night that a plane crash snuffed out the life of the greatest female singer who ever lived, **Patsy Cline**, and her friends **Hawkshaw Hawkins, Cowboy Copas** and her manager/pilot, **Randy Hughes**. They were flying through a blinding rainstorm, coming home from a Kansas City deejay benefit when the plane went down.

Jean Shepard, wife of Hawkshaw

Hawkins, talked about the plane crash on the 40th anniversary of her husband's death.

"There were four people killed in that crash," said Jean, who had a 14-month-old baby and was eight months pregnant when her husband died. Jean is right. Most of us refer to that plane crash as the one that took Patsy Cline's life. We shouldn't forget the others, or those affected by that tragic event.

saloon was soon packed full.

"Tootsie's is a honky-tonk," said John Michael. "You're supposed to honky-tonk there!"

WALKER TAKES A STAND

Clay Walker has lived with multiple sclerosis for seven years, and he's done so like a champ. Now he's ready to take a lead in raising public awareness of the disease. He's joining with Teva Neuroscience, Inc., the company that makes the injection drug that Walker takes to manage his MS.

Walker believes the drug therapy has made a great difference in his life, and he wants to tell his story to inspire others.

As for his music, I saw and heard Clay perform recently, and I'm here to tell you, that handsome Texan is just as sexy and talented as ever.

ONE GEORGE TO ANOTHER

By George, the President of the United States decided to honor the greatest living country music singer. **George Jones** has received a National Medal of Arts from **President George W. Bush** and **First Lady Laura Bush**. The ceremony took place, one Texan to another, in the Oval Office of the White House.

Of course, our George is still going strong. A member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, he's still performing

and recording nearly 50 years after his first hit.

"It's great to be invited to the White House," the humble hero beamed, "but to receive this honor is something else."

Past country music recipients of the award include **Johnny Cash** a year ago and **Eddy Arnold** the year before. Detroit native **Smokey Robinson** was one of the nine honorees this year as was the late artist/caricaturist **Al Hirschfeld**, who had passed away a few weeks before the announcement of the awards were made.

Asked if country music should be defined as a fine art alongside architecture, acting, design and painting,

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Jones told the press, "I think it would be like any type work that you do; if you do it in a big way, and you're good at it, that would be an art."

Of course, I couldn't help but think back to the days when both Georges partied it up, and I couldn't help but smile thinking what would happen if the Prez and the Possum got started nipping and sipping in the Oval Office. Don't you just know the Secret Service is not slick enough to keep up with those two wild Texans!

HONORING REBA

The Country Radio Broadcasters organization will honor **Reba McEntire** with its annual Career Achievement Award as part of its Hall of Fame ceremonies on June 26 in Nashville. And they should! Reba McEntire has brought country music a lot of fans over her wonderful career. Since her first appearance at the Country Radio Seminar New Faces Show in 1980, Reba has made radio



Reba deserves what she's getting from Country Radio Broadcasters.

JOHN HANCOCK/UPM

and her fans a priority.

Of course, country music's favorite redhead has done more than just sing great hits – she's written best-selling books, starred in motion pictures, a Broadway musical and on her own sitcom, *Reba*. But being an appreciative country girl, she'll take time from her busy schedule to attend the ceremony and accept her award in person.

HAYES WADES BACK IN

With two gold records to his credit, **Wade Hayes'** star faded as he and Sony Records went separate ways. He continued to work the road, though, joining **Rhett Akins** and **Daryle Singletary** on a popular tour. He also wrote songs, including some with **Mark McClurg**, a fiddler and mandolin player for **Alan Jackson's Strayhorns** band whom Wade had met while opening shows for Jackson a few years ago.

The two had been discussing forming a duo when they heard that record executives **Tony Brown** and **Tim**

DuBois were actually looking for a musical pair to sign to their label. So they hot-footed it to Universal South Records. Both Wade and Mark are well-versed enough in country music history to know that DuBois was the man who put **Brooks with Dunn** to create the hottest, award-winningest duo this hillbilly town has ever seen.

They've signed with the label, set up shop with **Kenny Chesney's** manager and will make an album with **Joe Nichols'**



FAMILY ADDITION

Sara Evans and hubby **Craig Schelske** named their new 8-pound, 7-ounce baby daughter **Olivia Margaret Schelske**. Big brother **Avery**, 3, wanted a baby sister. Upon seeing her for the first time, Avery said, "Mommy, she has cute toes!"

PATRICK HRELIET

producer. That, my friends, is getting on the country treadmill and turning it up to full speed ahead.

UNDER GOES OVER

Folks, it's a first that I never thought would happen. While handsome **Joe Nichols** sang on the *Opry* stage at the sacred Ryman Auditorium, a spectator tossed her green bra onstage. Are you believing that?! Joe hung the lacy undergarment on his guitar and kept singing. The woman who did it, a Vanderbilt University student, got a chance to meet Joe at the stage door later that night. Not sure if she got her clothing item back or not.

BROWNS ON TOUR

Country stalwart **Jim Ed Brown** and his retired sisters, **Maxine** and **Bonnie**, are pulling their stage clothes out of mothballs and reuniting for a series of casino dates. During the late '50s, the trio scored with such memorable hits as "I Take the Chance," "Scarlet Ribbons" and the unforgettable chart-topper, "The Three Bells," a pop and country hit. This will be a rare opportunity to see one of our classiest acts.

COUNTRY LAWYER

New York City rolled out the red carpet for a chi-chi country crowd when hillbilly attorney extraordinaire **Joel**

Katz was awarded the United Jewish Association Federation's Spirit of Music award. An Atlanta man of law, Joel represents probably half of the bigwigs in the country music business. Our own **Brooks & Dunn** showed the Big Apple fancy pants how it's done – honky-tonk country style. Believe it or not, all those men in suits could almost clap in time. A good time was had, and a lot of money was raised!

PAYCHECK MEMORY

Daryle Singletary's current album, *That's Why I Sing This Way*, bears **Johnny Paycheck's** final recording. Singletary recorded Paycheck's self-penned song, the marvelous "Old Violin." Paycheck did a recitation of part of the song for the Singletary project from his hospital bed.

The last time I saw Paycheck at the *Opry*, **Vince Gill** was hosting the televised segment. Paycheck was not well, but ever the pro, he put every inch of strength he had into performing "Old Violin." His incredible performance earned him a well-deserved standing ovation. Vince walked somberly onstage with tears in his eyes and addressed all the "young bucks" in the audience. "What you just saw here tonight was education, and you better learn from it," said Vince. "I just did!" ★



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BY
REVER
DM

Beautiful Hello

Jennifer Hanson finds success — after finding herself

Ten years ago Nashville told Jennifer Hanson she was “too young.” Now, at 29, she’s finally got her foot in the door.

New stars on the rise



COURTESY: CAPITOL RECORDS

Jennifer Hanson brings together California cool and Southern steaminess — and for a reason. The long-legged, longhaired singer of the recent hit “Beautiful Goodbye” was raised in La Habra, Calif., just south of Los Angeles. But in her early teens she began visiting Nashville, soaking up its music and its culture.

“Growing up, I didn’t realize that we had as little as we had,” says Hanson, 29. “Music was always just the center of my world and what I did.”

Her parents were both musicians, and she was raised on the California sounds of Linda Ronstadt, The Eagles, Emmylou Harris and Fleetwood Mac. “My memories start with me going to band practice with them as a child and hearing that music,” she says. “Country music came later.”

When Hanson was 7, her parents divorced. Her father relocated to Nashville in 1987 when offered a job as tour guitarist for Alabama, a position he still holds today.

That decision forever altered his daughter’s direction in life. Her trips to visit her father in Nashville exposed her to the city’s rich musical scene. By 15 she was writing songs and eager to launch a country music career. She and her father began knocking on Music Row doors in the early ’90s.

“This was before LeAnn Rimes,” she says, “so Nashville considered me too young.”

In hindsight, she realizes they were right. “I always had a vision and soon realized the kind of artist I wanted to be would take time, experiences, growing up and maturity,” she says.

The best advice her father gave her came when he told her that she should move to Nashville if she was serious about country music. She did just that in 1995 and landed a songwriting deal with Acuff-Rose three years later.

“Writing was huge for me,” she says. “Until I started writing songs and digging down deep, I was really lost. It took me a long time to figure out who Jennifer Hanson was. It took me a long time to find my voice and style that would set me apart.”

Hanson co-wrote and co-produced her debut album, gaining valuable assistance from her husband, veteran Nashville songwriter Mark Nesler. Her first hit, “Beautiful Goodbye,” quickly captured the attention of fans with its haunting chorus and unusual point of view.

“It’s kind of scary to put yourself out there and to know that people may or may not like it,” she says. “But I have to say that I have no regrets.”

— Beverly Keel

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The TOP 100 SONGS OF ALL TIME

Where do your favorites rank?
Tune in to CMT June 8 to find out.

Name a great country star, and what immediately comes to mind? A great country song. Now start naming the great country songs. You'll quickly compile quite a list.

For an upcoming TV special, CMT set out on the difficult task of coming up with the 100 greatest country songs of all time. The network's choices undoubtedly will spark debate, as they should – such a list not only recognizes greatness, but also raises the level of discussion about what has made country music such a vital, foundational element in millions of lives over the decades.

What songs did CMT choose? Here they are.

But we're presenting them alphabetically, not ranked by number, to impart some element of suspense to CMT's unveiling of the No. 1 country song of all time on June 8. This way, you can follow along as you watch the telecast, guess at the outcome, even make your choices of how you'd rank each of the 100.

So jump in – and let the love, heartbreak, drama and dreams of country's greatest songs sweep you away.

COMPILED BY MICHAEL McCALL AND ALANNA NASH

ACT NATURALLY

(Voni Morrison/Johnny Russell) **Buck Owens**

Owens' exaggerated drawl provided a perfectly cheeky tone to a man so good at dramatizing his loneliness that Hollywood could make him a star just for acting like himself. In 1963, it became the first of Owens' many No. 1 hits, and two years later The Beatles covered it, giving Ringo Starr one of his most memorable turns at the microphone.

ALWAYS ON MY MIND

(Wayne Carson/Mark James/Johnny Christopher)

Willie Nelson

Here's one way to say you're sorry. A potent apology to a woman who feels taken for granted, Nelson slowly and emotionally acknowledges that she deserves better. By 1982, the song already had a rich history, including a popular Elvis Presley version. But Nelson's subtle, award-winning take stands as the definitive rendition.

AMARILLO BY MORNING

(Paul Fraser/Terry Stafford) **George Strait**

An update on the romantic cowboy song – only this one emphasized rodeo life's loneliness as much as its freedom. Featuring Strait at his most stoic and blue, the 1983 hit found a veteran bronco buster struggling between contests and weighing the costs (a wife, a girlfriend, a broken body) against the gains (independence and the thrill of the ride).

AMAZED

(Marv Green/Chris Lindsey/Aimee Mayo) **Lonestar**

Proms, weddings and Lonestar would never be the same after singer Richie McDonald found his bliss by filling this soaring love ballad with sensitivity and conviction. The 1999 No. 1 moved the quartet from struggling newcomers to full-fledged stars, and country music found a new king of the ballad.

BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN

(Gene Autry/Ray Whitley) **Gene Autry**

Whoop ti yi yo! When America's first superstar cowboy idol yelped those words, he made it clear he couldn't be happier than when heading out on the trail. The 1939 hit stands as the ultimate romantic cowboy song, except in this case the loved one is the open range, *where you sleep out every night, and the only law is right.*

BEFORE THE NEXT TEARDROP FALLS

(Vivian Keith/Ben Peters) **Freddy Fender**

Fender's aching tenor communicated not only heartbreak but a desperate kind of hope on this 1975 No. 1, the first by a Mexican-American. Even though the woman he loves is with another man, he promises her that should anything go wrong, he'll be there *before the next teardrop falls.* When he breaks into Spanish, it's hard to understand how she can resist.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

(Kenny O'Dell) **Charlie Rich**

Mood music for cautious but passionate lovers, "Behind Closed Doors" finally provided the multitalented Rich with his breakthrough No. 1 hit in 1973. With a piano as soft and sensual as candlelight, the Silver Fox seduced listeners by intimately informing them that he and his lover might be a model of discretion in public, but certainly not when they were alone.

BLUE

(Bill Mack) **LeAnn Rimes**

She was 13 with the voice of a 30-year-old, and the face of a new-wave Lolita. And the 1996 hit, which Mack originally wrote for Patsy Cline, was so authentically retro (that yodel!) as to have dropped in from outer space. It sounded like nothing else on '90s radio. Unadulterated bliss.

BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY

(Bill Monroe) **Bill Monroe & His Blue Grass Boys**

Bandleader Monroe hoped his song about a nighttime sky and a cheating woman would best his previous, No. 3 hit,

BLUE EYES CRYING IN THE RAIN

(Fred Rose) **Willie Nelson**

In 1975, Willie Nelson could point to a string of hits ("Night Life," "Hello Walls") other artists had scored with songs he'd written, but he'd never charted a No. 1 himself. The irony is that he was about to do just that – not with one of his bluesy, honky-tonk laments, but with a cover of this 30-year-old country standard by Fred Rose.

Nelson's rendition sat quietly on *Red Headed Stranger*, a concept album of pathos and internal strife that

revolved around an Old West preacher, his unfaithful wife and the rashest of foul deeds. Recorded over three days in Texas for \$20,000, the album was instrumentally and sonically spare, and Nelson was branded an "outlaw" for going against the Nashville grain. But its eventual success – it sold more than two million copies – made "outlaw" chic and ushered in a new mainstream for Nashville recording style. Nelson, meanwhile, became an international star, his nasal baritone a seeming siren call for the renegade in everyone.



THE CHAIR

(Hank Cochran/Dean Dillon)

George Strait

Who knew that such a virtuous Texas cowboy could be so sly? George Strait's subtle sincerity helps make this crafty 1985 story song all the more romantic. Shyly approaching a woman sitting alone at a table, he fibs that he had been sitting at that same table before she arrived, persuading her to allow him to join her.

He then, through smooth and steady banter, manages to work her onto the dance floor – and eventually works himself into her heart, winning her over with the gentlest persuasion.

In the end, he even admits that he started off with a little white lie about the chair being his. We don't think she minded.



The TOP 100 SONGS OF ALL TIME

"Kentucky Walz." But this 1947 recording never charted at all – but it did change the world. Not only did Elvis Presley ride it to fame, but Monroe's own version –

as high and lonesome as a man can get – virtually defined bluegrass.

BOOT SCOOTIN' BOOGIE

(Ronnie Dunn) Brooks & Dunn

The line-dance craze starts here. Though Dunn's tune had already been recorded by Asleep at the Wheel, its inclusion on the five-million-selling *Brand New Man* album made it an undeniable smash that filled dance floors across the USA in 1992. Who could resist Dunn's tenor, set to a shuffle with a neon heart? You can almost feel the sawdust on the floor.

A BOY NAMED SUE

(Shel Silverstein) Johnny Cash

Talk about tough love. Using his larger-than-life persona to great comic effect in this 1969 No. 1 hit, Cash had a blast as a swaggering macho man improbably named Sue who tracked down a roustabout father who abandoned him at birth. He intended to make the lowlife dad pay for saddling him with a feminine name – but received a life lesson instead.

BREATHE

(Stephanie Bentley/Holly Lamar) Faith Hill

Hill matured from Nashville ingenue to international sex symbol with this blatantly carnal love song. Starting with a husky, intimate whisper about the magic in the air, the 1999 hit builds into a climactic crescendo about how lovers meld into one when alone and everything is right. When she opens up and screams the chorus, you can all but hear the fireworks going off.

CHISELED IN STONE

(Max D. Barnes/Vern Gosdin) Vern Gosdin

"The Good Stuff," part one. As in Kenny Chesney's hit nearly 15 years later, Vern Gosdin's 1988 award winner starts with an angry husband who hits a bar after a fight at home. There, an older man talks of his deceased wife with such loving tenderness that it helps Gosdin realize he should cherish the love in his life.

COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER

(Loretta Lynn) Loretta Lynn

With her backwoods accent and emotional storytelling style, Lynn triumphs as the voice of traditional female country. Her 1970 signature hit (and title of her award-winning 1980 film biography) seems like something Steinbeck could have written, driven by hardscrabble resolve and mountain pride. Few songs ever sounded so poignant – or real.

COAT OF MANY COLORS

(Dolly Parton) Dolly Parton

More than just the autobiographical story of a patchwork jacket and a mama's love, "Coat of Many Colors," released in 1971, is the perfect distillation of Dolly Parton. In focusing on her individualism and survival tactics – and not her shame at being poor and taunted – Parton shares the remarkable tale of fortitude and self-determination that led her out of the mountains.

CRAZY

(Willie Nelson) Patsy Cline

An amazing song meets an extraordinary singer and visionary producer: Together, the result is a rare, enchanting miracle of good taste. Nelson's lyric of agonized love became, in the hands of Patsy Cline and Owen Bradley, a sultry rendering of the torment and ecstasy of head-swirling romance. It's also the very essence of 1961's Nashville Sound.

THE DANCE

(Tony Arata) **Garth Brooks**

He'd had hits before, but it was 1990's "The Dance," a wistful declaration to a lost love, that set Brooks on his superstar path. A pop record hoisted by piano and strings, the single combined Dan Fogelberg-like earnestness with a melodramatic synthesis of joy and pain that has always defined great country music. All suburbia swooned, and country music was never the same.

DELTA DAWN

(Larry Collins/Alex Harvey) **Tanya Tucker**

The year was 1972, when kids were kids and country music was still for grown-ups. Then came 13-year-old Tanya Tucker, cracking the Top 10 with a Southern gothic ditty about a middle-aged woman gone crazy from a lover's broken promise. This astonishingly "knowing" vocal made Tucker a legend, and deservedly so.

DESPERADO

(Glenn Frey/Don Henley) **The Eagles**

The 1973 ballad put the country in the most successful California country-rock band. A plea to a friend whose independence has left him lonely too long, the song's key line – *You better let somebody love you/Before it's too late* – touched a universal nerve in anyone who has let pride push others away.

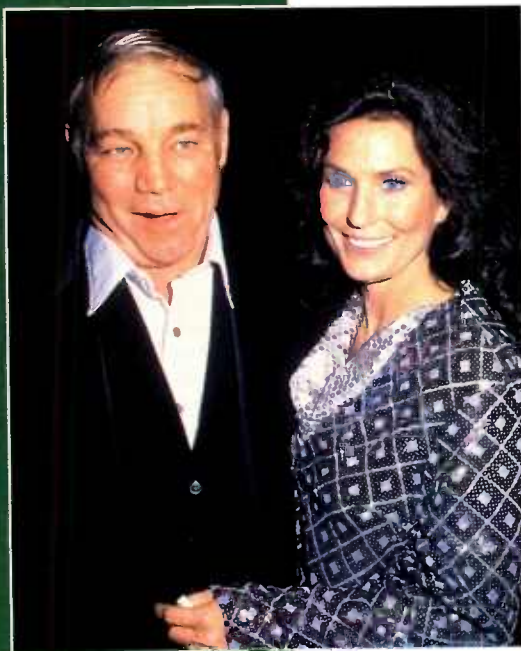
DON'T COME HOME A DRINKIN' (WITH LOVIN' ON YOUR MIND)

(Loretta Lynn/Peggy Sue Wells)

Loretta Lynn

Nothing if not feisty, Lynn fell in step in 1966 with the burgeoning women's movement, giving husband Mooney the ol' heave-ho when he came home after a night on the town. Country women might not have known who Betty Friedan was, but they knew all too much about a groggin' and a gropin'.

The song gave Loretta her first No. 1 and further established her as a one-of-a-kind songwriter capable of addressing her relationships, her history and her social point of view in a colorful, concise language all her own.



THE DEVIL WENT DOWN TO GEORGIA

(Tom Crain/Charlie Daniels/Joel DiGregorio/
Fred Edwards/Charlie Hayward/James Marshall)

Charlie Daniels Band

Daniels and his band were recording its 1979 *Million Mile Reflections* album when Daniels realized he needed a fiddle tune. Adding a Mephistopheles theme to Stephen Vincent Bener's fiddling contest poem "Mountain Whippoorwill," Daniels tapped into the great mythology of the South. His amalgam of hillbilly and rock earned him his only No. 1 country hit, with a rousing fiddle solo that all but raised the dead.

D-I-V-O-R-C-E

(Bobby Braddock/Curly Putman) **Tammy Wynette**

At first, she wasn't sure she liked it. But her 1968 hit – about a mother so worried about how her divorce would affect her child she had to spell it rather than say the word itself – resonated with single mamas everywhere. With it, Wynette earned the first of two signature songs and built a reputation as a tower of female strength singing woman-to-woman songs that seemed to reflect her own life.

DON'T ROCK THE JUKEBOX

(Alan Jackson/Roger Murrain/Keith Stegall)

Alan Jackson

The paradox of Jackson's impassioned 1991 plea to keep things country (*my heart ain't ready for the Rolling Stones*) is that he works the shuffle about a heartbroke hillbilly so hard that it absolutely rocks. The lanky Georgian may be traditional country's patron saint, but his winning blend of honky-tonk and blues knows the value of a backbeat to please country radio.

DON'T TOSS US AWAY

(Bryan McLean) **Patty Loveless**

It's hard to think of a countrier-sounding song than this hit of one-sided love from 1989. But this mournful shuffle with a honky-tonk hangover came from California roots-rockers Lone Justice, just one of several outside sources Loveless would turn to in her quest to carry Emmylou Harris' neotraditionalist torch.

EL PASO

(Marty Robbins)

Marty Robbins

Arguably the best-known cowboy song ever, "El Paso" is a musical mini-movie, a tragic tale of love and death spanning more than four minutes – an eternity for 1959 radio. Its power lies in its magnificent production and the way Robbins, an Arizona native, used his rich, sonorous baritone to make the Old West imagery positively gallop. When he sings *I feel the bullet go deep in my chest, you'll clutch your own*.

The TOP 100 SONGS OF ALL TIME

FADED LOVE

(Billy Jack Wills/Bob Wills/Johnny Wills)

Bob Wills & His Texas Playboys

In 1950, Western-swing

king Wills dusted off an instrumental he'd written as a boy with his father and asked his brother, Billy Jack, to add a nostalgic lyric in the heart-song tradition. Quicker than you could say "Ah, ha," the tune, featuring Rusty McDonald and the Playboy Trio on vocals, climbed into the Top 10 on its way to becoming a bona fide classic. Patsy Cline later revived it with a version that's been often imitated by other performers.

FAMILY TRADITION

(Hank Williams Jr.) **Hank Williams Jr.**

Bocephus' endless allusions to his poor dead daddy and the heavy load of being Junior lost their luster eventually. But not on 1979's "Family Tradition," an

FOLSOM PRISON BLUES

(Johnny Cash) **Johnny Cash**

With a face that looked as if it had stopped a fist or two, a mountainous build and a carved-from-granite baritone – a virtual canyon of experience and passion – Cash roared onto the national scene in 1955 and took his place among the pantheon of great American originals. Backed by The Tennessee Two in 1956, he recorded "Folsom Prison Blues" (with the memorable tag line *I shot a man in Reno/Just to watch him die*) and forever cemented his image as a man who could deal authoritatively with just about anything. That includes the raucous crowd who welcomed him at the actual Folsom Prison in 1968 for a live rendition of the song, which duplicated the boom-chicka rhythm of The Tennessee Two, but put more barbed-wire sting in the electric guitar. By then, Cash had adopted his all-black attire, which made him seem both sinister and priestly, in perfect stride with his complex musical personality.



exercise in myth-making that held up as both rowdy self-realization and a musical wink to the past and the future. If you listen closely, you can almost hear the ghost of Hank Sr. singing along.

FANCY

(Bobbie Gentry) **Reba McEntire**

Gentry's late-'60s tale of a destitute teen who rises to riches through prostitution was ready for a good dusting off by 1991, when McEntire resurrected it into a Top 10 hit and a must-see video. Reba didn't just sing it, though – she embodied it, infusing each word with a wounded pride that likely did Fancy's mama proud.

FLOWERS ON THE WALL

(Lew DeWitt) **Statler Brothers**

It was their first hit, and it managed to make the gospel-bred Statler Brothers cool during a turbulent era. This wryly comic 1965 hit, in which a rejected lover insists he's been wildly busy since his girlfriend split, is as memorable for its quartet harmonies as for its lyrical quirkiness. No wonder Eric Heatherly covered it!

FOGGY MOUNTAIN BREAKDOWN

(Earl Scruggs) **Flatt & Scruggs**

Country fans have hailed this great Flatt & Scruggs instrumental as "the bluegrass national anthem" almost since the duo first recorded it in 1949. But it took the 1967 film *Bonnie and Clyde* to introduce the masses to the song through a version that had been re-recorded by the duo two years earlier. Scruggs, a banjo god, is more potent than white lightning, bending the strings like a man with 12 fingers on each hand.

FOREVER AND EVER, AMEN

(Paul Overstreet/Don Schlitz)

Randy Travis

It's no easy task to write a bouncy song that combines a quasi-religious title with a secular love story and a line about a balding woman, but here it is, a 1987 No. 1. The album, *Always & Forever*, Travis' second, stayed at the top spot for 43 weeks, mak-

ing the square-jawed North Carolinian the white knight of country tradition in the wake of *Urban Cowboy* faddishness.

FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES

(Dewayne Blackwell/Bud Lee) **Garth Brooks**

Take one hot young singer, add a tipsy song about crashing your ex's formal wedding in cowboy boots,

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The TOP 100 SONGS OF ALL TIME

had Brooks leaving every other hat act in the dust – and loving it.

GALVESTON

(Jimmy Webb) **Glen Campbell**

In 1969, during the Vietnam War, a song that referenced *cannons flashing* and *I am so afraid of dying* could be about only one thing. But songwriter Jimmy Webb, who wrote “Galveston” as one in a series of hits for Glen Campbell, began the song as a paean to musical outlaws. No matter, “Galveston” was a powerful piece of songwriting, brought home by one of country’s most emotive singers.

THE GAMBLER

(Don Schlitz) **Kenny Rogers**

You got to know when to hold ‘em/Know when to fold ‘em, urged the irresistible chorus from this 1978 Rogers mega-hit – and a new catchphrase was born.

throw in some frat-boy bluster, and what do you get? Sales of 700,000 albums (*No Fences*) in its first 10 days. This 1990 sing-along, coming on the heels of “The Dance,”

The song, which became a touchstone for country songsmiths in the New Traditionalist era, had already enjoyed three recordings before the gravel-voiced Rogers cut it, proving that sometimes it’s the synthesis of singer and song that makes the magic.

GO REST HIGH ON THAT MOUNTAIN

(Vince Gill) **Vince Gill**

A farewell song that combines the reverence of a hymn and the emotional immediacy of a bluegrass ballad, the 1995 hit was inspired by the deaths of Keith Whitley and Gill’s own half-brother, Bob Cohen. His sorrow over both passings resulted in one of the genre’s most affecting performances, rendered in an ethereal tenor that would make even the angels weep.

GOD BLESS THE U.S.A.

(Lee Greenwood) **Lee Greenwood**

The ultimate modern patriotic anthem, Greenwood’s 1984 hit offered a prideful reminder that we must celebrate and defend the freedoms and fortunes of America. With time, it grew to rank in popularity with “God Bless America” and “The Star-Spangled Banner” for its flag-waving, united-we-stand message.

GOOD HEARTED WOMAN

(Waylon Jennings/Willie Nelson) **Waylon Jennings**

In this valentine laced in regret, Jennings toasts the forgiving women who stand by their honky-tonk good-time men. He isn’t apologizing for his wicked ways in this 1972 hit; he’s just stating the facts. But there’s a loving tenderness to his tone, and that sensitivity was just as important to Jennings’ popularity as was his machismo.

GREEN, GREEN GRASS OF HOME

(Curly Putman) **Porter Wagoner**

One of country’s great prison songs, the 1965 hit is nearly finished before you realize the man is behind bars. Wagoner masterfully paints a scene of a man stepping off a train who’s greeted at the beautiful old homestead by his mama, papa and his sweet Mary. Only then he awakens and realizes he’s to be executed that day.

GUITARS, CADILLACS

(Dwight Yoakam) **Dwight Yoakam**

Brashness personified, Yoakam kicked down Nashville’s doors with this bold 1986 boot-scooter about a man who turns to guitars,

HE STOPPED LOVING HER TODAY

(Bobby Braddock/Curly Putman)

George Jones

Jones often gets called country’s greatest vocalist, for good reason. But on his signature 1980 hit, he speaks, not sings, the majority of the lyrics. Still, each consonant reverberates like a sermon on how humans learn to repress their feelings. Then, in a grand crescendo, he lets loose a lifetime of restraint. It’s that contrast between gentle, slurring words and soaring, full-out emotion that makes it such a classic example of Jones’ range. It also presents the perfect epitaph to the song’s subject, a man who devoted his life to loving in vain.



COURTESY COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME & MUSEUM

The TOP 100 SONGS OF ALL TIME

Cadillacs and hillbilly music to get over a broken heart. He sells the honky-tonk life with such gusto that you don't worry about whether he can survive a few inner scars.

HARPER VALLEY P.T.A.

(Tom T. Hall) **Jeannie C. Riley**

A ribald tale about the day a miniskirted mama socked it to a hypocritical school board, the 1968 story song introduced Hall as a one-of-a-kind songwriter and Riley as a particularly saucy female vocalist. It was Riley's first single and her only No. 1 hit.

I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

(Dolly Parton) **Dolly Parton**

In 1973, Parton found herself often at loggerheads with duet partner Porter Wagoner. A regular on his syndicated television show since 1967, Dolly had become a popular and successful recording star, but yearned to branch out on her own and look beyond the confines of Nashville. As a bittersweet goodbye, and to express her gratitude for all Wagoner had done for her, Dolly went home and wrote "I Will Always Love You."

The biggest-selling record of her career, the ballad was a hit for Parton herself twice, once in 1974 as her first chart-topper since splitting with Wagoner, then again in 1982 as part of the movie *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. Ten years later, Whitney Houston's version, the theme from *The Bodyguard*, became an adult-contemporary hit. In 1995, Parton revamped the song as a duet with Vince Gill, winning the Country Music Association's Vocal Event of the Year award. Believe it or not, that same 1973 songwriting session that created this song also yielded "Jolene."



COURTESY COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME & MUSEUM

HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY THAT I LOVE YOU

(Scott Wiseman) **Gene Autry**

A gentle love song about a relationship that endures the test of time, it's about reminding your partner that the words first spoken in passion and in wedding vows remain true. Autry, whose smooth romanticism proved a nice fit, learned the song from fellow WLS stars Lulu Belle & Scotty, the latter of whom wrote the classic.

HE'LL HAVE TO GO

(Joe Allison/Audrey Allison) **Jim Reeves**

Heartbreak at its most romantic, this classic 1960 No. 1 finds Reeves' velvet baritone whispering into the phone to the woman he loves. He flirts, then offers a bargain: He'll have the bartender turn down the jukebox if she'll ask the guy with her to leave. Good try, buddy. And good luck.

HELLO DARLIN'

(Conway Twitty) **Conway Twitty**

A man meets his ex-lover on the street. He did her wrong, but he's the one suffering now, as their conversation slowly reveals. Twitty, in his husky bedroom voice, tries to gently seduce her into another chance. But she's happy with her new love, and the fact that he cries all night isn't changing her mind.

HELLO WALLS

(Willie Nelson) **Faron Young**

The old joke is that when Nelson told Young his song title, Faron laughed and went around saying, "Hello table. Hello stool. Hello commode." But he later laughed all the way to the bank, as his smooth but slurringly expressive voice provided the perfect sly tone to this story about a man turning to black humor to deal with his loneliness.

HERE'S A QUARTER

(Travis Tritt) **Travis Tritt**

Ah, sweet revenge. His woman's done him wrong way too many times, and now that she's seeking his sympathy, he relishes the opportunity to tell her what he thinks: *Here's a quarter*, Tritt bellows with relish on this 1991 hit, *call someone who cares*. It's a kiss-off he delivers with just the right touch of humor and bite.

HEY GOOD LOOKIN'

(Hank Williams) **Hank Williams**

One of country music's best come-ons, Hank Williams lays it on thick in this 1951 classic – but with such a playful boisterousness that it's hard to imagine even the most prudish paramour

INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Gretchen Peters) **Martina McBride**

Let freedom ring, McBride shouts with righteous fury, but the liberation she's exalting concerns an abused wife and mother who burns down the family home in a day of reckoning. Told from the point of view of the couple's child, the 1994 song mixes tough observation with rousing indignation, and McBride gives it just the right blend of fire and backbone.

Amazingly, the unforgettable song didn't break the Top 10, stalling at No. 12 on the charts because some stations felt the message was too provocative. McBride's had plenty of other top hits, but this stands as her career song, the one that closely identified with her and that always gets the strongest reaction in concert – and in one-on-one meetings with fans who tell her it changed their lives.



resisting. All rhythm, steel and fiddle, by the time Hank boasts that he's got a *hot rod Ford* and a \$2 bill, she's probably riding shotgun and ready to go.

I AM A MAN OF CONSTANT SORROW

(Traditional/Arranged by Carter Stanley)

The Soggy Bottom Boys

The song is as old as the hills from which it originated. Ralph and Carter Stanley, in one of hundreds of recordings of it, created the best-known version until singer Dan Tyminski and The Soggy Bottom Boys set it on fire for the 2000 movie *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Sometimes songs are just blessed by timing – and by one hell of a performance.

I CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU

(Don Gibson) **Ray Charles**

Time can seem to stand still for the broken-hearted. In this monumental masterpiece – one of the most recorded country songs of all time – the heartbroken singer declares that his feelings won't ever change, that he's stuck with unrequited love for the rest of his life. The song's visited the country Top 10 in versions by Kitty Wells, Conway Twitty and Gibson. But Ray Charles' orchestrated version broke down barriers between soul, country and pop, and is the one you hear when the song comes to mind.

I FALL TO PIECES

(Harlan Howard/Hank Cochran) **Patsy Cline**

The haunted lyrics relate a lack of self-control: No matter how the woman tries, every time she sees her former lover – or simply hears his name – she crumbles, again. But Cline's 1961 performance is all about control: Reining in her full voice, her hushed rendition perfectly captures the desperation of someone who can't forget.

I HOPE YOU DANCE

(Mark Sanders/Tia Sillers) **Lee Ann Womack**

As wish lists go, this one is as life-affirming – and as beautiful – as they come. A heartfelt appeal for a loved one to lead an abundant life balanced with opportunity and humility, "I Hope You Dance" achieves its goals through Womack's sweet, yearning alto and producer Mark Wright's subtly sweeping production. The 2000 hit stands as a high-water mark among the morality tales that filled country music at the turn of the century.

I WALK THE LINE

(Johnny Cash) **Johnny Cash**

No matter how you interpret Johnny Cash's 1956 rockabilly hit – as a declaration of fidelity, the wry complaint of a henpecked husband, or as a pathetic pledge of a man who knows his woman's love is all that's keeping him from giving in to his darker nature – "I Walk the Line" is the haunting sound of a man in perpetual struggle. No wonder it became Cash's theme song.

I'D BE BETTER OFF (IN A PINE BOX)

(Steve Clark/Johnny MacRae) **Doug Stone**

No song ever got right to the point faster. The man thought he could never feel worse than when his lover left him, but then he sees her with another man – and imagines that death would be better than dealing with his grief. The 1990 hit may have broached death, but in 1990, hard-country fans heard a resurrection of the music they loved.

IF YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY, I'VE GOT THE TIME

(Lefty Frizzell/Jim Beck) **Lefty Frizzell**

A rounder's fantasy: To a high-stepping fiddle and singing steel guitar, a honky-tonker proposes to a gal that they hit

The TOP 100 SONGS OF ALL TIME

standard, juicing each line with a fun-loving wink and a rakish smile.

❑ I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY

(Hank Williams) **Hank Williams**

Has a bluer song ever been created? Not released as a single when originally recorded, "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" stands as a model of Williams' dirt-floor poetry and his ability to illuminate the darkest corners of the heart.

❑ IS THERE LIFE OUT THERE

(Susan Ruth Longaker/Rick Giles) **Reba McEntire**

Country music has always celebrated those who lead quiet, honorable lives, but it's also given voice to those who desire more. McEntire so realistically dramatized the emotion of devoted housewives who come to want a second act – a career, an education, a life outside the home – that the 1992 hit eventually evolved into a movie.

❑ IT WASN'T GOD WHO MADE HONKY TONK ANGELS

(J.D. Miller) **Kitty Wells**

Wells proved to be the ideal first female country star partly because she was so inherently virtuous. But even the upright have a breaking point, which is why she touched such a universal nerve with the quiet anger in her 1952 reply to the hit "Wild Side of Life," which suggested women were to blame for corrupting married men.

❑ IT'S YOUR LOVE

(Stephony Smith) **Tim McGraw and Faith Hill**

An ardent love song that finds country's First Couple publicly pledging their devotion in song, and in a memorable video featuring an obviously pregnant Faith. But the song delves much deeper, addressing how strong love serves to inspire as well as comfort.

❑ KILLIN' TIME

(Clint Black/Mayden Nicholas) **Clint Black**

It started as an offhand remark on a drive to a gig north of Houston. Black had just begun writing with guitarist Nicholas, and he was frustrated about how long it took for his big break to come. "This killin' time is killin' me," he said, and the two men knew they had a hook. They also had the title of Black's 1989 debut album, which served up this song as its second No. 1.

❑ KING OF THE ROAD

(Roger Miller) **Roger Miller**

From its jazzy, finger-popping percussion, to its sly, vivid word-play, Miller's portrait of hobo life was an irresistible anomaly even in 1965, when country never saw a novelty tune it didn't like. An Oklahoma hipster, Miller may have presented himself as

all the nightspots to dance, drink and live it up – as long as she's got the cash to bankroll the party. Frizzell, the consummate honky-tonk singer, makes a convincing case in this 1950

an undignified stumblebum here, but with a steel trap mind. Any drifter who knows "every lock that ain't locked when no one's around" ain't no Boxcar Willie.

❑ KISS AN ANGEL GOOD MORNIN'

(Ben Peters) **Charley Pride**

Sammi Smith's "Help Me Make It Through the Night" and Freddie Hart's "Easy Loving" pushed country music into sexually explicit territory in 1971. Pride's memorable song sold the notion of morning and evening intimacy in a less brazen manner. The title could have meant nothing more than a passionless peck, of course, but the next line – "and love her like the devil when you get back home" – left no room for misinterpretation.

❑ LOVESICK BLUES

(Cliff Friend/Irving Mills) **Hank Williams**

It was Emmett Miller & His Georgia Crackers who first recorded "Lovesick Blues" in 1928, but after Hank Williams made it his breakthrough hit in 1949, he owned it, and neither Sonny James nor others who cut it afterwards could touch it. Only Hank, with his catch-and-moan bray and yelping yodel, could sound simultaneously ill and giddy from a woman's rejection.

❑ MAKE THE WORLD GO AWAY

(Hank Cochran) **Eddy Arnold**

Ray Price and Jim Reeves had already recorded it for the country audience, but it was Timi Yuro's version of "Make the World Go Away" that got Arnold's attention and made him decide to tackle this song of romantic anguish in 1965. With a Nashville Sound arrangement sympathetic to Arnold's smooth, earnest vocals, the tune flew up the pop charts and stayed for more than a year, helping to launch what became Arnold's second prolific career phase.

❑ MAMA HE'S CRAZY

(Kenny O'Dell) **The Judds**

A daughter, flush with the confidence true love provides, gives her mother the good news: *Mama, he's crazy/Crazy over me.* From the warm tone Wynonna Judd gives the story, it's easy to tell Mama Naomi is just as happy as she is. She should be: The 1984 song, the Judds' first No. 1, provided the perfect introduction for the most famous mother-duo in history.

❑ MAMMAS DON'T LET YOUR BABIES GROW UP TO BE COWBOYS

(Ed Bruce/Patsy Bruce)

Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson

A tongue-in-cheek warning issued at the height of outlaw fever, the 1978 No. 1 ranks among the most famous songs to come out of Nashville during that era. Waylon and Willie savored the irony: Two country cowboys celebrate the excesses and self-centered individuality of their lives while cautioning others to do as they say, not as they do.

❑ MY HOME'S IN ALABAMA

(Teddy Gentry/Randy Owen) **Alabama**

A wistful blues about the romantic memories of home, the 1980 introductory hit defined what made the Fort Payne

quarter such a force. With the guitars and drums of Southern rock blended with the sentimental heart of country, these friendly, longhaired boys changed the Nashville scene forever.

☐ OKIE FROM MUSKOGEE

(Merle Haggard/Roy Burris) **Merle Haggard**

Written tongue-in-cheek, Haggard's conservative 1969 ode struck a nerve with the silent majority during an era when the generational divide was at its widest and most volatile. It became an anthem for those put off by the social changes brought forth in the late '60s.

☐ ON THE OTHER HAND

(Don Schlitz/Paul Overstreet) **Randy Travis**

A classic cheating song, Travis' 1986 No. 1 finds a fellow counting on one hand all the reasons why his new love is perfect for him. But there's one reason she's not: the "golden band" on his "other hand." Travis' slurring, tormented reading of the lyrics is among the reasons he became a savior of traditional country.

☐ PASSIONATE KISSES

(Lucinda Williams) **Mary Chapin Carpenter**

Call it a feminist anthem if you must, but as in most cases when a woman makes a stand for her rights, what she wants are basic comforts and pleasures: food, shelter, clothing, respect and passion in her life. The way Carpenter's 1993 hit version rocks, it sounds likely she will get what she wants – and she did, including an audience that cherished her literate country-folk songs.

☐ RHINESTONE COWBOY

(Larry Weiss) **Glen Campbell**

The title became a cultural catchphrase, but the performance itself is much more subtle than the bang-the-drum chorus suggests. In it, Campbell is a performer hustling for a break who dreams of standing in the bright lights someday, like a "rhinestone cowboy." In 1975, it was his first No. 1 hit in six years, and it did indeed put him back in the spotlight, "getting cards and letters from people" he didn't know, "and offers coming over the phone."

☐ RING OF FIRE

(June Carter/Merle Kilgore)

Johnny Cash

Who else could invest such moral uncertainty about diving into passion's fiery depths than The Man in Black? With a memorable – and, for country music, highly unusual – Latin horn arrangement stoking the flame, the 1963 hit finds Cash acknowledging that his new love makes him burn, burn, burn. But he shows no signs of inclination to step away from the heat.

☐ ROSE GARDEN

(Joe South) **Lynn Anderson**

In this spirited and loving reprimand, a woman admonishes her man by begging his pardon: She said she'd love him forever, but she never said life would be perfect. Anderson's spitfire delivery, and the cascading strings that pushed her along, made the 1970 No. 1 leap from speakers and force you to listen up.

☐ SEVEN YEAR ACHE

(Rosanne Cash) **Rosanne Cash**

Welcome to modern love. Cash brings a new complexity to country love songs with this damning 1981 portrayal of a charming ladies' man who wants every woman in the room: but

PLEASE REMEMBER ME

(Rodney Crowell/Will Jennings)

Tim McGraw

A mystical message of grand compassion, as well as a plea to not forget those who've been important in our lives, McGraw revealed how much he'd matured as an artist when he chose to record this fine 1999 ballad – and then nailed it with a heartfelt performance. His decision to record the song also provided further evidence for McGraw's knack of uncovering outstanding material from overlooked sources. Crowell, who co-wrote it, not only recorded the song a few years earlier, he'd also released it as a single. Country radio unduly ignored Crowell's version, but McGraw gave them the opportunity to right that wrong. The result is a song that deserves its status as one of the strongest ballads of its time.



RUSS HARRINGTON/THEPIX

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doesn't want a commitment that lasts. With her husky tone and intelligent sneer, Cash's first No. 1 opened a new era of integrity in Nashville.

□ SHE'S IN LOVE WITH THE BOY

(Jon Ims) **Trisha Yearwood**

An upbeat celebration of the will to love, this 1991 No. 1 finds a young woman pledging her heart despite her father's concerns. It also marked the grand entrance of Yearwood, whose clear, resolute voice inspired country fans to fall in love ... with the girl.

□ SHOULD'VE BEEN A COWBOY

(Toby Keith) **Toby Keith**

By now, we know this Oklahoma roustabout is a modern-day cowboy. But he initially introduced himself with this 1993 No. 1 about a man who daydreams of having the nerve to live like the roughneck ranchers from the Old West days. Over time, this wrangler turned that dream into a reality.

□ SMOKY MOUNTAIN RAIN

(Kye Fleming/Dennis Morgan) **Ronnie Milsap**

At the height of his success, Milsap jokingly complained that there'd been great songs about several major cities, but never one about his home in east Tennessee's Smoky Mountains. Shortly afterward, he received this gift, a soaring 1980 No. 1 about a man who eagerly returns to his mountain home, only to find the woman he loved gone – and the blue rain coming down.

□ SOMETHING IN RED

(Angela Kaset) **Lorrie Morgan**

A melancholy 1992 stunner about an aging woman who recounts how the colors of her dresses often reflected the stages of her life. Morgan's restrained, intimate reading captures both the romance and the regret that the song conjures, building to a powerful

climax which finds the woman determined to recapture the fire of her past by wearing something the color of passion.

□ STAND BY YOUR MAN

(Billy Sherrill/Tammy Wynette) **Tammy Wynette**

Is it a pledge of devotion or an ode to submission? One of country music's most recognized songs also stands as one of its most divisive, splitting fans between those who see the 1968 No. 1 as a testament of faith against those who view it as an backward-thinking response to the feminist movement. One thing's indisputable: It's an unforgettable performance that shows off the emotional complexity of Wynette's aching throb of a voice.

□ STRAWBERRY WINE

(Matraca Berg/Gary Harrison) **Deana Carter**

Bold as love, Carter broke country radio taboos with this wistful look at a teenage sexual encounter in which the singer remembers the summer she lost her virginity. Carter's raspy purr of a voice – perfect for the bittersweet tale – brought country a new star in 1996.

□ SUNDAY MORNING COMING DOWN

(Kris Kristofferson) **Johnny Cash**

The best depiction of a hangover ever put to music, the 1970 classic is also much, much more: In a story of a



COURTESY RAZOR TIE

□ SWEET DREAMS

(Don Gibson) **Patsy Cline**

Don Gibson, Faron Young, Emmylou Harris and Reba McEntire are four of the five singers to enjoy a hit with this classic song. But, in truth, it belongs to only one artist: the late Patsy Cline. The title song of a book on her life and to her film biography, "Sweet Dreams" is a sad, beautiful gem. With producer Owen Bradley's gorgeous string arrangement swelling around her, Cline pours herself into the song, displaying the glorious richness of her voice and the full emotional sweep of her interpretive ability. It's one of the primary reasons she's often referred to as country music's greatest female vocalist.



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wise but downtrodden songwriter, Kristofferson illustrates the loneliness that drove him to drink in the first place – but also captures his yearning for the normal, comfortable life he once willingly left behind. Johnny Cash, most appropriately, made it a No. 1 song the same year.

TAKE ME HOME COUNTRY ROADS

(Bill Danoff/John Denver/Taffy Nivert) **John Denver**

The laid-back Denver eased into the country charts in 1971 with a wistful song about going back to West Virginia, “the place where I belong” and a symbol for

WHERE WERE YOU (WHEN THE WORLD STOPPED TURNING)

(Alan Jackson) **Alan Jackson**

America’s heart was still numb with pain when, a little more than a month after 9/11, this singer of simple songs introduced a sensitive, insightful musical prayer about what we experienced that fateful day. More than any song written about the event, Jackson summed up a nation’s feelings in a manner that promoted healing and love.

Already one of the biggest country stars of the era, Jackson became even more celebrated as his song was embraced not only by country fans, but by a nation. As usual, the tall, lanky Georgian handled the increased attention with his usual humility – which made him even more endearing to a citizenry that was actively re-evaluating what was important to them and to the world around them.



honest values. The song bridged folk, pop and country in a newly commercial way and introduced flannel-shirted hippies to their square-dancing cousins. Similar songs followed, but by 1975, Nashville had had enough. Denver’s CMA Entertainer of the Year award drew jeers, and he metaphorically moved home to Colorado.

TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT

(David Allan Coe) **Johnny Paycheck**

As a blue-collar anthem, Paycheck’s broad, outrageously rendered 1978 hit expresses both the humor and the spite inherent in this blast at workplace exploitation. Of course, he’s not just mad at his boss; his woman just left, and that leaves him little reason to go someplace else where he feels taken for granted.

TENNESSEE WALTZ

(Pee Wee King/Redd Stewart) **Patti Page**

Has heartbreak ever sounded so gorgeous? Page’s beautiful, tender tone pulls every tear out of this 1951 recording about a woman who loses her man to an old friend during a night of romantic dancing. Time has passed, but her pain hasn’t, and the sweet, melancholy melody only makes the memory linger.

THERE STANDS THE GLASS

(Russ Hull/Mary Jean Shurtz/Audrey Greisham) **Webb Pierce**

A powerful rendition of an alcoholic’s moment of truth: He’s just entered the bar, and the appearance of a full glass presents him with the salve he desperately needs. Pierce, his twangy voice ripe with guilt, all but shouts, *It’s my first one today*, knowing it’ll calm his shakes, if just for the time being. He’s ostensibly snuffing the memory of a wronged love, but every word he sings says he’s killing much more than that.

WALKING THE FLOOR OVER YOU

(Ernest Tubb) **Ernest Tubb**

His faithless lover may be keeping him up nights, but Tubb sure walks those planks with a jaunty step. An upbeat toe-tapper about a downbeat subject, this 1941 classic lifted Tubb’s hangdog baritone and sharp honky-tonk arrangements to the forefront of country music – where he will remain for eternity.

WHEN I CALL YOUR NAME

(Tim Dubois/Vince Gill) **Vince Gill**

Gill struggled for six years to make a name for himself before finally finding the song that perfectly matched his sweet, tender tenor and fully exposed his ability to coax all the sad-

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NO PURCHASE OR ONLINE ACCESS NECESSARY: To enter, tune in to the "100 Greatest Country Songs" special on CMT, Sunday, June 8, 2003 4pm ET/PT to find out the ranking order of the songs. Complete the official entry form - or print out and complete the official entry form available at www.countrymusicmagazine.com - OR write the required information on any size postcard accepted by the U.S. post office. Include your name, address, age, daytime and evening phone numbers with area code and your email address (if available) plus the correct title, artist, and rank of any 5 songs that appear in the show. Mail to: **100 Greatest Country Songs Sweepstakes c/o Country Music magazine, P.O. Box 24210, Nashville, TN 37202**. Multiple entries are permitted, but only one entry per envelope will be accepted. We are not responsible for lost, late, damaged, or illegible entries. **Entries must be received by Tuesday, July 1, 2003.** The winners will be selected in a random drawing from all eligible entries with correct answers, to be held on or about Wednesday, July 2, 2003 by representatives from *Country Music* magazine whose decision will be final. The Grand-prize winner will be notified immediately by phone.

Prizes and approximate retail value. 1 Grand Prize: a 3day/2night trip for two to see the winner's choice of Alan Jackson, George Jones, Brooks & Dunn or Kenny Chesney in concert. Includes roundtrip coach air travel, 2 nights hotel accommodations (double occupancy). The trip location and date will be determined after the prize is awarded and the winner selects the artist he/she wants to see. The winner is responsible for own transportation to the airport nearest their home with available flight service to the concert location. Winner will also be responsible for all ground transportation. Approximate retail value of prize package: \$2,500.00.

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The TOP 100 SONGS OF ALL TIME

ness found in a lyric. The spare arrangement, steeped in tradition but undeniably modern, gave him a setting that let him shine, as did this song of a man who suddenly realizes his happiness has been pulled out from under him.

WHEN YOU SAY NOTHING AT ALL

(Paul Overstreet/Don Schlitz) **Alison Krauss**

Krauss was a young, cult favorite in the bluegrass world when RCA Records invited her to participate in a tribute album to the late Keith Whitley. This gorgeously romantic song, with its tender message about the quiet support that exists between a loving couple, introduced her to a larger audience in 1995. She's been a star ever since.

WIDE OPEN SPACES

(Susan Gibson) **Dixie Chicks**

The title song of this trio's blockbuster debut, it showed off their instrumental and vocal talents while updating the genre's musical traditions with a sparkling vision of its future. "Wide Open Spaces" indeed: As their career has shown, there's no limit to what dedication to talent and vision can achieve.

WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN

(A.P. Carter) **Nitty Gritty Dirt Band**

Originally made famous by the Carter Family, it took a band of country-loving hippies to remind the world of its strengths and turn it into a perennial closing gospel tune for encores and at large festivals. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band appropriately chose the song as the title cut of its first collaboration with veteran country stars, ensuring its status as one of America's best-loved tunes.

YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE

(Jimmie Davis/Charles Mitchell) **Jimmie Davis**

Nashville songwriting dean Harlan Howard once said his ambition was to write a song as perfect as "You Are My Sunshine" - a song that's upbeat yet weighted in sadness, and one with a beautiful, insinuating melody that's instantly hummable and unforgettable. Davis' 1940 song of lost love is one of America's most enduring songs, and it no doubt helped him get elected Governor of Louisiana four years after its release.

YOUR CHEATIN' HEART

(Hank Williams) **Hank Williams**

Williams, with a voice as sad as falling rain, doesn't just sing about pain, he embodies it in what may stand as the best-known cheating song in the country songbook. This posthumous 1953 hit featured Williams at his best: A swinging beat, a stinging steel guitar and a teardrop voice that sounds haunted, especially when coming from the grave.

YOU'RE STILL THE ONE

(Robert John "Mutt" Lange/Shania Twain) **Shania Twain**

The Canadian powerhouse may best be known for her catchy, energetic style, but she's proven equally capable at casting a spell with a ballad. This sweet love song, about longevity and true commitment, proved just as infectious as her dance songs. It also revealed a principled heart beating above that famous midriff.★

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It's easy to enter: just tune in to "100 Greatest Country Songs", a CMT live special, on Sunday, June 8, 2003, 4pm ET/PT. Then tell us the title and ranking of any 5 songs that appear in the show (the complete unranked list of songs appears in this issue). Winners will be drawn from all correct entries received by July 1, 2003. Remember! You must watch the show to find out the ranking order of the songs to complete your entry.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. See page 34 for official rules and alternate means of entry. Entry forms and rules are also available at: www.countrymusicmagazine.com.



Official Entry Form

Name: _____

Age: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Daytime Phone: () _____

Evening Phone: () _____

Email address (if available): _____

Title, artist name, and rank of any 5 songs that appear in the show:

Title	Artist	Rank
1) _____	_____	_____
2) _____	_____	_____
3) _____	_____	_____
4) _____	_____	_____
5) _____	_____	_____

Mail entry form to: 100 Greatest Country Songs Sweepstakes
c/o Country Music magazine
P.O. Box 24210
Nashville, TN 37202

Entries must be received by Tuesday, July 1, 2003.

The *New York Times* recently divided entertainers into two types, "Stars From Outer Space" and "Stars Like Us." Cher and Michael Jackson, all flash and exorica, typify the former. Tom Hanks and Oprah Winfrey, full of warmth and approachability, qualify as the latter.

Is there any question in which group Vince Gill belongs?

By now, Gill's easygoing, personable manner is as much a part of his stardom as his long string of hits. At a recent Las Vegas performance, he wore his Mr. Nice Guy demeanor like a comfortable jacket. During a business dinner, he rose to greet a longtime fan as if they were old friends. Onstage, he shared family stories as if talking to loved ones over a holiday meal.

A favored topic of conversation was Corrina, his 2-year-old daughter with wife Amy Grant. "She just does the cutest things," he tells the audience, beaming like the proud papa he is.



Since his marriage to Amy Grant, Gill has "mellowed into a nice combination of humility and world-awareness," says friend Rodney Crowell.

"He's a lad who's stepped into who he really is," says close friend Rodney Crowell. "Especially since he and Amy got married, he just seems more [comfortable] in his body. And through the course of what he's gone through, he's mellowed into a nice combination of humility and world-awareness. He's become a distinguished gentleman, which is the highest compliment I can pay somebody."

That combination of ease, humor and dignity is never more apparent than when Gill hosts the CMA Awards, as he has done for the past 11 years. He rules the show with a suave, sometimes goofy charm, knowing intuitively when to relieve tension with a well-chosen joke, add a gloss of eloquence to poignant moments or punch up the mundane to make it memorable.

But his sense of humility, especially about his place in the music business, also shows in Gill the artist. The album's title song, "Next Big Thing,"

TRUTH & CONSEQUENCE

Vince Gill opens up about his marriage, joys and heartache

BY ALANNA NASH

"She'll get in front of the TV and say [arms outstretched], 'Go Titans!' Then she'll break wind – yeah, she will! – and she'll go [eyes wide open, putting a hand on a hip], 'Cor-RINA!' "

The fans erupt in laughter, but then the star turns serious. "What a gift this child has been," he says softly. "She has just saved my life."

The Las Vegas concert comes amid Gill's Back 2 Basics Tour, which has followed the release of his new album, *Next Big Thing*, a 17-song collection and the first album he's made on his own, with-

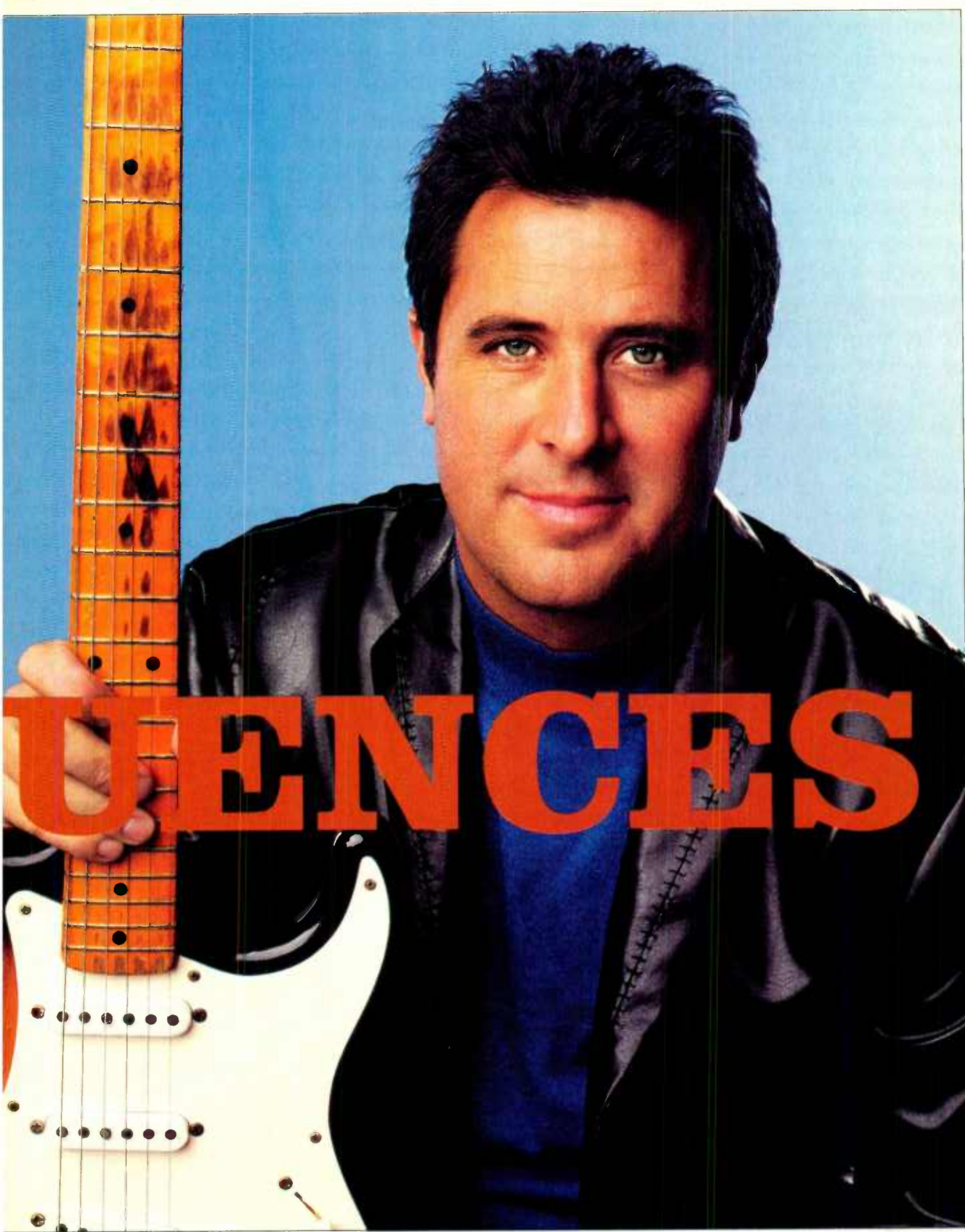
out the help of a big-name producer.

Those closest to Gill believe the album reveals how he's finally grown into himself, arriving at a place personally and professionally that he has worked toward all his life.

It comes on the heels of several tumultuous years packed with transitional experiences: his divorce from singer Janis Gill, the death of his father, his marriage to Grant, and Corrina's birth among them. The rush of life-changing events found him emerging from a deep despair into the happiest period of his life.

lampoons how stars are manufactured these days, as well as the ephemerality of fame. *I'll get a cowboy hat, some real tight jeans*, he sings. *Lose a little weight and get a belly-button ring*.

The song "Young Man's Town" deals with the same topic in a more serious fashion. Gill, whose career has slowed since winning the CMA's Male Vocalist of the Year award five years straight in the '90s, graciously acknowledges that nobody stays on top forever, and that older artists need to make room for new blood.



INFLUENCES

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"It's just life and how it evolves, you know?" he says, sitting in his Vegas penthouse suite the morning after the show. "I'm 45 years old. It's time for the next generation to show up and shout, 'Hey, watch me go!' I mean, it's inevitable. It always has been and always will be. You have to look at things with a healthy perspective."

Though he may grant that new blood is inevitable, he's not about to leave his station as a country star without giving it his best. "Sometimes Vince comes off as

a happy-go-lucky, casual kind of guy," says Mark Wright, an executive vice president at MCA, Gill's record-label home since 1989. "But he's really one of the most intense people I've ever met."

From the start, Gill wanted *Next Big Thing* to be special. When his longtime producer, Tony Brown, left MCA to head another record company, Gill went to Wright and asked if he could produce the new album himself. "You and Tony invented the Vince Gill sound," Wright responded. "You just need to expand your role."

But after Gill's last album, the love-song-driven *Let's Make Sure We Kiss Goodbye*, Wright expressed concern about the singer's material. "Man, you were writing so many killer songs when you were sad," Wright told him. "I hope you don't lose it being happy."

To guard against that, Gill took his time crafting a balanced collection of songs, writing with such collaborators as Al Anderson, Leslie Satcher and Dean Dillon.

"I've always felt it was difficult to make a great album every year," Gill

Vince Gill "I never once asked her to leave her marriage, and vice versa. But we can't deny that we both thought it might be neat someday."



Two-year-old daughter Corrina checks out daddy's sound-check. "She has just saved my life," Gill says.

muses. "This time I think I was smart enough to be patient for the songs to show up."

For Gill, the album signified a new birth, particularly in the freedom it affords him as an artist. "I told myself, 'Just be creative. Get your humor and your imagination back.' So I felt free to write songs about all kinds of things. My personal life was in the middle of those last two albums, and everybody said, 'That's about Amy, and everybody said, 'That's about Amy, that one's about your dad, this one's about your ex-wife.' I was like, 'Stop it!' So this record has imagination to it and some stuff that is the truth. I'm not quite so afraid of the truth these days."

However, there was a time when things were different – a time when Gill's relationship with Grant, a gospel-pop star in her own right, was a rampant rumor in Nashville gossip circles. Both were married and admired for leading exemplary family lives.

Though some tongues wagged scandal, the music community was more understanding than usual. The consensus was that Gill and Grant had simply married the wrong people the first time around, and that fate had finally taken a stand.

Still, the push and pull of the heart was agonizing. Gill wrote several of his finest songs ("I Still Believe in You") about trying to make his marriage to Janis work and about realizing that it was futile to try to detour his feelings for Grant ("Whenever You Come Around").

The pain of that era is a wound that opens easily, even when Gill is asked if he remembers when he first fell in love with Grant.

“Oh yeah, the first time I met her,” he admits. “The first time I actually sat down and talked with her was one of the neatest conversations I have ever had with any human being. I thought, ‘Oh, my God, she’s married and got a million kids, but what a neat person.’ And it was pretty much a mutual connection, but it wasn’t anything but two people going, ‘I really like you. I don’t care if you are married. I don’t know if you are happy or miserable or any of those things.’”

Gill takes a deep breath, realizing he’s delving into a sensitive area. “It’s so odd. You could look back at both her life and mine and go, what could be wrong? On top of the world, having hit records, got a beautiful farm, a nice house. It looks like *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. But nobody really knows what it’s like. It was just an amazing feeling with her, right from the start.”

Early on – when they were just friends – Gill and Grant realized there were rumors about them. “It was so interesting to watch everybody look into our lives and evaluate our friendship and just think the absolute worst of us,” he says, growing quiet. “That was pretty tough. Now they try to go back and connect the dots so they can all say, ‘I told you so.’ Because everybody assumed we planned it all. But I never once asked her to leave her marriage, and vice versa. But we can’t deny that we both thought it might be neat someday, you know.”

He stops and looks down, and soon his words come in chokes and waves of emotion. He wipes away tears with the palms of his hands.

“After all of this time,” he adds, “you struggle with the fact that you can’t tell the complete truth. That, to me, is disrespectful. I really love those kids of Amy’s, and they are never going to hear me speak an ill word about their father. But I felt like I was made a scapegoat. People paste you up there and expect you to be perfect and superhuman, and you are not.”

Suddenly he’s self-conscious about the tears, and breaks into a smile. “My grandma always said, ‘If your eyes leak, your head won’t swell.’”

Gill’s willingness to show his emotions –

he even teared up during his Las Vegas show while singing an old song, “Colder Than Winter,” at the request of fans – is central to his ability to communicate heartbreak ballads.

When asked where this ability to express pain comes from, he turns away from the topic. He offers that he had a normal, middle-class upbringing outside Oklahoma City based around music, school, church and sports – though he was “a runt,” protected in fights by his older sister, Gina. “She just throttled people,” he laughs.

He was closer to his mother, Jerene, than to his father, Stan, a lawyer, judge and taskmaster. His parents divorced after he left home.

But he says the emotion in his music doesn’t come from hidden personal trauma. “I think a lot of the pain you hear in my music is because of my love of bluegrass,” he says. “I just love how real and honest those songs are. I always loved sad things. My favorite song is ‘Old Shep,’ you know? It doesn’t get any sadder than shooting your own dog.”

Nonetheless, at age 10, he did learn a hard lesson about the uncertainty of life. His half-brother, Bob Cohen, 12 years older and a product of his mother’s first marriage, got drunk and wrecked a car doing “at least a hundred miles an hour.” Bob suffered a head injury and would never be the same, losing job after job and spending his life traveling aimlessly. After Bob died of a heart attack several years back, Gill finished writing “Go Rest High on That Mountain,” a song he had originally meant as a tribute to Keith Whitley.

“My dream,” he says, tears again filling his eyes, “is that it could some day wind up in a hymnal. That would mean a lot.”

His brother’s disability instilled a tenderness and compassion in him. Yet this vulnerable singer remains guarded when talking about his early life.

“In Vince Gill there is a wounded child,” says Crowell. “The absolute tear-drop



Gill often wears his emotion visibly. “My grandma always said, ‘If your eyes leak, your head won’t swell.’”



The title track of *The Next Big Thing* lampoons today’s belly-button-ring-wearing, manufactured stars.

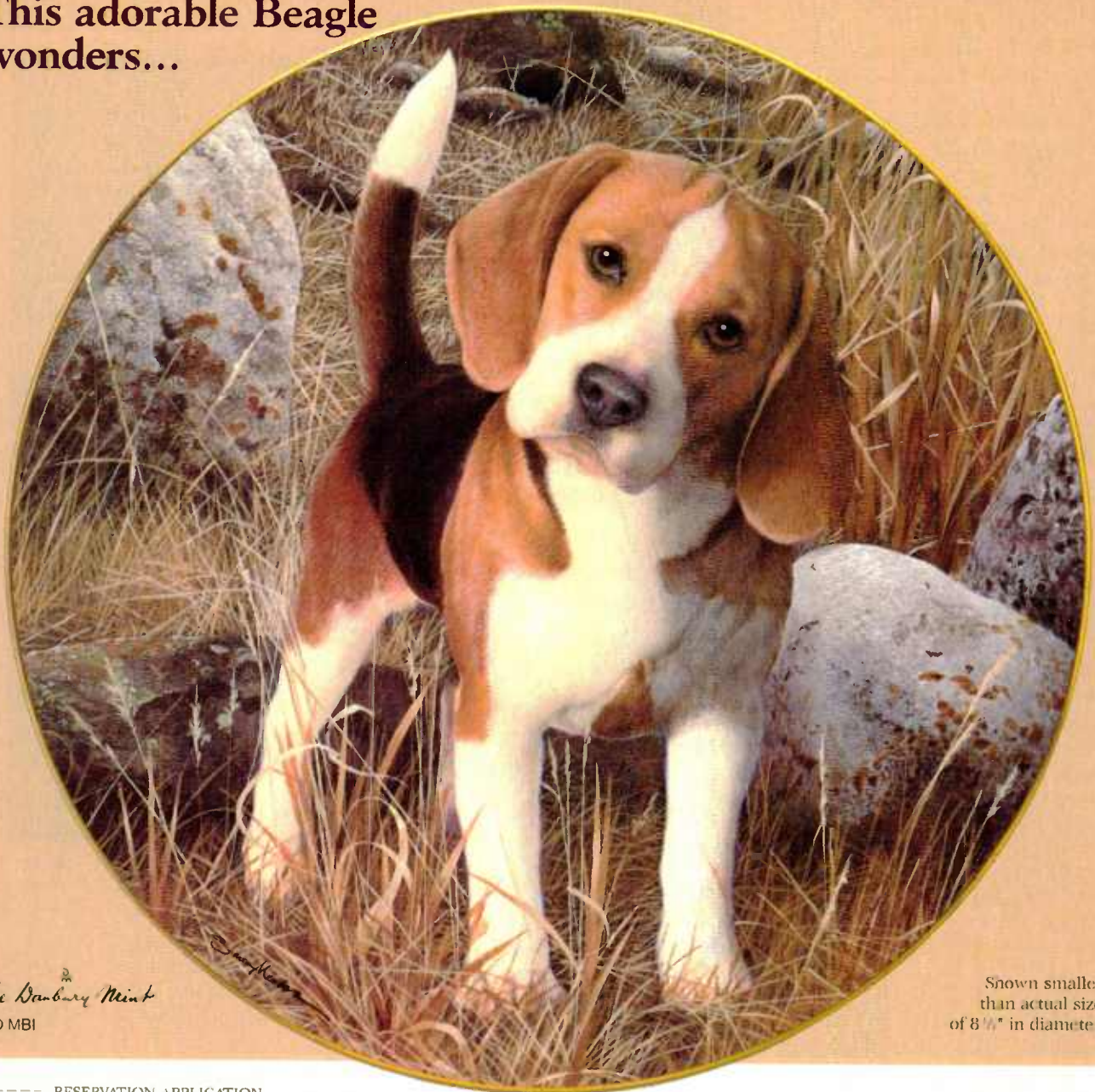
quality of his beautiful ballads comes from that deep well of loneliness, and I love him more because I know his dark nature. You put that kind of thing out there because you need to be loved.”

These days, he’s looking for that love at home rather than on the road. “Amy and I want to prioritize things a little bit, not try to have a personal life with what’s left over,” he explains. “I don’t want to miss the life of this baby, but at the same time I love playing. The trick is just to find that good balance.”

His album’s closing song, the affecting “In These Last Few Days,” takes stock of such things that really matter. Gill is more reflective and more open than at any other time of his life. All the same, he admits there are things he will never talk about, that he has to keep for his own.

The important thing, of course, is that he continues to sing about them. Fans who love “Stars Like Us” understand that just fine. *

This adorable Beagle
wonders...



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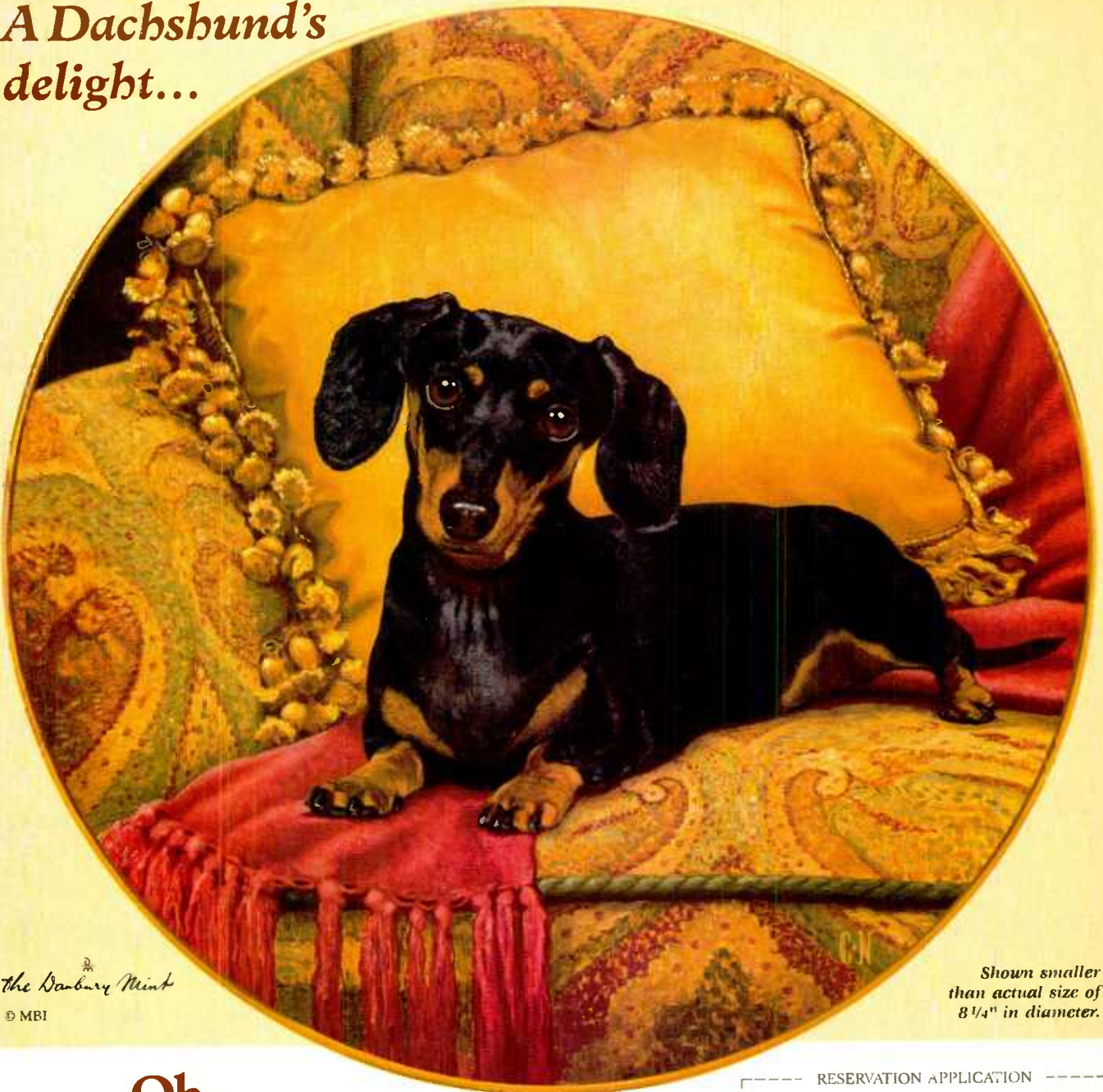
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Allow 2 to 4 weeks after approval period for shipment.

Detach here and mail.

Growing Pains

For Terri Clark it's crunch time. Only a couple hours before a sold-out Seattle concert, the lanky star gets talked into a last-minute radio interview. One problem, though: The station is 30 miles away on a Friday night in a city famous for bumper-to-bumper traffic jams.

"Oh my God," laughs Clark amid the gridlock. "This is insane! I'm not sure I've ever seen anything quite like this before. You know, I never would have considered doing something last minute like this except everyone's so excited about my new song. It almost makes dodging cars on the freeway in rush hour worthwhile."

The next day Clark learns that going the extra mile has paid off. That morning, she discovered her song would hit the No. 1 spot on *Radio & Records'* country chart, making her the first female country singer to claim country's top spot in almost a year.

After a few years out of the spotlight, the 34-year-old Canadian songstress, whose self-titled debut album came out in 1995, is back at the top of her game.

"Eight years into this, it still feels good – no, better! – than it ever did," Clark says. "The idea that the music still connects is pretty overwhelming. You don't know whether you want to scream or cry or just fall over from all the adrenaline, but whatever it is, it's good. Very, very, very, very good!"

While she's happy about the chart success of her new album, *Pain to Kill*, Clark insists that fan response is what matters most.

"Every artist wants to have a best-selling album or songs that go No. 1," she continues. "That's just a natural thing to want in this business. But a big part of the way I measure the success of a song

After her last album left listeners scratching their heads, Terri Clark regains her creative stride with *Pain to Kill* and discovers that success is sweeter the second time around

BY BETSY MODEL

is by the reaction of the people in an audience. Whether it's at a concert – and I spend more time doing live performances than most artists – or at a record store appearance, the fans will tell you straight where you hit the mark and where you didn't."

So far, the fans are telling Clark that *Pain to Kill* is right on target.

"The fans have been insane," she admits. "They come to see us to have a good time, to forget about everything. So this album is hitting them right where they like it. I'm shocked at how many new songs they already know. The rowdier they get, the further I think I can go."

That kind of support landed Clark, a native of Alberta who's made her home in Nashville for the past 16 years, her third Fan's Choice Entertainer of the Year Award from the Canadian Country Music Association. But now it's translating on the other side of the border, too. With a new hit song, she's getting bigger dates and more personal appearance requests in the United States than she has in years.

"Being busy and being in demand is a lot better than the alternative," she

grins. "I've been there before, too. This feels a *lot* better."

But from earlier in her career, she knows what it's like to have more demands than she has time to fill. It helps that she's been through it before.

"I'm definitely feeling more settled than when my first hit, 'Better Things to Do,' came out," she says. "When you first become the flavor of the month and you have a new hit and you've come out of nowhere, it seems like they're more apt to try to knock you off the pedestal – because you haven't earned the respect that years and years of hard work will earn somebody. Now I've got a grass-roots fan base from playing a hundred shows a year for eight years. It helps a lot."

At nearly 5 feet 11 inches, Clark's a statuesque beauty who fought to find her place in the world of country music.

"I think Nashville's perception of me has changed in the last couple of years," she says. "I came to Nashville in 1987 when I was 18. I've known a lot of people for a long time there, but the jury stays out on new artists until they prove themselves. For a long time I felt they thought I was nothing more than a girl in a gimmicky hat pounding a cowbell and singing up-tempo ditties. I wasn't getting nominated for female vocalist awards, I wasn't getting nominated for singles."





PAMELA ANDERSON/MERCURY

She pauses, reflecting on her past. "Look, I'm a country singer. That's my history, my roots. It's all I ever wanted to be. For a while I was wondering where my place was in country music, because it was taking a bit of a different path. Things began being a lot more pop than what I heard myself being, and I didn't know quite where I fit in. That's when I went and made *Fearless* because I felt the timing was good to do that."

That album, which did not feature the rocking sound fans associate with the Telecaster-playing Clark, threw

songs that best reflect her own life. "A lot of this album is autobiographical because many of the songs were about surviving and perseverance," she says. "That's the subconscious theme of the album. There's an empowering theme about real life, real issues, real things to *Pain to Kill*. Not enough artists have thematic albums any more; it's about getting four singles and filling in the rest. I wanted an album that really spoke as a body of work."

As for the success of the single "I Just Wanna Be Mad," Clark's not

surprised that it hit an emotional mark with listeners.

"I had a feeling the song would speak to people," she says. "It's such a relatable song. Anyone who's been in a relationship can find it easy to put themselves there. I mean, I was with the same guy for 10 years and, believe me, there were times where we just needed space, that 'I'm going to kill you if you don't give me some space' feeling. The song talks about being in love and staying there and not going in the end. Haven't we all been there?" *

Terri Clark

"In one breath, they were saying, 'Was she crazy?' In another breath, they were praising me for doing something artsy."

listeners for a loop. Some critics said she sounded like she was trying – unsuccessfully – to channel Mary Chapin Carpenter.

"With *Fearless*," she muses, "I think the industry was saying, 'That was kind of ballsy, her making an album like that.' In one breath they were saying, 'Was she crazy?' In another breath, they were praising me for doing something artsy."

The adventurousness of *Fearless* gave her the license to take chances with this album. "*Pain to Kill* is basically the rocking stuff from my first few albums and the introspection of the last album rolled into one," she says. "I had to do *Fearless*; it was something I had to get out of my system."

Does the commercial success of *Pain to Kill* make her feel vindicated? Clark thinks for a moment, then leans back for some serious introspection.

"I don't know if it's timing, I don't know if I've just really found myself and my niche on *Pain to Kill*," she allows. "It's not that I was searching all along, but I think as you grow as an artist, you find different pieces of yourself along the way. I think that every piece is complete this time, on this album. It's all there."

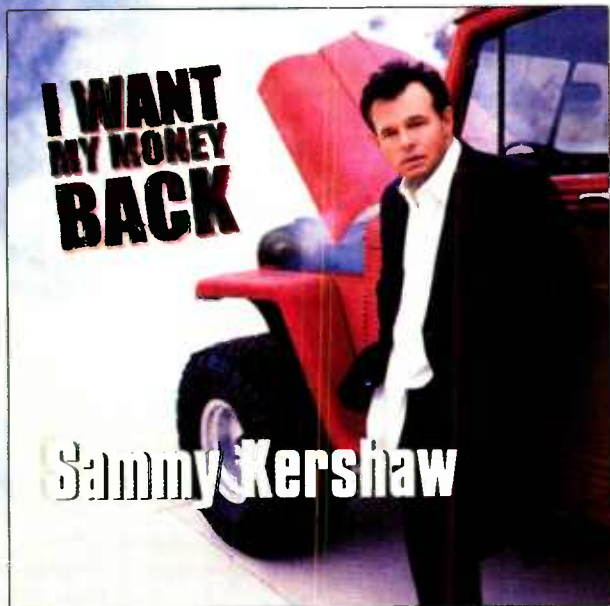
Also, she believes she's grown better at picking

Clark has proven herself to be more than a novelty act. "I think Nashville's perception of me has changed in the last couple of years," she admits.



KEVIN FERGUSON

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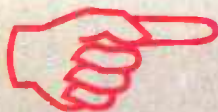


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The Anti-Diva

BY ALANNA NASH

Bluegrass princess Alison Krauss turns her insecurities into a relentless push for perfection



ALL PHOTOS: ANDREW MACLEOD/HITMAN FOUNDERS RECORDS

Alison Krauss still isn't sure if she's pleased with her recent concert album. Several months after finishing *Alison Krauss + Union Station Live*, the 31-year-old singer, fiddler and bandleader finally had to let it go and move on.

"I really haven't got it back out to hear," she says in her famously feathery tones. "But I know the guys [in the band] are happy with it, and I always worry about what they're going to say. That's who I look to."

One of her famous bandmates says that's typical of the self-examining star. "She's just not secure in her talent," explains Jerry Douglas, the Dobro player extraordinaire who joined Union Station in 1998. "But that's not unusual. Everybody's scared to death in their own way – she's just got such a high bar."

Krauss has been so deeply consumed with the artistry of creating music and in caring for her 3-year-old son, Sam, that she seems almost oblivious to what the rest of the world readily sees: That she leads what many consider to be the finest acoustic band on the planet, and that her hypnotic, gossamer vocals connect with listeners with an intimacy that suggests she not only knows them, but knows their loneliness and their secrets.

Yet when revisiting her work, Krauss fears the worst. "I'm always thinking I'm going to be embarrassed, like 'Why did I do stupid stuff like that?' But I did actually get out one of our old records. I was driving my parents' car and, I'm like, 'Wow, Dad, my records are in there!' So I put in one from a few years ago, and I

thought, 'Hey, that's OK! That's OK!'"

The two-disc, 25-song live album, recorded at the Louisville Palace – a refurbished, 2,800-seat movie theater dating from the late '20s – is more than OK. The ensemble – Krauss, Douglas, Dan Tyminski on guitar and mandolin, Ron Block on guitar and banjo, Barry Bales on bass and Larry Atamanuik intermittently sitting in on drums – is the most cohesive of any of Union Station's previous incarnations, and the recording occurred at the peak of their touring season. Mixing bluegrass with jazz, folk and rock, the band combines dazzling speed with virtuoso chops, aching emotion and shimmering vocal blends.

Union Station recorded two concerts at



With *O Brother* breakout star Dan Tyminski (above) and the rest of the fine-tuned Union Station band (below)



the theater in April 2002 for both an album and a DVD. The musicians liked the first night better, and all but two songs on the album came from the first show. "The Boy Who Wouldn't Hoe Corn" is a compendium of both performances, while "Down to the River to Pray" comes from an *Austin City Limits* appearance.

The stunning musicianship of *Alison Krauss + Union Station Live* explains in part how the band has beaten the odds and achieved an unusual level of success despite receiving little radio play, doing nothing bombastic onstage and shunning excessive press.

Yet CMT plays their videos, the CMA honors them with nominations and awards, the pop music industry reveres them and rewards them with Grammys and they sell more than a respectable amount of records.

In fact, *New Favorite*, the band's last studio effort, "went gold faster than any album of new material of theirs," reports Ken Irwin, head of Massachusetts-based Rounder Records, which signed Krauss when she was a fresh-faced teen fiddle champion from Champaign, Ill. In 1995, Union Station's compilation album, *Now That I've Found You*, sold more than two million copies, an unprecedented feat for a bluegrass record at the time. Krauss also provided key performances on the *O Brother* soundtrack.

Krauss has been at the forefront of the rise of acoustic music for nearly a decade. By the time she became a million-selling artist, she had already begun expanding the definition of the genre by adapting pop and hillbilly songs by the likes of Bad Company and Keith Whitley as part of her high-lonesome repertoire. Then came the Coen Brothers and a little film about Depression-era convicts, set to the toe-tapping rhythms of "I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow" sung by the fictitious Soggy Bottom Boys, a studio-soundtrack aggregation that included members of Union Station with Dan Tyminski on vocals. "Ron, Barry, Jerry and Dan are all members of The Soggy Bottom Boys," Krauss sometimes teases onstage. "But Dan has the soggiest of the bottoms."

In concert, "I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow" gets the fans so fired up that they're nearly climbing the chandeliers and setting off fireworks.

"It's amazing to see the crowds go nuts [over that song] every night," admits Tyminski, who supplied the singing voice for actor George Clooney's lead role in the movie. "I wish I could put my finger on it,

ALISON KRAUSS

other than I think it's a rhythmic, rock 'n' roll-feeling song."

And kick it they did, bringing a new level of popularity and renown for the band – and in particular Tyminski. But the movie boost aside, Krauss gives much of the credit for Union Station's near-cult status to Rounder's Irwin. The record company always gave the band complete freedom to make music as they see fit, never putting restrictions on their repertoire or time in the studio, as a mainstream Nashville country label likely would do.

Krauss also praises Douglas, whose

"No, they want to hear what you have to say. Every band needs a focal point – and your name is the one in big letters out on the marquee."

At the same time, Krauss works at maintaining her privacy, and the facts of her life are largely unknown apart from her music. "There is a lot of mystery about her just because she doesn't get up on a soapbox and tell people what she thinks," says Douglas. "She leaves it up to people to figure out what she is by what they hear."

That sometimes can be confusing. Krauss' philosophy of song selection

"Most people think I'm sort of morose until they see us play," she admits. "I think they expect a much darker person."

Her videos can reinforce that notion. It was Krauss who came up with the concept for "Let Me Touch You for a While," in which a sexually hungry woman comes on to a bartender, played by Doyle "Butch" Primm, Allison Moorer's real-life husband and song-writing partner.

Krauss was eerily effective as the chilly seductress, even as she says she had trouble getting through those "come-hither" close-ups. "I told the director, 'If we can shoot this where



The boys in the band: Jerry Douglas on Dobro (left), drummer Larry Atamanuik (above left), banjo player/guitarist Ron Block (above right) and bassist Barry Bales (right)

"I love that sad feeling. When we first learned 'New Favorite,' every time that second verse would come up, I couldn't even do it."

production experience and command of the studio took a lot of pressure off of her during the recording of *New Favorite*. That, she says, gave her more time to spend with her young son, whose sleeping schedule often dictates her hours in the studio.

However, no matter how much of a collaborative process it is – Krauss picks the first round of songs, and the band has a vote in what they record – the real weight of Union Station's success rests on her fragile shoulders.

One thing that set the group apart, particularly in the early days, was that a woman was the bandleader. When Douglas came into the band, Krauss asked him to emcee the shows, as former mandolin player Adam Steffey had done. But Douglas declined, telling her,

revolves around story, mood and feel. Most of the time, she's drawn to melancholy songs about lost love, wounded pride and barely contained angst, as in the Union Station staples "Ghost in This House," "Forget About It" and "New Favorite."

"I just like the way they make me feel," explains the singer, who experienced a painful divorce after the birth of her son. "I love that sad feeling. When we first learned 'New Favorite,' every time that second verse would come up, I couldn't even do it."

But she's quick to joke about her fondness for such material. She often tells audiences she sings so many downers because "we don't want anyone leaving our shows feeling good," a line that always brings a laugh.

neither of us is actually looking at each other, it will be fine.' "

Despite her popularity with country's core audience, Krauss says she has no ambition to record a straight-ahead country record or to tour big halls with Nashville superstars. Years ago, Union Station played a string of large arenas on a Garth Brooks bill. The sound bounced around the cavernous hall and the band couldn't tell if they were singing in tune or not. Says Krauss, "It was just like hell in there. It wasn't music anymore."

With a sensibility that favors music over stardom, Krauss naturally wishes she had learned more about concert recording before jumping into the live album. That way she might not have been so nervous knowing the shows were being taped.

"I just have a hard time with it being forever," she says with a sigh. "I wish there was a series of them, so every month you could put out a different show." *

Shelling Out

Southerners are nuts about boiled peanuts

Back in the mid-'70s, when Jimmy Carter announced he was running for president, the Georgia peanut farmer's profession and slow, Southern drawl made him a favorite target for talk-show jokes.

However, in the South, peanuts are no laughing matter. Nine Southern and Southwestern states account for 99 percent of the country's peanut production, and their sale contributes \$4 billion to the economy annually.

The peanut plant probably originated in Brazil or Peru, then traveled as far north as Mexico. Spanish explorers took the nuts back to Spain. From there, traders took them to Africa and Asia.

Africans brought them to America aboard slave ships and planted peanuts throughout the South. At first, they were used for oil and as feed for pigs. Later peanuts were sold freshly roasted on street corners, at circuses and at sporting events.

It was botanist George Washington Carver whose research led to the development of peanuts as a profitable rotation crop in the Southeast cotton-growing areas, as well as inventing peanut butter. Planter's, the company that led the way in marketing peanuts to Americans, introduced the dry-roasted peanut in 1912.

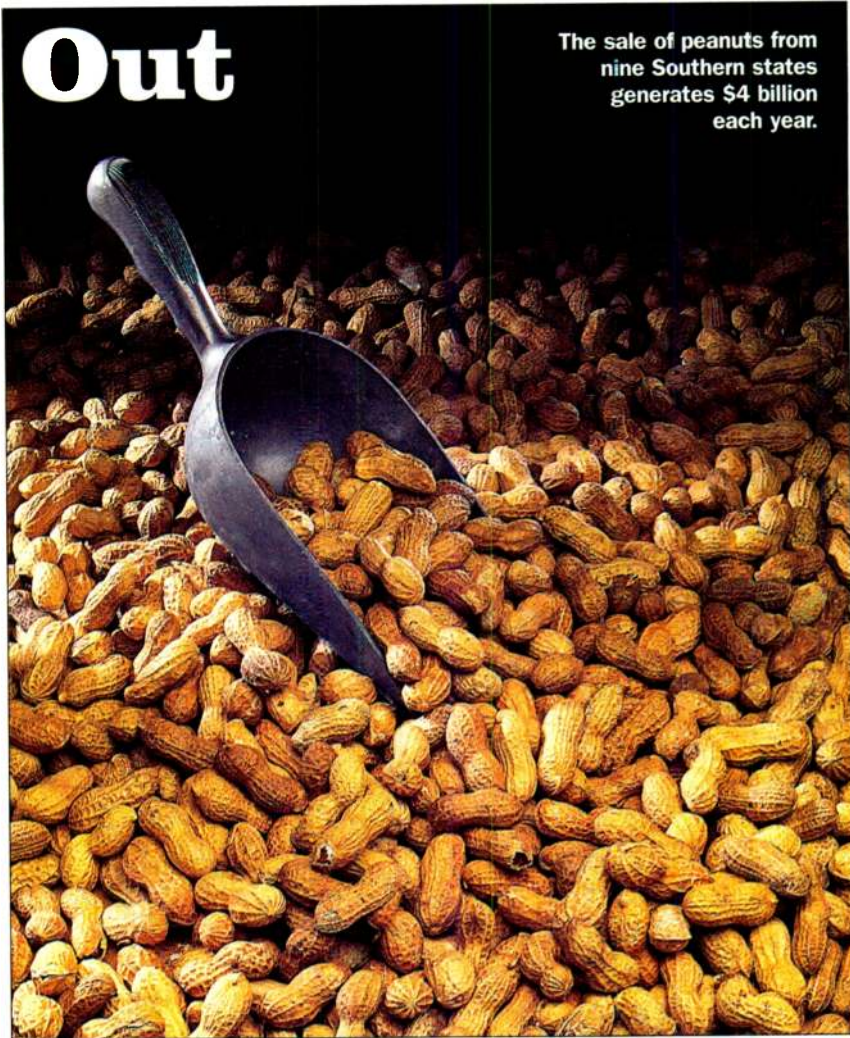
Though peanuts have long been enjoyed as a snack across America, there are two ways of eating them that are peculiar to the South.

Kathy Bloodworth, owner of The Peanut Shop, a downtown Nashville institution, grew up indulging in one of them — peanuts and Coca-Cola, not consumed separately but combined together. "You need a glass bottle coke, not a can or the plastic kind," Bloodworth emphasizes. "Then you get you a bag of shelled, salted peanuts and pour some into the coke bottle so they all jam up in the flute. When you drink it, that ice-cold coke comes through the salty peanuts and some of the peanuts come into your mouth, too. It is *so good!*"

Then there are boiled peanuts, a recipe that doesn't hold quite the same appeal to Bloodworth. Nevertheless, she's happy to prepare them for customers.

"I have sold a batch of boiled peanuts a week since I bought this store," she says. "I don't have to advertise. The people who want them know when to come get them."

Boiling peanuts is a long, laborious process. Bloodworth begins the 15-hour procedure on Monday mornings, putting the raw in-shell peanuts in a pot, covering them with salted water and bringing the water to boil. The peanuts on top



The sale of peanuts from nine Southern states generates \$4 billion each year.

begin to steam. Keeping an eye on water levels, she continues the steaming process for about eight hours. When she leaves the store Monday night, she turns off the hot plate and lets the covered peanuts soak overnight in the same salted water. The next morning, she adds more water if necessary, brings it to a boil, and cooks them until 1 p.m. By 1:30, boiled peanut fans are lining up for their weekly fix.

The finished kernels have a firm, slightly gelatinous texture. They're moist yet crunchy, with a mild, nutty flavor. Boiled peanuts are sometimes used in salads, casseroles, poultry stuffing or as a substitute for water chestnuts. Hard-core fans eat them right out of the soggy little bag as a snack. Boiled peanut stands are a common sight along back roads in the deep South.

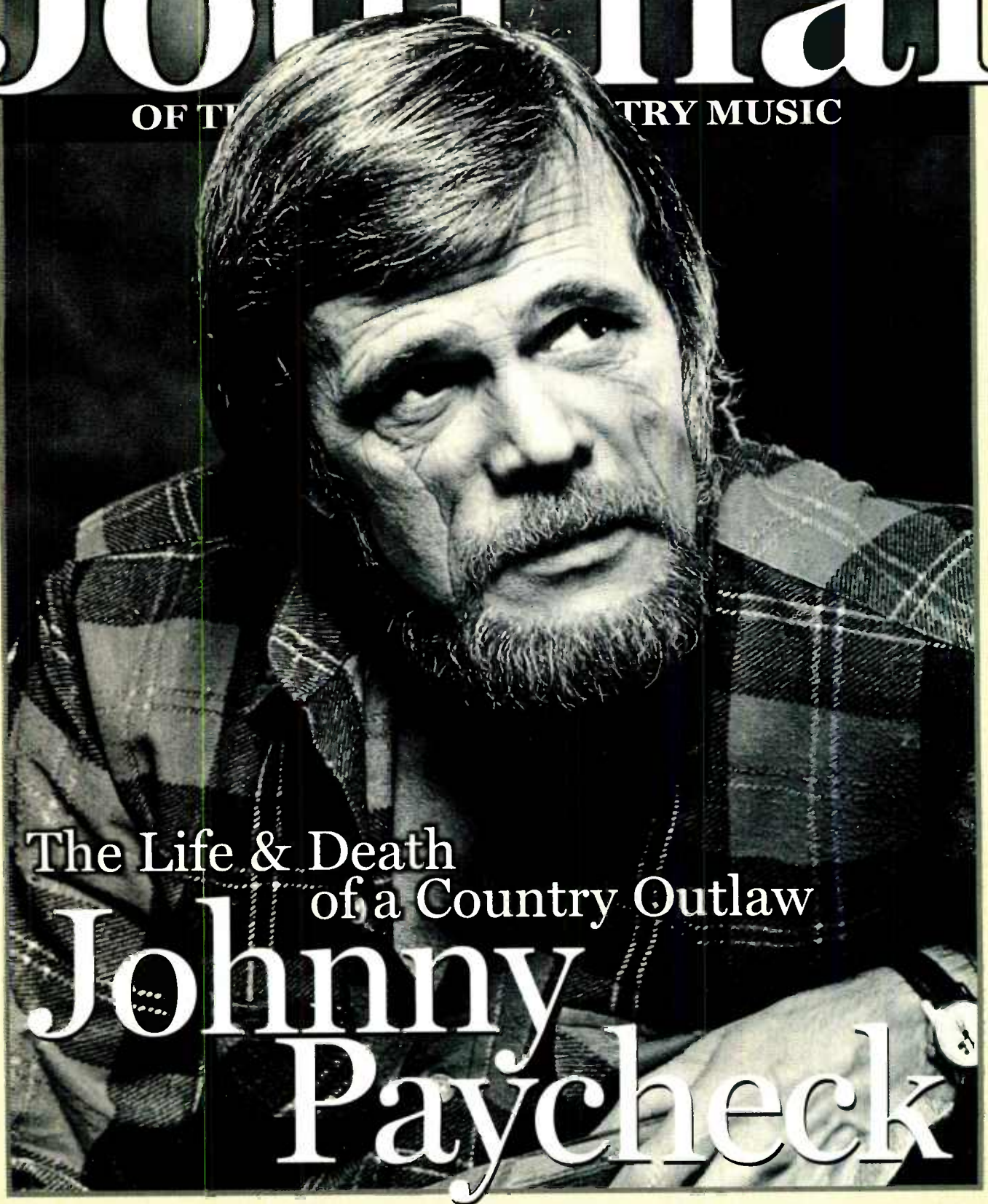
William Lee Golden, the Oak Ridge Boys' baritone singer, has been a roasted-nut buyer at The Peanut Shop for years, but he picks up his boiled peanuts when he heads home to Brewton, Ala., near the Florida border.

"I grew up eating them," he says. "I love them. The best time to eat them is right at harvest, when they're fresh-picked from the field, still green. We used to have big peanut boils, right out in the field. You'd boil up big pots of peanuts and have some cold beer. It's an outback country party."

— Kay West

THE Journal

OF THE COUNTRY MUSIC



The Life & Death
of a Country Outlaw

Johnny Paycheck

EDITOR * ROBERT K. OERMANN

PRECIOUS MEMORIES FROM THE COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



Building Memories

The official name, RCA Studio B, sounds deceptively bland. But its nickname, Birthplace of a Thousand Hits, gives the landmark its proper respect. For four decades, the activity inside the little concrete building on 17th Avenue helped put Nashville on the map as Music City.

When RCA Victor established a Nashville office in the mid-1950s, Chet Atkins convinced the company to build a separate recording facility. RCA was flush with profit from the phenomenal success of Elvis Presley, and a studio so close – only three hours – to the star’s Memphis home made sense to the label’s New York office.

The opening of Studio B was announced with a full-page ad in the November 11, 1957, issue of *Billboard*: “The South’s finest recording facilities ... by RCA Victor, of course! This new studio, housed in a building specifically designed for it, puts at your disposal the most advanced,



The Everly Brothers booked the famed studio to record pop smashes like “Cathy’s Clown.”

Four decades of musical history resonate inside the walls of RCA Studio B

most complete recording equipment in the South.”

On June 10, 1958, Presley sang at the facility for the first time, recording “I Need Your Love Tonight,” “A Big Hunk o’ Love,” “Ain’t That Lovin’ You Baby” and “A Fool Such As I.” He continued to return, recording the soundtracks to his films as well as such hits as “Are You Lonesome Tonight?” and “Little Sister” at the studio.

By the early ’60s, Studio B was booked solid with sessions not only for RCA Victor, but also for Monument, Dot, MGM and Warner Bros. Records. Business was so good that an addition was built in 1960. During this time, such classics as Hank Snow’s “I’ve Been Everywhere,” Skeeter Davis’ “The End of the World,” Bobby Bare’s “Detroit City” and Eddy Arnold’s “Tennessee Stud” were recorded there.

The studio also birthed pop smashes as well, including The Everly Brothers’ “Cathy’s Clown,” Roy Orbison’s “Oh Pretty Woman,” Al Hirt’s “Java” and more.

In the 1970s, a second wave of artists – Dolly Parton, Waylon Jennings and Charley Pride among them – continued Studio B’s legacy with recordings like “Love Is Like a Butterfly,” “I’m a Ramblin’ Man” and “Angel Good Mornin’.”

RCA closed the studio in 1977, and the Country Music Hall of Fame man-

Brand New...
and Beautiful

RCA VICTOR
Custom Record Sales

Recording Studio

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



A 1957 ad (above) heralds the opening of Studio B, which today still stands as Music City’s oldest operating recording facility.

aged the building as a historic site.

Today RCA Studio B is Nashville’s oldest operating recording studio. In February 2002, a partnership – including the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, the Mike Curb Family Foundation and Belmont University – transformed the building and its contents into a living history exhibit and educational lab benefiting both music fans and studio-engineering students. Visitors can observe as students conduct recording sessions using vintage analog techniques, microphones and equipment.

The Birthplace of a Thousand Hits gives another generation the experience to make a thousand more.

— Mark Medley

THIS DATE IN COUNTRY MUSIC

JUNE

June 1

1915 Johnny Bond born
1953 Ronnie Dunn born
1959 Johnny Horton hits No. 1 on pop charts with "Battle of New Orleans"
1963 Dave Dudley's "Six Days on the Road" enters the charts
1964 Dolly Parton moves to Nashville
1974 Ronnie Milsap scores his first No. 1 hit, "Pure Love"



Ronnie Milsap

1985 Highwayman LP pairing Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Kris Kristofferson enters charts

June 2

1896 Guglielmo Marconi receives the first radio patent
1927 Carl Butler born
1998 Helen Carter of The Carter Family dies

June 3

1927 Saxophonist Boots Randolph born
1948 Fred "Too Slim" LaBour, of Riders in the Sky, born
1972 Donna Fargo hits No. 1 with "The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A."
1989 Reba McEntire and manager Narvel Blackstock wed
1994 Wally Fowler, founder of the Ryman's All-Night Gospel Sings and of the Oak Ridge Boys, dies

June 4

1909 Texas Ruby, "The Sophie Tucker of the Cowgirl Singers," born
1937 Freddy Fender born
1971 Dolly Parton, Sonny James, Faron Young, Conway Twitty and Loretta

Lynn play Madison Square Garden in Manhattan

2001 John Hartford dies

June 5

1943 *Grand Ole Opry* moves to the Ryman Auditorium
1945 Statler Brother Don Reid born
1948 Gail Davies born
1993 Conway Twitty dies
1993 Toby Keith hits No. 1 with his debut single "Should've Been a Cowboy"

June 6

1885 Fiddler Gid Tanner born
1943 Joe Stampley born
1960 Harlan and Jan Howard drive to Nashville in a white Cadillac, moving from Los Angeles to a \$100 a month rented house that June Carter found for them.
1970 Conway Twitty's "Hello Darlin'" ascends to No. 1

June 7

1934 West Coast country star Wynn Stewart born
1975 "Rhinstone Cowboy" debuts on charts for Glen Campbell
1982 Graceland opens for public tours in Memphis
1991 Alan Jackson joins the *Grand Ole Opry* cast

June 8

1941 Honky-tonker Vernon Oxford born
1951 Tony Rice born
1964 Alton Delmore of The Delmore Brothers dies

June 9

1915 Les Paul born
1941 Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper wed
1984 Lorie Morgan joins the *Opry* cast



Lorie Morgan

1990 The year's biggest country hit, George Strait's "Love Without End, Amen," hits No. 1

June 10

1931 Jimmie Rodgers and The Carter Family record together
1988 Herman Crook, the last of the original *Grand Ole Opry* performers, dies
1988 Ricky Van Shelton joins the *Opry* cast
1989 Clint Black's first single, "A Better Man," rises to No. 1
1997 Yodeling movie star Carolina Cotton dies

June 11

1939 Wilma Burgess born
1949 Hank Williams debuts on the *Grand Ole Opry*



Hank Williams

1988 Patty Loveless joins the *Grand Ole Opry* cast

June 12

1936 *Grand Ole Opry* pioneer Dr. Humphrey Bate dies
1965 Tex Ritter joins the *Grand Ole Opry* cast

June 13

1952 Hank Williams records "Jambalaya"
1960 Loretta Lynn debuts on charts with "I'm a Honky Tonk Girl"
1972 Country Music Foundation Library & Media Center dedicated
1987 Randy Travis tops charts with "Forever and Ever, Amen," the year's biggest country hit

June 14

1923 Ralph Peer records Fiddlin' John Carson, country's first star
1968 Pop Stoneman dies
1980 Alabama's debut RCA album enters the charts

June 15

1937 Waylon Jennings born
1954 Terri Gibbs born
1963 Buck Owens hits No. 1 with "Act Naturally"
1969 *Hee Haw* debuts on CBS
1986 Black country singer Ruby Falls dies

June 16

1939 Billy "Crash" Craddock born

1939 "Orange Blossom Special" first recorded by The Rouse Brothers
1980 Bob Nolan of The Sons of the Pioneers dies

June 17

1910 Red Foley born
1915 David "Stringbean" Akeman born
1949 Amazing Rhythm Aces' Russell Smith born
1957 "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" debuts on country charts for Jerry Lee Lewis
1999 Groundbreaking ceremony held for the new Country Music Hall of Fame & Museum in downtown Nashville

June 18

1916 A.P. Carter and Sara Dougherty wed
1984 Former *Opry* star Paul Howard dies

June 19

1914 Lester Flatt born
1926 "Harmonica Wizard" DeFord Bailey debuts on *Opry*



Doug Stone

1956 Doug Stone born
1982 Chart debut of "Fool Hearted Memory," destined to become George Strait's first No. 1 hit
1993 Patty Loveless hits No. 1 with "Blame It on Your Heart"
1997 "Jingle Bell Rock" singer Bobby Helms dies

June 20

1916 T. Texas Tyler born
1924 Chet Atkins born
1945 Anne Murray born
1965 Ira Louvin dies in a car crash

June 21

1938 Eddie Adcock born
1948 Columbia introduces the long playing (LP) record album
1948 Leon Everette born
1955 Johnny Cash releases his first single, "Hey Porter"
1959 Kathy Mattea born
1975 Star-making *Red Headed Stranger* debuts

on charts for Willie Nelson

June 22

1930 Roy Drusky born
1936 Kris Kristofferson born
1991 Brooks & Dunn's "Brand New Man" makes chart debut

June 23

1929 June Carter born
1956 "Crazy Arms" becomes Ray Price's first No. 1 hit

June 24

1918 Johnny Bailes of The Bailes Brothers born
1978 Oak Ridge Boys land first No. 1 hit with "I'll Be True to You"

June 25

1949 *Billboard* changes the title of its chart from "Hillbilly" to "Country & Western"
1966 David Houston's "Almost Persuaded" enters the charts, headed for No. 1
1987 Songwriting great Boudleaux Bryant dies

June 26

1926 Bluegrass fiddler Kenny Baker born
1976 Oak Ridge Boys debut on country charts
1977 Elvis Presley performs his last concert in Indianapolis

June 27

1913 Yodeling king Elton Britt born
1924 Yodeling queen Rosalie Allen born



Rosalie Allen

1986 Joe Maphis dies

June 28

1924 George Morgan born
1929
1968 "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" hits No. 1 for Tammy Wynette
1980 "He Stopped Loving Her Today" takes the top spot for George Jones

June 30

1922 Fiddler Eck Robertson waxes the first country-music recording
2001 Chet Atkins dies

Wild & Blue

When he died in February, Johnny Paycheck left behind a colorful legacy that breathed life into his hard-core honky-tonk songs

Country music will never again see the likes of the late Johnny Paycheck.

Unquestionably gifted and unmistakably raw, he was that rare performer whose life and art were completely entwined. Records like "I'm the Only Hell (Mama Ever Raised)," "Me and the I.R.S.," "11 Months and 29 Days" and

the unforgettably defiant "Take This Job and Shove It" sounded torn from the pages of his biography.

Often, they were.

"The definition of country music, to me, is life," said Johnny Paycheck, who died Feb. 19 in a Nashville hospital after a long bout with emphysema. "When you say *life*, you've said *country music*."



Paycheck (right) rubs shoulders with record producer Billy Don Burns, Merle Haggard and video director Neal James before a show at the Ohio corrections facility where Paycheck was serving time.

SHOVE
TAKE THIS JOB & SHOVE IT!



The comedy for everyone who's had it up to here.

Say it and see how good you'll feel.

Paycheck's blue collar anthem "Take This Job and Shove It" became not only his most memorable song but also the inspiration for a movie. He had a small part in the film, billed in the credits as "Man with Hamburgers."

Whatever he sang, he did it with such hair-raising conviction that the lyrics always rang true. And to hard-country connoisseurs, Johnny Paycheck was one of this music's finest stylists.

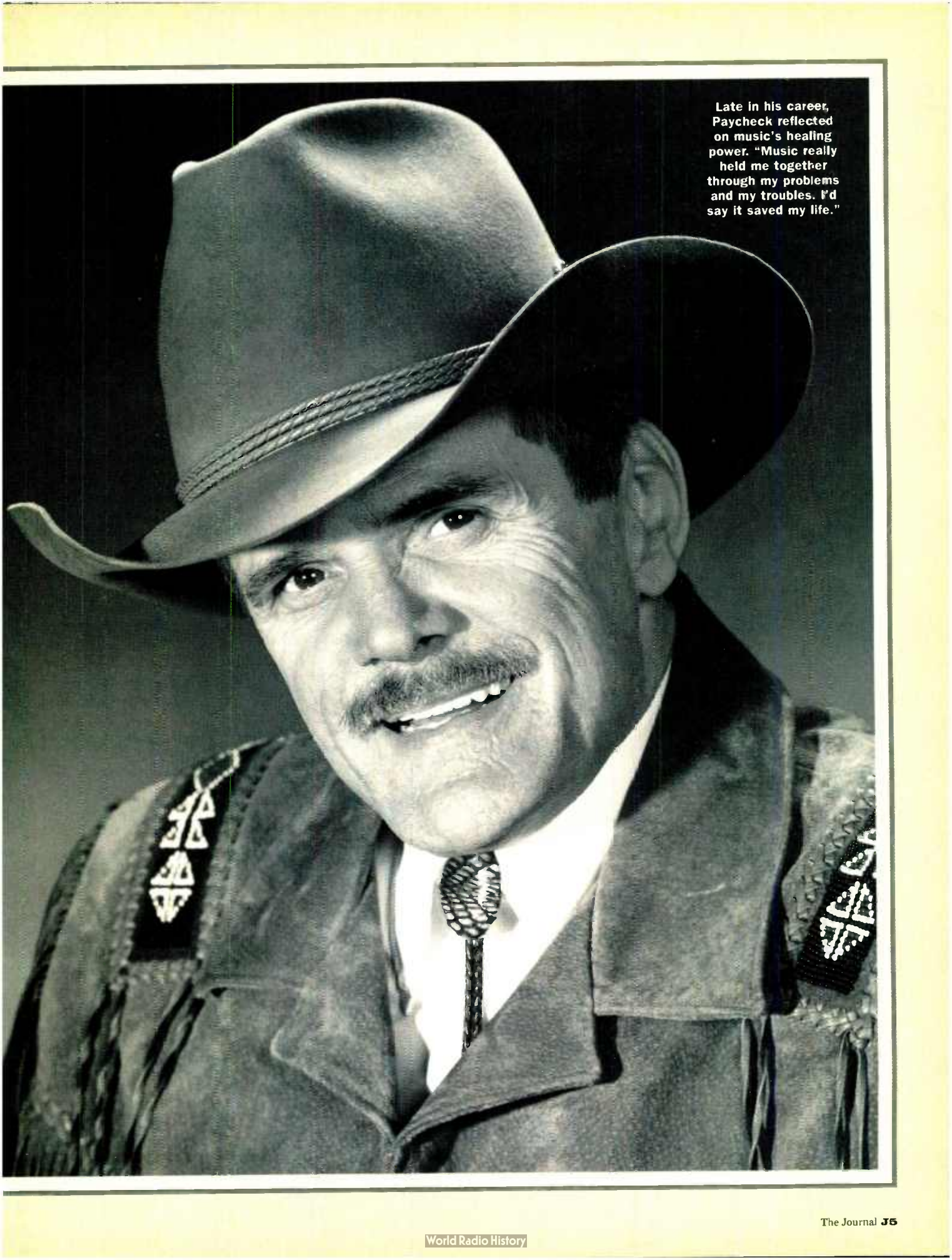
"The man was a singer's singer," says Glenn Ferguson, who managed Paycheck during his biggest years. "Did you know that whenever he played the *Opry*, the other artists would all gather at the edge of the stage to watch him?"

Paycheck was an outlaw icon, and one of the few in that so-called musical movement who actually had the credentials. From the start, he went against the grain.

Born on May 31, 1938, Donald Eugene Lytle grew up in a working-class family in Greenfield, Ohio. Paycheck began playing guitar at age 6. He dropped out of school in the seventh grade, landed his first radio show job at 13 and left home to ride the rails and entertain in honky-tonks just a couple of years later.

"I was not really a runaway," he recalled. "I just told my mom and dad that I had to leave. They didn't want me to. But I was just a gypsy, bummin' around the country."

By 16, he had landed a job at the top country nightspot in Columbus. Then it was on to Toledo, where, at age 18, he impulsively joined the Navy. But the discipline of enlisted life was not for him. He punched an officer and was court-

A black and white portrait of a man with a mustache, wearing a dark cowboy hat and a western-style jacket with decorative patterns on the shoulders. He is smiling and looking slightly to the left of the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

Late in his career, Paycheck reflected on music's healing power. "Music really held me together through my problems and my troubles. I'd say it saved my life."

Johnny Paycheck

martialed. He tried to escape twice while in the brig. The Navy released him in 1958, and he turned up in Nashville a year later.

"Nashville was totally different when I came in here," Paycheck reminisced. "There were only two studios in the whole city. It was a lot easier to meet and get acquainted. When I came, I didn't have any plan at all. I just wanted to play music and write songs and sing."

He changed his name to Donny Young and wrote songs for Tree Publishing. Tree president Buddy Killen recognized the songwriter's vocal talent at once and called Owen Bradley at Decca Records to secure a recording contract. The erratic Paycheck vanished on the day he was to sign with the label.

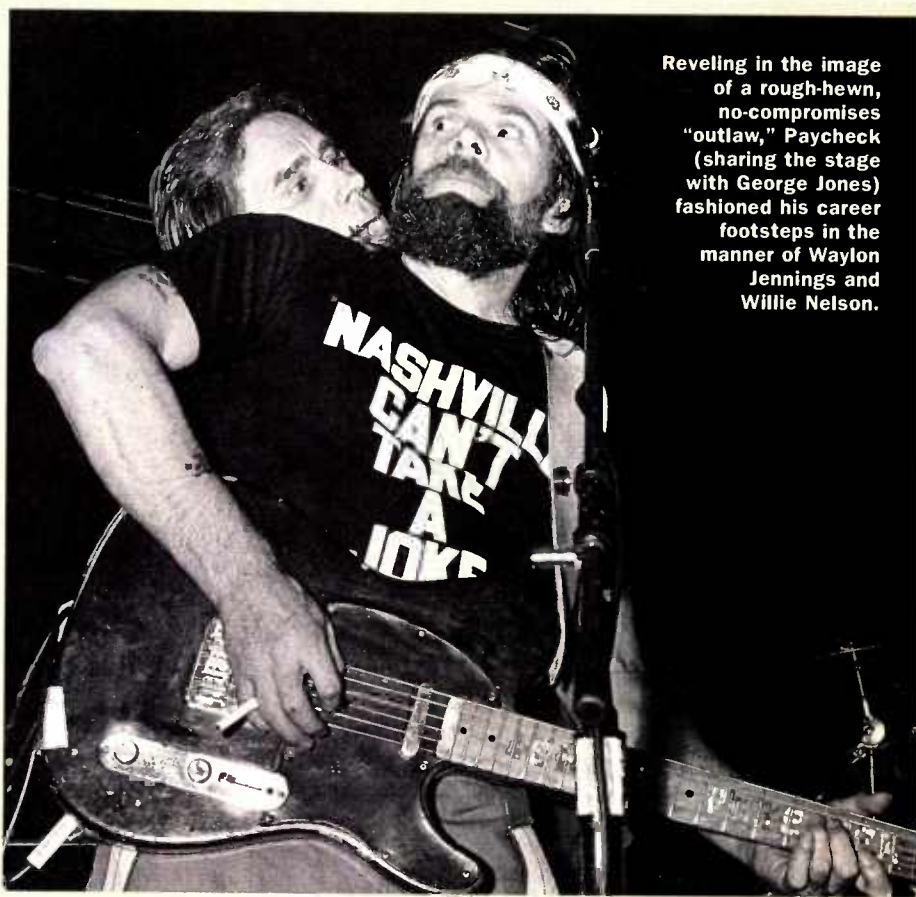
"Even in those days, he had a penchant for alcohol and drugs," wrote Killen in his 1993 autobiography. "Six months later, my secretary buzzed me to say that Donny Young was on the phone."

Aided by Killen, the repentant singer recorded singles for Decca, then Mercury Records. When nothing made the charts, he hit the road as a bass player and steel guitarist for Porter Wagoner, Faron Young, Ray Price and – most notably – George Jones. Paycheck and Jones began touring together in 1960 and remained partners, off and on, for the next six years. Paycheck can be heard as the harmony singer on over a dozen George Jones albums, and on such hits as "The Race Is On" and "Love Bug."

"Actually I formed George's band," Paycheck revealed. "He didn't have a band when I first went with him. We started out in, I believe it was a '59 or a '60 Chevy. It was just me and him [playing with pickup bands], and we worked a long time that way. Then I quit and went out on my own, just ramblin' around the country. When I came back the second time, I formed the Jones Boys for him, the first one that was ever formed."

Record producer Aubrey Mayhew has asserted that "George Jones, Wynn Stewart, Merle Haggard all learned to sing from Johnny Paycheck." Mayhew told writer Jonny Whiteside, "What Johnny Paycheck does is phrase on his vowels, and that was unheard of prior to him. Johnny Paycheck is the original."

Mayhew discovered the singer in 1964 and came up with the stage name Johnny



Reveling in the image of a rough-hewn, no-compromises "outlaw," Paycheck (sharing the stage with George Jones) fashioned his career footsteps in the manner of Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson.

Paycheck, reportedly borrowed from a Polish boxer. Next he got the Jones Boys to back Paycheck on 1965's jukebox classic "A-11." It became the singer's first charted single, leading Mayhew and Paycheck to form Little Darlin' Records in Nashville. In 1966, Paycheck recorded a sexy tune called "The Lovin' Machine" that resulted in his first Top 10 smash.

That same year he clicked as a songwriter, as well. Tammy Wynette launched her career with Paycheck's "Apartment No. 9" and Ray Price had a Top 10 success with his "Touch My Heart."

Because Little Darlin' was a small independent label, unaffiliated with the bigger Music Row hitmaking machinery, Mayhew decided that the way to get noticed was to be outrageous. Paycheck's unorthodox records were bright and piercing, featuring prominent steel guitar. And their lyrics were often outrageous as well.

For example, in "The Cave," the singer has a dream of a nuclear apocalypse. "(Like Me) You'll Recover in Time" takes place in an insane asylum. As its

title suggests, "He's in a Hurry (to Get Home to My Wife)" is rather twisted. And Paycheck delivered the shockingly dark "(Pardon Me) I've Got Someone to Kill" in a perfectly deadpan tone.

He stayed with Little Darlin' Records through 1969, and though he scored several mid-chart hits he never climbed back into the Top 10. But those songs – "Motel Time Again," "Jukebox Charlie," the emotional ballad "Wherever You Are" – are cherished by fans of the hard-core country music of the '60s.

It was the up-tempo single "If I'm Gonna Sink (I Might as Well Go to the Bottom)" that proved prophetic – when the hits began to dry up, Paycheck hit the skids. He lived on the streets in Los Angeles between 1967 and 1970, playing steel guitar or singing for change to buy his next drink. Destitute, his weight dropped to an emaciated 103 pounds.

Still, his startling and innovative recordings had made him something of a legend among country insiders. Music Row executive Nick Hunter tracked him down, and producer Billy Sherrill signed him to Epic Records.

"They'd been lookin' for me for a long time, and they finally got ahold of me out there in Los Angeles," Paycheck reported. "Billy said that if I'd get myself together, he'd give me another shot."

His rehabilitation began with the 1971 hit "She's All I Got" (one of the few country smashes of that era written by an African American, former pop star Gary "U.S." Bonds). The Top 5 "Someone to Give My Love To" solidified Paycheck's comeback. By 1973 he was cranking out Top 10 hits regularly, including "Something About You I Love," "Mr. Lovemaker" and "Song and Dance Man." George Jones also benefited from the singer's return, charting high with the Paycheck-penned "Once You've Had the Best."

Paycheck continued to score minor hits in the mid-'70s until he hit another fruitful period of Top 10s, starting with "Slide Off of Your Satin Sheets" and then the pile-driving "I'm the Only Hell (Mama Ever Raised)." He capped the year with what would become his signature tune, "Take This Job and Shove It."

"Billy Sherrill brought me the song and said, 'I think we got us a hit.' And I agreed with him. But we had no idea how *big* a hit it was gonna be. It became a movie, and it was No. 1 worldwide in all languages. I guess it's because people work everywhere."

By this time, Paycheck had shed the clean-cut image of the '60s. He embraced the trappings of the "outlaw" singers – a rough-around-the-edges look of denim, leather, bandannas, long hair and a beard favored most notably by Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings. From the mid-'70s to the mid-'80s, he retained this edginess in both his appearance and music.

"I think the outlaw movement came with people who got tired of bein' told what to do," Paycheck observed. "Back then there was a certain way you were supposed to dress. There was a certain kind of song you were supposed to sing. I think the movement came when we said, 'We don't care what you say. This is the way we're going to do it.' Because of

that, we became known as outlaws. It's just another word for rebel, you know. But it was a very great thing to happen to this industry, because it let it progress."

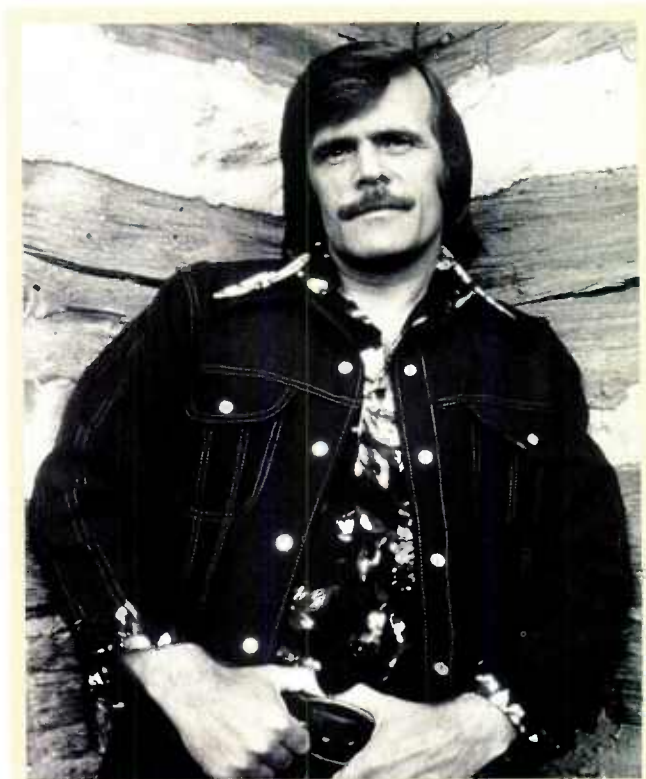
Increasingly, his songs reflected his lifestyle. "Colorado Kool-Aid," "Georgia in a Jug" and "Me and the I.R.S." all hit the charts in 1978. Yet the hard-partying celebrations "Drinkin' and Drivin'" and "D.O.A. (Drunk on Arrival)" were tempered by "The Outlaw's Prayer" and "(Stay Away From) the Cocaine Train."

He also recorded a series of popular duets with George Jones in the late '70s and early '80s, but by then the renegade's behavior appeared to be spiraling out of control again. His troubles included a slander suit, I.R.S. problems, bankruptcy and a sexual assault charge.

In December 1985 he was back in Ohio to visit his family at Christmastime when an altercation resulted in him shooting a fellow bar patron.



The evolution of the honky-tonk stylist – as well as his image – is revealed through the covers of Paycheck's albums.



"It was an accident," he asserted. "I was a victim of circumstances. The guy was back in the bar *that* night," reportedly wearing a Band-Aid where Paycheck's bullet had grazed his forehead.

Nevertheless, Paycheck was tried and convicted. While out on appeal, he returned to Nashville to record for Mercury Records. Among the songs were his late-career landmarks "Don't Bury Me 'Til I'm Ready" and "Old Violin."

"This will probably be my last time around," he said at the time. "The fans have always taken me back. I'm one of the most fortunate guys in the world. Most people don't even get one shot at it. This time I'm gonna protect it. Peacefully."

He was sentenced to prison in 1989. While locked up, Paycheck found sobriety and completed his high-school education. Merle Haggard, with whom he'd recorded in 1981, came to the prison to record again with him. That music has yet to be released.

In the mid-1980s, when Paycheck was appealing a prison sentence, he recorded some of his best music, including "Old Violin," where he compared himself to a discarded musical instrument.

Johnny Paycheck

In 1991, the governor of Ohio pardoned his sentence. "I'm starting over from the bottom," said Paycheck when he was freed. "I don't have anything right now."

As a condition of his release, he was required to do community service work. With his GED high-school diploma in hand, Paycheck spoke often about the importance of education.

"I'll tell ya, education comes in two forms," he said. "One of 'em is life's education. Another is schooling. Both are important. But now as I look back, I think school education is much more important. In my day, with just a life's education, you could get by. But I wouldn't recommend that. Get the schooling first. In prison, you see the final product of not having an education."

Using his own life as a cautionary tale, he also campaigned against drugs and alcohol. "I think anybody in the public eye, the demands become unbearable on 'em. I think they turn to something to help 'em get through it. Most times, it's drugs and alcohol. When you're nobody, seems there's not too much pressure. But when you become a national figure, it's a daily pull to keep up."

He found that the country music world had been revolutionized during his prison stretch. And sometimes he regretted the changes.

"In pop music, you're as good as your last record. And that never was that way in our day, mine and Merle's and Johnny Cash's and George Jones'. Once you was there, if you treated people right and you kept on givin' 'em good music, you was there forever. But I think that era is goin' by the wayside, and it's sad."

Even so, newer stars like Garth Brooks, Tim McGraw and Toby Keith praise Paycheck as a forefather. Others in a new generation began reevaluating his music.

Tracy Byrd's second charted single was a remake of "Someone to Give My Love To," and he later scored a Top 10 hit by reviving "(Don't Take Her) She's All I Got." Alan Jackson brought back "Once You've Had the Best" in 1999. Blake Shelton sings "Georgia in a Jug" on his new CD.

"I only wish his health could have

held out so he could have enjoyed some of the success and reverence that have been bestowed on him in the past several years," says Byrd. "But he was just too ill. I am glad he is suffering no more. And I am glad I was able to help bring his music to this new generation of country fans."

The Country Music Hall of Fame reissued the Little Darlin' classics on the album *The Real Mr. Heartache* in 1996. Epic followed with its 2002 career retrospective CD, *The Soul and the Edge*. The battle-scarred country survivor joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1997.

In recent years he had been confined to a Nashville nursing home suffering from emphysema and its complications. He got by with assistance from former managers Glenn Ferguson and Marty Martel.

Daryle Singletary was responsible for the star's last recording. The young traditionalist had recorded Paycheck's self-penned "Old Violin" for his 2002 CD, *That's Why I Sing This Way*, and requested that Paycheck do the song's recitation part. Paycheck complied, but had to do it from his hospital bed.

"I knew Johnny had been very ill, so I didn't see it as a real possibility," says Singletary. "We went to Marty Martel and he called back and said, 'I haven't seen the old man this happy in a long time.'"

"We knew when we made the record how special it was," Singletary continues. "I see 'Old Violin' as a tribute now, to a departed friend and inspiration."

Late in his career, Paycheck reflected, "I'd say music saved my life and music governed my life. That's what really held me together through my problems and my troubles. I sing about things that have always been and always will be. I sing about the little guy who's



Even as he battled failing health in his declining years, Paycheck stood strong. He recorded a recitation to Daryle Singletary's version of "Old Violin" while on his hospital bed.

been kicked around by the big guy. I like to sing about things that are universal and timeless."

Snow turned to rain on the cold day they laid Johnny Paycheck to rest at Woodlawn cemetery in Nashville. George Jones paid for his burial plot – Paycheck died virtually penniless – and attended the ceremony. So did members of the Hell's Angels motorcycle club and country singers John Conlee, Jeannie Seely, Jimmy Dickens, Billy Walker and Trace Adkins. When the star's 1986 recording of "Old Violin" was played, it drew a standing ovation.

On that February day, the chapel was so packed that the mourners spilled into the next room and out the doors.

A standing-room-only crowd – Johnny Paycheck would have liked that. ❁

THE STORY BEHIND THE SONG

“Everything Is Beautiful”

“Everything Is Beautiful”

BY RAY STEVENS

Jesus loves the little children
All the children of the world
Red and yellow, black and white
They are precious in His sight
Jesus loves the little children
of the world

CHORUS:

Everything is beautiful
in its own way
Like a starry summer night or a
snow-covered winter's day
Everybody's beautiful
in their own way
Under God's heaven
The world's gonna find a way



There is none so
blind as he who
will not see
We must not
close our minds
We must let our
thoughts be free
For every hour
that passes by
You know the

world gets a little older
It's time to realize that beauty
lies in the eyes of the beholder

REPEAT CHORUS

We shouldn't care about the
length of his hair or the
color of his skin
Don't worry about what shows
from without but the love
that lives within
We're gonna get it all together
now and everything's gonna
work out fine
Just take a little time to look on
the good side, my friend, and
straighten it out in your mind

REPEAT CHORUS

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Written by Ray Stevens

With its simple, sing-along chorus and universally appealing message, “Everything Is Beautiful” is a classic anthem song. Listening to its easygoing eloquence, one might imagine it came to the songwriter in a moment of inspiration.

And one would imagine wrong.

Ray Stevens got the title phrase from a book of proverbs that he was looking through specifically for song ideas. He was holed up in his basement, under self-imposed pressure and determined to write a song that would be taken seriously.

It was late 1969 or early 1970, and Stevens was known in the world of pop music as a sporadically successful novelty artist, with such hits as “Ahab the Arab” and “Gitarzan.” He was also established behind the scenes in Nashville as a talented studio musician and session singer, and had just debuted as a serious artist with his 1969 country recording of “Sunday Mornin’ Comin’ Down” on the Monument label.

Stevens’ version of the Kris Kristofferson song achieved only modest success. The song just didn’t fit his clean-cut image, he says on reflection. It was better suited for a rougher-edged artist, as Johnny Cash later proved with his hit version. When Stevens’ second country single didn’t fare any better, he parted company with Monument.

He went on to sign with Barnaby Records, Andy Williams’ new label. At the same time he was tapped to host the summer replacement for Williams’ TV variety show. “I wanted my first record for the label to be a hit, naturally, and I was also shooting for a song that might be a theme for that TV show,” says Stevens.

“So I just really ‘bowed up,’ as they say out in the country. The house where I was living in Nashville had a basement, and I had

a little ol’ piano down there, and that’s where I tried to write songs. I stayed down there for three days. I came up once in a while for a bite to eat. I finally came out with ‘Everything Is Beautiful.’ I had a little book of Chinese or East Indian proverbs, and that was one of them.”

While painstaking workmanship led to the song’s creation, a moment of inspiration did hit afterwards. Stevens had already completed the recording, or so he thought, when he got the idea to open the record with children singing the Sunday School staple “Jesus Loves The Little Children.” “It just came to me,” he said. “I don’t know from where. Maybe there are angels out there hovering and whispering in your ears.

“I had two daughters in school at that time, in the first or second grade. I took a little portable tape recorder to their school and got the whole class on there, recorded them at school with a piano, then spliced them onto the tape.” The splice caused

a little “blip” on the tape, so Stevens overdubbed a chord played by a string section to cover it up.

Barnaby Records released “Everything Is Beautiful” in May 1970, and the record followed the script Stevens had envisioned. It went to No. 1 on the pop charts, where it stayed for two weeks, and cracked the Top 40 on the country charts. Moreover, it provided a theme song for the “other side” of Ray Stevens as an artist and songwriter and laid the groundwork for three decades of consistent chart recordings – serious as well as funny.

— Walter Carter



Stevens released “Beautiful” in 1970.



Risky Business

Steve Wariner stands at an autograph table inside a Wal-Mart in Corona, Calif., as a raft of humanity drifts by. Shoppers in sweats, jeans and business suits stop to buy a CD, to collect his signature – and, in many cases, to tell him how much his music means to them.

One particular woman, her head shaved, moves forward with slow, deliberate steps until she can give Wariner a lengthy, emotional hug. The veteran star doesn't hurry, holding the

embrace for several moments.

Caryn Wariner, the singer's wife and manager, watches them with a smile that expresses both sweetness and sadness. "That's a 'Holes' moment," she says. "I don't know how he does it."

She's referring to Wariner's 1998 hit "Holes in the Floor of Heaven," which provided an emotional touchstone for those who had lost a loved one. Because of the song's personal message, Wariner is often asked to shoulder stories of heartbreak from total strangers.

"She had a brain tumor," Wariner says later. "She said she only had a little time to live."

While many entertainers might find that kind of scene disturbing, Wariner finds peace in the process.

"For some reason," he ponders, "it's a comfort thing to me. I'm honored by it. I don't mean to sound syrupy or corny, but you think about all the things they could be doing when they've only got a little time left on earth – and they're spending their time waiting in line for two hours to see me? It knocks me out. The girl had tears in her eyes, saying, 'I'm dying.' What do you say to somebody like that? But that's the incredible thing about music, and I don't think I understood it fully until 'Holes' came out."

When Wariner wrote the song, he was still on the Arista Records roster. But he didn't feel a strong sense of support from the company, so he asked to be let out of his contract.


After his release, he drew on his own savings to pay for a recording session that included "Holes." He briefly considered establishing an independent record company of his own, but instead joined Capitol Records in 1998. "Holes" proved to be the



USA TODAY/EP

Shooting the video for his 1998 hit "Holes in the Floor of Heaven," a song that continues to touch listeners in "incredible" ways, says Wariner.

BY TOM ROLAND



After 25 years
under the
corporate banner,
Steve Wariner
finds his
independence
and relishes
his new role

Now that he's the
head of his own
record label,
Wariner says, "I
definitely look at
things differently."

COURTESY KAREN BYRD PR

Steve Wariner

most successful hit of Wariner's career, winning CMA trophies for single and song of the year.

But after Capitol's management changed, Wariner once again felt he might be best served working on his own. Freed from his contract last year, he has now launched a label, Selectone Records, and put out a new album, *Steal Another Day*.

"It's a hard world out there. I'm not sure that we can succeed, but we're gonna try."

Now that he's a record executive as well as an artist, Wariner says, "I definitely look at things differently."

The Indiana native first moved to Nashville from Indiana as a teenager to play bass in Dottie West's band. Chet Atkins produced his first single in 1977, and his first hit came in 1980. Over the next 20 years, his smooth, understated country-pop would earn him 32 Top 10 hits.

Like most artists, he often grew frustrated with his record companies.

writing royalties, his wife acts as his manager, and because he owns Selectone, he doesn't have to share the profits.

Free to do as he pleases, Wariner stuffs 16 songs into *Steal Another Day*, encased in an expensive tri-fold package with a sticker price \$5 below the going rate for most top-name CDs. The goal is to sell the CD for under \$10 and still turn a profit.

To his surprise, he received 125,000 initial orders for the CD from retail stores. "That freaked me out," he says. "My very first order was the same as it would've been at MCA or Capitol or anywhere else."

Meanwhile, his stint as a cost-conscious record executive has him in



Taping a 1994 TV special with hero Chet Atkins, and with wife and manager Caryn, whom Steve married in 1982.

He admits the move might seem risky, since he's now competing on his own against such conglomerates as Sony, Universal and AOL Time Warner.

"Man, I'm out of my freakin' mind," he laughs. "It's a hard world out there. I'm not sure that we can succeed, but we're gonna try."

Wariner takes the challenge seriously. His Wal-Mart stop was one of a series of promotional visits made across America. He has signed a multitude of autographs, hustled live radio station interviews and taken on bundles of media opportunities that he might have avoided in the past.

"Oh, man," he sighs, "let me count the ways."

His wife, in fact, counted at least 100,000 ways. That's the number of unpaid dollars owed to Wariner she says she uncovered when she audited Capitol Records, admitting that a certified accountant might have turned up more.

That's another reason why Wariner is determined to make it on his own. He built a studio on his property in 2001, which helped to complete his emergence as a one-man cottage industry. He produced *Steal Another Day* himself, he owns the song publishing and song-

an aggressive marketing mood. He wants to do more interviews, more concerts and more in-store appearances to stimulate sales.

The hard work is doing more than enriching the bottom line. It's also reminding Wariner why he feels blessed to make a living doing something he loves.

He recounts an autograph signing in Wichita when an older couple came through the line with a girl in her early teens. The girl's mother had died, and Wariner's song "Two Teardrops" was played at the funeral.

"In those moments," he says, "I think, 'I'm doing what I'm put here to do.'" ★

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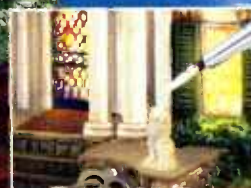
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A Da R

World Radio History

JIM MCCUINE, ROUNDER RECORDS

Five years after her famous father's death, Jeannie Kendall rekindles the memories with her first solo album



Daughter's return

As Alan Jackson finished his part on the duet "Timeless and True Love," Jeannie Kendall rushed over to thank him for agreeing to perform on her first solo album. "Oh, I've been singing with you for years," Jackson corrected her. "You just didn't know it."

Kendall burst into a high-pitched fit of giggles and joshed back at him. "So," she hooted, "that's why you sing so good!"

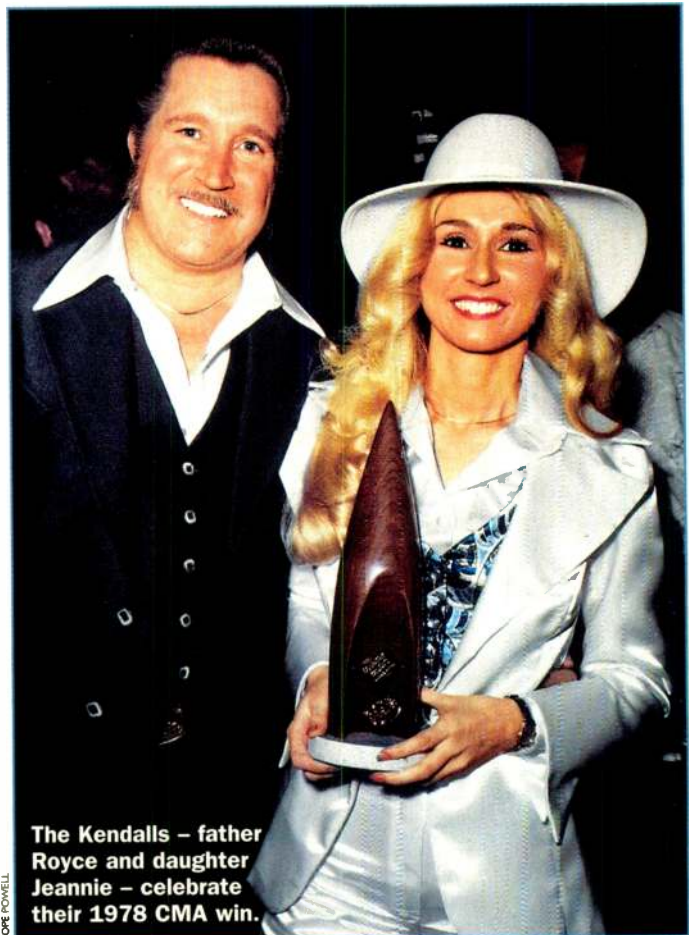
But it's true: Jackson had been singing along with Kendall for years, just as many country fans have. As the harmony duo of Jeannie and her dad, Royce, The Kendalls were an island of authentic country in an ocean of "Urban Cowboy" music in the late '70s and early '80s.

"What I like about Alan," says Kendall, "is he has a real identifiable voice, which is hard to come by these days. The music has become so formulaic that you can't tell who is who. The production is so orchestrated that you can hardly hear the singer. That's why Alan is a breath of fresh air."

The first concert Jackson attended was a Kendalls show in western Georgia. He later recorded The Kendalls' 1984 chart-topper, "Thank God for the Radio," on his 1994 album *Who I Am*. He even sent Jeannie and Royce a card saying he was a big fan.

When Kendall performed at the Folk Alliance Conference in Nashville in February, it was easy to recognize the qualities that impressed Jackson. Now 48, she still has the rosy cheeks, dainty nose and blond bangs that flowed from underneath the brim of a cowboy hat on dozens of album covers, and her soprano can still leap an octave with no apparent strain.

What Jackson learned from her was the trick of combining a thrilling vocal tone with a remarkably understated delivery. That contrast allowed her to dramatize competing desires in a song. For example, The Kendalls' 1977 breakthrough hit, "Heaven's Just a Sin Away," addressed the allure of a sexual



The Kendalls – father Royce and daughter Jeannie – celebrate their 1978 CMA win.

HOPE POWELL

BY GEOFFREY HIMES

affair and how it can tear down otherwise moral resistance. Kendall's lead vocals captured not only the eager anticipation of pleasure but also the guilty reluctance of a church-raised woman caught in the riptide.

Most of The Kendalls' songs featured the backing of a contemporary honky-tonk band. But her new solo album,

1977's "Heaven's Just a Sin Away," which stayed at the top of the charts for four weeks and won CMA and Grammy honors.

That breakthrough was the result of an unusual experiment.

"Everyone thinks of The Kendalls in terms of duo harmonies," Kendall reveals, "but our secret was trio

"It was rough," concedes Mack Watkins, who has been Kendall's husband and lead guitarist for 25 years. "It's bad enough when it's your dad, but when it's your lifelong professional partner, too, it's even worse." "It took several years to get ourselves together and figure out what to do next," Kendall admits. "I finally decided that Daddy would want me to keep singing. Sometimes I think he kept singing just to make me happy."

The most moving song on the new album is "Smoky Lonesome," co-written by Leslie Satcher and Larry Cordle, whose band Lonesome Standard Time provided musical support for her Nashville Folk Alliance show. The song comes from the point of view of a singer who is heartbroken over the loss of her partner, but who must pretend to be happy for the fans who have "come to hear me sing your songs again."

In Nashville, Kendall closed her eyes as she poured all her feelings into a key line, *You're right beside me/But all the crowd sees/Is a cloud of smoky lonesome over me.* Her soprano seemed to gather its remaining strength as it rose up for the high note on "lonesome," which she rang like a bell.

Cordle shook his head in wonder at the sound and turned to the bassist.

"Yeah," he said. And that seemed to say it all. ★

Jeannie Kendall "I finally decided that Daddy would want me to keep singing."

Jeannie Kendall, is an all-acoustic affair featuring pickers from Alison Krauss & Union Station and other bluegrass bands. "My dad had sung bluegrass when I was a baby," Kendall points out. "We always listened to it. In acoustic music, there's not as much hitting you in the face, so you're focused on the lyric and the harmony. And harmony singing has always been our strength."

It's still strange to see Kendall onstage without her dad next to her — and no one feels that absence more keenly than her. Her eyes still moisten at the mention of his name, and it took a long time for her to get over his unexpected death.

The father-daughter duo's history reaches back to 1970, when they snagged a minor hit with "Leaving on a Jet Plane." They became stars with

harmonies. Dad was fooling around at home, overdubbing parts on a recorder. When he added that third part, it gave our music that extra fluffy, lilting sound."

The hits continued on Ovation Records through 1981 and then on Mercury through 1985. Eventually, though, the hits stopped. After more than a decade out of the limelight, the father and daughter decided to return to their roots with an all-acoustic album for Rounder Records.

Two tracks had already been completed when tragedy struck. After their sound check for a show in Marquette, Iowa, on May 20, 1998, The Kendalls were greeting fans when Royce clutched his chest and fell. He suffered a massive stroke and died two days later.



Harmonizing in the studio in 1997, one year before Royce passed away

LARRY HILL

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DADDY'S GIRL

Pam Tillis on fake fingernails, 'Happy Birthday' and stripping

With more than a dozen *Billboard* Top 10 hit singles, Pam Tillis long ago stepped out from the shadow of her dad, the legendary Mel Tillis. Nevertheless, her latest album, *It's All Relative*, found her returning to classic country songs written by her famous father.

When you were a teenager, did you think your dad was uncool? Oh, I went through that just like any other teen. That rebellious age. But I was always conscious of the fact that a lot of people seemed to know who my dad was, growing up in Nashville.

What do you do when you hit a dry spell in your songwriting? Redecorate. I also apologize profusely to my co-writers and just wait it out. If you're going through a dry spell, there's usually a reason for it, and it might mean you're not being inspired. Sometimes I like to try to go write someplace else, get out of town. Buy a new CD, or go see somebody else play. See a movie, or go to an art museum.

What song do you wish you had written? "Happy Birthday," because everybody loves to hear it, and because it's probably made the most money of any song!

Cats or dogs? I have to say cats, since my dog ran away with my housekeeper. He got attached to her because I was gone for a whole year. I now have two cats, and their names are Scaredy and Fraidy. And I found the best cat toy last night at Wal-Mart. It's a little furry ball with feathers tied onto it. They think it's a bird. But they are mostly so lazy, it's sort of like having animate throw rugs.

What food could you never give up? Bread. I've tried to do that low-carb thing, but it was too tough to give up bread.

Have you ever restored an antique yourself? Yeah, I'm a great stripper ... if you know what I mean! Back in my old life, I was very domestic. I always wanted nice pieces of furniture I couldn't really afford, so I had to learn how to refinish less than perfect pieces I'd find at the flea market. It didn't matter how bad or cheap the apartment was, I always had a passion for decorating. Still do.

Do you have any other hobbies? I like to collect books. I have a library. When I'm on the road, my carry-on bag gets heavier in each city. I collect old cameras. I like to collect things that work and have a purpose, not just knickknacks.

Are you an organized person? Ha! I really try. I like order and cannot have my house be a complete wreck and be cool with it. But it doesn't come naturally. Anybody who knows me well who reads this is going to bust a gut laughing, but I do strive for neatness. The main reason is because disorganization slows you down. I hate to spend a half hour looking for my cellphone. I think I've spent more time looking for my cellphone than I've spent talking on it. I'm an organized person trapped in a disorganized person's body.

Do you still listen to vinyl records? Yes, and it's a big deal to me to be able to. I especially like to dig out the vinyl around Christmas. I encourage everybody who still owns a record player to go back once in a while and listen to vinyl. I do think the average listener can tell the difference in the sound quality you get on vinyl as opposed to CD.

Have you ever worn fake fingernails? I have, but only for special occasions. They make you feel glamorous, but they're not very practical. And I can't play guitar with them.

— Kath Hansen



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World Radio History

Sound Therapy

BY ALANNA NASH

Chris Cagle knows all about the power of music. A native of Baytown, Texas, he grew up in a blue-collar family with an alcoholic mother and enough drama to keep him knotted in fear. Early on, he found solace in the lines of a lyric, determination in the pounding rhythm of a drum and hope in the searing solos of an electric guitar.

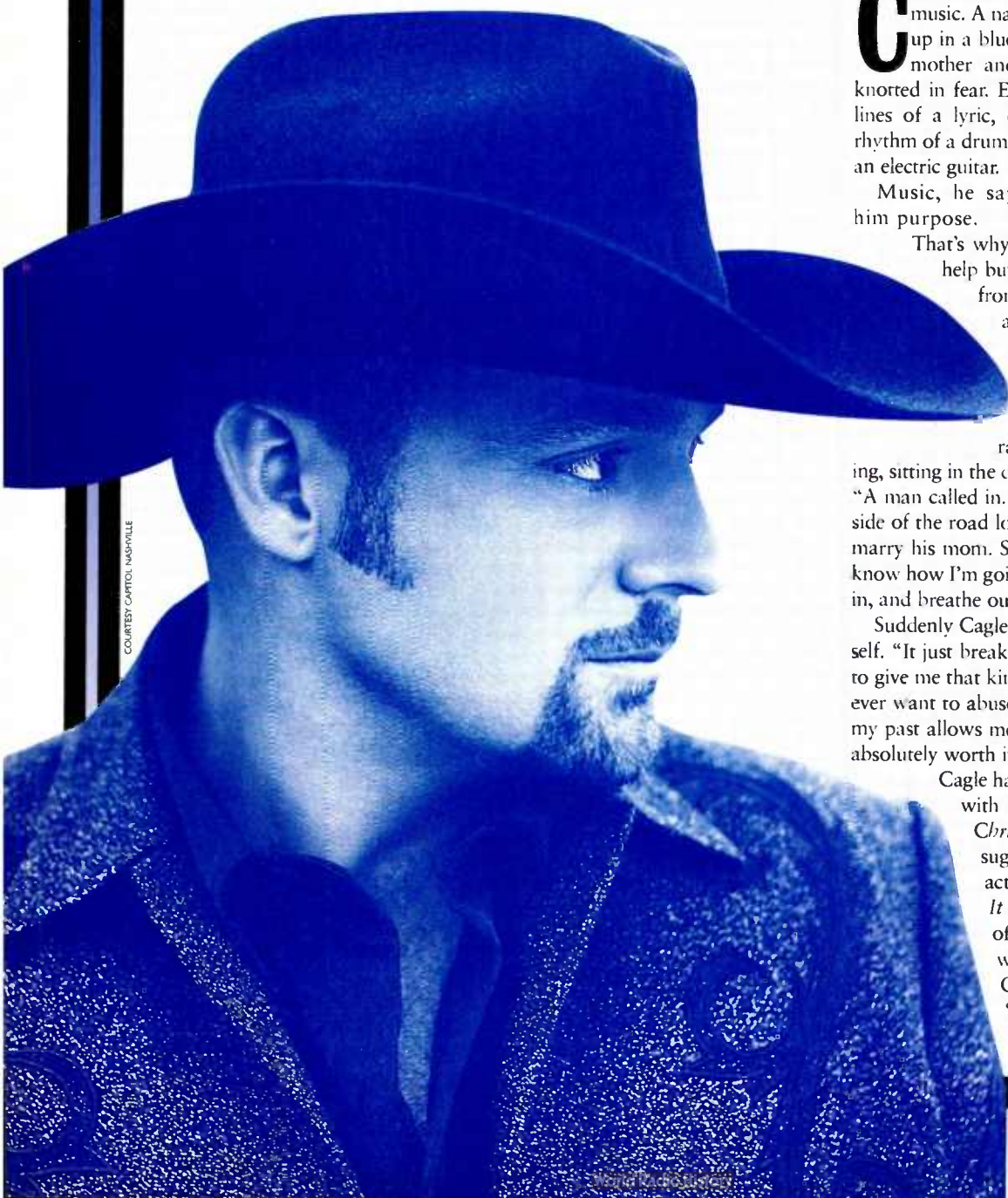
Music, he says, saved his soul and gave him purpose.

That's why the 34-year-old hitmaker can't help but bawl when fans draw strength from his songs – especially those about love that won't die and the pain of survival without choice.

"I was up in Ohio the first day I heard 'I Breathe In, I Breathe Out' played on the radio," he said early one morning, sitting in the deserted bar of a Nashville hotel. "A man called in. He said, 'I'm just sitting on the side of the road looking at my son. I never got to marry his mom. She died giving birth. But now I know how I'm going to be strong for him. Breathe in, and breathe out.'"

Suddenly Cagle begins choking back tears himself. "It just breaks my heart," he says. "For God to give me that kind of gift is so humbling. I don't ever want to abuse it. The fact that my pain from my past allows me to change people's futures, it's absolutely worth it."

Cagle has another chance to do just that with his new album, named simply *Chris Cagle*. While the title might suggest an artist's debut, this is actually Cagle's follow-up to *Play It Loud*. That first album shot out of the chute nearly three years ago with the frenetic "My Love Goes On and On" and the wistful "Laredo." It has since been cer-



COURTESY CAPITOL NASHVILLE

Music helped Chris Cagle through a rough childhood, and it sustains him still

tified gold, with sales in excess of a half-million.

If his second effort isn't exactly the definitive statement the title implies, it does offer an intimate look at the singer/songwriter and his life today.

"This particular record is absolutely where I am at right now," says Cagle, an intense, hard-muscled man who puts rough edges on soft words of love, need and validation. "I had two months to get this album together, and every song comes from things I've felt or contemplated."

Cagle has had plenty to think about in the past couple years. Just as Virgin Records released "Laredo," his second single, the company was shut down. Cagle learned about the closing on a cell-phone while sitting in a restaurant parking lot less than an hour before a show.

"It was the most scared I've ever been in my professional life," he says. "I remember thinking, 'Wouldn't you know it? The rug gets soft and then it gets jerked. But you made it farther than most people.' Later that night I thought, 'There's no way you're gonna succumb and say it's over.' It was like a new fire."

Virgin's sister company, Capitol Nashville, picked up his contract. That left Cagle feeling like a stepchild nobody really wanted; label president Mike Dungan told him he had a lot to prove, particularly as a songwriter.

"My first meeting with Dungan was terrible," the Texan recalls. "I was brought to tears because my songs were something I was extremely proud of. I had a group of people telling me they thought my album was great. I had critics hollering 'the next Garth Brooks.' Then my new record label president says, 'I don't know that I



believe in this.' We're in a real good spot right now, but back then, it was tough."

The label reissued *Play It Loud*, adding two songs – among them "I Breathe In, I Breathe Out," which Cagle had written with Jon Robbin. The song quickly shot to No. 1 and earned Cagle the fan-voted CMT Flameworthy Breakthrough Artist of the Year Award.

"As far as being a survivor, yeah," says Cagle, drawing on a short cigarette and speaking with the machine-gun rhythm of a man on a mission. "You won't meet another like me in that regard. But a lot of it has to do with the relationship I have with radio and my fans. They saved me."

Both radio and fans – the most avid are known as Cagleheads – are likely to respond to his new songs, nearly all of which he co-wrote. "I took the time to develop what it is I wanted to present to country music," he says. "There is a masculinity to country music that's being stripped down. No one talks about sex much in country, although it's mentioned a lot in rock 'n' roll. But I don't want to become just a closet classic rocker. I still want to listen to country music."

Chris Cagle "I never felt like my self-worth was enough, that just being me was OK, so I spent most of my life trying to be something I wasn't."

The first single, "What a Beautiful Day," is the story of a man who thinks every day is wonderful as long as the woman he loves is in his life. He wrote it after a Florida radio interview in which he chatted about his marriage to Elizabeth, a long-lost girlfriend who he hadn't seen in 12 years before running into her by chance and renewing the relationship.

The deejay expressed surprise that Cagle decided to get married since, with his new fame, he could get any girl he wanted. "I was like, 'Uh, I got *her*,'" Cagle remembers. "He said, 'What makes it so special?' And I said, 'The primitive side of love. Every day you wake up, and you have a choice – you can stay, or you can go. She chooses to stay, when I'm in a business that isn't really conducive to having a marriage. That makes it a beautiful day for me.'"

As soon as he said it, he looked at Monty Powell, a friend and frequent co-writer. The two of them walked away talking about writing a song based on what he said in the interview. By the time Cagle hit the concert stage a few hours later, he and Powell had written "What a Beautiful Day."

His gift for expressive country ballads, with their particular appeal to women, comes to the fore on another of the album's most memorable songs, "I'd Be Lying." This time the song found its genesis in a disagreement he had with Elizabeth.

"I just said, 'I wish I could tell you I understand how you feel, but I have no idea. I'd be lying if I did.' She threw a pillow at me and said, 'You'd be lying in here with me,' and went into the bedroom. I was like, 'Wow!' I got my guitar and sat there and thought, 'What if she left? How would you feel?'"

Cagle admits that his nearly two-year marriage – they wed on Sept 10, 2001 – has often been volatile, and that it continues to

experience dramatic ups and downs. At press time, he talked of filing for divorce, but still held out hope that the couple could reconcile.

Despite its volatility, and however it ends up, their relationship is something Cagle says he'll never regret. For one thing, it has allowed him the chance to be a stepfather to Elizabeth's two children. "I love them," he says, emotion immediately welling up in his brown eyes. "In just a year, I've tremendously impacted my children's lives."

And, one senses, his own. He fingers the bristles of his goatee and pours the last dregs of a soft drink, watching it fizz. "It's just a chance to right the wrongs that happened to me," he finally adds. "They will never be afraid. They'll never have to be."

Cagle's own parents divorced early, and for many years he was estranged from his natural father, a line supervisor for Exxon. They are just now becoming close.

He describes his

childhood as "motivated by fear, of anything and everything. My stepfather was not a good person. I never felt like my self-worth was enough, that just being me was OK, so I spent most of my life trying to be something I wasn't. You do that for 15 or 20 years, and all of a sudden you say, 'Who the hell am I?'"

At the University of Texas in Arlington, and later at junior college in Baytown, he says he found academics too easy to hold his attention, so he dropped out.

"I could have been a doctor or an attorney or had a Ph.D in biochemistry if I wanted to," he says. "But I never held a job long because I would excel, and they would start talking promotion, and I'd get out, because my heart wasn't in it."

Instead, he wanted to play music in roughneck bars, eventually plying his trade in the Dallas area and sharing the circuit with such hopefuls as Ty Herndon and Ricky Lynn Gregg. "I wanted chicks digging it," he says with a smile, a reference to a song, "Chicks Dig It," from his new album. "The desire to play music was everything."

Cagle says he's not thirsting for CMA awards right off the bat and will never be an industry darling "because I won't do it their way. I won't get into the good old boy network. I am an artist, not an act. No compromises."

His main goals, he says, are to make his mark and to last. "I want to have at least two songs like 'The Chair' and 'He Stopped Loving Her Today,'" he says. "But the most important thing is making sure I don't take the dream for granted."

Something tells us he won't. *



Best Western

Urban Cowboy redux: Pearl snaps and embroidered shirts gallop back into vogue

A seriously good-looking guy stares out from the poster for a Broadway musical. He's a slice of New York beefcake: His open shirt reveals a well-muscled torso, with a glint in his eye, a sly half-smile and ... hey, wait a minute.

That shirt. It's one of those old Western-style things men wore back in the era of mechanical bulls, two-stepping and Stetsons as clean and crisp as starched Wranglers. The guy in the poster is totally now, but the shirt is so ... retro.

That's because the poster is for the new Broadway version of *Urban Cowboy*. Yup, it's back, and so is the craze for Western clothes.

"Just about every trade show I've gone to has some version of the Western shirt," says Katy K, designer and owner of Katy K's Designs in Nashville, a store specializing in Western wear. "It's really picked up in the last year or two, especially for men."

While *la-di-da* fashion moguls like Hugo Boss and Dolce & Gabbana have jumped on the wagon train, Nashville's music makers have always had a place in their closet for a few cowboy duds. After all, they used to call it country *and* Western.

Think back to Webb Pierce or Buck Owens and their elaborately embroidered cowboy getups. Or Garth Brooks and his geometrically bold, rodeo-inspired shirts. These days you can find artists as diverse as Brad Paisley, Tim McGraw, Toby Keith and Pinmonkey sporting Western shirts onstage and in videos.

"The appeal is the design," says Joanna Carter, an executive at Capitol Records. "It's not a basic shirt, so it gives the artist who wears it some flash and some flair." It's also a very flattering cut that emphasizes the shoulders and narrows the waist.

The Western look is a true American style that started with working cowboys, who wore what they did for practical purposes. According to *100 Years of Western Wear*, Rodeo Ben, the premier tailor for rodeo riders in the 1930s, saw a cowboy get hung up when his saddle horn settled into the fabric opening between buttons in his shirt. Ben almost immediately realized that replacing the buttons with snaps would give the shirt a way to open up and free the cowboy. He started putting snaps on his rodeo shirts, and knowing he was dealing in showbiz, he made them pearl snaps.

Dime novels, rodeo shows and movies all helped to



Country hitmakers have always had a place in their closets for a few cowboy duds, like this original creation from Katy K's in Nashville.

romanticize the cowboy life. As the West became Hollywood-ized, so did Western clothes. Details were expanded – and literally embroidered. Singing cowboys of the 1950s picked up the exaggerated style, and country crooners followed suit, many of them hiring Nudie the Rodeo Tailor, a Hollywood legend. The country stars soon threw away their tattered hillbilly stage clothes in favor of rhinestone-studded, embroidery-decorated Western costumes.

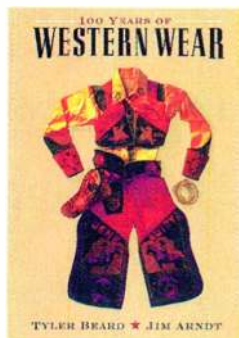
Then in 1980, the hit movie *Urban Cowboy* sparked a revival of interest in country music – and its style. Everyone got intoxicated with the Western craze, so much so that it led to a backlash, especially in Nashville, where executives wanted country to lose its traditional image.

George Strait, when first signed to MCA Records in 1981, was told to ditch his cowboy hat because that look was *so* over. His manager, Erv Woolsey, recalls Strait simply saying "No, I'm not going to do that." The hat, jeans and shirt were the clothes he wore growing up in Texas.

Despite such holdouts as Strait, the post-*Urban Cowboy* hangover was a killer, still causing pain years later. "When I came to Nashville in 1994, nobody wanted Western clothes," Katy K recalls. "They were all going to New York for fashion – anything but country. I remember one artist just being horrified at the idea of wearing fringe. Even the *Opry* was difficult at that time."

Still, you can't keep a good style down. These days, edgy country artists like Pinmonkey and Keith Urban gravitate toward the '70s Western shirt – florals and patterns in a slim fit, usually worn untucked over jeans and with the sleeves rolled up. More traditional artists, like Brad Paisley or BR549, might lean more toward the 1950s look with heavier fabric, elaborate embroidery and bold colors. Either way they take their Western look, these guys are totally retro – and so ... now.

— Nancy Henderson



Jumpin' No More

Grand Ole Opry star Bill Carlisle, country's last link to the vaudeville era, dies at 94

Bill Carlisle's country music career spanned more than 70 years, characterized by catchy novelty tunes like "What Kinda Deal Is This" and "Too Old to Cut the Mustard." But the *Grand Ole Opry* legend will always be best remembered for his entertaining stage presence, including the mid-song leaps that led to the affectionate nickname "Jumpin' Bill Carlisle."

Carlisle died March 17 at age 94 at his home near Nashville from complications of a stroke he suffered five days earlier.

Born December 19, 1908, in Wakefield, Ky., he began performing in the region while still in his teens. Following in the footsteps of his older brother Cliff, he learned to play guitar, then joined his brother, father and other family members in 1929 on *The Carlisle Family Saturday Night Barn Dance*, a Louisville radio show.

He and Cliff later starred on the Knoxville, Tenn., radio programs *Midday Merry-Go-Round* and *Tennessee Barn Dance*.

Bill formed The Carlises with Cliff in 1951 and saw his greatest success as a recording artist during that decade.



COURTESY COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM



LARRY HILL

The legendary Opry star began "jumpin'" in the 1950s and stayed airborne in the decades that followed.

"Too Old to Cut the Mustard" hit the Top 10 in 1952, followed by the chart-topping "No Help Wanted" the following year. "Knothole" and "Is Zat You, Myrtle" also cracked the Top 5 in 1953.

It was during that period when Carlisle introduced the "jumping" routine that would become his trademark. Dressed up as "Hotshot Elmer," a comedic character he created in the 1940s, and staging a mock fight with Cliff, Elmer would stand flat-footed and jump over a chair and back. The routine drew so many laughs that Carlisle started incorporating leaps into his performances.

Carlisle joined the *Grand Ole Opry* as a solo act in 1953 and became one of the show's most popular stars. He continued to perform there even during his later years as his health deteriorated and made his last appearance on the show March 7, five days before his fatal stroke.

Capping his remarkable career, Carlisle was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2002.

— Bob Paxman



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REVIEWS



CHRIS CAGLE

Chris Cagle

CAPITOL

★★

Play It Loud, Cagle's first album, got him off to a good start. During a difficult time for new artists, the Texan's debut generated substantial radio play while hinting at greater potential.

Unfortunately, this self-titled follow-up fails to build on that momentum. The album gets lost in a wasteland of positive love songs and sensitive male Oprah-isms that have been in vogue since country radio began aiming at an adult female audience.

The tepid, mid-tempo first hit, "What a Beautiful Day," typifies Cagle's direction. The rare diversion isn't much better: On "Chicks Dig It," a pulsing groove fueled by screaming fiddles and arena-rock drums is marred by condescending lyrics. The tune justifies risking life and limb in foolish childhood stunts to draw the attention of females. Um, right.

Devoid of conflict and lacking substantive depth, *Chris Cagle* is too one-dimensional to be compelling, and it's

not nearly as exciting as Cagle has proven he can be.

Perhaps sensing this, Cagle closes with "Look at What I've Done," which shows what he can do with a solid song. The unexpected twist in the lyrics – in which pity for an old flame turns in on itself – makes for the album's only surprise. By then, though, it only hints at what *Chris Cagle* otherwise fails to deliver.

— Chuck Aly

WILLIE NELSON

Crazy - The Demo Sessions

SUGAR HILL

★★★★★

Don't listen to these songs with a liquor bottle or a pistol within arms' reach, at least not if you have plans for the weekend. For these early, stripped-down examples of Willie Nelson's songwriting probe the darkest of topics, all packed with heartache, anguish, remorse and self-pity – the stuff country music used to be made of.

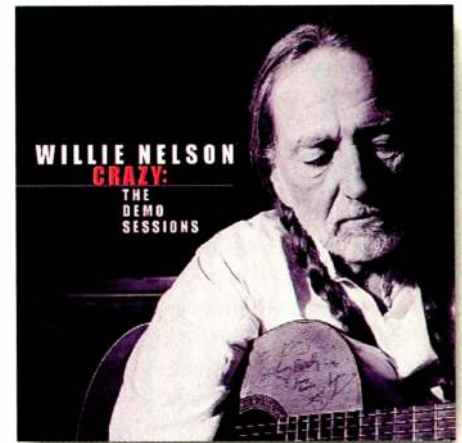
This historic release compiles the early-'60s songwriter demos of 18 Willie Nelson

originals, all initially recorded simply as a vehicle for the songwriter to pitch them to bigger-name artists. Now these rare recordings have been digitally restored.

The opening eight songs feature Nelson alone with his guitar, a simple setting that gives focus to the pain inherent in the lyrics. The second half finds him paired with a small backing band.

The acoustic recordings cut right to the heart. "Undo the Right" features steel guitar player Jimmy Day as Nelson's lone accompanist, and Day's unique chordal style adds an extra touch of despair. Hank Cochran provides harmony vocals to "What Do You Think of Her Now," giving it a Delmore Brothers feel. The band recordings include the first versions of such classics as "I Gotta Get Drunk" and "Crazy" – in the same demo version Patsy Cline first heard before she recorded the song.

Nelson later recorded most of these songs with fuller arrangements, and of



course several became part of the repertoire of such stars as Faron Young, Ray Price, k.d. lang and others. But these bare-boned versions make evident the beginnings of Nelson's unique style. *Demo Sessions* captures the legendary Willie Nelson when no one had any idea who he was. Listening to these tracks, it's obvious that his status of legend was preordained.

— Jeff Wall

THE DERAILERS

Genuine

LUCKY DOG

★★★

It's make-or-break time for The Derailers. With *Genuine*, they're on their second album for Sony's Lucky Dog label. Since



the previous album failed to sell, it's time to go for broke, right? Instead they've played it safe – and made a pleasant but not especially memorable record.

Which is a shame, because at their best this Austin quarter puts an edgy spin on the classic Telecaster twang of Buck Owens, mixing in stately Orbison touches and Beatles harmonies for good measure. Their previous five albums, especially 1997's *Reverb Deluxe* and 1999's *Full Western Dress* combined classic country and rock 'n' roll covers with originals by band members Tony Villanueva and Brian Hofeldt that often sounded rather classic themselves.

In contrast, *Genuine* feels like a collection of corporate compromises instead of the forceful artistic statement this hardworking band needs to make to distinguish itself from the pack. The problem here lies not with the players but with the material and production. There are too many meaningless love songs, too many off-the-rack hooks. As with 2001's *Here Come the Derailers*, the band's hard edges have been sanded off in a misguided bid for radio acceptance.

Still, three tracks are keepers – “Uncool,” a good-natured regular-guy rant against hipsters; “The Wheel,” an original acoustic gospel song; and “Whole Other World,” a gem of a ballad about the difficulty of being a small-town person in a big, impersonal city.

As for the rest, they leave this album sounding more contrived than the title implies.

— Paul Kingsbury

THE BAILES BROTHERS Oh So Many Years

BEAR FAMILY

★★★★★

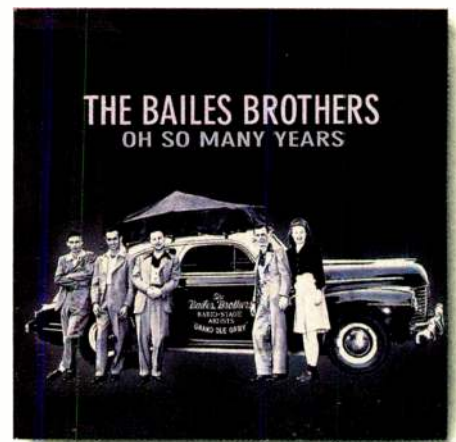
The great Bailes Brothers are hardly known today, and that's a shame – because they're

one of the truly legendary acts of the 1940s.

Stylistically, the group bridged the gap between the brother-duet teams of the '30s and the bluegrass and mountain stylists of the '40s and '50s. Historically, they're important on several levels. They popularized the standards “As Long as I Live” and “Searching for a Soldier's Grave” and wrote such classics as “Dust on the Bible,” “I Want to Be Loved (but Only by You)” and “Whiskey Is the Devil (in Liquid Form).”

They also helped launch such talents as Jimmy Dickens, Grandpa & Ramona Jones and Molly O'Day, and they gave such noted musicians as Grady Martin, Tillman Franks and Shot Jackson their starts, as documented by an illustrated booklet featuring a well-researched essay by WSM radio deejay Eddie Stubbs.

Most important, the music of the



Bailes Brothers remains among the most spine-tingling and entrancing of their era. It's long overdue, but finally all 28 Columbia sides are available on CD.

— Robert K. Oermann

MINTON SPARKS

This Dress

RURAL

★★★★★

Performance poet Minton Sparks deserves a spot on the jukebox right next to George Jones. But don't expect to tap your foot to her tracks. The Nashville artist's second album is all about closing your eyes, engaging your brain and connecting with the disappearing culture of the South through imagery of the spoken word.

This Dress is basically a CD of poetry written and read by Sparks, who is not a country music entertainer but a professor at Tennessee State University with a degree from Vanderbilt. But this heady woman has an uncanny ability to paint verbal portraits of the rootsy South. Her 12 poems pay homage to common people who drive old Impalas, smoke Viceroy's and watch laundry blowing on the line. Each is a snapshot of a colorful character at a defining moment in time.

The lives into which Sparks glimpses are often as blunt and harsh as the Southern people in Cormac McCarthy's novels. And unlike many who pose as roots writers through



overuse of Southern colloquialisms (like “maw-maw” and Moon Pies), her wordplay is clever and fresh. Just as important, Sparks' Southern twang sounds authentic, not contrived.

Behind each track, Nashville musicians score the mood, from Steve Conn's piano to Maura O'Connell's haunting wails. The timing and tone of the music showcase the words perfectly.

In all, this is a delightful and provocative journey of the mind that leaves you with a sense that even the most mundane has meaning.

— Miriam Pace Longino

Country Music rates all recordings as follows:

★★★★★
★★★★
★★★
★★
★

EXCELLENT A classic from start to finish.

VERY GOOD An important addition to your collection.

RESPECTABLE Recommended with minor reservations.

FAIR For loyal and forgiving fans.

POOR Seriously flawed.

Ratings are supervised by Country Music editors.

REVIEWS



VARIOUS ARTISTS The Songs of Hank Williams Jr.: A Bocephus Celebration

WARNER BROS./CURB

★★★★

During his long career, Hank Jr. has alternately been innovative, refreshingly irreverent, boorish and belligerent. Music fans tend to love him or loathe him; his brazen outspokenness has never left much middle ground.

Not surprisingly, this solid 16-cut tribute album has a fair sampling of Bocephus' chest-thumping, muscle-flexing celebrations

of booze, wild women and the occasional controlled substance. Tracy Lawrence delivers "Outlaw Women" with just the right menacing growl. There's also a soulful, rock-embellished take on "Whiskey Bent and Hell Bound" by Dan Baird of The Georgia Satellites, and a surprisingly anemic run at "All My Rowdy Friends Are Coming Over Tonight" by Trick Pony.

But other Hank Jr. compositions, revived here by everyone from Alan Jackson and George Jones to The Marshall Tucker Band and 38 Special, showcase a couple of important dimensions of Jr.'s music that have been obscured by the hard-living "man of steel" persona he so assiduously cultivated during his hitmaking heyday.

One of these is the vital musical link Williams represents between country and its first cousin, Southern rock. The other is his largely overlooked flair for love ballads.

A case in point is Jackson's superb turn on the tender "The Blues Man," and the passionate vulnerability that John Michael Montgomery and Dusty Drake bring to their respective outings on "Major Moves" and "Heaven Can't Be Found." These romantic gems, along with "Outlaw's Reward" – a raw-edged, introspective gospel original sung by

Bocephus himself – suggest that beneath the surly, glowering facade has always been the heart of a warm, sensitive guy.

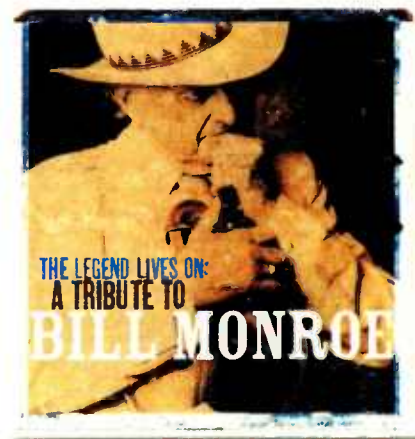
— Bob Allen

VARIOUS ARTISTS The Legend Lives On: A Tribute to Bill Monroe

AUDIUM

★★★★

For starters, a note about truth-in-titling: Nowhere on the front or back cover of *The Legend Lives On: A Tribute to Bill Monroe* does it say it's a live album, which it indeed is. Instead, it says, "All



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New Recordings Performed by Country and Bluegrass Legends.” That’s accurate enough, though “new” is a relative term: All of these live cover songs *are* previously unreleased, but they were recorded at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville back in April 1997, the year after the Father of Bluegrass died at age 84.

The music itself, though, shines. Featuring 28 songs on two CDs, the performances are vibrant and engaged throughout, and it’s clear that every performer wanted to do his best to live up to the exacting standards of the late Mr. Monroe.

It’s a stellar lineup, too. Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder kick it with a ripping “Uncle Pen,” Ralph Stanley steps into his role as patriarch with “Can’t You Hear Me Callin’” and “I Got a Letter,” and Tim O’Brien, Jerry & Tammy Sullivan and The Whites all make strong contributions, with Connie Smith singing with the latter on “Walkin’ in Jerusalem.”

The real burners, though, come from The Del McCoury Band, which plays, as

always, with blistering precision. “John Henry” revs the engine, “True Life Blues” wails in pain and “Rawhide,” with Marty Stuart, leaves them both in the dust.

Legend would have been compelling enough as a tribute to Monroe, but it becomes still more moving since three other participants, John Hartford, Jim McReynolds and Bill Carlisle, have died since its recording. Jim & Jesse pitch in with a vigorous “Rocky Road Blues,” Hartford adds poignancy with two quieter, contemplative numbers, “Little Cabin on the Hill” and the heart tugging “Cross Eyed Child,” and Carlisle contributes an uncannily appropriate “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.”

— Dan Deluca

LUCINDA WILLIAMS

World Without Tears

LOST HIGHWAY

★★★

Essence, Williams’ previous album, steered clear of the narratives that have long been her stock-in-trade and veered more toward

VARIOUS ARTISTS

O Mickey, Where Art Thou?

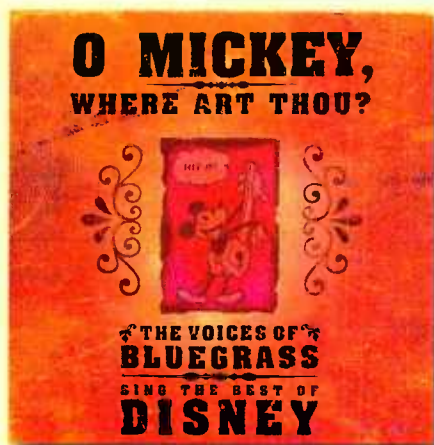
WALT DISNEY

★★★

Bluegrass versions of Disney movie standards? The very idea makes you cringe. Your fears are confirmed when “Will the Circle Be Unbroken” segues into Collin Raye singing “Circle of Life.” You moan when an instrumental version of “Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious” recalls “Dueling Banjos,” the most tired trifle in bluegrass history. You reach for your *Toy Story* soundtrack when Lyle Goodman and Amanda Martin present a tepid remake of “You’ve Got a Friend in Me.”

But hold on. Despite that Disneyfied cheese, there are several gourmet dishes on *O Mickey*. Elizabeth Cook’s thick-as-molasses voice is perfect for a languid “Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah.” Kevin Montgomery’s understated version of *Tarzan*’s “You’ll Be in My Heart” is sweet and free of gimmickry.

Of course, many of these tunes are so well-written they’re foolproof. Caroline Brown wraps her pure alto around the lilting ballad “Baby Mine” from 1941’s *Dumbo*, a melody that hasn’t aged a bit in 62 years. Sonya Isaacs’ lovely pipes offer a tender “When She Loved Me” that nearly tops Sarah McLachlan’s *Toy Story 2* original.



Alt-country insurgent Robbie Fulks tosses off a swinging “When I See an Elephant Fly”— still one of Disney’s wittiest lyrics ever. Finally, the album’s shining moment comes when Charlie Louvin uses his craggy voice to turn the poignant “I Will Go Sailing No More” into a rumination on aging.

So even though you can almost hear Disney’s marketing plan being read aloud, many of these performers inject some life into their assignments. To be sure, we’ll be hearing a lot of this album on the Walt Disney World sound system, but that’s not necessarily a bad thing – or would you rather hear “It’s a Small World” *again*?

— Bob Cannon

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collages of evocative imagery set to arrangements better suited to curtained drawing rooms than rowdy juke joints.

Her new album rocks more, but still reveals Williams to be finding her way by mood rather than by craft. That isn't to say she doesn't toss in a few brilliant phrases here and there; she just continues to find meaning less in what she's saying than in how she sings it – and how her band plays it.

The album alternates between declamatory blues-rock anthems (“Bleeding Fingers,” “Those Three Days”) and country-soul meditations heavy on tremolo guitar and sighing pedal steel (“Fruits of My Labor,” “Ventura”). Tracks in the latter category typically depict loss, those in the former anger and betrayal. A couple of numbers also find Williams veering close to the twang-hop territory of Toby Keith’s “I Wanna Talk About Me,” with a lyrical rap of either lurching cadences (“Sweet Side”) or dreamy atmospherics (“American Dream”).

Those excursions aren't as successful – or satisfying – as the languid ballads or groove-driven roots-rockers. They're less affected, though, than some of Williams' more conventional vocals, which, trading enunciation for emotional impact, smack a bit of a young Mick Jagger aping Muddy Waters, only without any trace of irony.

Edited down to 10 as opposed to 13 tracks, *World Without Tears* might stand as one of Williams' best records. But as it is, it feels a little forced and indulgent.

— Bill Friskies-Warren

ERNEST TUBB
The Texas Troubadour

PROPER
★★★★★

Can't afford the Bear Family box, but have a hankering for the music of one of the

FREDA AND THE FIREDOGS

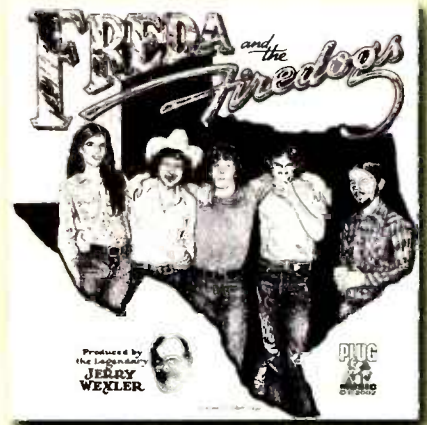
Freda and the Firedogs

PLUG
★★★★

Something important was happening in Austin in 1972. Willie Nelson had returned from a stalled country career in Nashville, and Doug Sahm had returned from a stalled rock career in San Francisco. They found themselves playing to the same crowd, an odd mix of hippies and rednecks that didn't mingle anywhere else at the time.

Those audiences inspired a new kind of country-rock, a “cosmic cowboy music” that linked Dylanesque lyrics to Tubb-like honky-tonk. Jerry Wexler, the Atlantic Records producer who made stars out of Ray Charles and Aretha Franklin, heard about the Austin scene and swooped down from New York to capitalize on it. *Doug Sahm and Band* and Nelson's *Phases and Stages* were among the albums Atlantic released.

But *Freda and the Firedogs* remained nothing but a rumor for 30 years, a bit of Texas-music lore. At long last, that lost album has emerged. Freda was Marcia Ball, the long, tall Texan who went on to win several W.C. Handy blues awards for her boogie-woogie piano and belt-it-out voice. With the Firedogs, however, she crooned Loretta Lynn's “Fist City” and Tammy



Wynette's “Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad” quite convincingly, even as David Cook's pedal steel guitar was countered by the rhythm section's boogie-rock. The band's other lead singer was the Michael Martin Murphey-like Bobby Earl Smith, who penned three tunes for the disc.

Freda and the Firedogs is not the work of a one-of-a-kind genius the way the Sahm and Nelson albums were. But it does capture the populist flavor of Austin in 1972 better than any other record. It was a scene where a quintet of unknowns could pack college hangouts and honky-tonk dancehalls with a mix of Taj Mahal and Merle Haggard songs, blues piano and steel guitar, sad laments and raucous rhythms.

It's a snapshot of a moment that changed Texas music forever.

— Geoffrey Himes



original honky-tonkers? Budget priced, this four-CD, 100-song set imported from England is an astonishingly good value.

The first two CDs encompass Tubb's biggest hits of the 1940s, including

“Walking the Floor Over You,” “Soldier's Last Letter,” “Drivin' Nails in My Coffin” and “Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello.” The sound is faithful to the 78 rpm of the originals, which is to say deliciously spare and dry.

The final two discs are devoted, respectively, to Tubb as a songwriter and as a cover artist of someone else's material. Both feature rarely heard gems that are sturdy vehicles for Tubb's homey, emotionally honest drawl.

— R. K. O.

HAYSEED DIXIE
Kiss My Grass: A Hillbilly Tribute to Kiss

DUALTONE
★★★

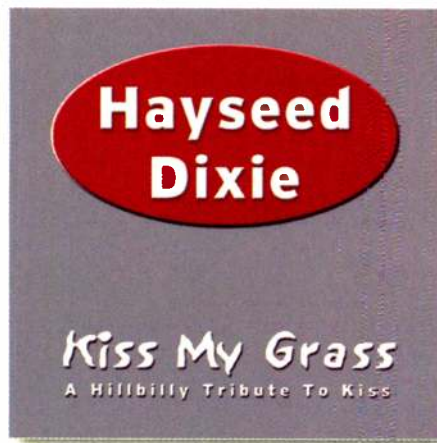
The key to being a one-trick pony is not to ride it too long. Unfortunately, with its

third collection of bluegrass remakes of rock songs, Hayseed Dixie is suffering from a bad case of musical saddle sores.

After albums of AC/DC covers and FM-rock-era love songs, the self-professed hillbilly string band makes a natural choice in taking on New York glam-rock legends Kiss. But what was once funny and novel has now become predictable – and therefore not nearly as entertaining.

Sure, there are some genuine instrumental – and to a lesser extent, vocal – chops involved in this band. And sure, hearing the roaring rock riffs of “Detroit Rock City,” “Cold Gin” and “Rock & Roll All Nite” faithfully transposed for bluegrass mandolin, banjo and bass fiddle will bring a smile. It’s well-executed even if it is entirely silly.

But bein’ silly is also the problem. Like any joke that gets told too often, the trio of anonymous musicians plying their craft behind the monikers Barley Scotch, Talcum Younger and Enus Younger aren’t as amusing as they were



the first time around. What once seemed clever has now grown contrived. Nonetheless, these guys seem determined to ride this gimmick as far as it’ll take ’em. About the only mystery left is which arena-rock dinosaur will be their next target. You heard it here first – smart money’s on Guns N’ Roses.

— Robert Baird

TOM RUSSELL

Modern Art

HIGHTONE

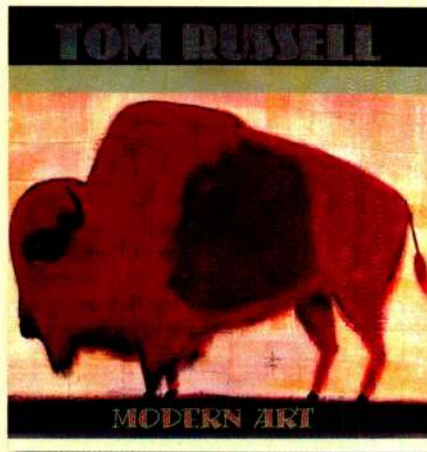
★★★

In 1999 Russell recorded a self-written folk opera, *The Man From God Knows Where*, an investigation of his family history that moved from Scandinavia to the New World and new century. *Modern Art* isn’t a sequel, but it deepens the scope of Russell’s personal and spiritual archaeology to expand on the question at the heart of his quest: What does it mean to be an American in the 21st century?

Russell gives two possible answers on “The Kid From Spavinaw,” a poignant ballad in which a dying Mickey Mantle looks back on the successes and failures of his life, and on “Muhammad Ali,” a jaunty calypso track that celebrates the famous boxing champ’s personal integrity.

Mantle, who coined the phrase “If I’d known I was going to live this long, I’d have taken better care of myself,” lived the American dream of the ’50s, keeping personal tragedies to himself. Ali spoke out against racial, political and moral hypocrisy and paid a price for his outspoken stand, but kept his soul and honor intact.

Russell comes at the American conundrum from a West Coast angle on



“Tijuana Bible,” a surrealistic rendering of the murder of Johnny Stompanato, Lana Turner’s mob boyfriend, while “Crucifix in a Death’s Hand/Carmelita” uses bare-bones acoustic picking to complement a poem by Charles Bukowski, and a snippet of a Warren Zevon song, to paint a grim portrait of L.A.’s working-class underbelly.

Some downbeat covers, including Emmylou Harris’ “Ballad of Sally Rose” and Michael Smith’s “The Dutchman,” round out a set stamped by Russell’s ability to look in the face of tragedy and celebrate the human ability to find diamonds shining through the refuse.

— J. Poet

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BRADY SEALS
Thompson Street

IMAGE
★★★

Once upon a time a former mop-topped keyboard player for Little Texas named Brady Seals sought his fortunes as a solo artist. He tried to show the world he was a modern country artist, but no one listened. Then the dark winds of reorganization blew through his former record label, and he was left without a creative home.

But instead of sinking under the weight of failure, Seals used the change to declare his artistic freedom. No longer bound to Nashville formulas, he cut his long locks, donned Brad Pitt sunglasses and revealed the rock 'n' roller he'd kept hidden inside.

As musical transitions go, it's hard to argue with *Thompson Street*. Seals' third solo release borrows heavily from '70s inspirations like Harry Nilsson, John Lennon, Peter Frampton and even The Rolling Stones, effectively leaving his country persona behind.

Seals produced and had a hand in writing all of the material, giving him a pretty big fingerprint on the project. But he attributes the rock 'n' roll direction to collaborators Rodney Crowell (a longtime mentor who produced Seals' first solo effort) and former Jellyfish frontman Andy Sturmer.

That change is evident from the get-go. The gutsy title track is full of R&B grooves and a husky sexuality; "Free Love" takes that a step further, the pounding lead guitar and CSNY-style harmonies recalling a 1970s love-in. "That's How It Goes" pays homage to Nilsson's classic "Remember," even down to the simple piano melody beneath Seals' vocals.

Some might dismiss all this as mere retro rehash, but Seals stays contemporary

DAVID OLNEY

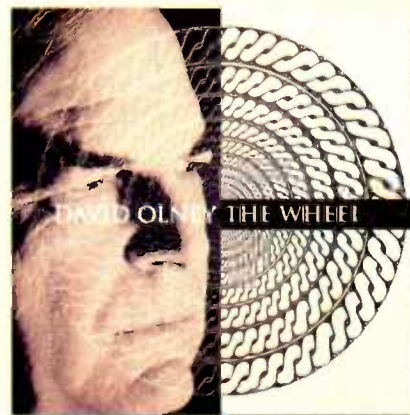
The Wheel
LOUDHOUSE

★★★★

Nashville singer/songwriter Olney long ago established himself as an artist whose albums garner the kind of quiet, beyond-the-headlines enthusiasm afforded the best authors of literature. His 11th studio record, *The Wheel*, inspires precisely that reaction, but also lends itself slightly to theatrical production.

The collection revolves around the thematic scheme of motion, without beginning and without end – a fitting novelistic approach. Olney interrupts the steady progression of his repertoire with four musical interludes, all less than 30 seconds in duration. These sirenlike choruses call to mind a band of troubadours walking onstage to portend a vital plot twist during a set change, and they arrive almost like clockwork, or as quarter intervals on Olney's timepiece of creation.

Like Richard Thompson, Olney works from a folk perspective, but also embraces R&B, gospel, chamber music, rock and pop. His primary concern is storytelling, the backbone of country music. In his first short segment, "Wheels," a 29-second prayer chant that asks a higher power to keep him safe on the highway, we



understand that the "wheel" of his metaphor is life, and that the journey is menacing, beautiful and uncertain.

But whether the songwriter finds his troubled underdogs at the roulette table, chained to a Sisyphus rock of their own design or spiraling themselves into a "God Shaped Hole," he makes it clear that love is their only true salvation.

Olney, who sings in a baritone rubbed raw by life's rougher edges, often writes in the hellish imagery of nightmares, only to veer to soothing poetry and the dignified prose of deeply felt emotion. His world – complex, frightening and ultimately self-correcting – is a microcosm of the soul.

— Alanna Nash

as he digs into his '70s bag of tricks. This makeover is a fairy tale in the making.

— Lisa Zbito

THE JAYHAWKS
Rainy Day Music

AMERICAN/LOST HIGHWAY
★★★★

Harmonies that shimmer and soar highlight the seventh album by these Minneapolis country-rock mainstays. Now a trio following a series of personnel changes and musical-direction shifts, the band forsakes the elaborate pop production of 2000's ambitious *Smile* for a more organic blend of vocals and largely acoustic instrumentation. The results bring them full circle, recalling their late-'80s ascendance as heirs to the legacy of Gram Parsons and The Flying Burrito Brothers (and a seminal influence on the alt-country resurgence).

With his reedy tenor and understated guitar chops, frontman Gary Louis

THE JAYHAWKS *SMILE*



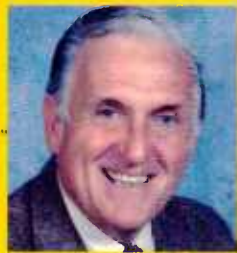
remains the heart of the 'Hawks. The bittersweet "Tailspin," the stripped-down intimacy of "All the Right Reasons" and the Byrdian guitar jangle of "Save It for a Rainy Day" find him applying his yearning vocals to some of his strongest material to date.

Among other standouts, the harmony-

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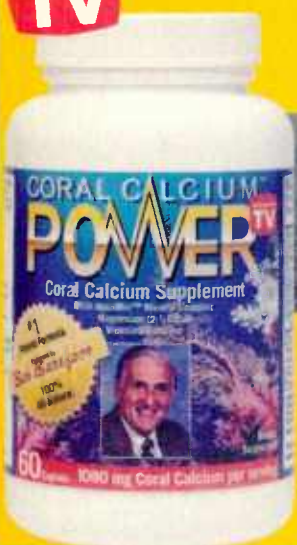


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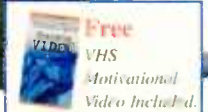
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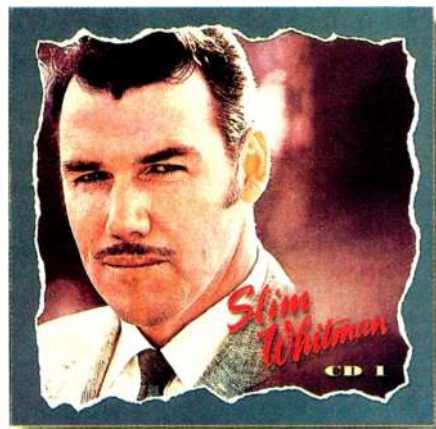
World Radio History

rich “Stumbling Through the Dark” and “Madman” evoke memories of early Eagles and Crosby, Stills & Nash, while the string-laden balladry of “Don’t Let the World Get in Your Way” sounds more like homage to the pre-disco Bee Gees (with a dash of ELO).

The band has plainly found an empathic studio ear in Ethan Johns, whose equally strong work with Ryan Adams and Tift Merritt has all but established him as house producer for Lost Highway. There’s also stellar support from Matthew Sweet, Chris Stills and the Wallflowers’ Jakob Dylan on background vocals, founding Eagle Bernie Leadon on banjo and former Long Ryder Stephen McCarthy on steel guitar. Yet such guest contributions never overshadow the band.

It’s a testament to the Jayhawks’ staying power that they can sound this inspired and renewed after all this time.

— Don McLeese



SLIM WHITMAN I’m a Lonely Wanderer

BEAR FAMILY

★★★★

Whitman’s instantly recognizable, one-of-a-kind vocal style has been the butt of too many jokes. (Who can forget the hilarious 1996 movie *Mars Attacks*, in which the U.S. government used the piercing sound of his falsetto to kill aliens?)

But Whitman’s fierce individuality is partly the reason his old records hold up so well. Bear Family concentrated on the stylist’s early hits in its *Rose Marie* box set several years ago. This massive, six-CD follow-up includes everything the star recorded between 1961 and 1966. Whitman had only a few hits during this era, notably “The Bells That Broke My Heart,” “More Than

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Hard Times in the Country COUNTY

★★★★

Subtitled *Down and Out in the Rural South*, this CD collects 18 performances recorded from 1927 to 1938 that comment on the textile mills, coal mines, tenant farms and other factors that transformed the South’s economy during the early 20th century.

These artists would never have described themselves as protesters or social commentators. They merely sang about the world around them. In so doing, they left us such powerful statements as Blind Alfred Reed’s “How Can a Poor Man Stand Such Times and Live,” Lowe Stoke’s “Prohibition Is a Failure,” the Lee Brothers Trio’s “Cotton Mill Blues”

“Yesterday” and “The Twelfth of Never,” but many others are worth hearing.

Better still is the inclusion of his entire *Yodeling* album of 1963. The 45-second sustained high note in “Chime Bells” is classic Slim Whitman, and it still sounds astonishing.

— R. K. O.

PAM TILLIS It’s All Relative

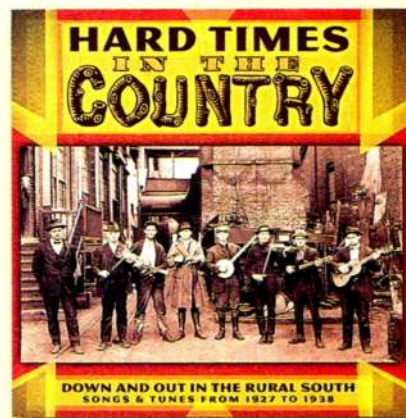
EPIC/LUCKY DOG

★★★★

Less than a legend yet more than a footnote, Mel Tillis may best be known for how he parlayed a mild speech impediment into sh-sh-sh-showbiz schtick.

But hard-core fans know he gave the music much more than that. Tillis wrote many songs that are synonymous with ’50s and ’60s country, and he enjoyed a solid recording career that stretched from the late ’50s through the late ’80s. In the ’70s – his recording heyday – he was a constant presence on the airwaves and on television programs.

As the veteran entertainer prepares to retire, daughter Pam Tillis toasts his legacy on *It’s All Relative*, a stylish, heartfelt collection that underscores just how good of a songwriter her father is – and how good of an interpreter she is. Ably assisted by guests Dolly Parton, Trisha Yearwood, Marty Stuart, Emmylou Harris and her father, Tillis combs through several decades of songs and makes them all sound as fresh and relevant as anything



and the Carolina Tar Heels’ “Got the Farm Land Blues.”

If you’re unfamiliar with the charms of old-time music, this is an excellent place to start.

— R. K. O.

on this week’s country countdown.

Producing the album herself with occasional assistance from Ray Benson of Asleep at the Wheel, Tillis imaginatively updates such classics as “Detroit City,” “Emotions” and “Mental Revenge.” A couple of her father’s second-rate songs are included, such as “Violet and a Rose”



and “Come On and Sing.” But overall, this fine, familial album showcases father and daughter at their very best.

— B. A.

CROSS CANADIAN RAGWEED

Cross Canadian Ragweed

UNIVERSAL SOUTH

★★★★

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band has built a substantial grass-roots following over the last eight years, burning up the miles in road-warrior fashion and releasing several independent records that have sold impressively.

With its major-label debut, the group proves that those years spent toiling on the sweaty club circuit weren't for naught. For the most part, this is tight, roadhouse rock that no doubt goes down well with a beer or three on a smoky dance floor.

But heard on CD in the sober light of a living room, the band's deficits are thrown into stark relief. The lead-off track, "Anywhere but Here," sets the tone for the entire disc – the band hits an enjoyably rocking groove, but it's a groove that nonetheless fails to sustain liftoff into something higher.

Perhaps it's no accident that the initials for Cross Canadian Ragweed – CCR – mirror those of Creedence Clearwater Revival. Both bands share



roots-rock turf heavily populated with dirty guitar hooks and snarly vocals. But the road between the two bands forks at a crucial juncture. What Ragweed lacks that Creedence had in spades is the singing-songwriting genius of John Fogerty.

Where Fogerty was an original, Ragweed main man Cody Canada too often is a derivative of obvious '70s influences. Occasionally he dips back a bit further – the goosed-up "Walls of Huntsville," for example, references Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues."

The band is at its most effective on bittersweet outings like "Broken," a mid-tempo mix of strummed guitars and plaintive observations. But overall, this album presents a solid bar band that hasn't yet quite climbed to a higher artistic plateau.

— Chrissie Dickinson

BOOKS

HEARTACHES BY THE NUMBER: COUNTRY MUSIC'S 500 GREATEST SINGLES

By David Cantwell and Bill Friskics-Warren

(VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY PRESS/COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION PRESS, \$27.95)

Let's get one thing straight: God did not appear to the authors with the 500 best country songs etched in a stone tablet. As Cantwell and Friskics-Warren readily concede, the selections spring in large measure from their personal tastes, developed in their youth during the late '60s and early '70s. That helps

explain why Sammi Smith's 1971 hit "Help Me Make It Through the Night" ranks No. 1 on their list.

The authors discourage the notion that their book is a countdown, promoting instead their lively, informed essays – which point out each song's sonic strengths and its connections with the larger country music landscape.

Fans will likely applaud their own favorites that make it and raise a ruckus about those that didn't.

Most will agree with choices such as George Jones' "He Stopped Loving Her Today," Hank Williams' "Lovesick Blues" and Dolly Parton's "Coat of Many Colors." But those with their own sharply delineated tastes will wonder why anything from George Morgan's "Candy Kisses" to Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Heart" didn't make the cut. They'll ask where's Sonny James or Travis Tritt, or is Rodney Crowell's "Elvira" really his best single?

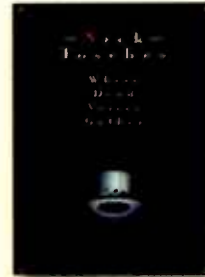
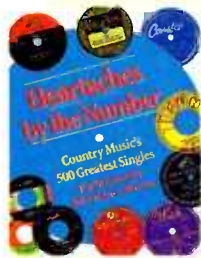
But that's why the book is so valuable. It likely will ignite arguments on Internet chat rooms and in lawn chairs at country music festivals. But when the chatter dies, readers certainly will go searching for the real sounds – and that's exactly what the authors intended.

WHERE DEAD VOICES GATHER

By Nick Tosches

(LITTLE, BROWN, \$14.95)

Obsession feeds writer Nick Tosches but often blurs his vision. His latest work, now available in paperback,



makes black-face minstrel Emmett Miller the George Washington of American popular music, an influential father figure to Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams, Jerry

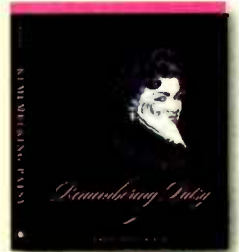
Lee Lewis and others. As always, Tosches proves alluring as a stylist, but the bestowal of such weight on Miller seems more a product of fixation than reality.

REMEMBERING PATSY

By Brian Mansfield

(RUTLEDGE HILL PRESS, \$14.99)

This tiny tribute to country queen Patsy Cline is like an ornate compact case, the kind Patsy herself probably carried. Lush photos and loving comments by Lee Ann Womack, Billy Walker, George Hamilton IV and other stars decorate its 93 pages. Included on CD, without explanation, is jazz diva Diana Krall singing Cline's "Crazy," leaving you wondering why the original version wouldn't do.



MERLE HAGGARD, POET OF THE COMMON MAN: THE LYRICS

Edited by Don Cusic

(HAL LEONARD, \$23.50)

If Merle Haggard rates among country music's most influential singer/songwriters, why do the Willie Nelsons, Johnny Cashes and Dolly Partons of the world seem to collect more plaudits? Cusic's book reprints



most of the Hag's catalog, reminding readers that this dynamic singer's writing equals or bests that of his Hall of Fame peers.

— Michael Streissguth

The Perfect Porcelain Doll...

Abbie

A 23-Inch Toddler by Linda Murray

Meet golden-haired "Abbie," warm as a summer's day and adorned in a dress inspired by the petals of a flower in full bloom. Her little face tugs at your heart, so lifelike you expect to hear her parted lips whisper little secrets. At almost two feet from head to toe, she's the perfect size to sit on your lap and love.

...To Sit In Your Lap and Love

"Abbie's" impossibly fetching face shows why the artist was awarded the 2002 Dolls Award of Excellence. This winsome toddler will fill a special place in your heart... commission her today!

Our No-Risk Guarantee

If you are not delighted with "Abbie," we will gladly buy her back for the purchase price any time within 100 days - no conditions, no exceptions.

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\$19⁹⁹



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"Abbie™" is approximately 23 inches from head to toe, 13 inches seated and comes with hat, plush bunny, numbered Certificate of Authenticity and collector's box.

Abbie

by Linda Murray
Limited to
100 Firing Days



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CJC06A00-L1053421

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Signature Telephone

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City State Zip

YES! Please enter my reservation for "Abbie," a limited edition, individually numbered 23-inch collector doll crafted for me in fine imported bisque porcelain.

I need send no money now. I will be billed for my doll in two installments of \$19.99* - the first due before shipment.

*Plus \$7.50 shipping and handling and any applicable sales tax (CA and TN only). Canadian price is C\$65.00 plus C\$25.00 shipping in Canadian funds. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

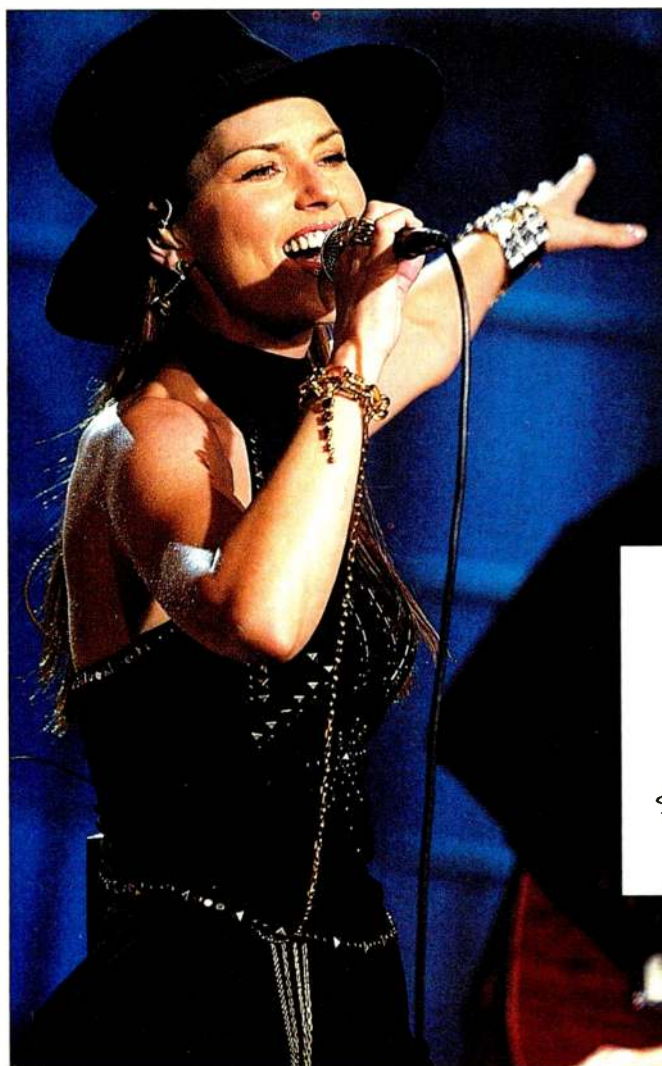
All orders subject to acceptance.

Lighting Up The Dark

Shania Twain's songs push a positive message into a tension-filled world

Shania Twain strives to create upbeat music, and there's no better example than her recent hit, "Up!" Co-written with husband and producer Mutt Lange, "Up!" offers positive reinforcement during a time fraught with tension. Twain's straightforward lyrics suggest using energy and optimism to transform a bad day into a good one.

A day can turn on us quickly: We wake up late, the kids are not ready for school, we hit every red light going to work, we have unwanted guests visiting this weekend. The potential annoyances can be endless. Twain reminds us with her drawn-from-life lyrics that we can't take everyday problems too seriously. We must remember to laugh and think positively because,



as she says, "things can only go up from here."

This philosophy is an underlying theme in many of the Canadian star's songs, but this time she makes her philosophy clear: To make positive things happen, you need to approach your life in a positive manner. And, of course, she promotes fun with a capital F and an exclamation point. That, as much as anything, is Twain's primary calling card.

On "Up!" she cites a list of problems she confronts – everything from bad skin to forgetting to fill the car with gas. We've all had those days. We know what it feels like to be down and want to rise above it.

Twain's dealt often with this theme of positive self-encouragement. The title track on her third album, *Come on Over*, recommends that we seek ways to relax to better cope with the load life makes us carry. Even if it is just to "make a wish" or "make a move," as she sings, the important thing is to make up your mind and take action.

Twain is conscious of uplifting her female listeners, and she loves to celebrate the uniqueness of women as individuals. "Up!" has a hint of feminist energy to it, though not as explicit as a previous hit, "Man! I Feel Like a Woman!" On that song, she also gives women an outlet for expressing anger in a world that may seem tilted against them.

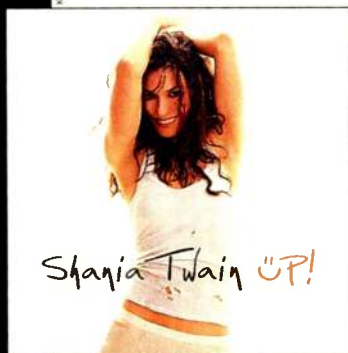
All this talk about women doesn't mean Twain's songs don't speak to men, too.

"Up!" crosses all boundaries, and we all can use some optimistic re-enforcement from time to time.

Not only that, Twain helps men in another way: She provides them with insight into a woman's mind. Take, for instance, "Don't Be Stupid," "That Don't Impress Me Much" and "Any Man of Mine." These tunes encapsulate a woman's point of view with entertaining clarity, and in a way, they're specifically directed tidbits aimed right at a man's mind and heart.

So as lighthearted as "Up!" may sound, its message is strong. It's about finding your inner strength in the face of struggle. When everything is going wrong – and we all know it happens – Twain is telling us not to worry *too* much, it won't last for long. She reminds us of the powerful energies that positive thought can hold.

— Hollie Woodruff



Twain supports women's uniqueness and gives men insight into the female mind.



Steve Holy

Unaframed to get his hands dirty, Steve Holy has poured as much blood, sweat and tears into his custom-built Dallas home this year as he has into his fast-rising career. After romancing America with his No. 1 hit "Good Morning Beautiful," is there anything he can't do?

COOKING TO IMPRESS

My mom's lasagna. The key is to use cottage cheese instead of ricotta – it gives it a sweeter taste.

COOL WHEELS ▼

The Hummer H2. And if you're going to get something that obnoxious, it might as well be yellow.



NICKNAME

My nieces and nephews call me "Uncle Famous."



PAULA SMITH/FEATURE FLASH

◀ CURRENT CRUSH

Hate to admit it but ... Britney Spears. She's a good little Southern girl.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

"Life is a pay-attention game." My dad said that.

NERVOUS TIC

I twirl napkins and make them into little tornadoes.

KIDS

I plan to have four – and I like [the names] Abigail and Jacqueline for girls, Nick for a boy.



CAROL MCELROY/COMBIS

PETS ▶

Dogs. Big dogs. Outside only.

BEST LINE FROM FLETCH

When a guy asks him, "Would you like to see more wedding pictures?" Fletch says, "No, no. I'm trying to quit."

SILLY QUESTION

Somebody asked me once if I'd ever consider having dancers in my live show.

GUILTY PLEASURE

Italian food

DREAM INTRODUCTION ▼

President George W. Bush. I'd like to let him know that I've got his back – I support his decisions.



CHRISTY BRUEHN/POOL

FAVORITE JOHN CONLEE SONG

"Friday Night Blues"

SONG HE WISHES HE'D GOTTEN TO FIRST

"What's It to You" by Clay Walker

PRE-SHOW RITUAL

I like to be alone for at least 30 minutes because I still get pretty nervous.

IRRITATIONS

Missed opportunities and drivers who block the passing lane.

ALWAYS IN THE REFRIGERATOR ▶

Beer.



LAST SHOPPING TRIP

Coming from a family with five sisters, two brothers, eight nephews and one niece, I'm almost always shopping for birthday presents.

FAVORITE CD

Dean Martin's *Greatest Hits*

BREAKFAST

Oatmeal

BEDTIME ▶

Usually not before 2 a.m. I'm definitely a night person.



TV

I'm a huge sports fan. I watch the ESPN channels.

"MAKING IT"

If you're always striving for something better, I don't know if you ever really do make it. But I think it's when the people you love think you have.

— Danny Solomon



RON DAVIS

Amazing new weight-loss discovery has taken Europe by storm

- BY MARGARET LORD

Imagine a weight-loss method where you can have several gastronomical feasts every day, eat chocolate and lose weight in the process. Even some of the best chefs of France now swear by it, and

and that's why Michel Montignac says that this weight-loss plan is better than other well known methods like low calorie diets, high-protein / no carbohydrate diets or the zone diet.



Can 14 million people be wrong?

THE NUMBERS ARE IMPRESSIVE: "Backed by more than 1,200 doctors and scientific studies" and "already tested with success by more than 14 million people". And the claims seem "too good to be true": "...people lose an average of 4 to 9 pounds the first week and up to 7 pounds per week after...", "...easily and naturally lose 25, 50, and even more than 75 pounds in record time while eating as much as you wish..." and even "...keep your new figure slim for good...". But are these claims true? Can this weight-loss plan keep its promise and work for you as well? And if it works that well, how and why?

We are at the *International Congress on the Phenomenon of Obesity*. Professor Apfelbaum, who has prescribed strict diets to his patients for the last 25 years, is courageous enough to take the podium and say out loud what hundreds of physicians seated before him have only thought to themselves about the ineffectiveness of diets: "In the long term, ALL those concerned had PUT BACK ON the pounds they had lost". Then, following the question "Have we all been mistaken in our treatment of obesity?" He answered promptly: "YES".

Recently, nutrition specialist Michel Montignac (pronounced Mon-teen-yak) discovered why traditional diets and calorie-counting are ineffective and even dangerous.

Everything we have been told about diets and weight loss up to now is wrong... wrong... AND WRONG! "The less you eat, the more weight you lose..." ALL WRONG! He explains why.

It's quite the contrary. Scientific

tests prove that the less you eat, the more difficult it is for you to lose your excess fat.

New studies have shown that more than half of all obese people eat even *less* than average people, and still get fatter and fatter. And the worst for most of them is to realize that the more diets or other attempts to lose weight they try, the fatter they get.

If you have already followed one or several diets, you have probably noticed that a diet reduced in calories goes through three stages: 1. The weight-loss stage; 2. the stabilizing stage; and... 3. the weight-gain stage!

Anyone who has tried to eat less in order to lose weight will have discovered that their target cannot be achieved permanently (an investigation recently published by the University of Pennsylvania showed a success rate for strict dieting of only 2% after five years. Out of 50 dieters...49 FAIL!)

And what is really sad is the fact that the body not only returns to its earlier overweight or obese condition sooner or later, but *most of the time* returns to a HEAVIER and a FATTER CONDITION.

"I know about the yo-yo effect, but why do I so often weigh more after an attempt to lose weight, and often more than ever before?"

1 When you diet, your body slowly becomes *accustomed* to a lower intake of calories and reacts by *slowing down* its metabolism. And that's not all....

2 The full fat cells do indeed shrink, but they also start to *divide*.

Driven by a *survival instinct*, your body activates these two processes when there is a shortage of food so as to be able to stock more reserves the day you'll feed it again with normal meals. It does this just in case you decide in the future to diet again and deprive your cells of energy.

Why does the body behave in this way? Today, we know that this behavior is a natural survival process that we carry in *our genes*, and that it has developed over the course of hundreds of thousands of years, since prehistoric times.

Prehistoric humans were nomads who could go days without finding any food at all. Gradually, over the course of generations, their bodies genetically developed a natural system to slow their metabolism and to divide fat cells when needed. This allowed them to improve their capacity to use the energies stored in fat cells, allowing them to survive even longer the next time they would have to face a food shortage.

The problem is that this system of metabolic slowdown during a diet is particularly effective. Your body can effectively slow your metabolism by more than 50% in a single diet and burn up to two times fewer calories after a diet than before you started it!

Actually, due to the 2 processes above, the more your body is deprived of food, the more fat it can

Dozens of celebrities have already tried it and SUCCEEDED



Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and her entire court followed this weight-loss plan.

Former French Prime Minister **EDUARD BALLADUR** lost 31 pounds.

Famous fashion designer **CHRISTIAN LACROIX** lost 42 pounds.

Have a meal with French actor **GERARD DEPARDIEU** ("Green Card") and you will understand what "food lover" means. He really loves to eat and eats huge amounts. But if you have seen him in his latest movie you certainly noticed that he lost 42 pounds.

PAUL BOCUSE has been the most famous chef in the world for more than 40 years. By seeing his belly you could tell that he loves to eat rich food... but he lost 44 pounds in no time.

And the list goes on: **QUEEN BEATRIX** of the Netherlands, her entire court and singer **KYLIE MINOGUE** are just a few examples among more than 14 million people who have easily lost weight thanks to the weight-loss plan detailed here.

store and the longer it can survive additional deprivations (like diets).

Modern humans have preserved these two systems of fat storage and metabolic slow-down developed during prehistoric times in their genes. And these systems automatically engage *each time* the body is deprived of food during a diet.

The result: with a slower metabolism, more calories can be stored and more fat cells are available in the body to store even more fat during your next diet. And it's really a pity that with each new attempt, with each new diet, your body develops a better resistance to diets at the same time.

That's why only a single weekend of letting yourself go is often enough to make you regain in 48 hours the few pounds lost over two difficult weeks with a traditional, calorie-reduced diet.

This phenomenon means that traditional diets even cause you to put on yet more and more unwanted extra weight over the years.

Indisputable evidence of that syndrome is that overweight problems and obesity are increasing, both here and in Europe, despite a decreasing

and the original solution discovered by Michel Montignac that *has already been tested with success by more than 14 million people:*

Michel Montignac discovered that if you are overweight, or even obese, it's probably because...

1 You have probably already tried several calorie-reduced diets. You may be trying too often to stop eating before you are full, or even skipping meals. You don't eat enough and, over the years, this has reduced your metabolism and increased the number of fat cells in your body.

Now, you **MUST** not only *stop dieting and stop counting calories*, but you **MUST** also eat more — yes **MORE** — and more often if you want to lose your extra pounds *once and for all*.

2 You have also inadvertently altered the proper working of your pancreas over the years, so that by now your pancreas secretes *too much* of that well-known hormone, *insulin*. Today, it's a *scientific fact* that this overproduction of *unused insulin* by your pancreas stimulates an enzyme called lipase—an enzyme which is responsible for the **EXCESSIVE FORMATION OF FAT RESERVES IN**

BODY TISSUES and for weight gain. Because of this, part of the calories you absorb and digest are not burned by your metabolism, but are instead transformed and stored into fat reserves.

What's great with the new *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* is that it is easy to follow because almost all foods are permitted and you can eat as much as you wish.

So, you can follow the complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* and eat as much as you want of meats, fish and sea foods. Eggs and dairy products. Bread, pastas and rice. Vegetables and fruits. You can even drink alcohol and eat desserts every day (like chocolate mousse, cheesecake or chocolate cake)... and lose weight.

"Can I expect to obtain fast results with the Montignac Weight-Loss Plan?"

Results may vary from one individual to another, but experience has shown that people having up to 25 pounds to lose can lose 4 to 9 pounds the first week and 2 to 7 pounds per week during the following weeks. If you have more than 25 pounds to lose, the results can be obtained even faster and you can lose 5 to 10 pounds the first week and 3 to 8 pounds per week after that, until you reach your goal.

What does the complete Montignac Weight-Loss Plan include?

1 A book that explains in detail easy-to-follow rules to restore the proper function of your pancreas and to restore your metabolic rate so as

Michel Montignac... or the incredible story of a revolution

His name is Michel Montignac (pronounced Mon-teen-yak) and he is no stranger to diets. An obese child at a time when obesity was rare, he suffered from the taunts of other children. A few years later, and over the course of twenty years, he was so concerned about his weight problems that he bought no fewer than 350 diet books and tried 30 different diets. Despite all his efforts, he was still overweight at 35.



Working for a giant pharmaceutical laboratory, he had access to its scientific library. He pored over study after study and finally understood why he couldn't lose weight. That's how he developed his weight-loss plan.

He then decided to try his discovery... and lost, to his great surprise, those 35 extra pounds while eating as much as he wanted. Without special effort, without depriving himself and in only 12 weeks, the scale kept dropping to settle at his own ideal weight of 167 pounds.

In the following years, he was even more surprised to observe that all of his friends to whom he'd explained his method lost weight as suddenly and easily as he did. Even those who believed that they were difficult or hopeless cases. Even the most skeptical of them. And the most surprising thing is that, like him, **THEY NEVER REGAINED THE LOST POUNDS AND THEY MAINTAINED THEIR IDEAL WEIGHT WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE!**

So he decided one day to share his discovery with the public, never imagining that in a short time he'd have more than 14 million fans!

Now, his revolutionary weight-loss plan has made him "Europe's Most Famous Weight Loss Expert" and the "Guru" of millions of overweight people that were skeptical before trying.

Today, at 58 years old — and 22 years after having tried his discovery on himself — he's still at his ideal weight of 167 pounds and he feels more in shape and younger than ever.

to lose weight and to keep it off. It's going to take you less than one hour to understand the basic Montignac rules to follow. An investment of just one hour to understand easy-to-follow advice that will help you to lose weight efficiently and stay slim for the rest of your life.

2 Caplets specially formulated by Michel Montignac. These caplets have to be taken as indicated by Michel Montignac during the weight-loss stage. They limit the lipogenesis (fat storage) every time you eat. (120 caplets of 500 mg each.)

3 Capsules specially formulated by Michel Montignac for their amazing thermogenic properties. You must take one of these capsules before each meal. They help your body to naturally increase and get back its original metabolic rate and to burn off fat. (180 capsules of 165 mg each.)

ATTENTION: The caplets and capsules formulated by Michel Montignac are not drugs. They do not contain ephedrine, or any other ingredient that is dangerous for your health. They have been developed by Michel Montignac in order to maximize the results obtained with his weight loss

plan. They are 100% safe and very effective when combined with the *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* for anyone who wants to lose weight naturally and for good. (We have indicated to you on the next page how you can take a risk-free trial, without any obligation to purchase, of the *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* with the Montignac caplets and capsules by ordering directly from the exclusive American distributor.)

This is what the Montignac Weight-Loss Plan is going to do for you.

Contrary to all the three-stage restrictive methods that you have tried (weight-loss stage, stabilizing stage...and weight-gain stage), the *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* consists of only two stages: The weight-loss stage and the stabilizing stage.

STAGE 1: The complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* is going to immediately restore the proper functioning of your pancreas, which you have unbalanced over the years. Remember that it has been scientifically proven that the unbalanced function-

(please turn over...)

This weight-loss discovery is now backed by more than 1,200 medical doctors and scientific studies

caloric consumption and the increasing availability of light, calorie-reduced foods and diet products. Now, it has been demonstrated that it is not only wrong to count calories and to diet, but calorie-restricted diets are dangerous for your health and encourage weight problems and obesity due to the yo-yo effect.

Actually, people follow more and more reduced-calorie diets. What's more, people are eating less and less fat—15% less fat than they did ten years ago—because the ingredients in our meals contain less fat than before. We are finding more "light" or "diet" foods available on the market.

SO, WHY IN ONLY 10 YEARS, HAS THE NUMBER OF OBESE PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY PARADOXICALLY RISEN BY 33%. ALTHOUGH DURING THE SAME PERIOD THE AVERAGE DAILY CALORIC INTAKE WAS REDUCED, FAT CONSUMPTION DROPPED AND THE NUMBER OF CONSUMERS OF "LIGHT" AND "DIET" PRODUCTS WAS MULTIPLIED BY FOUR?!

WHY, DESPITE ALL THAT, TODAY 61% OF ADULTS IN OUR COUNTRY ARE OVERWEIGHT ... WITH ALMOST HALF OF THEM OBESE?!

And the situation gets worse every year. Even the Health Department of our government has started to panic because it doesn't know what to do to stop this "epidemic" that costs billions of dollars each year in EXTRA health system costs for the numerous health problems caused by chronic weight problems and obesity.

Now, here's the surprising answer.

ing of your pancreas is, in large part, responsible for the storage of superfluous fats.

Day after day, you are going to observe an improvement in the functioning of your pancreas, you are going to have a significantly reduced production of extra useless insulin, and you are going to burn the calories from your meals instead of storing them as fat reserves. Just like millions of people before you, you are going to see those extra pounds disappear and your body is going to become slimmer each week. All this is going to happen naturally. Without any effort and while eating as much as you like. Without any medication or any frustration.

What's more, if you have cholesterol problems, you will notice just

how much your bad cholesterol level drops and just how this weight-loss plan has numerous positive effects on your health. From week to week, you are going to experience an astonishing increase in energy—both physically and mentally.

STAGE 2: But the most amazing feeling will be when, for the first time, you realize that the pounds you've lost are not coming back. Actually, the *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* is perhaps the only weight-loss plan today that can **GUARANTEE YOUR RESULTS FOR FIVE (5) YEARS** (see below).

Proven long-lasting results.

The Montignac Weight-Loss Plan is now backed by more than 1,200 medical doctors and scientific studies. For

example, a study conducted by doctors Copin and Robert demonstrated the stunning effectiveness of the *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan*. Not only did the women who participated in the study reach their ideal weight (32 of them even lost too much weight!), but this study also demonstrated that the lost pounds didn't return and that their new weight remained stable.

The *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* has been recommended all over the world to very famous people who wanted to lose their extra pounds AND IT WORKED FOR ALL OF THEM. Yes, dozens of royal family members, celebrities, politicians and other VIP's are among more than 14 million people who have already used the *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* to easily get rid of their extra pounds

for good. If, like all these people, you want to lose your extra pounds without renouncing the pleasures of the table, you must try this new and easy-to-follow way to lose weight. It works everytime you eat, it doesn't matter if you eat at home, at work, when you are invited or in a restaurant.

If you have 10, 25, 50 or even more than 75 pounds to lose, you can be assured of reaching your ideal weight with this new revolutionary weight-loss plan. You'll have a pancreas that works properly, a thermogenic metabolism, a new slim figure you can be proud of... and a new sense of happiness with life. All this is guaranteed, or you have nothing to pay (read below about the risk-free trial offer made by the exclusive American distributor).



AVAILABLE IN THE USA FOR THE FIRST TIME

Now you can receive and try the complete Montignac Weight-Loss Plan on a risk-free trial basis WITH ABSOLUTELY NO OBLIGATION TO PURCHASE

What better proof can Massachusetts Health Plaza (the exclusive distributor for the USA) give you that the *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* is going to work for you other than to tell you this: "Pay for your complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* ONLY if you are totally satisfied".

Yes, you read that right. You pay only if you are 100% satisfied by the results obtained.

The complete *Montignac Weight Loss Plan* comes with a unique five-year money back guarantee. So, you will have all the time that you wish to see for yourself:

- that you begin to lose weight within the first 48 hours and up to 10 pounds the first week

- that you lose a total of 25, 50 and even more than 75 pounds in record time
- that all the pounds lost never come back

If you don't obtain better results with the complete Montignac Weight-Loss Plan than with any other weight-loss plan, diet or product that you have already tried to date, if you don't observe that you easily keep your figure slim once and for all, or if for any other reason whatsoever you are not absolutely delighted, just return your Montignac Weight-Loss Plan within five years and Massachusetts Health Plaza will send you a prompt and FULL REFUND. No questions asked. No conditions.

This way you can be absolutely certain of paying ONLY if you lose your

extra pounds, and of not paying anything unless you are absolutely satisfied.

You can receive and try the complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* with no obligation whatsoever, simply out of curiosity, because you don't risk losing a single cent.

It is very easy to receive the complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* on a risk-free trial basis. Just call toll-free 1-866-895-2712 or fill out and return or fax the coupon below.

After having verified how easy it is to lose your excess weight, decide for yourself if you want to keep your weight-loss plan or not.

There is no obligation whatsoever. So, act now. This risk-free trial offer with no obligation to buy may never be

repeated. Don't miss this opportunity.

ONLY read this IF you are skeptical and no longer believe in anything:

If you have already tried many different ways to lose weight with no long-term success, you may be skeptical, or even reluctant. It's normal. How can you be sure that now you'll finally lose the weight you want for good?

The answer is obvious: Michel Montignac would not risk his reputation by giving a five-year money back guarantee on his weight-loss plan if he was not absolutely certain that you can now lose your extra weight once and for all (and do you think that 14 million people can be wrong...?)

Michel Montignac has requested that everyone who tries his weight-loss plan and who does not lose their excess weight for good to be 100% refunded.

That's why if you don't lose all your extra pounds, and if you don't easily keep your new figure slim, you have a five-year money-back guarantee which allows you to return your weight-loss plan and to be immediately and completely refunded upon receipt — without any discussion — even the shipping fees!

This is a formal agreement between the North American distributor of this new amazing weight-loss plan and Michel Montignac.

MEDICAL DOCTORS: If you are a medical doctor and if you wish to receive the complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan*, just send a sheet of your letterhead paper and your business card with the coupon below.

ATTENTION: The complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* is not yet available in stores. You can only receive it by mail by ordering directly from the exclusive US distributor. It will be rushed to you for a risk-free trial with no obligation.

Eat to lose weight with the complete Montignac Weight-Loss Plan

Phone orders
Call toll free (24/7)
1-866-895-2712

Have your credit card handy
Or fax it to 1-800-734-1001
(Credit card orders only)

This coupon has to be returned as soon as possible to:

Massachusetts Health Plaza,
One Kendall Square, Bldg 600, #750,
Cambridge, MA 02139-1562

YES, like more than 14 million Europeans before me, I want to easily lose weight with the complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan*. It is understood that, by following this unique weight loss plan:

1. I can EAT AS MUCH AND AS OFTEN AS I WISH. There is no strict diet to follow. No calories to count.
2. I have no strenuous exercise to do.
3. It's 100% natural. I have absolutely no medication to take.
4. I must lose 4 to 10 pounds the first week and 2 to 8 pounds per week for the following weeks until I have reached

my goal.

5. I have a lifetime guarantee to verify that all the pounds lost will not come back. I must observe that I can keep my new figure slim with no effort.

6. I must obtain better and more durable results with the complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* within five years than with any other way to lose weight that I have already tried to date.

If for one of the reasons above, or if for any other reason I'm not 100% delighted about the results I've obtained, I can just return the *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* within five years and immediately receive a full refund, including shipping fees. No questions asked. No conditions.

Under this formal written 100% money-back guarantee, please rush me in a discreet parcel the complete *Montignac Weight-Loss Plan* (1 book + 120 caplets + 180 capsules) for 3 easy installments of only \$29.75 (+ one single fee of \$5.75 for handling and first-class shipping).

- I pay with my credit card
- VISA MASTERCARD

Card #:

Exp. date : | | / | | / | |

Signature: _____

- I prefer to pay by check. I enclosed a check of \$35.50 (\$29.75 + \$5.75 s&h) + one 30-day postdated check of \$29.75 + one 60-day postdated check of \$29.75.
- I prefer to pay in one single payment of \$95 (3x \$29.75 + \$5.75 s&h) by check or money order.

I make my payment payable to:
MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH PLAZA

Do you think that your body is resistant or has developed a resistance over the years to weight loss? NO YES very resistant or resistant

(IN BLOCK LETTERS)

Miss Mrs. Ms Mr.

FIRST NAME: _____

LAST NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/TOWN: _____

STATE: _____

ZIP: _____ (MM1892)

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A Home On The Range



Dalton heard the call of the wild.

When Lacy J. Dalton moved to Nevada from Tennessee, she was enchanted by the thousands of wild horses roaming the Virginia Range. Some were so tame they came right up to people's houses, eager to take a carrot from a friendly hand.

Her favorite was a beautiful bay stallion with two white socks. "He was just the proudest, prettiest thing," she says. One morning, Dalton drove to the corner where the road from her Virginia City ranch merges with the two-lane road to Reno, and found the beloved stallion dead – struck by a car.

"He was about the fifth horse I had seen hit at that same spot that year," says the woman behind the '80s hits "16th Avenue" and "Takin' It Easy."

She decided to do something about it, forming the Let 'Em Run Foundation to spearhead a movement to put aside thousands of acres where the horses can run free and be protected.

And she rounded up a number of musical friends to record a benefit album, *Wild Horse Crossing*. Her second CD for the project, *The Girls From Santa Cruz*, has just been released and will help to fund a documentary, *Sanctuary*, on the wild horses.

— Alanna Nash

LITTLE BITTIES

Appalachian music will be celebrated at this year's Smithsonian Folklife Festival, June 25–29 and July 2–6 at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. ... Brad Paisley offers lots of fish stories and an "I'm Gonna Miss Her (The Fishin' Song)" DVD in his new book, *Jug Fishing for Greazy and Other Brad Paisley Fishing Stories*.

GRAM SLAM

Thirty years after his death, Gram Parsons still fascinates. A musician who fused his love of traditional country music to the energy and anger of rock 'n' roll, he's sometimes credited with inventing country rock.

Now the singer/songwriter is central to two upcoming movies and a new album by old friends. Johnny Knoxville (from the MTV-spun movie *Jackass*) has signed on to play Phil Kaufman, Parsons' friend and longtime road manager, in *Grand Theft Parsons*. The film tells the true story of Kaufman fulfilling a promise to his old pal, who died of a drug overdose in 1973, by stealing Parsons' corpse and cremating it at the Joshua Tree Monument in California.

Meanwhile, Rolling Stone Keith Richards, another friend and admirer, bought the movie rights to the Ben Fong-Torres' biography *Hickory Wind: The Life and Times of Gram Parsons*.

And the newly formed band Burrito Deluxe recently released *Georgia Peach*. The group, which includes former members of Parsons' band The Flying Burrito Brothers, used Parsons' nickname as the album title, and the record includes three songs written by Parsons.



Gone but not forgotten

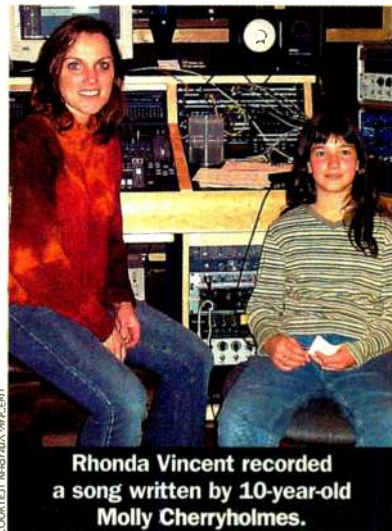
When a homework assignment ends up on a bluegrass album, does that count for extra credit? Maybe not, but for 10-year-old bluegrass fiddler Molly Cherryholmes,

it's certainly a thrill. One of her heroes, bluegrass performer Rhonda Vincent, recorded Cherryholmes' instrumental composition "Frankie Belle," for her new CD, *One Step Ahead*.

Molly is the youngest member of The Cherryholmes, a rural Arizona family band whose musicianship is raising murmurs of approval in the bluegrass community. The four children are home-schooled by their mom, Sandy Lee, who assigned the kids to write a song. Molly turned in "Frankie Belle," which soon became part of The Cherryholmes' repertoire.

Vincent first met the family at a bluegrass festival where both were performing. "Here was this young lady on fiddle – left-handed – and she's playing like there's no tomorrow," Vincent says. "I'd never seen anyone so talented since I saw a 12-year-old fiddler named Alison Krauss." After hearing "Frankie Belle," Vincent not only asked to record the song, she invited the young fiddler and composer to play on the cut.

Little Girl Blue



Rhonda Vincent recorded a song written by 10-year-old Molly Cherryholmes.

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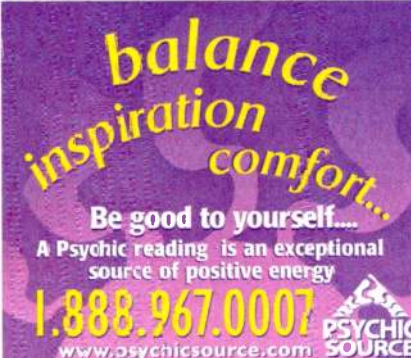
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