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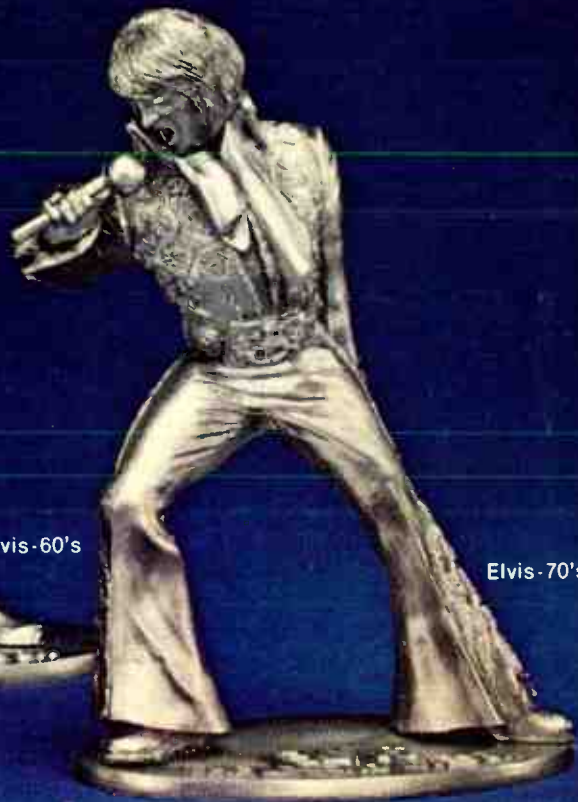
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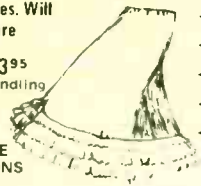
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Volume Six, Number Four  
January, 1978

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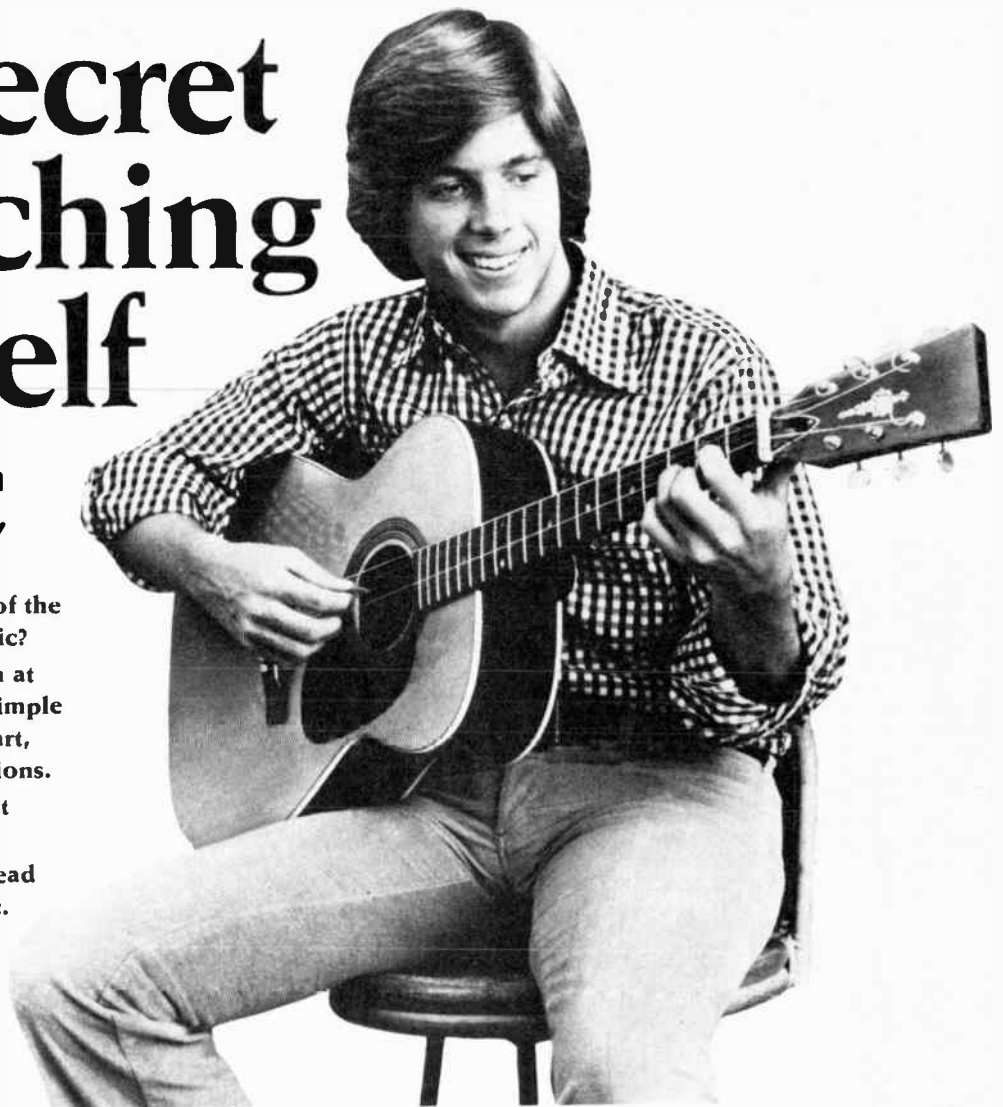
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small conventions. I am even considering making music my career."

And, Cecelia Feeney of Vineland, N.J. reports: "It's like a dream come true. Knowing how to play and read music has given me new self-confidence."

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After a week in Music City for the Dee Jay Convention, I'm more convinced than ever country music is going through its biggest upheaval yet. Nashville finds itself being pushed from every direction at once—the ever-increasing costs of producing a hit record coupled with the absolute necessity of producing better records; the increasing expansion and dilution of the country marketplace; the shift from singles to albums as the staple moneymaker of the industry.

Nashville is changing, and, with it, country music. I won't tell you that all those changes are for the better—they're not. Country music is a game being played for increasingly larger stakes, and those kinds of stakes attract all kinds of people. There are some genuinely wretched excesses being done in the name of the "pop crossover" these days, and there are more "sure-fire" formulas for getting on the pop charts than fleas on that proverbial blue-tick hound.

One thing does strike me as interesting, though. I notice artists who go to Los Angeles, enlist the aid of the West Coast's best hitmakers, do everything by the book and then stiff, while other artists remain in Nashville, use the same ol' Nashville pickers and the same ol' Nashville songwriters and promptly top the country *and* the pop charts.

The reason, I think, has nothing to do with location. There's enough talent in Nashville (or Los Angeles, for that matter) to make just about any kind of record you want, and make it well. The common denominator is, rather, songs that end up on both charts are, plainly and simply, very, very good. Singer, songwriter, producer, musicians, everybody contributes their best, and that comes through on record. That's what *Luckenbach Texas* has in common with *I Never Promised You A Rose Garden* or *Don't It Make Your Brown Eyes Blue* or *Harper Valley PTA*.

Quality, plain and simple.

There are people in Nashville who've already discovered this—people like Allen Reynolds, who produces Crystal Gayle and George Hamilton IV, or Jimmy Bowen, staff producer at Glaser Studios and producer of Mel Tillis. Tom Bresh and Tompall Galsler. They know what it takes, and they know it's not going to be either cheap or easy. But their standards are very, very high, and the quality of their records is very, very high, and I can't help but believe they are two of the most important people working in Nashville right now.

Because the most important thing for them is not making a pop record or even a country record, but simply making a good record.

And that's the good news about Nashville—that a few people are beginning to catch on about making good records. Hank Snow's 104th record (produced by Chuck Glaser) is a good record. So is Mel McDaniel's first album (produced by Johnny McRae). And that's a good sign.

Which brings us, in a roundabout way, to our Platinum Bullet Awards for New Talent. A bullet, as you may know, is the term the recording industry uses to designate a hot song, one that is shooting (forgive the pun) up the charts. We asked our writers to identify the hottest new artists of 1977, and they responded enthusiastically (or as enthusiastic as one can expect any critic to respond). For our winners we had crafted a very special bullet—the Ultimate Bullet, in fact.

And to the winners, congratulations for livening up our listening year.

Michael Bane

# Announcing Country Music Magazine's Annual

## **BULLET AWARDS**

### The Most Important New Talent Awards in the Country Music Industry

At COUNTRY MUSIC Magazine, we believe there is a very real need to recognize new talent and bring it to the attention of our readers. We've been doing that for years with our "Watch This Face" column and since October, 1976, with our "Rising Star Awards." Now we want to give special recognition to the best new country performers of 1977 through the establishment of our first annual Bullet Awards.

This year's inaugural BULLET AWARDS have been decided through secret ballots by over 50 of the top country music journalists. Beginning in 1978, COUNTRY MUSIC's 920,000 readers will join us in that balloting.

Our winners will receive the ultimate BULLET, a custom-designed ten pound, nine by three inch diameter Bullet, in gold color for all winners, except the New Entertainer of the Year, who will receive our Platinum Bullet.

This year's winners are:

Best New Entertainer Of The Year  
EDDIE RABBITT  
1977

Best Management Of A New Artist—Eddie Rabbitt  
STAN MORESS  
1977

Best Promotion Of A New Artist—Eddie Rabbitt  
ELEKTRA/ASYLUM RECORDS  
1977

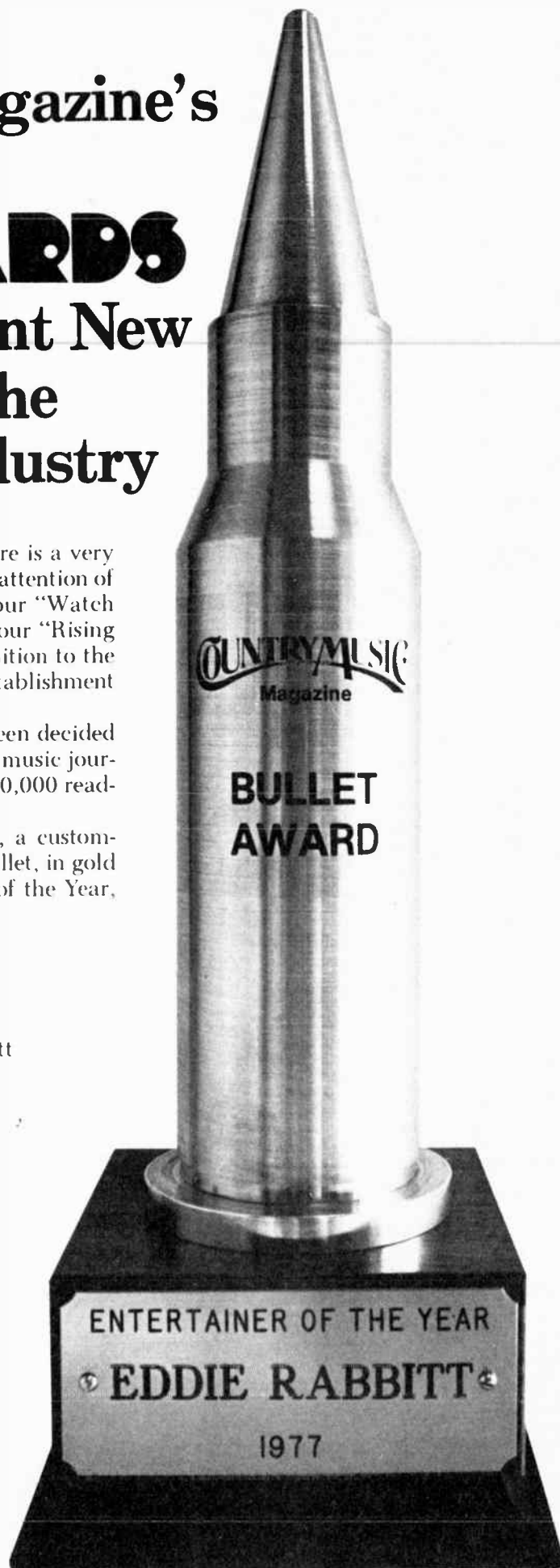
Best New Male Vocalist Of The Year  
ALVIN CROW  
1977

Best New Female Vocalist Of The Year  
CRYSTAL GAYLE  
1977

Best New Album Of The Year  
RIDIN' HIGH by ALVIN CROW  
1977

Best New Single Of The Year  
LUCILLE by KENNY ROGERS  
1977

Best New Sound By New Artist(s)  
JIM ED BROWN AND HELEN CORNELIUS  
1977





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**Jim Chapman**

Editor  
**Michael Bane**

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**Cheh Nam Low**

Assistant Editor  
**Rochelle Friedman**

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**Michael R. McConnell**

Director: Direct Marketing:  
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John H. Killion, President  
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## Advertising

Nashville Operations  
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Nashville, Tenn 37203  
Jim Chapman

West Coast (inc. Texas & Kansas)  
The Leonard Company  
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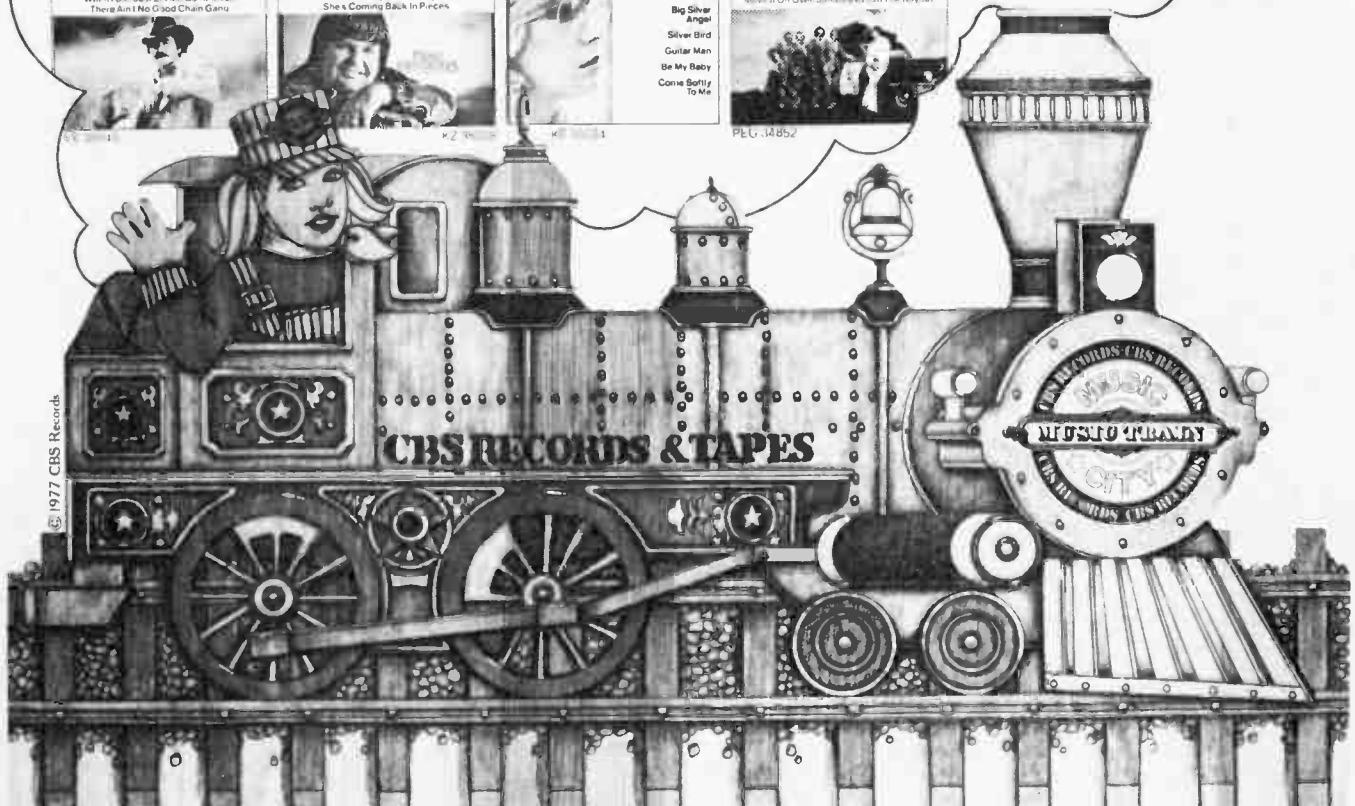


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# Letters

## Cheers To The Carter Clan

I am writing to say how much I enjoyed your article on June Carter Cash (Sept. 77). I'm a fan of Johnny and June Cash, the Carter Family, especially the beautiful and highly talented Anita Carter. One of the most exciting experiences in my life was to be part of the audience at the Johnny Cash Show at the New York State Fair recently. I would like to see more articles on Johnny Cash and the Carter family in Country Music.

Keep up the good work.

ANDY SHOOK  
MARTVILLE, N.Y.

## A Garden of Roses for Lynn Anderson and Mary Ellen Moore

I recently read the article on Lynn Anderson in your October issue. I enjoyed hearing her express her feelings about country music and TV as well. Thanks Mary Ellen. Lynn is a beautiful and talented lady and I am glad that she is finally being noticed as one of country music's stronger singers and we should be proud of her for supporting it so strongly. I think she deserves to have more written about her and I am looking forward to it in the future.

PAM SWELL  
WINSTON, ORE.

I want to thank Country Music Magazine and Mary Ellen Moore for that excellent story on Lynn Anderson. I don't think there is another person in Country Music who has done more to present a positive image of country than Lynn Anderson.

In addition to killing off those idiot stereotypes of country artists, women especially, she's always presented country music professionally, and with dignity without taking out of it the heart and warmth that is country.

NICK DeMEO  
YONKERS, N.Y.

Hooray. Finally a story on Lynn Anderson, and a good one, too, what a lady. I thought she was great on Starsky & Hutch. Now we know in addition to being one of the best talents in country music, she's also a darn good actress. I don't think there's anything she can't do if she wants to. Beauty, brains and talent. Country Music was blessed when she came along.

JAMES H. LONGO  
DUMONT, N.J.

I was delighted to pick up the October issue of your magazine and see that wonderful story on Lynn Anderson. She is really one of the greats of country music. It's people like Lynn, more than any other female artist, who are responsible for bringing country music into the 70's . . . I hope she does get her own TV show—she deserves it.

ARLENE JEFFERSON  
SCARSDALE, N.Y.

Country Music Magazine has always been my favorite country publication, now I know why. Mary Ellen Moore's story on Lynn Anderson was fabulous. At last we ladies have someone to look up to with beauty, talent, brains, 100% feminine and always a lady.

Thank you Lynn Anderson for shooting down the stereotypes. Country music, its performers and fans owe you a round of applause.

MRS. THOMAS SCHIAVONE  
NORWALK, CONN.

## Asleep Fans Wide Awake

Reading your July 1977 issue of Country Music prompted me to mail my subscription for 16 issues. I have always enjoyed reading your magazine which friends would lend me, but now I want to have my own copies. Thank you for the sensational article "Swing Out West—Asleep At The Wheel." Since I live near Paw Paw, WV, where The Wheel formed, I (along with many other fans) have avidly followed their emergence. I feel they have a great talent to share with the world; judging from The Wheel's popularity, many, many others feel that way today.

Hope to read more great articles on The Wheel in future issues.

BARBARA ROWZEE  
LEVELS, W.VA.

## #104 And Still Movin' On

Just finished the October issue of Country Music and wanted to tell you congratulations for the record review on Hank Snow's latest album—#104 Still Movin' On. Its selection as the album of the month was a wise choice. It is a truly fantastic record and each song is a masterpiece by "The Singing Ranger," and the instrumental backing superb. Hope Hank sticks with the Glaser Sound in future recordings.

ROBERT D. PAPPAS  
BATTLE CREEK, MICH.

## Gilley is First Class

Loved the review on Mickey Gilley's *First Class* album in the Oct. issue of Country Music. I couldn't agree with the reviewer more. But the article, *Texas Revisited*, failed to mention Mickey. True, he is not the Outlaw or Redneck type, but he is the best country singer in Texas or the United States, for that matter—maybe the world.

I do enjoy reading Country Music and look forward to seeing Mickey on the cover or at least in the centerfold star of the month page.

RITA MORA  
TEXAS REP. MICKEY GILLEY FAN CLUB  
209 W. ROCKY CREEK  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

## Tom T. is Tops

It's about time you got around to reviewing Tom T. Hall's album *About Love*. Being my favorite LP for the past four months, I've played it until its grooves have worn down. Your reviewer was pleasant and polite. But only three stars? Come on . . .

Also, Hall wrote seven of *About Love's* songs, not five like you said. His albums just keep getting better all the time and you'll find no one more versatile than Hall. He went from the stompin' bluegrass *Magnificent Music Machine* to a tender lovely LP complete with strings.

TRISHA KATSON  
ALEXANDRIA, VA.

## Country in Ohio

Thanks to your August issue, I was able to see my top country music star, Conway Twitty, due to the article, "Ohio, A Big State in Country Music." We were able to get tickets for his show at Ponderosa Park, Salem, Ohio.

What an entertainer. Conway is tops and such a personable person to visit with.

Your article really made this one of my most memorable vacations, as Conway also posed with me for pictures.

Country Music is the best country magazine.

MRS. GEO. DOWD  
GLENS FALLS, N.Y.

Your August issue is 100% correct on Ohio being "A Big State In Country Music." The Jamboree in the Hills is the latest to attest to this fact. Country music in Ohio in the winter is not a disappointment.

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**EDDIE ARNOLD - ANLI-1078 SPECIAL \$2.98**

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**TERESA BREWER - ANLI-1131 SPECIAL \$2.98**

(Put Another Nickel In) Music, Music, Music; Let Me Go, Lover; Jilted; Ricochet; Bo Weevil; A Sweet Old Fashioned Girl; Till I Waltz Again With You; What A Wonderful World; A Tear Fell; Pledging My Love; Empty Arms.

**THE BROWNS - ANLI-1083 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

The Three Balls (Les trois cloches); You Can't Grow Peaches On A Cherry Tree; The Old Lampighter; I Heard The Bluebirds Sing; Scarlet Ribbons (For Her Hair); Then I'll Stop Loving You; Send Me The Pillow You Dream On; Here Today And Gone Tomorrow; Looking Back To Sea; Shenandoah; I Take The Chance; They Call The Wind Maria.

**THE ORIGINAL CARTER FAMILY - ANLI-1107 \$2.98**

Keep On The Sunny Side; The Winding Stream; My Cinch Mountain Home; Mid The Green Fields Of Virginia; Bury Me Under The Weeping Willow; Over The Garden Wall; Motherless Children; The Evening Bells Are Ringing; The Homestead On The Farm; Cowboy Jack; Longing For Old Virginia; The Foggy Mountain Top; The Poor Orphan Child; This Is Like Heaven To Me; Picture On The Wall; Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone?

**JOHNNY CASH - C33087 SPECIAL \$2.98**

Precious Memories; Rock Of Ages; Old Rugged Cross; Softly And Tenderly; In The Sweet By And By; Just As I Am; Farther Along; When His Roll Is Called Up Yonder; Amazing Grace; At The Cross; Have Thine Own Way Lord.

**COUNTRY HITS OF THE '40s - SM 884 \$2.98**

Smoked Smoked Smoked (That Cigarette) Tex Wil Wakeley; Divorce Me C.O.D. (Merle Travis); There's A Flame; Slipping Around (Margaret Whiting); Jimmy A New Moon Over My Shoulder (Tex Ritter); Pistol Packin' Mama (Al Dexter); Mule Train (Tennessee Ernie Ford); You Are My Sunshine (Jimmie Davis); One Has My Name, The Other Has My Heart (Jimmy Wakely); I Love You Because (Leon Payne); Oklahoma Hills (Jack Guthrie).

**COUNTRY HITS OF THE '50s - SM 885 \$2.98**

Sixteen Tons (Tennessee Ernie Ford); Gone (Ferin Husky); A Satisfied Mind (Jean Shepard); The Wild Side Of Life (Hank Thompson); Loose Talk (Freddie Hart); Young Love (Sonny James); If You Ain't Lovin' (You Ain't Livin') (Faron Young); A Dea John Letter (Jean Shepard/Ferin Husky); You Better Not Do That (Tommy Collins); Don't Let The Stars Get In Your Eyes (Skeets McDonald).

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**ELVIS PRESLEY - ANLI-1319 \$2.98**

His Hand In Mine; I'm Gonna Walk Dem Golden Stairs; In My Father's House (Are Many Mansions); Milky White Way; I Believe In The Man In The Sky; Joshua Fit The Battle; He Knows Just What I Need; Swing Down Sweet Chariot; Mansion Over The Hilltop; If We Never Meet Again; Working On The Building; Known Only To Him.

**ELVIS PRESLEY - ANLI-0971 \$2.98**

Kentucky Rain; Fever; It's Impossible; Jailhouse Rock; Don't Be Cruel; I Got A Woman; All Shook Up; Loving You; In The Ghetto; Love Me Tender.



**LES PAUL AND MARY FORD - SM 11308 \$2.98**

The World Is Still Waiting For The Sunrise; How High The Moon; Whispering; The Best Things In Life Are Free; Lover; Bye Bye Blues; Deep In The Blues; The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise; I Really Don't Want To Know; Walkin' and Whistlin' Blues; How Deep Is The Ocean (How High Is The Sky); I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles; Vaya Con Dios.

**LEFTY FRIZZELL - CS-9288 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

I Love You A Thousand Ways; Saginaw, Michigan; Mom And Dad's Waltz; Release Me; She's Gone, Gone, Gone; Always Late; I Want To Be With You Always; The Long Black Veil; Shine, Shine, Show-er; A Little Unfair; If You've Got The Money, I've Got The Time.

**RAY PRICE'S GREATEST HITS - VOL. 2 - CS-9470**

Another Bridge To Burn; Let Me Talk To You; Burning Memories; Healing Hands Of Time; Unloved, Unwanted; This Cold War With You; A Way To Survive; Pride; Night Life; A Thing Called Sadness; Make The World Go Away.

**JOHNNY HORTON'S HITS - CS-8396 SPECIAL \$2.98**

The Battle Of New Orleans; Sink The Bismark; When It's Springtime In Alaska; Whispering Pines; North To Alaska; The Mansion You Stole; I'm Ready If You're Willing; All For The Love Of A Girl; Coon Chie (The Brave Horse); Johnny Reb; Jim Bridger; Johnny Freedom.

**STONEWALL JACKSON - CS 9177 SPECIAL \$2.98**

Don't Be Angry; Life To Go; Waterloo; Smoke Along The Tracks; Second Choice; Why I'm Walkin'; A Wound Time Can't Erase; Leona; Old Showboat; I Washed My Hands In Muddy Water; Lost In The Shuffle.

**SPIKE JONES - ANLI-1035 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

Cocktails For Two; William Tell Overture; Choo, My Old Flame; The Glow Worm; None But The Lonely Heart; Laura; The Man On The Flying Trapeze; You Always Hurt The One You Love; Der Fuehrer's Face; Dance Of The Hous; Hawaiian Fun Chant (Ta-Hu-Wa-Hu-Wai).

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**MAC WISEMAN - ANLI-1208 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

Eight More Miles To Louisville; Keep On The Sunny Side; It Rains Just The Same In Missouri; Mama, Put My Little Shoes Away; City Of New Orleans; Will The Circle Be Unbroken; Sunny Side Of The Mountain; A Tragic Romance; Catfish John; Let's Till Go Down To The River.

**RAY PRICE'S GREATEST HITS - CS-8866 \$2.98**

Crazy Arms; You Done Me Wrong; City Lights; Invitation To The Blues; I've Got A New Heartache; Who'll Be The First; Heartaches By The Number; The Some Old Me; Release Me; One More Time; My Shoes Keep Walking Back To You; I'll Be There.

**CHARLEY PRIDE - ANLI-0996 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

Intro By Bo Powell; The Last Thing On My Mind; Just Between You And Me; I Know One; Dialogue; Lovesick Blues; The Image Of Me; Kaw-Liga; Shutters And Boards; Six Days On The Road; Streets Of Baltimore; Got Leavin' On Her Mind; Crystal Chandeliers; Cotton Fields.

**TEX RITTER - SM 1623 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

I Dreamed Of A Hillbilly Heaven; Green Grow The Lilacs; Love Me Now; High Noon; The Deck Of Cards; Jealous Heart; Have I Stayed Away Too Long; Ol' Shorty; We Live In Two Different Worlds; There's A New Moon Over My Shoulder; Jingle Jangle Jingle; The Pledge Of Allegiance.

**MARTY ROBBINS' HITS - CS-8639 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

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**MARTY ROBBINS HITS - CS-8435 SPECIAL \$2.98**

El Paso; Don't Worry; Ballad Of The Alamo; Like All The Other Times; Is There Any Chance; Ride, Cowboy, Ride; A Time And A Place For Everything; Streets Of Laredo; Saddle Tramp; I Told My Heart; Red River Valley; Big Iron.

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**ROY ROGERS AND DALE EVANS - SM-1745 \$2.98**

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**SONS OF THE PIONEERS - ANLI-1092 - \$2.98**

Cool Water; Wind; Cowboy's Dream; The Last Round-Up; Ridin' Home; Twilight On The Trail; Red River Valley; Wagon Wheels; Riders In The Sky; Blue Prairie; Way Out There; Empty Saddles; Teardrops In My Heart; Blue Shadows On The Trail; Ridin' Down The Canyon; Timber Trail; Tumbling Tumblers; Whoopi-Ti-Yi-Yo.

**CARL SMITH - CS 8737 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

Hey Joe; She Goes; Old Lonesome Times; A-You Teasing Me; I Feel Like Crying; Doorstep To Heaven; Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way; The Little Girl In My Hometown; If You Saw Her Through My Eyes; You're Free To Go; Gettin' Even; I Overlooked An Orchid.

**KATE SMITH - ANLI-1135 SPECIAL \$2.98**

When The Moon Comes Over The Mountain; That's Life; Born Free; The Impossible Dream (The Quest); Climb Ev'ry Mountain; I Left My Heart In San Francisco; You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You; Medley; Somebody Else Is Taking My Place; That Old Feeling; There Goes That Song Again; Theme From "The Sand Pebbles" (And We Were Lovers); How Great Thou Art; God Bless America.

**KAY STAR - SM 11323 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

Bonaparte's Retreat; Crazy; Side By Side; Oh, Lonesome Me; She Man Upstairs; Wheel Of Fortune; Never Dreamed I Could Love Someone New; Make The World Go Away; Angry; Just For A Thrill.

**HANK THOMPSON - SM 1878 SPECIAL \$2.98**

Humpty Dumpty Heart; Squaw Along The Yukon; Wild Side Of Life; Six Pack To Go; Oklahoma Hills; Waiting In The Lobby Of Your Heart; Wake Up Irene; Hangover Tavern; Rub-A-Dub-Dub; Whea Sailor; Blackboard Of My Heart; New Green Light.

**MERLE TRAVIS - SM 2662 - SPECIAL \$2.98**

Sweet Temptation; Sixteen Tons; Follow Thru; John Henry; Three Times Seven; Fat Girl; I'm A Natural Born Gambler; Man; Dark As A Dungeon; I'm Sick And Tired Of You Little Darlin'; Nine Pound Hammer; Steel Guitar Rag; I Am A Pilgrim.

**FIDDLIN' CLARENCE "TATER" TATE - GREAT OLD STYLE COUNTRY WALTZER - NO VOCAL RRWB-203 - ALBUM SPECIAL PRICE \$2.98. SHOT JACKSON-DO BRO GUITAR. PAT STARR-PIANO. Old Spinning Wheel; Melody Of Love; Silver Haired Daddy; Farewell Thee Beautiful Brown Eyes; Blue Skirt Waltz; Mexicali Rose; Now Is The our; Let The Rest Of The World Go By; Roll On; Isle Of Golden Dreams; Silver Threads Among The Gold; When Irish Eyes Are Smiling; Good Old Summertime; Happy Birthday Song; Georgiana Waltz; Take Me Out To The Ball Game; My Wild Irish Rose; Carolina Waltz; Rainbow At Midnight.**

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## They Think Kenny's The Best

A very beautiful story on one of my favorite persons, the fantastic Kenny Rogers.

Thank you for a beautiful magazine. Indeed, the very best. Always look forward to my copies . . .

BETTY JEAN THOMPSON  
CLARENDON, ARK.

Thank you for the article on Kenny Rogers. He's the greatest. I hope you will have more articles about him. He's the number one country singer and you're the number one country music magazine.

B.S.  
LOUDON, TENN.

## He Likes Us

First, to congratulate you on the outstanding magazine you have on your hands, and on my shelves. You've done well with it since its inception, and probably will until the earth ends or there isn't any country music anymore. My compliments to you . . .

ANDREW S. WINSHIP  
WALLA WALLA, WASH.

## So Do They

Here's a great big Texas bouquet to you for the simply wonderful wedding picture of Hank Williams, Jr. and beautiful bride Becky. This made your Oct. 77 issue extra special. Hank Jr. has always been so special to me. I've already clipped the picture and have it framed. I really appreciate it. Thanks.

AUTIE HILL  
KOUNTZIE, TEXAS

There's not a magazine on the market that can compare to Country Music. Since I rarely see a letter in your column from Wisconsin, I just wanted to say congratulations on a job well done. Keep up the fantastic work.

CHUCK MARVIN  
BERLIN, WISC.

I have just renewed my subscription to Country Music Magazine. I am a disc jockey and I cannot tell you how much help your magazine is for adding color and information to my program. I specially enjoyed the November issue story on Loretta Lynn . . .

DON SABASTIAN  
HUNTINGTON, W. VA.

I'm a new country music fan, as I had to loosen up and grow into liking country music. I find it to be a sincere, honest, straight-forward type of music, and it doesn't blast my head off as does rock music. I like it because country music is quieter and more like just plain folks and their everyday feelings. I like your magazine because it lets me glimpse at the lives

of the people who sing these down to earth songs.

LINDSAY BROWN  
CHARLOTTE, N.C.

Thank you very much for the centerfold of Barbara Mandrell in the August issue of Country Music. Just great!

Barbara is really a terrific person. She really gives a lot of herself when she performs. You really get a feeling of warmth when you see her in person. She always has time for her fans by signing autographs or taking a picture with them, no matter what. I saw her in Brooklyn, Conn. August 28. It was a hot humid day and Barbara sang for over an hour in the direct sun, then signed autographs for quite a few fans. I stayed to see the night show and it was just as great as the first. Her band, The Do-Rites, did a great job also.

I want to tell you how much I enjoy your Country Music Magazine. I have been reading it for three years now. I have also sold my friends on it.

JUDY VLCEK  
NIANTIC, CONN.

## Coal Miner's Daughter Still No. 1

Congratulations on your pick for the cover of the November issue of Country Music—Loretta Lynn. Certainly enjoyed the full page color inside photo and the article by Joan Dew.

There is no greater performer or individual than Loretta Lynn and you can easily see this whenever you attend one of her shows. There is always a mutual love between her and her fans.

Thanks again. Look forward to receiving every issue of Country Music.

CAROLYN WERNER  
EVANSVILLE, ILL.

I have received your magazine for some time now, and I want to thank you for the story on Loretta Lynn in your November issue. I was wondering when you were going to print one on Loretta. There isn't anyone in my book who could top Loretta.

She and the Coal Miners are just wonderful, so keep writing about her. She is No. 1 Queen of Country Music.

MRS. CLARA COLON  
LITITZ, PA.

I want to thank you for putting Loretta Lynn on the cover of your November issue. I enjoyed the story and hope you will have another soon.

TINA IVERS  
ST. FRANCISVILLE, ILL.

Due to our great volume of mail, we regret we can't answer all letters individually. We welcome your opinions, and will publish the most representative letters in this column. Let us hear from you.—Ed.



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# Country Scene

## Ramblin'

### Ronnie Milsap, Crystal Gayle Top CMA Awards For '77

After a couple of wild years of out-law-mania, things settled back to normal last October, with the Country Music Association annual awards going to a predictable, if talented, grouping. Ronnie Milsap was the big winner, with the top award for Entertainer of the Year and two awards for Male Vocalist and Best Album (*Ronnie Milsap Live*).

Noticeably lacking in the nationally televised award presentations were awards for Willie and Waylon, who had earlier expressed their disgust with the awards.

The evening's surprises came with the selection of Jim Ed Brown and

Helen Cornelius as Duo of the Year over such heavyweights as Conway and Loretta, and with the selection of the Original Texas Playboys as Instrumental Group of the Year. Newcomer, Crystal Gayle overcame a long list of established greats (including sister Loretta Lynn), to win Female Vocalist of the Year.

A full list of CMA winners include:

Entertainer of the Year – Ronnie Milsap

Song of the Year – *Lucille*

Album of the Year – *Ronnie Milsap Live*

Female Vocalist of the Year – Crystal Gayle

Male Vocalist of the Year – Ronnie Milsap

Best Vocal Group of the Year – The Statler Brothers

Best Duo of the Year – Jim Ed Brown and Helen Cornelius

Best Instrumental Group of the Year – The Original Texas Playboys

Instrumentalist of the Year - Roy Clark

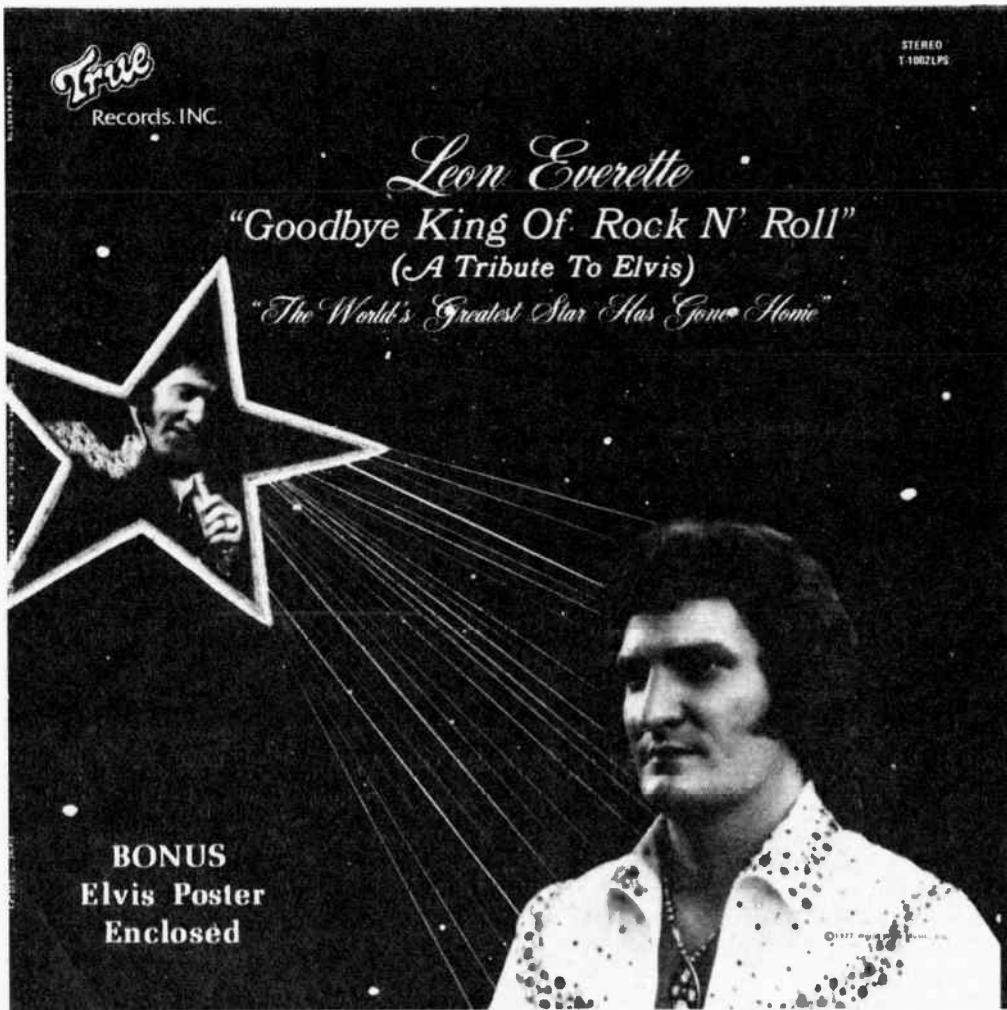
The CMA also selects a new member for the Country Music Hall of Fame each year. This year's winner was Merle Travis, one of the world's greatest guitar players and Country Music's own choice for the Hall of Fame. To Merle, and to all the winners and nominees, we offer our congratulations.



Crystal Gayle



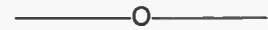
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(Has Gone Home)
- Just to Know She'd Let Me Leave  
Her (Is Enough to Make Me Stay)
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# Country Scene

## Ronnie Milsap, Crystal Gayle Top CMA Awards For '77



Dolly Parton and Minnie Pearl (left); Jim Ed Brown and Helen Cornelius, Best Duo (above); Mr. & Mrs. Ronnie Milsap (below).



Chet Atkins pockets his glasses (below, left) Dolly Parton performing (below, right).



Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty (above, left) were nominated for Best Duo and performed, while Kenny Rogers (above, right) sang his hit "Lucille."

# Country Scene

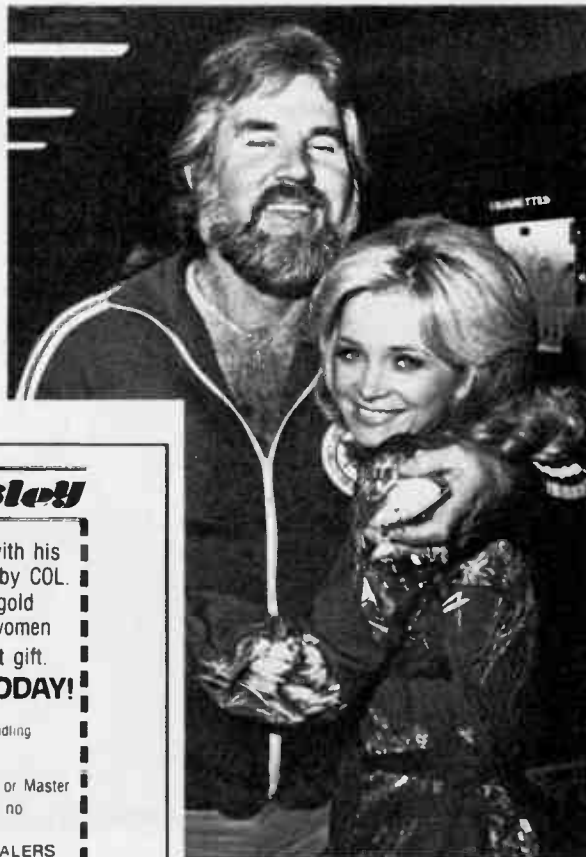
## Ronnie Milsap, Crystal Gayle Top CMA Awards For '77



Ronnie Milsap backstage after the awards, with Chet Atkins, Joe Galante (far left) and Tom Collins (far right), producer.



Jerry Clower and Minnie Pearl backstage.



Kenny Rogers and Barbara Mandrell.



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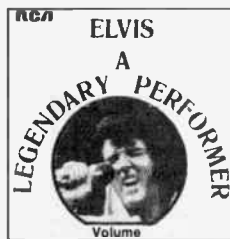
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LSP-2075(e)



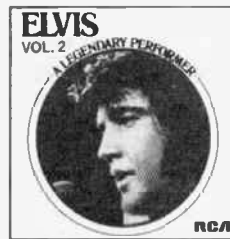
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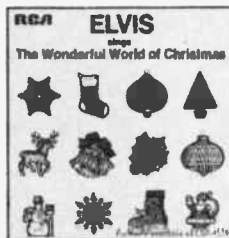
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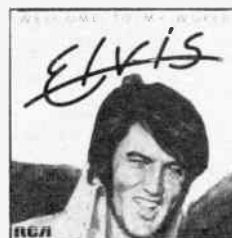
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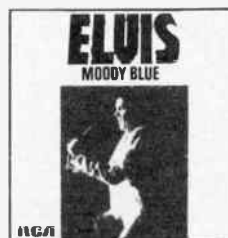
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ANL1-1936



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Elvis Presley LSP-1254(e)  
 Elvis LSP-1382(e)  
 Loving You LSP-1616(e)  
 King Creole LSP-1884(e)  
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 A Date with Elvis LSP-2011(e)  
 Elvis Is Back! LSP-2231  
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 Something for Everybody LSP-2370  
 Blue Hawaii LSP-2426  
 Pot Luck LSP-2523  
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"Fun in Acapulco" LSP-2756  
 Elvis' Golden Records, Vol. 3 LSP-2765  
 "Kissin' Cousins" LSP-2894  
 Roustabout LSP-2999  
 Girl Happy LSP-3338  
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 How Great Thou Art LSP-3758  
 Elvis' Gold Records, Vol. 4 LSP-3921  
 Speedway LSP-3989

Elvis—TV Special LPM-4088  
 From Elvis in Memphis LSP-4155  
 On Stage (February, 1970) LSP-4362  
 Elvis in Person at the International Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev. LSP-4428  
 Elvis Back in Memphis LSP-4429  
 Elvis—That's the Way It Is LSP-4445  
 Elvis Country LSP-4460

Love Letters from Elvis LSP-4530  
 Elvis Now LSP-4671  
 Elvis As Recorded Live at Madison Square Garden LSP-4776  
 Having Fun with Elvis on Stage CPM1-0818  
 Promised Land APL1-0873  
 Today APL1-1039  
 His Hand in Mine ANL1-1319  
 Harum Scarum APL1-2558  
 Spinout APL1-2560

Double Trouble APL1-2564  
 Clambake APL1-2565  
 It Happened at the World's Fair APL1-2568  
 From Memphis to Vegas/From Vegas to Memphis LSP-6020  
 Elvis' Worldwide 50 Gold Award Hits, Vol. 1 LPM-6401  
 Elvis—The Other Sides—Worldwide Gold Award Hits, Vol. 2 LPM-6402



# Country Scene

## Rabbitt Gets Behind In His Act

Touring the Midwest last summer, Eddie Rabbitt may have scored a spectacular first for a country artist. He was signing autographs after a show when a young lady said, "Eddie, would you sign my cheeks." Eddie said he would, whereupon the young

lady turned around and presented her bare posterior. Eddie, a professional through and through, wasn't fazed a bit. He signed, "Eddie" on one half, and "Rabbitt" on the other.

Points to ponder: Will the above mentioned young lady ever again wash the above mentioned parts of her posterior? How might the young lady preserve Eddie's signature? After all, one cannot preserve one's posterior for posterity. If she were arrested for indecent exposure while displaying the autograph, would Eddie be named an accessory to the crime? If so, would his accessoryship be before the fact, after the fact or behind the fact?

ARTHUR J. MAHER



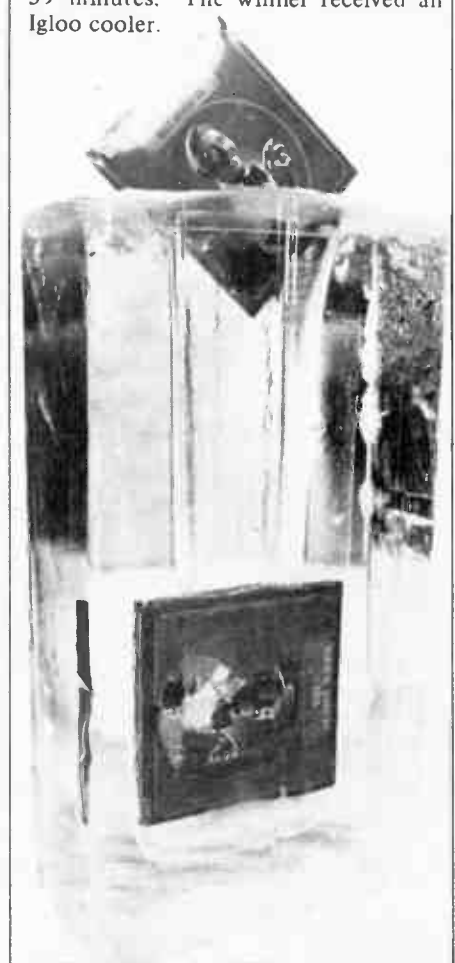
## Chet Teams With Super Axe & Harmonizer

Chet Atkins used two new pieces of equipment on his *Me and My Guitar* single and album. The guitar is the new Super Axe (designed by Chet), made available by Gretsch, and the box-like device is the Eventide Clockworks Model H-910 Harmonizer, which Chet used to record his voice. Normally, the harmonizer is used on instruments only, and is a new gadget which has just been introduced to many Nashville studios.

## Ice Melts and Leaves Snow On Top

Hank Snow's album *104 Still Movin' On* has prompted many promotions across the country similar to this one held at Ernest Tubb's Record Shop in Nashville. Contestants had to guess how long it would take this 300 pound block of ice to

melt completely. It took 66 hours and 39 minutes. The winner received an Igloo cooler.



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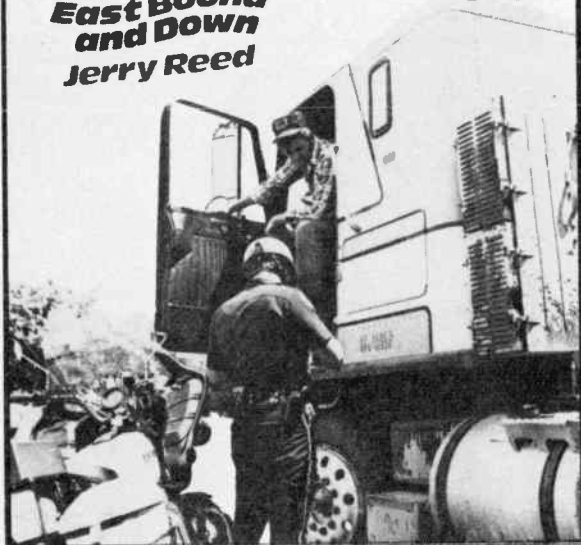


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# Country Scene



**Tulsa Antics** This year's Jim Halsey Picnic was another success, with folks like the Oak Ridge Boys (left), Don Williams (above, l.), Freddy Fender (a., r.) and Halsey himself (with Narvel Felts).

## SURE SHOT.



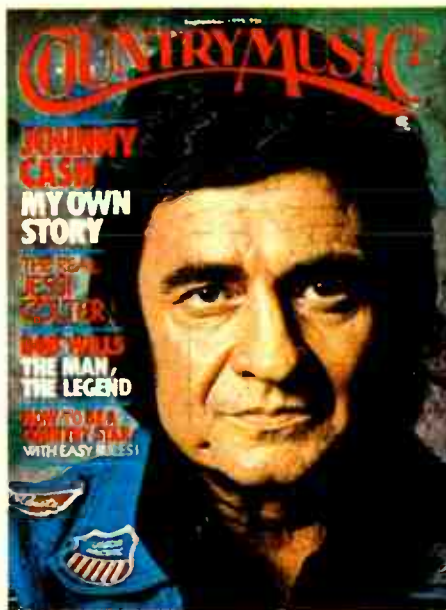
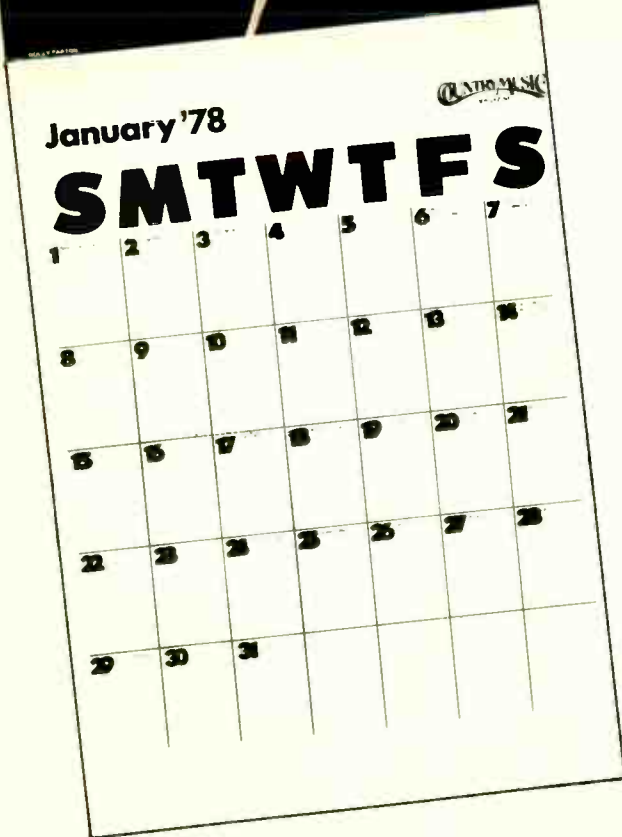
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# 1st Place

## EDDIE RABBITT

### Our New Entertainer Of The Year

*Eddie Rabbitt is our first Bullet Award for New Talent winner, selected as the best New Entertainer of the Year by Country Music Magazine's staff of contributors. Eddie receives our custom-designed Platinum Bullet and our congratulations on an excellent year.*

by **MICHAEL BANE**

Although I might confess to a certain amount of prejudice in the matter, there's still no place quite so beautiful as Tennessee in the autumn. The air is crystal clear and alive with the fragrances of the coming winter, and the trees have already begun their gentle slide from summer green into autumn gold. It's a magic time, and it's made only a little less magic by the hordes of people pouring into Nashville for Dee Jay Week, country music's annual pat-on-the-back-cum-Shriners'-Convention. Magic and craziness mix freely, and when the smoke finally clears I'm pacing around the lobby of my motel, nursing a particularly violent morning after and wondering if I'd missed connections with Eddie Rabbitt again.

Finding Eddie Rabbitt these days is just about as easy as finding his namesake in the woods—Eddie Rabbitt's on the move, and he's harder to pin down than a Texas bunny. Partially, the Rabbitt activity is a result of the continued chart success of his songs—*Drinkin' My Baby Off My Mind*, *Rocky Mountain Music* and *Two Dollars In The Jukebox* all went number one, with *We Can't Go On Living Like This* heading up the charts. He's been on the road for the first time, out for four months with a new bride languishing on the home hearth in Nashville. A third album is out and doing just fine, and after seven years knock knock knockin' on Nashville's door, Eddie Rabbitt is a hot property.

Which is very interesting for a number of reasons.

Rabbitt is, for instance, the latest graduate of the Kris Kristofferson School of Starving Songwriters, being as he is one of Kris' knockaround buddies from the old days of Kris and Billy Swan and Donnie Fritts and Billy Joe Shaver, etc. Rabbitt also wrote one of Elvis' best known (and best) later hits, *Kentucky Rain*, which promptly sabotaged his own recording career for the next five years. And that's not to mention Rabbitt as one of the new breed of singer/songwriters who manage to keep their head and home in the heady Music City air while letting their business be handled by West Coast slickies. And, bless us all, Eddie Rabbitt is probably

the best assimilated Yankee since Ol' Hank Snow: East Orange, New Jersey's, finest contribution to the cause of country music.

\*\*\*

Miraculously enough, I don't miss my connection, and pretty soon we're all headed, Eddie, manager Stan Mores, road manager Bill Rehrig and myself, to Opryland for a taping of the Olivia Newton-John Christmas radio special. The radio special is the brainchild of manager Mores, who reasoned that it would be a good idea to have Olivia talk to every country star in the world about Christmas, sort of a reindeer marathon. Eddie has a segment with Merle Haggard, neatly sandwiched between Stella Parton and Charley Pride on one side and Conway Twitty and Joni Lee on the other. When I tell him that he's the best assimilated outsider since Hank Snow, that Canadian fellow, he bursts into laughter, but only for a minute.

"My god," he says. "I think you're right."

Now, there's really nothing at all unusual about a country singer not being from the South. That, in fact, becomes more common every day. But Nashville is notoriously fickle when it comes to adopting "outsiders" as one of the flock—it took Waylon and Willie, if you will, around 15 years. But thanks in part to changing times and mostly to a genuine "nice guy" outlook on the world in general and music in particular, Eddie Rabbitt is just one of the boys.

"When I made that presentation on the (CMA) awards Monday night, that meant a lot to me," he says. "Minnie Pearl came up and introduced herself and said that she's heard a lot of good things about me. Merle Haggard was very nice. You know, that stuff means a lot to me. It means like I'm *there*, you know."

Eddie Rabbitt has been trying to get *there* for an awfully long time, ever since he can remember, in fact.

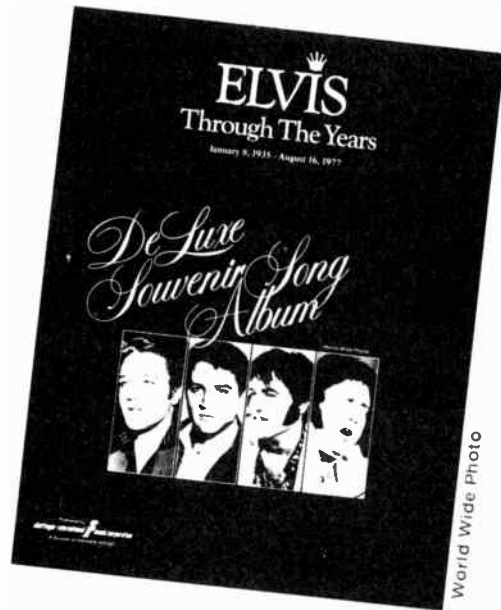
"Yea, I'm enjoying this right now, 'cause this is a dream I've had since I was five years old," Rabbitt says. "Really, five years old. I remember telling a guy named Sam Ross,

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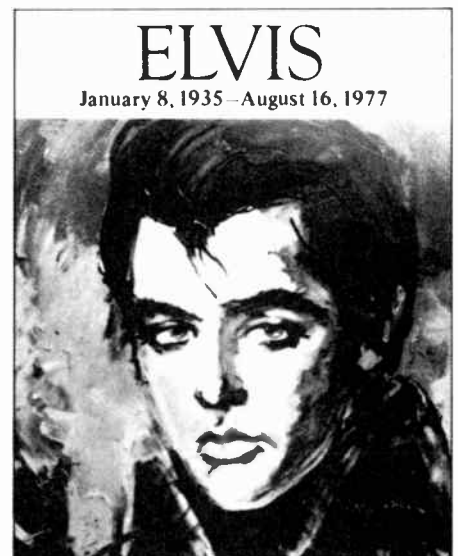
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who was a friend of the family... he was talking about civil engineering—I swear to god this is true; I don't know why I remember this thing—but we were sitting there at the kitchen table, and he was talking about civil engineering. He was a civil engineer, and I told him I wanted to sing. And he went into how hard it was to do that and stuff like that. But ever since then I was into records, stuff like the Platters, Buddy Holly, standing in front of the mirror and singing. I didn't even have a guitar at that time, you know."

He took his first giant step in 1964, at a little club in Jersey called the Six Steps Down, where Eddie and friends were celebrating graduation from night school.

"While we were there the piano player started an argument with the owner, told him to 'shove it' and quit," Eddie told interviewer Jimmy Johnson. "So I told the owner I played the guitar and sang and would be glad to help out. He was in a bind, so he said 'You start tomorrow'..."

For all you folks that don't know (and I was one until very recently), New Jersey is a hotbed of country music. The rural areas and factory towns are as natural a breeding place as the Ryman Auditorium, and in no time at all Eddie was tearin' 'em up. But all the while a little demon in the back of his head kept goading things along—who cares, said the little demon, about the Biggest Country Star In All Of New Jersey? Who cares about the best bush-league pitcher in the world? Just because East Orange, N.J., has never produced a Nashville country music star, the demon prodded again, does that mean that a good ol' boy from Orange can never be a Nashville country star?

In 1968 Eddie gave in to his demons and took the second giant step. He packed his bags, said goodbye to the hottest country band in New Jersey, and headed for Nashville.

\*\*\*

"You know what country music is like?" Eddie is saying. "Well, soap operas are very popular now. Country music is like a soap opera, you know. It's stories that relate to the people right on the street. The heartbreak, the loneliness, the no money, the drinking, the cheating, the good times—all of that stuff. I think that country music is more lyrically on the money for the common people than maybe other forms of music. Speaking in generalities, you'll find more to relate to in country music. Rock is more of an energy kind of thing, kind of dream stuff."

The Nashville Eddie Rabbitt found in 1968 might have been crafted from a rock and roll dream. Something was going on, if nobody was sure what, and in no time at all Eddie had written *Workin' My Way Up To The Bottom*, a hit for Roy Drusky. Shucks, Eddie thought, this is going to be easy, and he didn't even hear the echoes of all those other songwriters who said the same thing. After another year of scraping and finding out just how uneasy easy was going to be, he got a job as a song-

writer for the exalted sum of \$37.50 per week.

"It was strange when I got to Nashville," he says. "I guess you think Nashville is a little more than it really is when you hit the streets. But then I came to town I found out that the best of every little town out there that ever wants to make anything of themselves comes to Nashville, right? So the people you're playing with in Nashville are the best wherever they came from. And the competition... the demos I heard that guys cut that couldn't get recorded, guys that could not get a label—the were great. I couldn't imagine why they couldn't get anything going for them. I said 'Sheet! You got a long way to go!' I don't know why I went ahead and did it. I just stayed. I just loved it so much."

And then there was *Elvis and Kentucky Rain*, and if Eddie Rabbitt thought he'd had hard times before, it was nothing compared to what a little success could do. The story goes that in 1971 Eddie had finally nailed down that elusive recording contract and was ready to start cutting when his publisher decided to take some of Eddie's tapes to Memphis to play for Elvis.

Keep in mind that a recording contract doesn't mean instant money—far from it. If anything, a recording contract means staking your career on a toss of the dice,

all or nothing. A Nashville heavyweight had already been lined up to produce the record, and *Kentucky Rain* was the obvious choice for the single. Then Elvis heard *Kentucky Rain*. And loved it.

"Elvis Presley—who happens to be a hero of mine—wants to cut my song. That's what my publisher is telling me. I looked at him and I said 'oh god...' 'Well, it's up to you, son,' my publisher tells me. 'You can put it out yourself and possibly bomb because you're a new artist, or you can let Elvis cut it and guarantee yourself at least half-a-million sales.' This was my big decision. I could let Elvis record it and make some money, while at the same time tossing my own recording career down the tubes, or I could record it myself and maybe starve. I mean, I was making 37 bucks a week, man. So I made up my mind."

*Kentucky Rain* sold over a million records, the Nashville heavy kissed Eddie and his career goodbye and if Eddie had it to do all over, he'd do the same thing again.

"I just wasn't ready then," he says now. "It wasn't right. It couldn't be any more right than it is right now."

\*\*\*

And that may actually be the case. More than any other young artist I've met recently, Eddie Rabbitt is in total control

(Continued on page 63)

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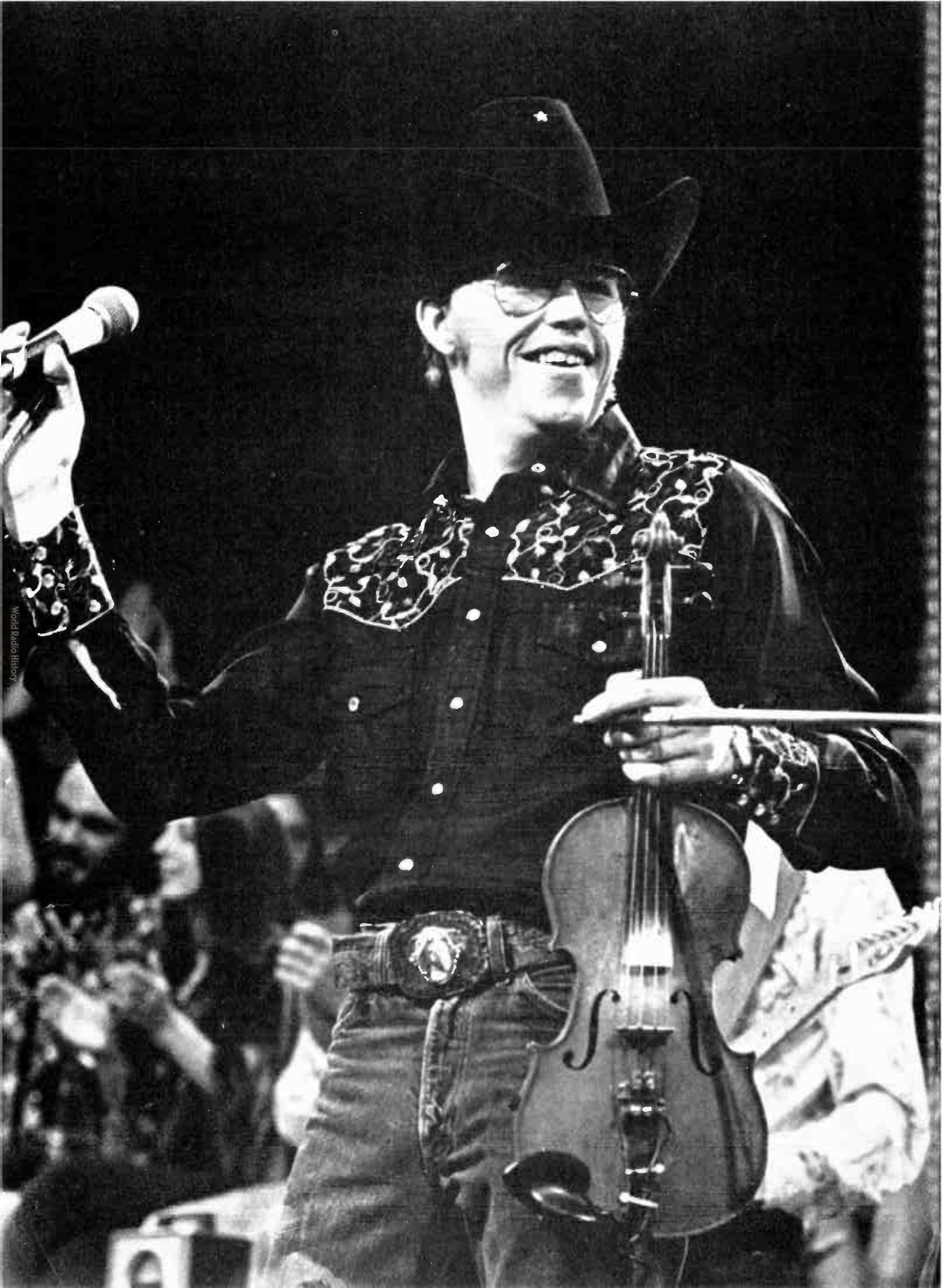
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## Best New Male Vocalist

# ALVIN CROW

Reports filtering back to Austin from the East Coast in September were encouraging, all right. Jalapeno pepper supplies were exhausted, already rare bottles of Pearl Beer became non-existent, and, for at least one week, boots outsold Guccis on Fifth Avenue. The unprecedented outbreak of Texas Chic was in honor of the first appearance of Alvin Crow and his Pleasant Valley Boys beyond their usual bread-and-butter dancehall circuit in the Southwest. And judging from the reaction in the local papers, it was just like the hepcats over at Soap Creek and the kickers at the Broken Spoke had always suspected: Alvin and the boys are the consummate Texas honky tonk bar and dance band.

The Boston *Globe* merely noted Crow "passed expectations", but the Washington *Post* warmed up enough to reckon "if ever a Texas swing band was to make it big, Alvin Crow's present journey from the hinterland will be the time." Billy Bob got all huffed up when we read that to him until someone explained that hinterland wasn't a dirty word. Surprisingly, though, the warmest response came from John Rockwell of that usually staid New York *Times*. He said Alvin "represents the finest recent flower of Austin's burgeoning club and concert scene" and wrote his performance "makes one realize once again what a wealth of music this country has produced."

That kind of unsolicited praise comes at a point in Alvin's career where his base of

*Alvin Crow represents the very best Austin and Texas has to offer—flawless musicianship, a great stage show and a hatful of really fine songs.*

support is expanding from a hard-core regional following to a broader national focus. The catalyst behind the push into national prominence was release last spring of his first album, *High Riding*, on Polydor Records. Two singles—*Yes She Do, No She Don't* first popularized by swing legend Milton Brown, and a cover of the El Dorados' doo-wopper, *Crazy Little Mama*—came out of the album to chalk up plenty of spins on midnight truckers' shows such as Bill Mack's on WBAP, Fort Worth, and Billy Parker's on KVOO, Tulsa. They failed, however, to sufficiently impress most mainstream AM country program directors. Still, the album as a whole crossed over extensively to numerous rock and FM progressive stations in spite of Alvin's purist, rather than pop, overtone.

Tommy Allsup, who works with the Original Texas Playboys and Asleep at the Wheel, produced the album and Playboys Leon Rausch and Al Stricklin made guest appearances, but Crow avoids typecasting as a Bob Wills nostalgia item, particularly in live performance, by employing precisely the same tactics as

the Playboys did back in the 30s. In other words, he makes the unconventional the norm. Rockabilly, rock n' roll, and rhythm and blues are all so thoroughly injected into the swing thing that a dancing fool is just as likely to move to *Land of 1000 Dances* and *Sea Cruise* as *Maiden's Prayers* and *Boil Them Cabbages Down*. The two-steppers down here wouldn't stand for any less versatile.

Alvin's had a hard row to hoe so far, with minimal record company support and being impossible to categorize into one style of music, but better days seem ahead. Polydor recently bought Crow's first album released a couple of years ago on his own Longneck label and just released the most requested song off that album *Nyquil Blues*. Jim Halsey, who books and manages half the country entertainers on the planet, recently told a reporter, "I think that kid is headed for some serious stardom." But the bottom line here is fan support on the street level. No matter how much Alvin rubs against the straight and narrow grain of Tennessee conventionality, his music will prevail. And that means he doesn't have to impress anyone but the customers. Like he told one of the distinguished members of the Yankee press, "I don't really give a damn whether they like us here or not, 'cause they like us in Texas." Just in case Alvin gets homesick, James has his pool cue and his favorite pinball ready over at the Spoke, but the consensus of the locals around Austin is folks won't be seeing Alvin around for quite a while. ■

## Our New Male runners up

**J**oe Ely is a wanderer from Lubbock, Texas—home to a whole bunch of country music artists: Buddy Holly, Waylon Jennings, Mac Davis, Sonny Curtis and Gary Nunn and Bob Livingston of the Lost Gonzo Band.

But Ely is more than a carbon copy of any of Lubbock's other offspring. His music is most closely akin to honky-tonk. His writing and his demeanor show a sensitivity to his surroundings that too many of his fellow musicians lack.

Since sensitive honky-tonkers are somewhat of a rarity—perhaps that's what makes Joe Ely's music unique in clubs overrun with barroom music OR "sensitive" music—most of it bad.

Before spending a lot of time on the road with his music and band, Ely spent a lot of time on the road. . . . There was a time he traveled with the circus as an

animal trainer until he got knocked in the ribs by a horse. There was the time he was in need of a guitar and just happened to run into a guy sitting on the beach who just happened to have a guitar for sale—\$10. Joe scraped up \$5; the guitar was—and still is—his. There was the time he was a janitor. . . . a fruitpicker. . . .

And then came the time he was on his way to Austin to start a band, just happened to stop by that town where he grew up—Lubbock, of course—and bumped into the guys who now form the nucleus of his band and with their writing and playing helped Joe for his sound: Gregg Wright, Steve Keeton, Jesse Taylor and Lloyd Maines.

The boys Texas attracted MCA's attention, signed up, cut a terrific first album and. . . hit the road again. All of which is just fine with

Joe Ely. ■



**JOE ELY**

**N**ot every up-and-coming musician has the fortune (or misfortune, but we'll get to that later) to be proclaimed the First Lady's favorite by the First Lady herself.

But then, James Talley is not every up-and-coming musician. In fact, he's somewhat of an oddity in today's Nashville—he's a musician whose message is actually more important (to him) than his music. One writer called it a social worker's consciousness. For Talley has been a social worker. And now he sings about the wrongs, the injustices and the life of the working class. Idealistic enough to hope and his message might even cause changes, Talley continues to record albums dedicated to the people, their heritage, their stories.

Talley was so determined to spread his message that

when he had the chance to cut his first album (a trade-off deal for some carpentry he did on a studio) he took it—then proceeded to press and package and distribute the result, *Got No Bread, No Milk, No Money, But We Sure Got A Lot Of Love*, himself—with his own money. Capitol Records heard it, liked it and signed Talley.

All this, and Talley remains a soft, sloooooow-spoken messenger, seemingly unaffected by the frequent comparisons to Woody Guthrie or the Rosalynn Carter hype.

How could a plug from the First Lady be construed as misfortune? Well, the critics liked him a lot—first. And now that the nation's eyes are upon him, the critics will be a lot tougher, more cynical, less forgiving.

But that's okay. Because Talley doesn't play for the critics—he plays for the people. ■



**JAMES TALLEY**

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# ELVIS

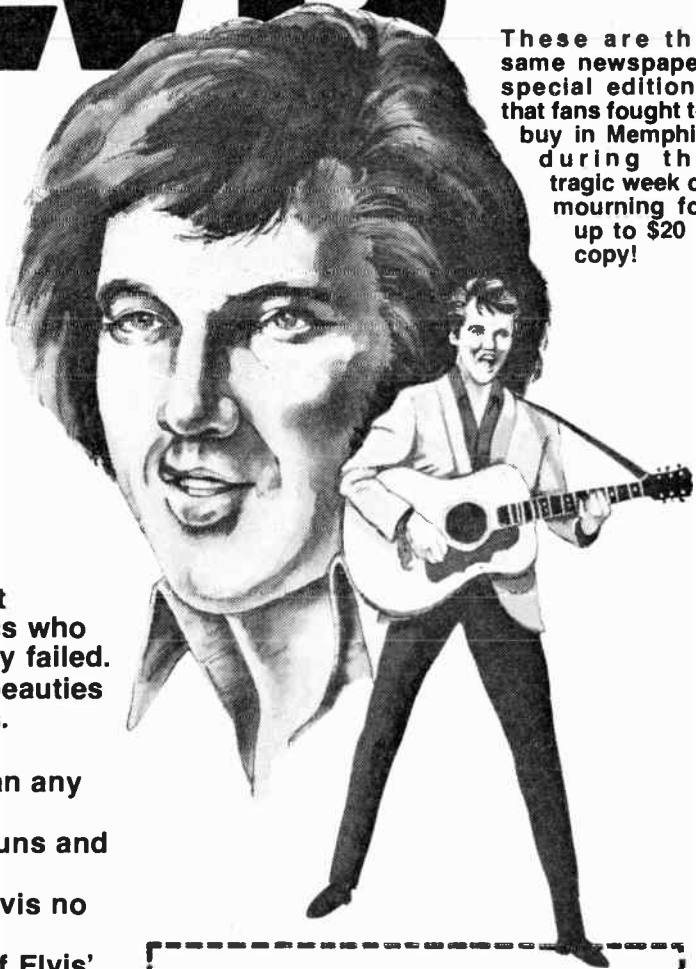
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Country Music  
Magazine's  
Bullet Awards

# BEST SOUND

Helen Cornelius has done the nearly impossible, which is to say she's taken a name like Helen Cornelius and, by sheer power of an excellent voice, parlayed it into a household word—at least in households that listen to country music.

Of course, Helen has had a little help. Namely, her partner in song, Jim Ed Brown, whose name was already familiar to country music listeners. With Helen, however, Jim Ed has gained a place in country music heretofore reserved for the likes of George and Tammy or Loretta and Conway.

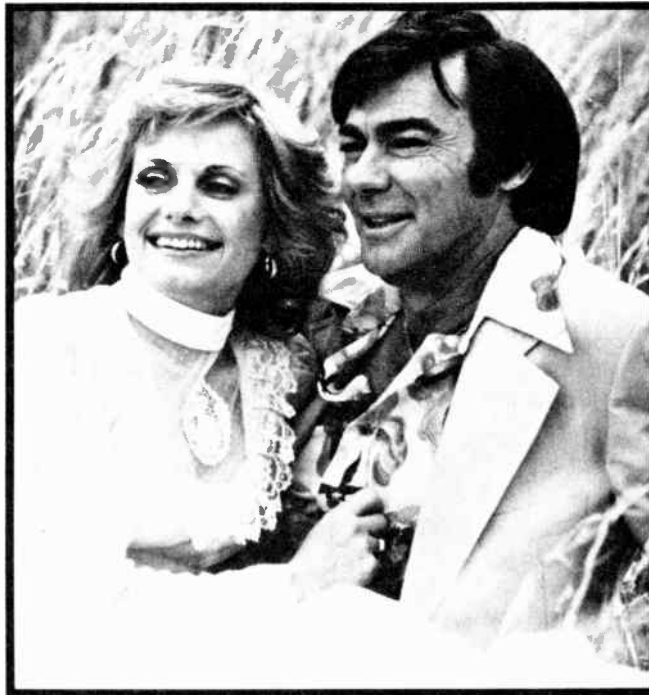
The new duo is, simply speaking, a pleasure to listen to. The soft, yet surprisingly powerful, tones of Helen blend perfectly with Jim Ed's own resonant voice. And when they solo, they each retain something special. Jim Ed, of course, has already proven he can go it alone; Helen, without a doubt, could certainly do so.

Fortunately, right now neither has such plans. Instead they're continuing to crank out hits, beginning with *I Don't Want to Have to Marry You*, moving right into *Saying Hello*, *Saying I Love You*, *Saying Goodbye* and latest, but surely not last, *Born Believer*.

Although Helen and Jim Ed sound like they were made for each other, it wasn't until fairly recently that the two got together. Until then, Helen was living in Hannibal, Missouri, raising a family and writing songs for others like Lynn Anderson, Barbara Fairchild, Connie Smith, etc.

And Jim Ed was living in Nashville, raising a family and riding out a career that included recording with his sisters, later with The Fairchilds, and more-or-less remembering his old hits, such as *The Three Bells* and wishing for more.

When Jim Ed, an already established star, was looking for a replacement for his old back-up group, the Fairchilds, ap-



proached Helen, she put her foot down.

"I was interested in my career. I didn't want to be somebody's background singer. And that was the stipulation I made when he asked me—I felt it was my career too. But he's been great. He's given me plenty to do on the show. He tries to build me as an artist—as an individual artist."

Though not exactly a has-been, Jim Ed's career was greatly revitalized by the appearance of Helen. And Helen almost didn't do it. Her family is so important to her that she let them have a say in the matter of wife and mother suddenly going on the road, being away from home and all manner of un-mommy like things. Fortunately for Helen, Jim Ed and country music, the family gave the go-ahead. And, in-

stead of losing her family, she's gained another type of relationship with Jim Ed and the Gems. ("I've got seven daddies," she jokes.)

It's doubly hard, because as a musical duo, Jim Ed and Helen are constantly being linked up as a romantic duo. Both are loyal to their families, however, and this sweetness, almost naivete (particularly with the admittedly prudish Helen) is prevalent in their duets.

In addition to constant traveling, recording one hit after another and winning awards (the Country Music Association just voted them Best Duo of the Year), the two also have a television show, *Nashville on the Road*. Jim Ed hosted the show even before the advent of Helen. Now they both host the show, one of the few successful country music television series going.

Yep. Helen Cornelius. Kind of has a nice ring to it. And Jim Ed Brown, too? Together, they're taking the households by a country storm. ■

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*JIM ED BROWN and HELEN CORNELIUS winners of our Best Sound Award, were also named Best Duo of the Year by the CMA.*

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COUNTRY MUSIC

STARS OF THE MONTH



World Radio History

ED BROWN & HELEN CORNELIUS



Best New Female Vocalist

# CRYSTAL GAYLE

*Our writers were almost universal in their praise for Crystal Gayle—one of the finest voices to grace country music.*

Don't it make your brown eyes blue?  
Just about a year ago, we selected Crystal Gayle as a Rising Star and both Crystal and her manager/producer predicted that the upcoming year would be her year for success.

Could've been they had a crystal ball  
This year has definitely been a good one for Crystal. Without half-trying she's been successful in both the pop and country fields, something many artists can't do when they're even more than half-trying.

*Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue*, almost lyrically simplistic, is a pretty song mainly because of Crystal Gayle's pretty voice. And it comes on top of several other hits: *This Is My Year For Mexico*, *Somebody Loves You* and *I'll Get Over You*, snowballing Crystal from being merely Loretta Lynn's little sister to being one of the big-name country women singers in her own right.

Brenda Gail Webb grew up listening to and singing along with Leslie Gore—not Loretta Lynn. But she toured with Loretta, and the mixed tutelage has paid off. As Crystal Gayle (she changed her name upon Loretta's advice, so she wouldn't be confused with Brenda Lee), she's as familiar to pop listeners as to country. Her looks—beautiful long hair, an arresting face and stylish clothes—are pop. Her voice is that Olivia Newton-John never-never land voice: Never country, never pop, always both.

Unlike Olivia, however, her voice has a depth to it that we can see growing as Crystal grows. But it's not bad now, not bad at all.

Crystal's worked hard to get to the top. While some might think she "had it made" being related to one of the most popular country singers around, it at times proved more of a bane than a boon. Rather than ride Loretta's grumpy dress-tails to stardom, Crystal developed her own style, totally different

from the nasal twang of Loretta's. This attempt to steer clear of imitating Big Sister has also contributed to Crystal's diversity, the inability to stick her in one musical category and forget about her.

Another major factor in Crystal's success is Allen Reynolds, that producer/manager who predicted the good year. His careful choice of material and fine hand with production had much to do with Crystal's crossover—that was no "by chance" move.

And now everybody seems to be taking the term crossover a little bit better than this time last year. At least half the numbers performed on the televised CMA awards were pop—or it took a good imagination to make them out to be country. When Crystal performed *Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue*, it sounded downright country in comparison to, let's say, Dave and Sugar.

Her latest album, *We Must Believe In Magic*, contains more of the same sounds, but it also contains some real country. *Going Down Slow* is done in the Tanya Tucker style—and done well, as is the rest of the material on the album. Unlike many pop-country artist's albums, *We Must Believe In Magic* is not drowned in strings and other methods of over-production. Rather, Reynolds relies on Crystal's voice which is strong enough to tackle the various material without wavering.

At the CMA ceremony, Crystal was voted Best Female Country Singer, winning over, among others, Loretta Lynn. And to her ever-lasting credit, rather than choose this time to be coy about being the little sister, she chose this time to acknowledge the fact that Loretta has helped her tremendously by thanking her for that help.

Now, with that good year behind her, Crystal's really going to soar.

Don't it make your blue eyes brown? ■

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## Our New Female runners up

**M**arshall Chapman's the best thing to happen to "girl country singers" in a long time. For one thing, she puts "woman" into that category—there's nothing coy, coquettish or girlish about Marshall.

She's as forthright in her music as she is personally. "Women like to honky-tonk, too," is her philosophy, and if they can do it, they certainly can sing about it. So she does, and her first album (for CBS) *Me, I'm Feelin' Free* is filled with the exuberance of being female and free.

Marshall also co-writes most of her music. Earlier, with Joy Wahl (tone deaf, but you'd never believe it from the sounds they produce) and most recently with Dave Hickey. Much of what she writes and sings is autobiographical, particularly *Somewhere South Of Macon*. The not-so-

little (5'10") rich girl from Spartanburg, S.C., went to school in Nashville, then joined Tompall Glaser and Jack Clement.

She started 1977 off with big sounds that attracted the attention of all the Big critics (made the N.Y. *Times* twice).

Now she's working on her next album, playing clubs and generally getting it all together. Whatever mistakes she makes, she's got one gigantic compensation—her voice. Deep, dark and delicious, it can belt out a honky-tonker with the same sincerity as Waylon or do a love song that takes you there. Influenced by Tompall and Clement, she is by no means confined by them, moving—in less than a year—from country to punk country to rock to who knows where she'll be by the time her second album comes out. ■



**MARSHALL CHAPMAN**

**B**reaking into the big-time of country music isn't the easiest thing in the world, as any itinerant picker can tell you. But trying to do it with a band and a name like Freda and the Firedogs really takes talent.

Well, Marcia Ball has the talent, but even that wasn't enough to make it, so several years ago she abandoned Freda, becoming just plain Marcia again and slowly—very slowly—her name's becoming synonymous with good, you-can-dance-to-it, country music.

Although Marcia's still playing backwoods clubs, she has signed with Capitol and things should start happening soon for velvety-voiced Marcia.

Her first notice came when she cut Patsy Montana's *Cowboy's Sweetheart* in a voice that rivaled the older songstress with its

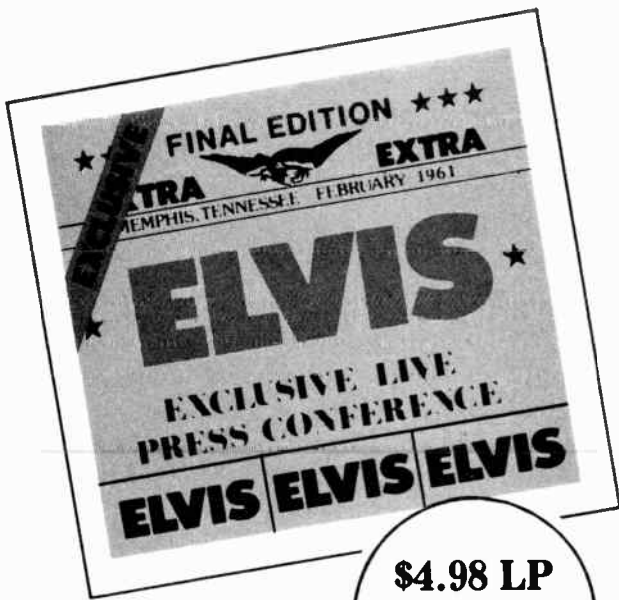
purity. She draws her current music from a variety of genres—rhythm and blues, rockabilly, western swing and cowboy. Her yodeling is a testimonial to the respect she gives the older music.

Marcia's piano playing is like frosting on the cake. The Louisiana-born Marcia was influenced greatly by rhythm and blues, honky tonks and soul music. It all shows up in her music and she's been compared, unfairly she believes, to almost every contemporary girl singer. That's simply because there are so few good women country musicians around that it doesn't take long to do the comparing.

Soon, however, Marcia Ball undoubtedly will be the basis of comparison for another young singer and—if anybody tells her she sounds like Marcia Ball—well, she should be rightly proud. ■



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# Best Single & Album by a new artist

**A**t most annual awards ceremonies, there's at least one clean sweep.

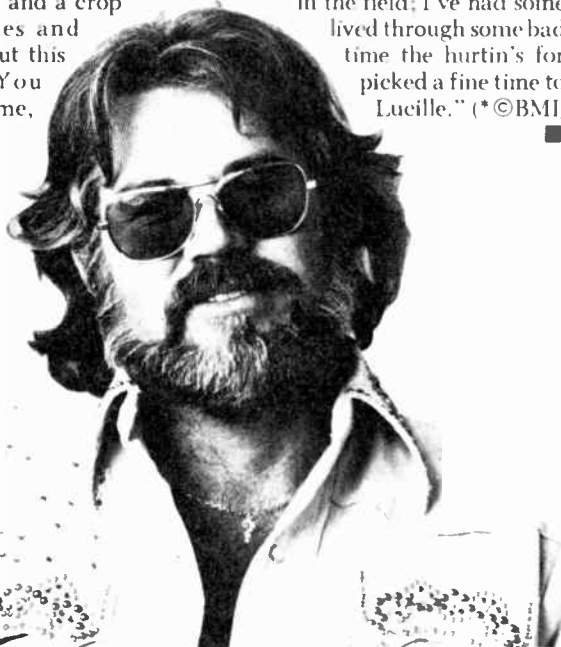
At this year's CMA, there were two—Ronnie Milsap and Lucille. Everybody's known Milsap for years, but who's Lucille?

Lucille is this year's best single, and not only did it sweep the CMA, but it captured our votes and swept the country. The combination of a catchy tune, moving lyrics and Kenny Rogers' husky voice were just too much not to make it.

Written by Hal Bynum and Roger Bowling, Lucille shot up the charts and stayed there. The irony, which always makes these stories so much better, is that Kenny Rogers recorded it only after several others turned it down. (Note: Those who rejected it may now be reassuring themselves that it would have been a bigger hit if they'd done it. But Waylon Jennings did cut it on *Ol' Waylon*, the same album that contains *Lucienbach*, *Texas*, another nominee for Best Song—and it didn't carry nearly as much punch as Rogers' version.)

Anyway, Rogers recorded it, and dramatically boosted a career that had been only so-so since his tenure, with the group The First Edition. Although The First Edition was primarily a pop success, they relied on some of Nashville's best writers for their material: Mel Tillis (*Ruby*), Mickey Newbury (*Just Dropped In To See What Condition My Condition Was In*) and Alex Harvey (*Reuben James, Tell It All, Brother and Rings*). Kenny and the First Edition consistently scored high in the top-40 pop and rock radio market.

So, you can almost say it's justice or whatever that saw Rogers get a boost from a country song, the poignant story of a home-weary wife running away, her just-as-weary, heartbroken husband and the stranger who witnesses the sad confrontation: "You picked a fine time to leave me, Lucille; With four hungry children and a crop in the field; I've had some sad times and lived through some bad times, but this real; You picked the hurtin' for leave me, Lucille." (\* ©BMI)



**Best Single: Kenny Rogers' Lucille**

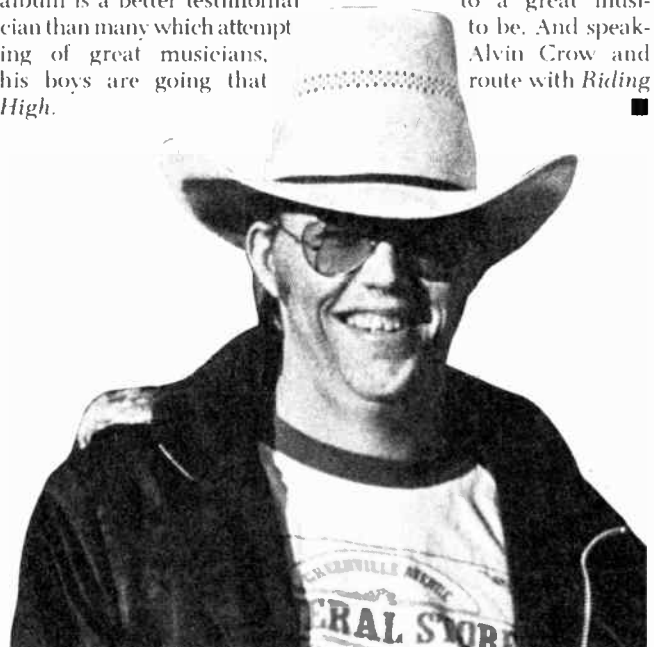
**M**ost of our "bests" are, not surprisingly, pretty young. Alvin Crow, Best New Male Performer, is a mere babe. But to hear him sing his Texas swing, you'd swear you were listening to a 40- or 50-year-old man, an original Texas Playboy even.

But it's more than his voice that makes Crow's *High Riding* (Polydor) such a fine album. From his choice of material to the finely attuned production of Tommy Allsup to the perfect rapport of old and new, it's all excellent. And let's not forget the band, The Pleasant Valley Boys. Without them, Alvin would be... well, Alvin would be Alvin Crow without the Pleasant Valley Boys. Although he could probably pull it off, it would be sort of like Bob Wills without the Texas Playboys.

You can't listen to this album without picking a favorite... or two. *Yes She Do, No She Don't (I'm Satisfied With My Gal)* is one favorite. Leon Rausch joins Crow for some harmony, setting the tone for the whole album. It's dance music—kick up your heels, maybe a waltz or nice slow round, even some boogying with *Crazy Little Mama (At My Front Door)*. And when Crow and his boys do a '50s tune they don't slick it up as so many recent country artists have done. It's also apparent on the truck drivin' rockabilly *The Texas Kid's Retirement Run*. Indeed, back in Texas, Crow has been credited with getting the old-timers back onto the dance floor with his music.

When the Texas Playboys won CMA's Best Instrumental Group award this year, a loud Whoop! was heard nationwide—and a tear or two was shed. Now, not enough groups are doing Bob Wills' music well—*Asleep At The Wheel* is one that is. Alvin Crow and the Pleasant Valley Boys is another.

They acknowledge the debt with another favorite, *Turkey Texas (Home of Bob Wills)*, written by steel guitarist Herb Steiner. But there's nothing maudlin about the tribute, and the album is a better testimonial to a great musician than many which attempt to be. And speaking of great musicians, Alvin Crow and his boys are going that route with *Riding High*.



**Best Album: Alvin Crow's High Riding**



**For LP Fans Only:**

Lawdy, Miss Clawdy/  
Poor Boy/Mystery  
Train/Shake, Rattle &  
Roll/My Baby Left  
Me, much more!  
LP: LSP-1990 (e)  
8TK: APS1-0386



**Elvis Country:**

Snowbird/The Fool/  
Faded Love/Little Ca-  
bin On The Hill/Make  
The World Go Away,  
much more!  
LP: LSP-4460  
8TK: P8S-1655



**Golden Records, V-3:**

It's Now Or Never/  
Fame & Fortune/Are  
You Lonesome To-  
Night/Little Sister/I  
Feel So Bad, more!  
LP: LSP-2765  
8TK: P8S-1057



**At Madison Square  
Garden.**

You've Lost That  
Lovin' Feelin'/Heart-  
break Hotel/Teddy  
Bear/Hound Dog/Su-  
spicious Minds, more!  
LP: LSP-4776  
8TK: P8S-2054



**Welcome To My  
World:**

Welcome To My Wor-  
ld/Release Me/Make  
The World Go Away/  
Your Cheatin' Heart,  
and much more!  
LP: APL1-2274  
8TK: APS1-2274

**Elvis TV Special:**

Trouble/Love Me  
Tender/Hound Dog/  
Guitar Man/If I Can  
Dream/Heartbreak  
Hotel, more!  
LP: LPM-4088  
8TK: P8S-1391



**Girls, Girls, Girls:**

Girls! Girls! Girls!/I  
Don't Wanna Be Tied/  
Earth Boy/Return To  
Sender/Where Do You  
Come From, more!  
LP: LSP-2621  
8TK: P8S-1139



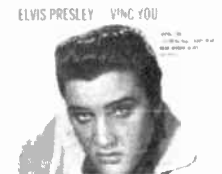
**King Creole:**

King Creole/Crawfish/  
Hard Headed Woman/  
Dixieland Rock/Don't  
Ask Me Why/New Or-  
leans, much more!  
LP: LSP-1804 (e)  
8TK: APS1-0385



**The Sun Sessions:**

I Love You Because/  
Blue Moon Of Ken-  
tucky/Good Rockin'  
Tonight/I'll Never Let  
You Go, much more!  
LP: APM1-1675  
8TK: APS1-1675



**Loving You:**

Let Me Be Your Ted-  
dy Bear/Blueberry  
You So/Lonesome  
Cowboy, more!  
LP: LSP-1515 (e)  
8TK: APS1-0384

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**Elvis Now**  
LP: LSP-4671  
8TK: P8S-1898

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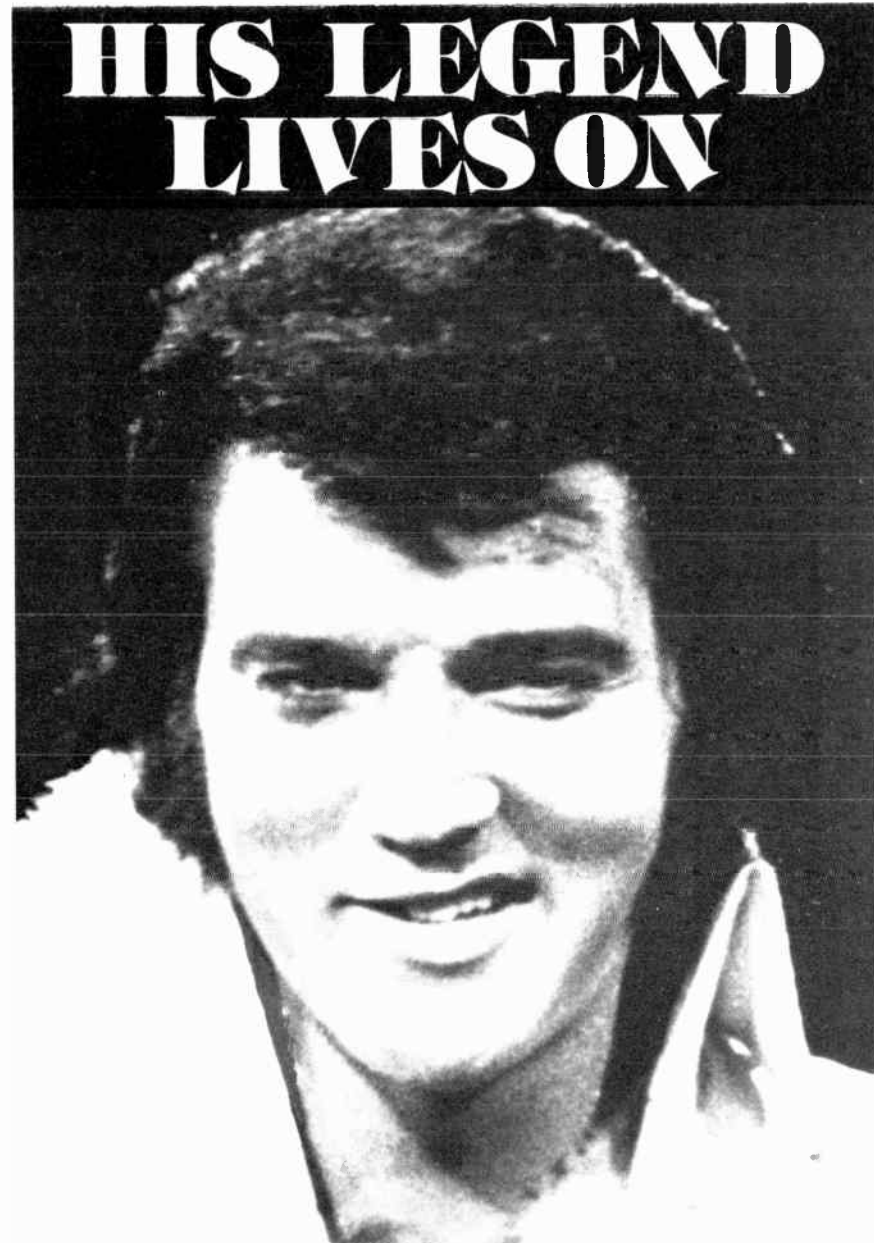
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# Faces to watch in 1978

- 1 Here's Roy Clark backstage with Randy Gurley (Randy's the cute one). Randy's smooth voice and powerful delivery make her a face to watch.
- 2 Jerry Reed is high on Stewart Harris—"He works as hard as I do," says Jerry. "The cream will rise to the top."





**3** John Wesley Ryles was the comeback sensation of 1976—after years of obscurity after his big hit *Kay* in 1968, he was on the charts again with *Fool*. A real comer.

**4** This may finally be the year for Delbert McCClinton. With a new record label, Capricorn, Delbert may be the sleeper act of the year. He certainly deserves it.

**5** The guy with Chet Atkins is Paul Craft, crazed writer of *Drop-Kick Me Jesus* and *Lean on Jesus (Before He Leans on You)*.

**6** Tom Bresh is a one-time protege of new Hall of Famer Merle Travis. Tom can work wonders on a guitar.

**7** Mel McDaniel is the latest in a long line of great performers from Combine Music. He's as good a country singer as can be found.



When you come right  
down to it,  
Billy Carter's got  
it knocked. . .

# BILLY

## The Toast of The Town

by MICHAEL BANE

**B**illy Carter is sitting in a classy New York restaurant picking over a piece of broiled filet of sole, and people are pointing at him. I should add at this point that, as a rule, people in New York do not point. They may smirk, make derogatory remarks to a friend or companion, snort, spit on the sidewalks or go through all manner of conniptions to indicate to said celebrity that, while they are aware of the star-studded presence, they do not care one whit. They do, however, make an exception in the case of Billy Carter, the President's brother.

Billy, of course, takes it all in stride, with an ample helping of Southern grace under fire that precludes noticing the waitress is on the verge of apoplexy. He picks at his sole, refuses to eat his vegetables ("Sometimes he'll go for two or three days without eating anything," says Tandy Rice, Billy's agent by handshake) and orders another gin and tonic. Eat your vegetables, the waitress replies, they're good for you. Billy smiles and laughs his probably copyrighted Billy Carter Plains Georgia Beer-Drinking laugh. Being a celebrity, he says, is hard work.

Indeed, and no one has been working harder at it than Billy Carter. Billy Carter has become a celebrity not because he is beautiful, like Farrah Fawcett-Majors, or the most powerful man in the Western World, like that other Carter, or because he can sing country songs very well, like most of



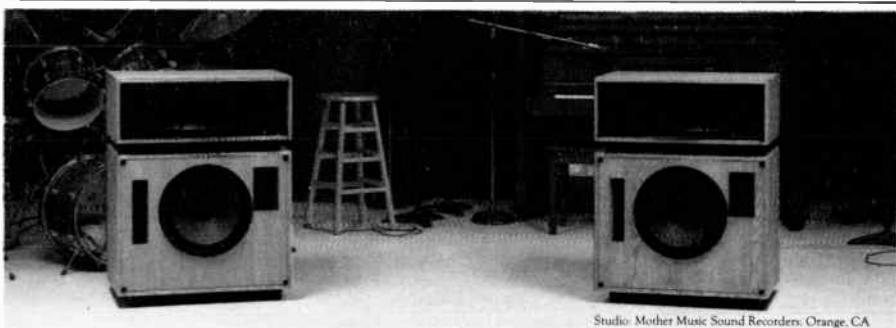
"My favorite people are Barbara Mandrell, Barbara Farnsworth and my wife Sybil. . . ."



Ever wonder where people get all those teeth? From the left, that's James Chapman, head of our Nashville Operations, CM Publisher Jack Killian, Ol' Billy and CM Editor Michael Bane.

Tandy Rice's other clients. Rather, Billy Carter became a celebrity because, like some latter-day Harry Truman, Billy Carter speaks the Truth.

We are at this classy New York restaurant, me and Billy and Tandy and all manner of other folks, because I am looking for the Truth about country



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music.

"Tom T. Hall," says Billy Carter. "Tom T. Hall is my favorite country singer. He's been out at the house a couple of times, and I've stayed with him when I was in Nashville."

When Billy dies, Tandy Rice interjects, he wants Tom T. to sing at the funeral. Tell him about it, Billy. Billy smiles.

"Yea, Tom can play *I Like Beer* instead of some old funeral march," he says. "I'd like that much better."

Barbara Mandrell, he adds. "Barbara Mandrell is one of my favorite . . . singers. Barbara Mandrell and Barbara Farnsworth (Top Billing's VP)." Billy says. "My favorite people are Barbara Mandrell, Barbara Farnsworth and my wife Sybil. Sybil first, of course. Barbara Farnsworth and Barbara Mandrell run a close-ass second."

Billy laughs. "I dare you to run that," Tandy Rice says.

Billy had actually gotten together a couple of months ago with his three favorite people at the Atlanta filming of the television spoof, *Almost Anything Goes*, where he, Sybil and the two Barbaras frolicked in the 100 degree or so heat for the television cameras. "I'll tell you how bad it was," Billy says. "I drunk 25 beers and never went to the bathroom."

Laughter.

There is a serious side to Billy Carter, but I suspect that side isn't all that far removed from the Billy Carter who's in New York to sample a new drink called Peanut Lolita. The serious side of Billy Carter has moved his family out of Plains and goes to some lengths to keep his wife and children out of the limelight that seems to follow wherever he steps. The serious Billy worries about impending hatchet jobs in national news magazines. But the other side of Billy Carter refuses to let him worry that much—only Billy Carter, for instance, would have the gaul to tell the wolverines at the IRS that they were discriminating against him because he was the President's brother.

"The guy at the IRS office in Atlanta said, 'Billy, think about all the publicity you'll get if we take you to court,'" Billy says. "I said, 'You worry about the publicity. I think it's great.'"

Come to think of it, Billy Carter's got it knocked. One could do a lot worse in one's lifetime than to spend four years traveling around the country saying what one feels. It could, in fact, start a tremendous national trend—a willingness to, say, look at a plate of vegetables and say "Hey I don't like those. I'd rather have a beer." I think that's a good sign. Who knows, if it catches on, maybe the next time Billy's in New York the first person he greets with a warm Southern "good mornin'" outside his hotel won't call him a "jive mutha." Think about it. ■



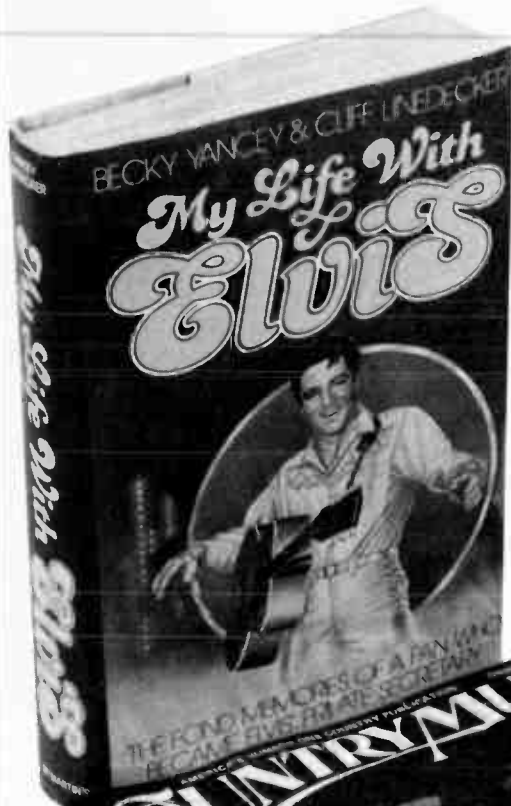
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# *THE RISE OF SMALL RECORD LABELS*



**BY HARRY MORROW**

Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Charlie Rich, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis—Sun Records of Memphis gave the world all of them, great talents who have stood the test of time for two decades and showed what a small record label can do when it gives creative men and women the freedom they need.

All of Presley's work for Sun was bought in 1955 for \$35,000 by RCA, which has made millions for RCA ever since. After Presley's death last August, RCA was pressing his albums at nine different plants. That capability has helped make

RCA a powerful force in the music business, a \$3 billion industry annually. Yet several small country labels have been started in the last couple of years, and that step may require as much as \$250,000.

"It's a big, vicious business, but there's always room for one more," says Gene Kennedy, a producer and former promotion man who founded Door Knob Records in 1976. "I don't think the majors pay that much attention to their country product unless it's a crossover."

The confident men working with small labels include guitarist Arthur Smith of

Charlotte, a partner in the CMH label which has cornered much of the bluegrass market, and Bruce Kaplan of Flying Fish Records in Chicago, a onetime Ph.D. student in Southeast Asia studies at the University of Chicago.

Despite the recent spate of activity, the major companies do not see a trend to small labels.

"They've always been around, but I don't really see anything any different," says Jerry Bradley, RCA's Vice-President in charge of Nashville operations. "If you've got a hit song they seem to find

their way through. The Kendalls have one right now, and I don't mean to be derogatory, but we'll find out what kind of label they have two or three records from now."

There's been a real fear that a small company with a monster hit would be unable to meet the demand for the record, wrecking the company.

GRT, founded as a tape manufacturing company, is one of the largest distributors both for the limited country product on its own label and for other labels. GRT handled Ronnie McDowell's Elvis tribute, *The King Is Gone*, on Scorpion Records and sold a million copies the first week. The record has sold another million since.

Dick Heard, GRT vice president and general manager, politely but firmly says he does not want his company confused with other small labels.

"We're quiet, but we're not small," he counters. "We're just selective, that's all. People in the business know we're around—we sell a lot of records."

"It's very, very rough for a small label today. The competition is enormous. It's not artists you need, it's promotion men. I guess it takes a combination of a lunatic and a dreamer to go into the record business today. I guess that's how empires are built."

Here, then, is a closer look at some of those small labels:

**Con Brio**—The company's name is an Italian phrase meaning with excitement or with enthusiasm. President Bill Walker, a native of Australia, and his staff have a right to feel excited, because Con Brio was voted small record label of the year by the trade magazine *Billboard*.

Don King, Jan Howard and Dale McBride are the best known of the six artists on the label, begun in 1975. King, only 22, clicked with *I've Got You* and *Girl Of My Dreams* and McBride sang *Ordinary Man*. Howard's past hits include *Bad Seed* and *Evil On Your Mind* and she presently travels with Johnny Cash's show.

Con Brio wants to improve its marketing this year, to find new ways of making things happen during a time of change that has brought major moves to independent producers.

"What triggered the avalanche of change was the recession of '73," says Biff Collie, vice president for promotion and marketing and a man with 35 years experience in the business. "The major corporate structures, looking at computer printouts, decided to speculate less on talent."

"The independent producer has nothing to do with the product he creates. We start at the beginning, finding the artist. We're budgeted to function the way the majors do."

**Flying Fish**—Formed in May, 1974 for less than \$100,000, Flying Fish concentrates on the traditional music owner Bruce Kaplan thought was being ignored. Its releases have been impressive: John Hartford's *Mark Twang* won a Grammy

as the best traditional album of 1976.

The company has no exclusive artists and has never released a single. "You could characterize us as a little gunshy," promotion director Charlie Gutfeld says. "To break a single takes a lot of power we're not sure we have."

Instead, Flying Fish signs artists like steel guitarists Buddy Emmons and Doug Jernigan, fiddlers Buddy Spicher and Vassar Clements and dobroist Mike Auldridge to contracts for individual records. Buddy Emmons Sings Bob Wills, Emmons' and Spicher's *American Sampler* and Jernigan's *Roadside Rag* are fine examples.

New ones include Hartford's *All In The Name Of Love* and Norman Blake's *Blackberry Blossom*. A live Jethro Burns album will be out early in 1978, when the company plans to start more promotion. Flying Fish albums and tapes are distributed by GRT.

**CMH**—Over the past two years Arthur Smith, best known for *Guitar Boogie*, and partner Martin Haerle quietly signed up some of the biggest names in bluegrass, like Mac Wiseman, the Stonemans, the Osborne Brothers, Lester Flatt and Don Reno. They have also streamlined the business aspects of bluegrass, assuring two albums a year by each artist and distributing them worldwide.

"We realized there was a market for bluegrass. We also realized there wasn't a marketplace," says Smith, who's been in the business for 40 years and produces the albums at his Charlotte studio. "If you wanted 10 artists you had to order from 10 different places. We believed we had to go in with clout." That's what CMH was able to do, requiring that its albums be put in a rack clearly marked bluegrass so they wouldn't be lost among all the country records.

"What we're doing, and no one has done it before us, is upgrading bluegrass," Smith explains. "We don't hesitate to use piano, drums and electrified instruments. To reach a mass market we have a lot of innovations. We like to work with artists who write their own material. We think '78 will be a great year for us."

The new approach is evident on *Mac Wiseman Sings Gordon Lightfoot*. Drums and a fiddle section were used. "To be successful, you've got to make a commitment to bluegrass. We've made that commitment," Smith says. "Our product has to be better than what the artist has done elsewhere. We make as good looking and good sounding an album as anyone in the business."

Smith's multi-million dollar operation also includes publishing, and last year he acquired Johnny Cash's House of Cash and Song of Cash, including songs by Cash and the Statler Brothers.

**Door Knob**—"A small label has to have a better product than a large label does," owner Gene Kennedy says. "Fortunately, material is not really a problem if you open the doors and see the writers who

can't get in to the majors.

"To me, an independent label is people who are sincere about what they're doing and can't get to first base with the majors."

Kennedy sincerely wants to give the public a brand new, modern Peggy Sue. He thinks her talent was overlooked before. Kennedy says he broke Crystal Gayle's first top 10 record, *I Cried The Blue Right Out Of My Eyes*, and he believes Loretta Lynn's other singing sister can become a star, too.

"I think Peggy (Loretta's other sister) has more charisma and feeling," he says. "She's just a super, super little talent. She's-gonna happen. We started out to make it and we're not going to give up."

Kennedy enlarged his operation last spring by buying World International Group (WIG) to handle his promotion and distribution. Kennedy also produces Jerry Wallace for BMA (Best Music of America) and WIG distributes BMA and Pinnacle, a new label that has Tommy Overstreet.

**True**—This company is barely a year old, and includes Claude King and—are you ready for this—that laid-back Tiny Tim. King is best known for *Wolverton Mountain*, a big hit in 1962. His first single for True was called *Cotton Dan*.

Mundo Earwood's *Behind Blue Eyes* was re-released, but he was later dropped. Dave Conway made the charts with *If You're Gonna Love You Gotta Hurt* and Leon Everett had one of the flood of Elvis tributes, *Goodbye King of Rock and Roll*. It sold about 100,000.

Clyde Brown Jr., a wealthy Kentucky coal and oil man, owns Worldwide Music, which includes True.

**Corral**—Sunset Boulevard in Beverly Hills is a famous enough address and that's where you'll find this new company which claims 34 country artists, including Charlie Walker, Charlie Louvin and Tex Williams. Big Bill Smith, a singer from Bakersfield, started Corral.

"He's been working this up in his head for a long time," says his daughter, Laura, the promotion director who wants to be a singer herself. "We don't charge the artist for production or promotion. We're working for the artist, not for profit as a record company. If it flops we're the one who gets stuck."

Corral plans to release singles on all its artists this year. The records will be handled by individual distributors.

"I hope they do make it," RCA's Bradley says of the small labels, which range from Philo Records in North Ferrisburg, Vt., to Corral in L.A. "I'm a strong believer that the more companies that put their roots in Nashville the healthier it is for all of us. I'm not one who wishes anyone bad luck."

Bradley also has probably the last word on why it's better for everyone if records are sold.

"You can't pour gravy on 'em and eat 'em." ■

# Records

## Billy Joe Shaver

Gypsy Boy  
Capricorn CPN-0192 \$4.98  
M8N-0192 (tape) \$5.98  
Star Rating: ★★★★★

**B**illy Joe Shaver burst onto the country music scene a few years back. His reputation as a songwriter had been steadily growing and soared after Waylon Jennings released his popular LP, *Honky-Tonk Heroes*, which was made up almost entirely of Billy Joe Shaver songs. A dozen hard years of struggle preceeded that success but by now Billy Joe's credentials as a country songwriter go unquestioned.

Produced by Emmylou Harris' producer-husband, Brian Ahern, *Gypsy Boy* is a bit more laid-back than *Wings* (Billy Joe's second album on Capricorn) and differs from his previous releases in a way that's bound to bring criticism from some quarters. It's simply that, Billy Joe Shaver the songwriter's songwriter, has dared to record some material other than his own. They're songs that seem tailor-made, however, particularly the two by Bob Carpenter, the title cut *Gypsy Boy* and *The Believer*, which represent Billy Joe's particularly mystic (at times almost eerie) romantic streak. In a similar vein there's Jack Duncan's *God Sing*, and Billy Joe's own *Silver Wings of Time* which is the best of a good lot and one of the strongest cuts on the album. Rodney Crowell contributed *I'm Going Crazy In ¾ Time*, and *Billy B Damned*, which sounds like an early Kristofferson tune, was written by Steven Rhymer. Billy Joe does some of his more famous songs, which were recorded by others, for the first time—*Honky Tonk Heroes*, *Slow Rollin' Low* and the sensitive ballad co-written with Waylon Jennings, *You Asked Me To*. Two songs co-written with Bobby Bare, one of Billy Joe's earliest supporters, *We Stayed*



*Too Long At The Fair* and *Chicken On The Ground*, wherein Billy Joe exclaims that "life was finger lickin' good" and gets away with it, round out the album.

Ahern handles Billy Joe with a light touch, the production is not slick or cute but at the same time no part of it sounds

like a jam session either. The array of musicians selected for the album seem perfectly suited to the task. Somehow a steel guitar was slipped in (despite Billy Joe's avowed disdain of that instrument), but most of the slack is taken up with the excellent dobro work of Ben Keith, James Burton and Gerry McGee. Mickey Raphael does his usual great job on harmonica. The mandolin, viola, and banjo make appropriate appearances. There are the usual famous guest appearances; in this case Willie Nelson, Randy Scruggs, and, of course, Emmylou Harris. Nelson helps out Billy Joe with vocals and gut string guitar on a moving version of *You Asked Me To*.

NELSON ALLEN

## Ronnie Milsap

It Was Almost Like A Song  
RCA APL1-2439 \$4.98  
APS1-2439 (tape) \$5.98  
Star Rating: ★★★★★

**I** suppose I like this latest Ronnie Milsap album, because I like almost everything he's done, but I find myself wanting to whisper in his ear, "Cut loose!" I mean, the reason he's on RCA in the first place is that he used to play private parties at the Presley household, back when he was the latest "white Ray Charles" to come down the pike. But he seems to stick to rather polite country songs on his records, occasionally breaking out with something like *I Hate You* or *20-20 Vision*. I bet there are plenty of people who still associate him with that awful song about Captain Crunch in the morning.



There is, thank heaven, nothing that pale on this album, although *Here In Love* is almost as silly, and songs like *What A Difference You've Made In My Life*, *Long-Distance Memory* and *Crystal Fallin' Rain* are definite pop-country hits, but I know that Milsap has a strong talent for communicating emotion, and the songs here just aren't that strong. Only a Mickey Newbury gem, *The Future Is Not What It Used To Be*, demonstrates Ronnie Milsap at his peak power, and one song an album isn't too hot a batting average. But, I'm still whispering "Cut loose!"

EJD WARD



**How We Rate The Albums:** 5 Stars...Album of the Month  
 4 Stars...Excellent 3 Stars...Very Good 2 Stars...Good  
 1 Star...Fair 0 Stars...Poor

**Merle Haggard and the Strangers**

A Working Man Can't Get Nowhere Today  
 Capitol ST-11693 \$4.98  
 8XT-11693 (tape) \$5.98  
 Star Rating: ★★ ★

This is one weird Merle Haggard album, folks, but I do believe you're going to like it, especially if you were as appalled by his Ramblin' Fever debut on MCA. What A Working Man... seems to be a bunch of left-over tracks from the Capitol days thrown together to meet a contractual obligation. The fact that it outshines any album he's done in a couple of years makes you wonder.

Of course, there's one big advantage, in that most of the songs here are classics: *Making Believe*, *Blues Stay Away From Me*, Hank Williams' - *Moanin' The Blues*, Bob Wills' *Blues For Dixie*, and an inventive tribute, *Goodbye Lefty*,



that mixes a half-dozen lines and melodies from classic Frizzell songs into one song of praise. For those of you who never got over *Okie From Muskogee*, there's the title track and a scurrilous bit of maybe-racism (I can't quite figure out if it is or not), *I'm A White Boy*, which is not one of Merle's finer moments no matter how you look at it.

I wonder how many of these curious compendia Capitol might have saved up? And what are the details of Hag's Capitol/MCA switch?

ED WARD

**Mel McDaniel**

Gentle To Your Senses  
 Capitol ST-11694 \$4.98  
 8ST-11694 (tape) \$5.98  
 Star Rating: ★★ ★★ ★



It's about time somebody in Nashville realized that Mel McDaniel could do more than cruise around in his decrepit red pick-up truck and look scenic. After letting him cruise for way too long on a singles contract, Capitol finally let Mel cut an album—and it's superb.

McDaniel's voice is a little bit smoother than fellow Combine Music songster Kris Kristofferson; a little bit rougher than Johnny Duncan's—and every bit as sensual as both. Mel McDaniel's voice is an old country music kind of voice, reminiscent of a Merle Haggard or even a Lefty Frizzell, of a time when all the confusion and jingoism about "country" was yet

**Joe Barry**

Joe Barry  
 ABC DOT DO-2085 \$4.98  
 8-2085 (tape) \$5.98  
 Star Rating: ★★ ★★ ★

This record could slip right by you. It doesn't look like anything special and the name Joe Barry probably doesn't mean a thing. Unless you happen to remember a string of hits from the very early sixties which included *Teardrops In My Heart*, *You Don't Have To Be A Baby To Cry*, *Little Papoose*, and the classic *I'm A*

*Fool To Care*.

The blues are all over this record, but it's very much a country record too. Hank's *Cold, Cold Heart*, Lefty's *Always Late* and the timeless *Prisoner's Song* are all included on this new album from ABC. There's also Delbert McClinton's *If You Really Want Me To, I'll Go*, a strangely but successfully re-worked *It's A Sin To Tell A Lie*, and Ivory Joe Hunter's memorable *I Almost Lost My Mind*. But perhaps the best cuts are two songs which



**ALBUM OF THE MONTH**

to come. He makes country sound good again, without making it sound like the Nashville Sound.

The love songs on *Gentle To Your Senses* (such as *Reachin' High For Rainbows*) are genuinely pretty. The humorous songs (such as *Plastic Girl*) are genuinely funny. From the opening title cut, *Gentle To Your Senses*, *Easy On Your Mind*, to the closing *Have A Dream On Me* (still my favorite after all these years), McDaniel doesn't make a bad move. (Note: Although no self-respecting woman should admit to liking much less laughing at *Plastic Girl*, an odd ode to an inflatable friend, it does get under your skin, vinyl or otherwise).

Admittedly, McDaniel has help. His friends, the musical geniuses at Combine Music, have pooled their talents to write a slew of winners, in addition to providing a pro-

ducer (Johnny "Dog" MacRae) and a studio (The Rat Hole, formerly used for cutting demos). *T.J.'s Last Ride*, by Dennis Burnin' Love Linde, *Reachin' High For Rainbows*, by J. Vann, and *Have A Dream On Me*, by Bob Morrison, are all from the Combine stable, as well as McDaniel's own composition, *Roll Your Own*. MacRae's totally unpretentious production is crisp and down-to-earth, never overstating or overpowering McDaniel's voice. The back-up musicians and vocalists are equally excellent, notably Chip Young's guitar, Stu Basore's steel and Johnny Gimble's fiddle, always complementing McDaniel's own voice.

With friends like these and talent like his own, it's a wonder Mel McDaniel has been just cruising for so long.

MARY ELLEN MOORE

are among the best ever written by Jimmy Donley (the legendary Houston songwriter who committed suicide in 1962), *You're Why I'm So Lonely* and *Think It Over*. The production is not slicked up; voices are used on a few cuts but they don't intrude too badly, and in a few instances actually seem to fit, especially on the gospel-like intro to *Think It Over*. Barry's vocals are flawless, adding a depth of feeling to each line.

NELSON ALLEN

# Records



**Larry Gatlin**  
*Love Is Just A Game*  
 Monument MG 7616 \$4.98  
 MGT 7616 (tape) \$5.98  
 Star Rating: ★★★★★

I find it no surprise that Larry Gatlin is on Monument, produced by Fred Foster. After all, that's the team that did so much for Roy Orbison. Not that Larry's an Orbison imitator by any means, no, it's just that he shares with him a voice of amazing range, both musical

and emotional, and that they both put out records you could either call pop-tinged country or country-tinged pop. Larry Gatlin's records show up on the country charts only, so I guess that puts him in the former category.

Of course, us country fans are way hipper than pop fans, and have been for some time, so it's probably just a matter of time till they catch up with us. Meanwhile, *Love Is Just A Game* shows Larry Gatlin get-

ting botter and better, writing and singing tunes like the title tune, *I Just Wish You Were Someone I Love*, and a version of *If Practice*



*Makes Perfect* that cuts Johnny Rodriguez' to shreds. The arrangements are understated, for pop, anyway, and the harmonies are some of the freshest I've heard outside of bluegrass. In fact, the only clunker is an *Alleluia* that closes the album, and sounds like some of those "daringly modern" pieces "progressive" churches featured twenty years ago.

The album is a perfect example of that widening area between country and pop. It's only a matter of time before Larry Gatlin crosses over.

ED WARD



**Linda Ronstadt**  
*Simple Dreams*  
 Asylum 6E-104 \$5.98  
 CT-8104 (tape) \$6.98  
 Star Rating: ★★★★★

This is not a country disc, which is the only reason I don't give it a full four stars. Linda's sheer artistry comes through here perhaps as in no other album she's done, and in an incredible variety of music.



Two numbers were arranged by Linda herself—*Old Paint* and *I Never Will Marry*. Two other pieces—*Sorrow Lives Here* and *Maybe I'm Right*—almost sound classical, the former deftly spiced with a dash of '30s torch. From there on, it's rock, baby, and not country rock, either.

Buddy Holly's *It's So Easy* is '50s rock 'n roll flavored with '70s rock. *Carmelita* is a '60s-ish ode to hard-core ghetto down-and-outness, with the county having the audacity to cut off not only the methadone but the welfare check as well (what cads!). The obtusely worded *Simple Man*. *Simple Dream* is a stately, rock-tinted lament to a pain in the ass who, I assume, is, was, or might have been, someone's love.

ARTHUR J. MAHER

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by Hans Fantel

# AUDIO

## Accessories After The Fact

In the flush of excitement over buying a new stereo system, you may have overlooked a few small items—seeming trifles that cost just a few dollars but can greatly improve the performance of your sound rig. I'm thinking of record cleaners, stylus-pressure gauges, tape head demagnetizers, and similar small accessories that many audio fans tend to pass by on their shopping trips. Not only will you want to get these gizmos for yourself; they also make welcome and inexpensive gifts for your hi-fi friends who have everything—almost.

Starting right at the stylus tip—the place at which the music enters the sound system—a whole gaggle of gadgets is now available to upgrade performance at this crucial point. For example, a stylus-pressure gauge lets you adjust the downward force of the tone arm to the exact value specified for your phono cartridge. True, most modern tone-arms have built-in stylus pressure scales. But some of these are not very accurate, and it's reassuring to check the tone-arm adjustment against your own "independent" calibration standard.

One of the neatest and most accurate devices of this kind is the Shure SFG-2 stylus pressure gauge, which operates on the principle of the beam balance and is finely calibrated in steps of 0.05 gram. A similar gauge sold by Radio Shack (Catalog No. 42-137) is a real bargain at \$1.99.

The stylus tip also should be kept absolutely clean. Those little dust balls that often stick to the stylus after it sweeps through the record grooves are the most frequent cause of fuzzy sound or outright groove skipping. In fact, service technicians tell me that most customer complaints about poor tracking and distorted sound stem from nothing else but dust gathering on the stylus. But if you try to scrape off those hardened specks of dirt and grime from the stylus with your fingers, you run the risk of bending the delicate stylus shank. A far better idea is to use a special stylus brush, such as Discwasher's SC-1 Stylus Cleaner (\$6)

whose handsome walnut handle contains a magnifying mirror for easy stylus inspection. A special cleaning solution for stylus tips has been concocted by Audio Technica (AT-607, \$3) which loosens encrusted grime stuck to the stylus without damaging any of the rubber or plastic materials in the stylus mount.

Probably the most important of all audio accessories is a good record cleaning device.

Among the many available record cleaners, one of the most effective is the Discwasher (\$15), which applies a special cleaning solution to the record and whose bristles are shaped and angled to reach all the way down into the groove to flip out the dirt. A similar brush with a built-in reservoir for the cleaning fluid is Radio-



The Pixoff Record Cleaner.

Shack's Hydro-Stor (\$10), and a less expensive—if not quite as effective—version of this kind of cleaning device is the Watts "Disc-Preener" at \$6.50. A different sort of record cleaner is Audio Technica's AT-60002 (\$10) which sits on the turntable like a second tone arm.

Whisking the dust off is complicated by the fact that static electricity—the kind that makes your fingers give off sparks after walking on a rug—draws dust particles from the air and holds them firmly on the record surface. Just recently, an ingenious gadget has been invented to counteract this. It looks like a pistol. You point it at the record and pull the trigger. Inside the gun is a high-voltage source that shoots an electric charge from the muzzle—strong enough to neutralize the

static on the record but so low in current that there is no danger of shock. Called the Discotron, this clever gizmo sells for \$20 at Radio Shack, and a similar device, called the Zerostat, is offered by Discwasher for \$20.

None of this works, however, if your records have long been neglected and a pasty goo of dirt and fat from your fingerprints has firmly settled deep down in the grooves. In that case, more radical clean-up methods are called for, like a working-over with a Pixoff. This is a roller with a special rubbery surface that molds itself right down into every wiggle as you guide it across the record. Being slightly sticky, the rubbery material picks up dirt from all the way down the groove bottom, thereby restoring to mistreated records their long-lost brilliance. You can get a Pixoff at many specialized audio dealers for \$17.50.

If you are a cassette fan, you will benefit from an accessory designed to keep your tape machine in top condition. Several prominent cassette makers, such as TDK, Maxell, and 3-M, now offer special cassettes designed to clean and demagnetize the heads, selling for about \$5. You just "play" these cassettes. They won't make any music, but after a minute or so, the machine is rid of its "head-aches."

Anyone taping live performances will sooner or later want a microphone mixer to feed several microphones to a tape recorder and set the input levels separately. That way you can adjust the balance between a singer and the back-up group or bring up various instruments or voices for optimum balance. Sony offers several such mixers with prices starting at \$30 for their Model MX-65, and Radio Shack has a low-cost mixer (Cat. No. 33-920) for \$15.

I have merely skimmed the wide field of audio accessories. The best way to find out what's available is to check out one of the larger audio shops. You're bound to find something you need—but chances are that you won't know you need it till you see it. ■

## Fat Sounds in Garlic City

GILROY, CALIFORNIA—Gilroy's garlic harvest is just over, and the trucks whizzing up the section of US 101 known as Blood Alley are now laden with tomatoes destined for Contadina. But it just may be that the Garlic Capitol of the World's best—if not most famous—export, if it's in those trucks, is in the cab, not the trailer. It's in quite a few restaurants in Santa Cruz, health-food stores in San Jose and even a few bars. It's only air, but the people who make it think of it as nourishing—even fattening.

I'm speaking of KFAT, 94.5 FM, California's first (and, so far, only) full-time progressive country station. Until a couple of radio crazies, Lorenzo Milam and Jeremy Lansman bought KSND, a dying "adult country" station in agricul-

Milam and Landsman changed all that in a hurry. Acting on the advice of programming consultant Larry Yurdin, they instituted the progressive country formula, and the small surrounding area that got their weak signal went beserk. Santa Cruz, a university town with a strong back-to-the-land hippie vibe to it, was particularly receptive, and advertising started trickling in. Somehow, Milam conned the FCC into allowing them a gigantic power increase, and Lansman stuck the transmitter atop Loma Prieta, the largest hill in the area.

Still, they were working with little or no money, and that caused certain problems with the staff. (I did a Saturday night show with Black Shadow, and we quit after three weeks when Yurdin was

Sullivan. Besides displaying a real talent for keeping a listening audience entertained with her creative mixes of records, Sullivan edits the Fatgrams. As a community service, KFAT maintains two telephone-answering machines, one in San Jose, the other in Santa Cruz, on which KFAT listeners can place messages ranging from rides wanted to lost dogs, to lost love, to psychotic raving. Edited into a single tape, these twice-a-day slices of life are as entertaining as the music.

It's just this kind of two-way communication with the listeners that makes KFAT so well-loved. Listeners are always calling with advice, requests and weirdness. It's clear the station has touched a nerve, even if Laura Allen is still not happy with it, saying "I think we need to shoot for more community rapport, more involvement with our community, and more news of what's going on there."

So has success spoiled KFAT? No, it was already ruined, and that's the way the staff likes it. Whichever staffer has been evicted this month sleeps in the front room, the control board still looks like a high school kid's science project, and the sound, while it's evolved, is still basically the same as ever. The only difference is, with the power increase a year ago, KFAT was on the map in a big way: on the map of Oakland, San Jose, Big Sur, Stockton, Vallejo and just about everywhere else San Francisco's big FM rocker, KSAN, doesn't blank out the signal with its Jive 95 blandness. The power increase managed to scare some of the local stations into relating with their audience a bit more. San Jose's FM rock station, KOMA, ordered its staff to "funk it up" a bit, since KFAT's informality seemed to be a big part of its appeal, and Oakland's AM country station, KNEW, which is floundering around for an image, now plays a rather self-conscious kind of "progressive country" in the evening.

"I dunno," Sullivan says, sitting in the control room, flipping records onto the turntable and juggling advertisements on tape cartridges, "this shouldn't have worked. I mean—*Gilroy*?" Well, why not Gilroy? Progressive country in California's got to start somewhere, and The Fat One's really doing the job right.

ED WARD



Left to right, KFAT's D.J.s, Sullivan, The Ozone Ranger, Gordy, Sister Tiny & Buffalo Bob.

tural Gilroy, country fans had to settle for a John Denver/Olivia Newton-John/Jim Croce/soft-rock-laden version of their favorite music. Heaven forbid that one of those stations should play anything too hillbilly, like Loretta Lynn or George Jones! Lonely truckers going along 101 or Route 5 had to twist their dials and hope that a freak of the ozone would bring them Bill Mack. Yet there was an audience out there. Not so much the second-generation Okies who supported the "soft country" stations, but the young people who had survived psychedelia. Berkeley beer-bars reverberated with country from Commander Cody, Asleep at the Wheel, the Oso Family and a dozen others five nights a week, and down in Santa Cruz, bands like Larry Hosford and Oga-nookie fiddled and twanged to packed houses. Their fans, meanwhile, bought what records they could find.

unable to come up with the \$10 each, tank of gas, and dinner they'd agreed to pay us.) Finally, Yurdin was replaced by Laura Ellen Hobbs, who solidified the station's programming. "We're not like other progressive country stations," she says today. "It's sort of California progressive country. See, around here, we've got KPFA for obscure music, KSAN and KOMA for rock and roll, so we've got to go for the stuff they don't play."

It's quite a mixture. Says DJ Gordy Broshear "We don't just play standard country and western—we play old country, cowboy music, swing, new country, roots music like Clifton Chenier or Barbeque Bob, old-timey stuff, bluegrass, newgrass, unclassifiable stuff like the Louvin Brothers, and, yes, even Linda Ronstadt gets played."

Gordy is followed, afternoons, by a raven-haired beauty who calls herself

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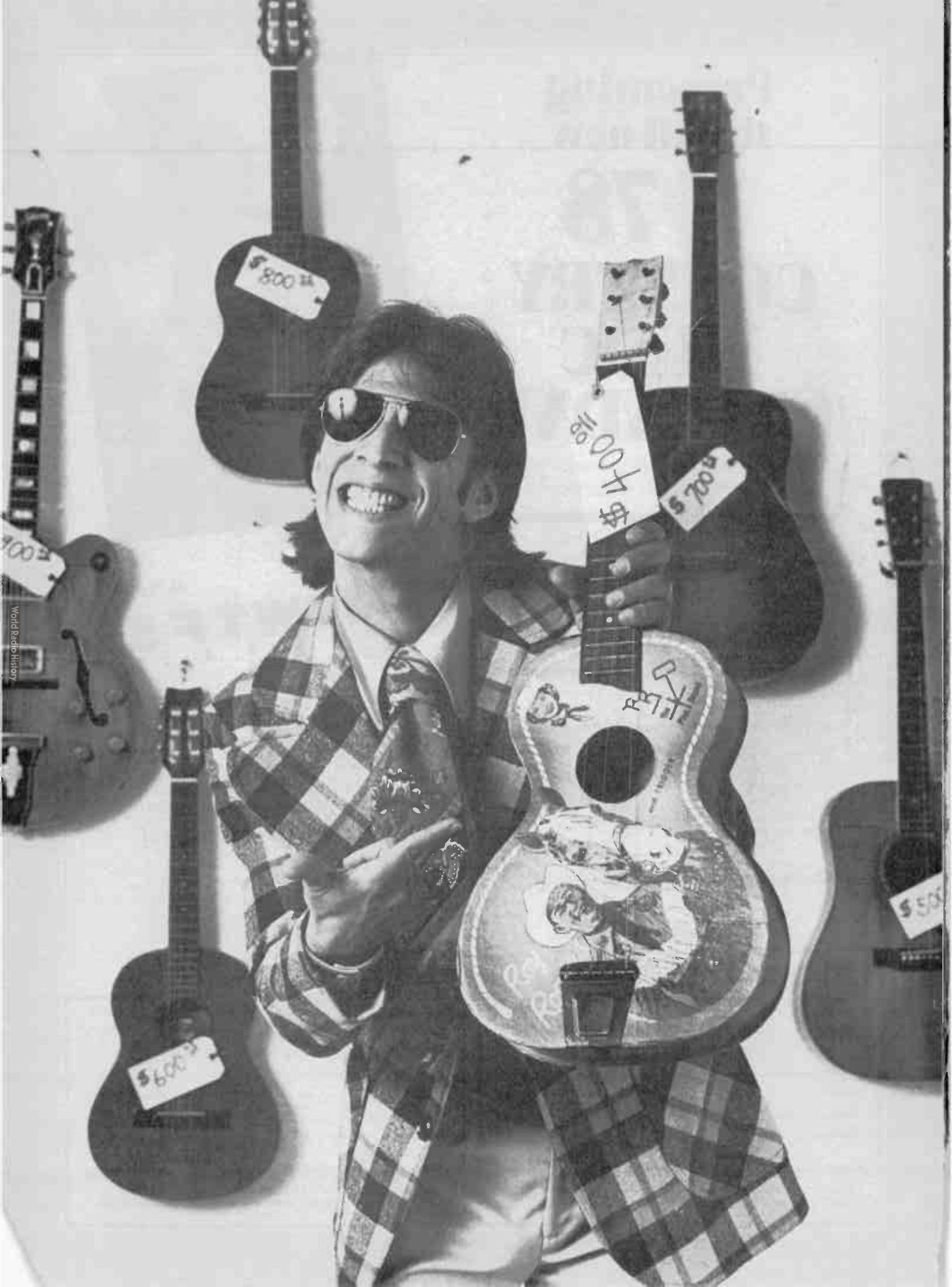
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A comprehensive look at finding that all important first guitar.

# PICKERS

by RICH KIENZLE

I never bought the first guitar I ever played. Instead, I rented it from the accordion player I took guitar lessons from back in 1964. At the time it really wasn't the worst instrument to learn on. The heavy gauge strings, sharp enough to double as cheese cutters, sat only a quarter-inch off the fingerboard. The fretmarkers, pickguard and binding all were expertly applied with white paint and a stencil. And the tone? Well, plywood has a certain *resonance* you just don't find in guitars much these days. It was with a few regrets (and considerable blistering on my left fingertips) that I returned it after just a few weeks when I bought my first guitar, a Kay electric with two pickups, a rock maple fingerboard not unlike a Telecaster's and a golden sunburst body similar to that of a Les Paul. Considering the \$89 price tag, it was a pretty good deal. I discovered that the hard way a couple of years later when I traded it in on a \$300 junker built by a major manufacturer that looked better than it played. But I was lucky; when I was learning the rudiments, except for those first few weeks, I had a decent instrument to learn them on.

My friend Barry wasn't so fortunate. He came over to my place one wintry March afternoon in 1965 toting a fifteen buck Japanese archtop known as a "Zim-gar" in a plastic drycleaning bag. There was no warranty and no case. Since I had a few lessons under my belt, I was the local "expert," and he needed help tuning it. I picked my high E string and Barry began turning the Zim-gar's fake ivory plastic tuning key. Before he'd turned it three times, the key disintegrated into ivory plastic dust. Undaunted, he picked on his b string, turned the key and... SNAP! The same thing happened on the G, D and low E strings and we finally wound up tuning the thing by turning the metal shafts with a pair of pliers.

Both stories have a moral: it wasn't all that easy for the beginning guitarist to find a good, solidly built, inexpensive instrument just a decade ago. Not that there weren't plenty of cheapo guitars around. Kay, Harmony and Dan-electro, three American companies (the latter defunct) had made good low-cost guitars for years. But the majority on the market were

## Pickin' Your First Guitar

Japanese or Korean made.

That first guitar is the important one. You'll learn the rudiments of playing, acquire and break bad habits.

A lot of people seem to have stories to tell about picking up a Martin or Gibson at an auction or flea market for \$10, and it does happen sometimes. But don't you figure on being that fortunate. The place to start is your local music store. Before you start shopping, figure what your budget will stand, preferably between \$90 and \$275, allowing \$15 to \$25 for a case. That way you can narrow your choices. Anything in this range will assure you not only an acceptable guitar to learn on, but give you a financial boost if you later decide to trade up to a professional-quality model. Don't be afraid to check more than one store, either. Plenty of discount music stores can offer up to 30 percent more off list price. If you've played enough to know the basics, go alone, but if you're starting from scratch, take the person who'll be teaching you or a friend who's knowledgeable.

Once in a store, let the salesperson know your price limits and check all the models, whether you prefer nylon or steel strings (I'd suggest starting with a nylon string acoustic) within your price limit. Even if you haven't played a note there's a few areas you should check.

Hold the guitar in playing position: does it feel comfortable, not too big or too small? Look at the tuning machines. Are the keys solid metal or cheap plastic? Are the connecting gears enclosed or open? The latter is preferable. Do the frets seem flat, shiny and smooth with no rough spots? To check for bowing, sight along the neck with the guitar lying flat. Check the body for cracking and look closely at the bridge. Do the strings seem securely

fastened there? If it's a pin-type bridge, do the pins holding the strings seem secure? If you have small hands, don't hesitate to ask for a ¾ size guitar even if it means further shopping.

The majority of reputable music dealers will be more than happy to let you examine and try out their wares, but there are exceptions. I know of discount joints whose clerks become extremely abrupt once they discover that you're not spending a fortune. They gripe if you ask to see more than one model or want to try it out for more than ten seconds. If by chance you run into a situation like this, leave. You don't need their hostility, and they don't deserve your business. Fortunately only a handful of places handle their affairs this way; most salespeople are friendly, knowledgeable and can be quite helpful to the beginner. Be sure to look hard at warranties and steer clear of any dirt-cheap bargain, used or new, without one. Occasionally, in the areas surrounding some big-city music stores, you'll run into a sharpie who'll offer you, usually in a whisper, a \$500-plus guitar for "only \$100." Usually it's right out in their car truck if you want to look. Don't. It's one thing to play a hot guitar, quite another to buy one.

Though there's an element of risk and no warranty, classified ads sometimes provide a good instrument at a low price. Check the ads carefully and be sure to note the brand, model and price. If possible, try to determine what the same model costs new. If you decide after contacting the seller to see the guitar, try to take along someone who can examine it. With a used instrument, condition is everything, and suggestions previously made on what to look for apply doubly here. If

(Continued on page 62)

# PICKER'S

## NEW PRODUCTS

*Gifts to brighten up the Post-Christmas Blues.*



If you've ever had one of those almost irresistible rock-and-roll urges to storm across the stage, slamming on your axe like a madman while the audience watched in awe, but found yourself stymied by the (sigh) cord-take heart.

J.D. Electronics has come to the re-

scue with the Nasty Cordless, an inexpensive system for the cordless operation of an electric guitar.

Basically, the Nasty Cordless is a highly refined wireless FM transmitter, operating on the blank spots in the commercial FM band.

Suggested retail price of the transmitter is in the \$200 range, while the receiver-amps are in the \$250 range.

Inquiries should be addressed to J.D. Electronics, P.O. Box 2205, Berkeley, Calif. 94702.



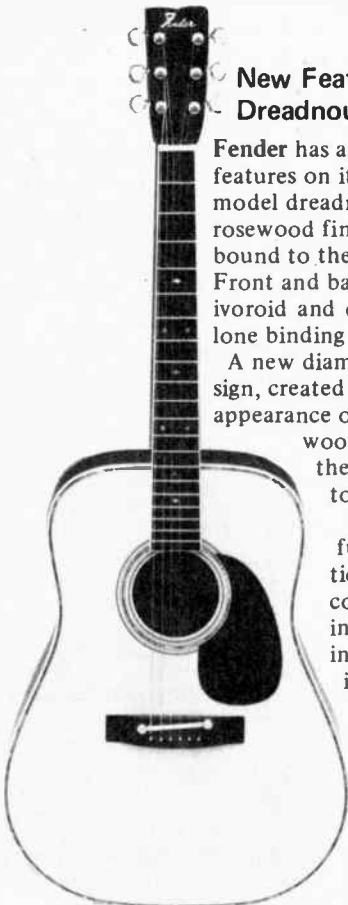
### New Features For F-65 Dreadnought

Fender has announced several new features on its popular F-65 model dreadnought. The 20-fret rosewood fingerboard is now fully bound to the mahogany neck. Front and back body bindings are ivoroid and display simulated abalone binding inlay.

A new diamond snowflake design, created by Fender stylists, appearance of the F=65's rosewood slides and back and the close grain spruce top.

Machine heads are fully enclosed and meticulously finished for consistent, easy turning. Scale is 25 1/2 inches. Length 41 inches; width 16 inches; depth 4 7/8 inches.

Fender Musical Instruments, 1300 E. Valencia, Fullerton, Ca. 92631.



### C.F. Martin adds Goya line of guitars, banjos and mandolins.

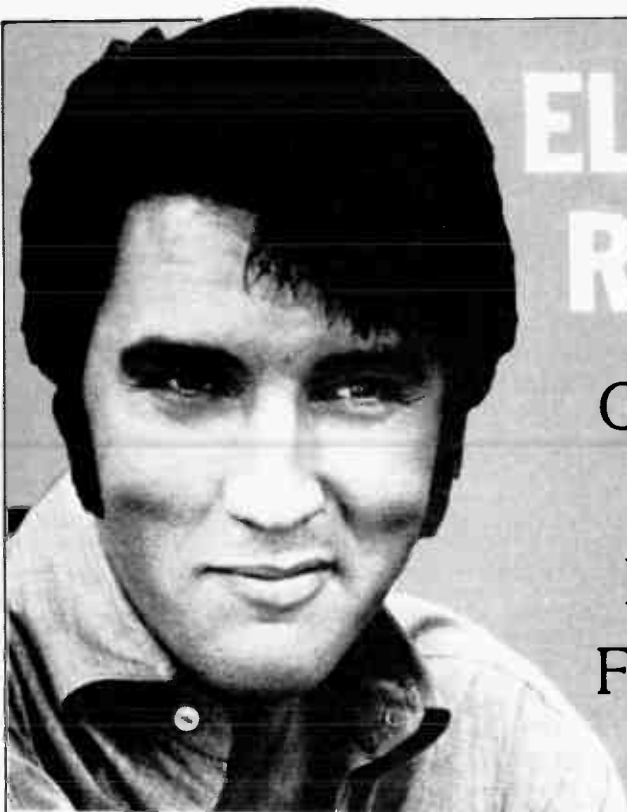
Now that Christmas is over, and the winter doldrums have set in, a new guitar might be the ticket for your budding picker. C.F. Martin, in addition to their excellent name line offers a number of lower priced guitars, all built to the exacting Martin standards. In addition to Martin's Sigma line, (recently covered in Picker's Products), Martin also imports the Goya line of moderately priced guitars, as well as a Goya banjo and a mandolin.

"We want to be able to supply musicians with a full, comprehensive range of fretted instruments," says Preston Rishaw, marketing manager for Martin. "The development of the Goya line makes it possible for us to answer the needs of many additional players."

The Goya line includes six classic guitars, two grand concert guitars, four electric guitars, two 12-string guitars, a mandolin and a banjo. Suggested retail prices run from a very low low of \$79 for a classic to approximately \$500 for a top-of-the-line classic, electric or dreadnought.



Photo From Page 86 'Illustrated Elvis'—Grosset & Dunlap, Inc.



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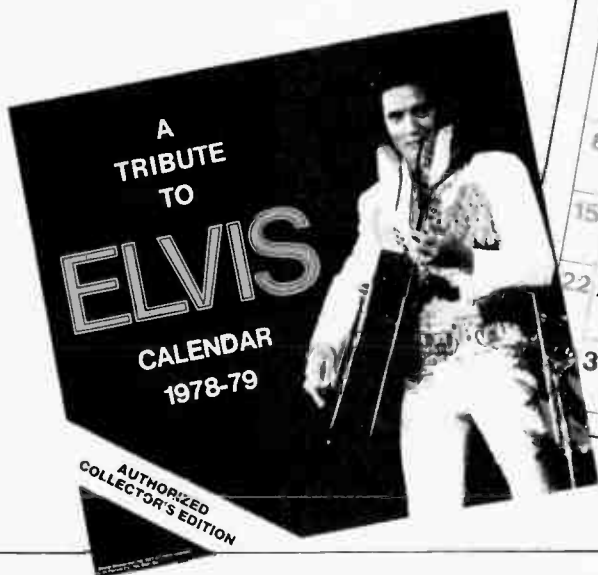
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### THE LIFE AND DEATH OF ELVIS

**The King Is Dead, But This New "Scrapbook" Of His Life Will Help His Memory Live On Forever.**

Here is a beautiful book about a beautiful person ... Elvis Presley ... a legend in his own time. Now, follow the "King's" teenage years and beginning in music ... his big movies, his army life, the trauma of his mother's death ... his loves, his co-stars, his big hit records. But that's not all. You'll also read about the imitators ... Elvis' later years ... his death, America's final goodbye and his funeral. There's even a full chapter on how his musical peers saw him. This collector's edition is jam-packed with hundreds of pictures. There are over 30 photographs in glowing color, plus still portraits from every film he ever made. Many of the pictures form a personal "Elvis" photograph album. Also included is a complete listing of all the golden records Elvis cut. Elvis is gone now but his memory will live forever in this brand new volume. Order your copy now.

### THE ILLUSTRATED ELVIS

Here is another in the list of bestsellers on Elvis Presley. From "Heartbreak Hotel" to his triumphant comeback, this ILLUSTRATED ELVIS is a pictorial guide to Elvis's life, times, music, and films. It contains over 400 photos, many contributed by fans and shown here for the first time. But more than a scrapbook, it's an eye-popping photobiography that traces Elvis from his origins through his rise to world acclaim, lapse into relative obscurity, and reemergence as a star. For fans, this thoroughly documented book is a winner.

### ELVIS: A BIOGRAPHY

"Elvis is exciting throughout," wrote the L.A. Free Press of ELVIS, A BIOGRAPHY. Author Jerry Hopkins has put Elvis on display in this 1972 bestseller, now in its fourth printing. Here is the greatest legend of them all, from his humble beginnings to fame and fortune and a gold, crushed diamond Cadillac, his career in the army, his temper that destroyed friends and property...and the parties where he would sit surrounded by 20 or 30 girls eagerly waiting for a wee bit of attention. For Elvis fans, this classic is a must!

### MYSTERY TRAIN

Here is a revealing book about rock 'n' roll music and how it has helped shape American culture. But more importantly, it offers 48 on Elvis Presley, and to our thinking, they are the best pages ever written on "The King". Author Greil Marcus takes a whole new look at America, showing how singers like Elvis are as much a part of our culture as Henry Ford and Walt Whitman. He makes a persuasive case, for example, that you cannot understand America without understanding Elvis. This is truly a unique volume and one you should not miss.

### ELVIS PRESLEY POSTER BOOK, Vol. 2

This is the second volume in this totally unique poster book series. Like the first edition, it's a big 11" x 16 1/2", 24 pages of giant full color photos you won't find anywhere else. There is Elvis in the army...Elvis in concert...Elvis at his wedding reception...Elvis in scenes from his movies, and much more! There is even a discography of his greatest albums. So don't miss this colossal new book either.

### ELVIS: HIS FILMS AND CAREER

**The Definitive Work On The Life And Career Of The Late, Great "King Of Rock 'N' Roll."**

On September 9, 1956, appearing on the Ed Sullivan Show, Elvis Presley captured 82.6% of America's television audience—about 54 million viewers—an unbroken record until the Beatles in 1964. From that day until his recent passing, Elvis had been one of the major entertainment attractions. His films have mainly been hugely successful; his Vegas cabaret appearances have dwarfed all competition; and his international appearances have seen capacity crowds fighting for admission. Here, illustrated with nearly 400 photos, is the definitive work on the life and career of Elvis. Every film of his is documented, along with casts, credits, synopses and production notes. Here, too, is a warm biographical study of the shy youth who became "The King", along with everything about his cabaret, television and international appearances. There's even a listing of his records. You'll cherish it!

### ELVIS ELVIS ELVIS: 100 GREATEST HITS

For Elvis fans, this is the songbook you should not be without. ELVIS ELVIS ELVIS is 100 of "The Kings" greatest recorded hits, all arranged for voice, piano and guitar. Here is just a sample of a few of the hits you'll find words and music to: All Shook Up/Blue Suede Shoes/Can't Help Falling In Love/Crying In The Chapel/Don't Be Cruel/G.I. Blues/It's Now Or Never/Heartbreak Hotel/Hound Dog/I Want You, I Need You, I Love You/Love Me Tender/Return To Sender/We Call On Him/Cindy, Cindy/Good Luck Charm, 85 more!

### THE ELVIS PRESLEY SCRAPBOOK

This treasure of solid gold memories is presented in a photobiography as dazzling as the lame suits Elvis sported. Here is the life of the late, great "King Of Rock 'N' Roll"—from truckdriver to international legend—in over 250 photos and a descriptive filmography and discography. "Don't Be Cruel"... "Heartbreak Hotel"... "Burning Love"... they are all here to make the ELVIS PRESLEY SCRAPBOOK a blast from the past that will get all the rockers and boppers of all ages "all shook up". If you don't already own it, order yours now!

### ELVIS AMERICA AND US: Nov. '75

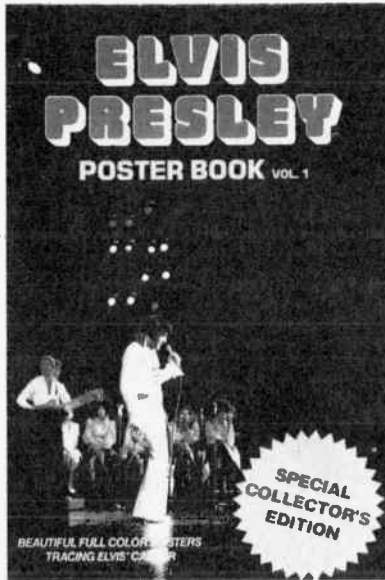
Here, while our limited supply lasts, is our outstanding Nov. '75 Elvis Cover-Story Issue, featuring over 11 pages and 12 photos on "ELVIS AND AMERICA." Don't miss it!

### ELVIS THE KING REMEMBERED: Dec. '77

Also available here, while our supply lasts, is the Dec. 1977 Special Elvis Memorial Issue you're looking at now. It's sure to be a collector's edition, so order your extra copies today!

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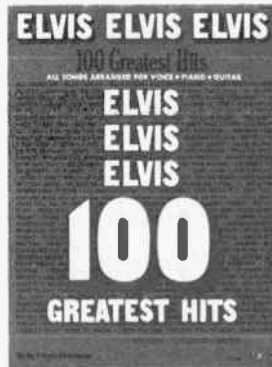
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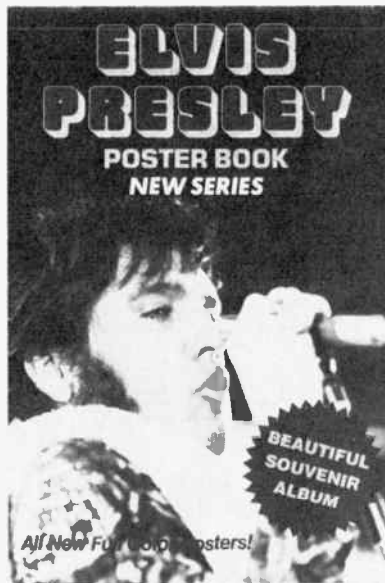
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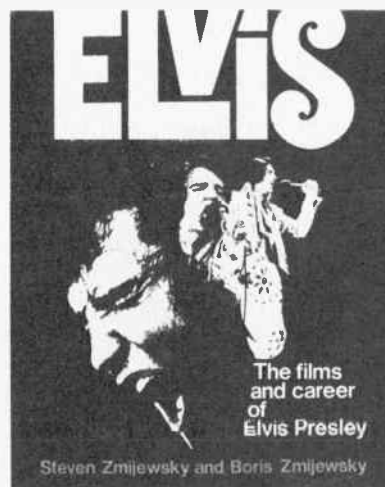


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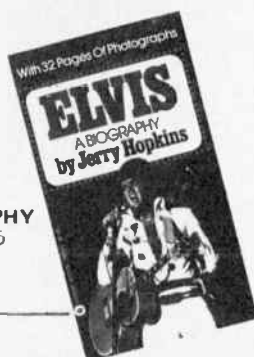


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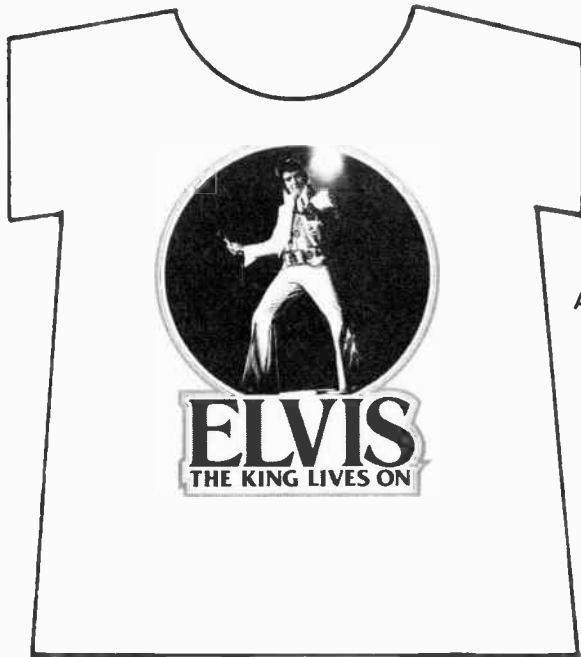
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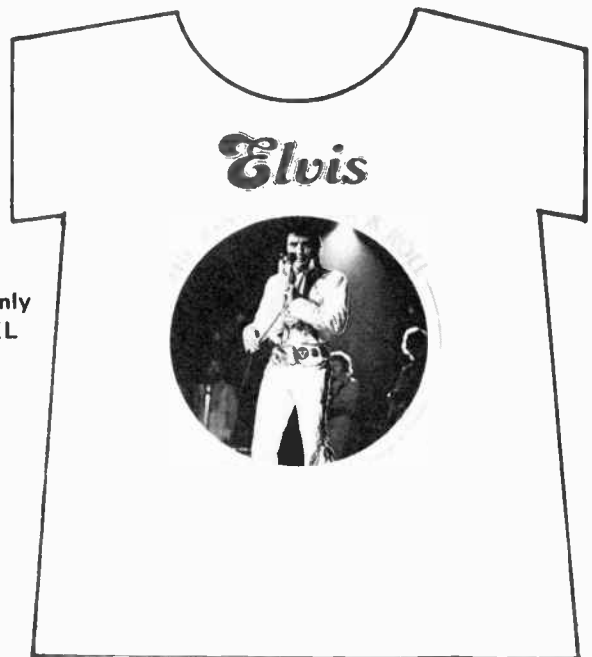
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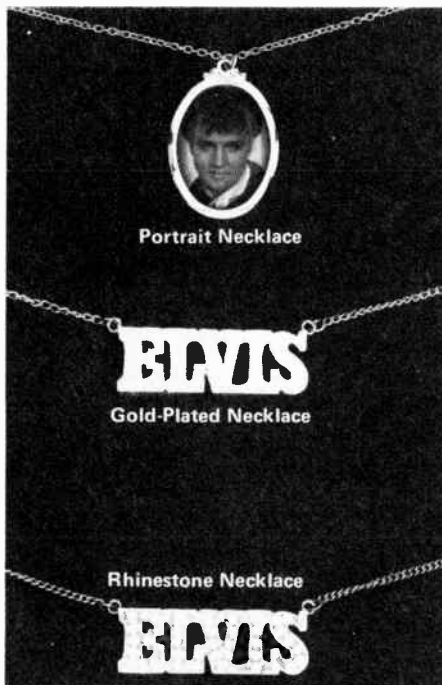
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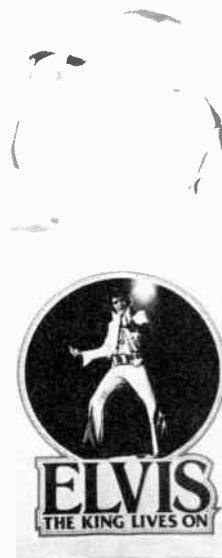
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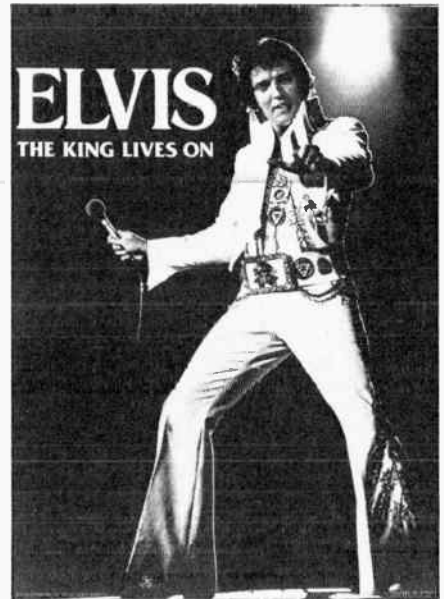


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# PICKERS

(Continued from page 55)

you feel a price is too high don't be afraid to haggle on it. Pay no attention to the owner's account of the guitar's age or how much (or little) it's been played. In the case of a parent selling a guitar for a youngster, ignore sob stories about the kid selling newspapers or building the World Trade Center to pay for it. Condition counts, not rhetoric.

What brands are best. Well, the number of budget-priced acoustics alone seems to increase monthly, and not all are purchased by amateurs. Harold Bradley, for example, the A-team Nashville studio guitarist, has an irreplaceable De Angelico costing thousands, but also uses a dirt-cheap Japanese classical guitar with an electric pickup on many recording sessions. Here, then, are the better known makes.

**Yamaha** is the daddy of low-priced quality guitars, appearing on the American market a decade ago. Like Martin, their factory in Japan is temperature controlled, and they select and age their wood with exceptional care. The result is construction that equals or surpasses many of the earlier American-made budget guitars. Even though today Yamaha is venturing into professional-quality, high-priced models, their budget line is as good now as a decade back. The G55A, a nylon-stringed classic guitar (\$89.50) is popular with beginners. Their steel-string line runs from the FG 45 (\$97.50) through the excellent dreadnought-size FG 180 (\$225) all the way up to the FG 295S (\$265) and FG 360N (\$376), two models whose flashy qualities are matched by features generally found on guitars twice the price. The tops are spruce and the woods run from mahogany and nato for the necks to rosewood

for the bridges and fingerboards. Figure an additional \$17 to \$25 for a case.

**Takamine**, another quality Japanese brand, has been around since 1962. Their dreadnought F-360 model comes complete with rosewood back and sides, a feature normally only found on \$7-800 American makes, for only \$230. It also comes in a left-handed model for \$289. The F-307 **Grand Concert** model is constructed a bit smaller, with spruce top and magogany back and sides, and lists for \$169.

Though your first guitar won't cost as much as a **Martin**, you can get one that's been inspected at the **Martin** factory in Nazareth, Pa. for a reasonable price. The **Sigma** line, built in Japan, features fifteen models including the classical CS-4 (\$99.50), the steel-string GCS-4 (\$125) built much like the far more expensive **Martin** 000-18 and the fancier **DR-9** (\$275), a D-28 replica with spruce top and laminated rosewood sides, back and fingerboard. These are good bets, since they're judged by **Martin's** legendary high standards.

One of the most exciting new budget guitars ever to come out is **Ovation's** new **Applause** line, built and designed much like the full-priced **Ovations** played by Glen Campbell and Tom T. Hall. Among the features are the Lyrachord fiberglass body in the distinctive roundback design, an unwarpable aluminum neck and tuning key assemblies that look rugged enough to survive World War III. But the most exciting feature is the price: the **Applause** series sits firmly in the \$150 price range. Its sturdiness rivals professional models costing four or five times as much. In fact, even professional guitarists on tight budgets would do well to check into these.

The **Guild Maderia** line exists under the same principles as **Sigma**. The instruments are made abroad, but undergo the same sort of thorough inspections as the American-made **Guilds** to insure quality. Models range from \$160 to \$325.

Other low priced lines are **Crestline**, the **Aria** models, which have been around almost as long as **Yamaha**, **Hondo II**, and **Conn**. **Aspen** has a full line of dreadnought-sized models ranging from \$195 to \$422 and a fine line of reasonably-priced classical models. **Carlos** features numerous acoustics, from classical to 12-strings.

Woody Guthrie once said "Get a kid a good guitar and he'll play it good; get him a bad one, he'll play it bad." That was a reply to his wife, who'd upbraided him for buying little Arlo a **Martin** to learn on. There's more than a little logic in that statement. A decent instrument won't necessarily make you a **Merle Travis** or **Jerry Reed**, but a \$25 cigarbox special may well keep you from ever getting past a one-finger G chord. With all of the high quality, low expense guitars on the market today if you do get stuck with a lemon, it's *your* fault.

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# RABBITT

(Continued from page 25)

of his success. He has taken a predominantly rock and roll record label, Elektra, and taught them the ins-and-outs of country music. He has reached out to the West Coast for management and public relations, taking the best they have to offer without even a hint of compromise in his Nashville-New Jersey hybrid music. His producer, David Malloy, is one of the finest of Nashville's new breed, who aren't afraid to go where they have to or spend what's necessary to make a good record.

Not only has Nashville assimilated Eddie Rabbitt, I think, but Eddie Rabbitt has assimilated Nashville. Sometimes, he says, Eddie Rabbitt sees the world as if he was on a satellite, watching everything happen from far away. When his buddies made it big, rather than despairing, Eddie Rabbitt saw it all from far away and wished them well. When he brought a halt to his own career, another Eddie Rabbitt sat watching in the wings, waiting for the right moment to take the third big step. In this, maybe, Eddie Rabbitt calculates without being calculating; plans without scheming. He held off touring until he could afford to tour; then he began a grueling tour in spite of a new bride ("She understands, I hope.").

The taping is over and Eddie Rabbitt is in a big hurry—a show in Memphis has been cancelled, and all of a sudden he's got a whole day to spend at home.

The MCA Records showcase is in progress, and as we go in Merle Haggard takes the stage. Eddie Rabbitt is walking fast, but as Merle starts playing Eddie's steps start slowing down, until by the time we reach the other end of the auditorium, he has slowed to a crawl. Finally, he comes to a complete stop.

"You don't mind if we stop a minute?" he asks. "I'd like to watch Merle for just a couple of minutes."

So we stand there, leaning against the wall, while Merle Haggard works his magic on an autumn afternoon. Down front, the fans file down in orderly rows to take a snapshot, then return to their seats. If the basis for rock and roll is energy, I think, then the basis for country music is love.

"Look at those people," Eddie whispers. "They love him, and that's a heavy thing."

He is quiet for a moment, watching the lines filing toward the front of the Opry House.

"That's it," he muses in the dark. "That is it." □

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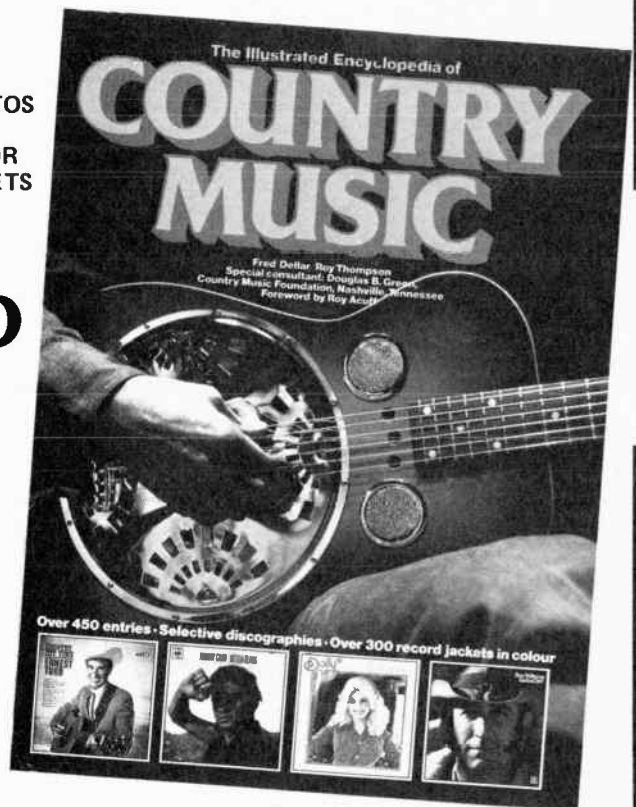
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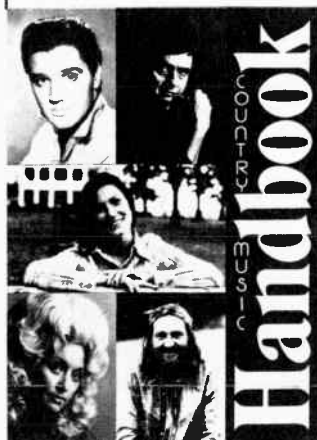
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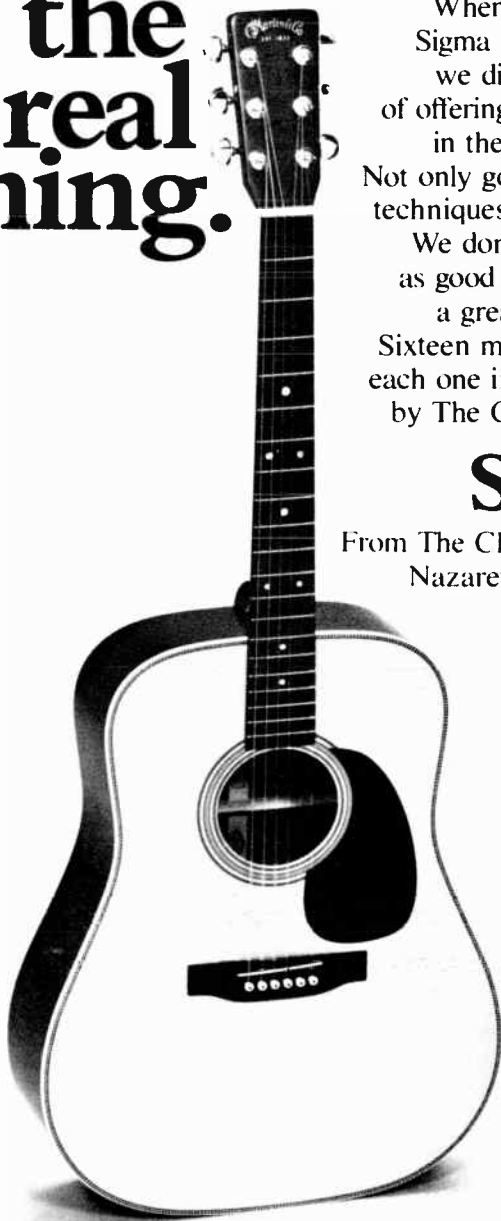
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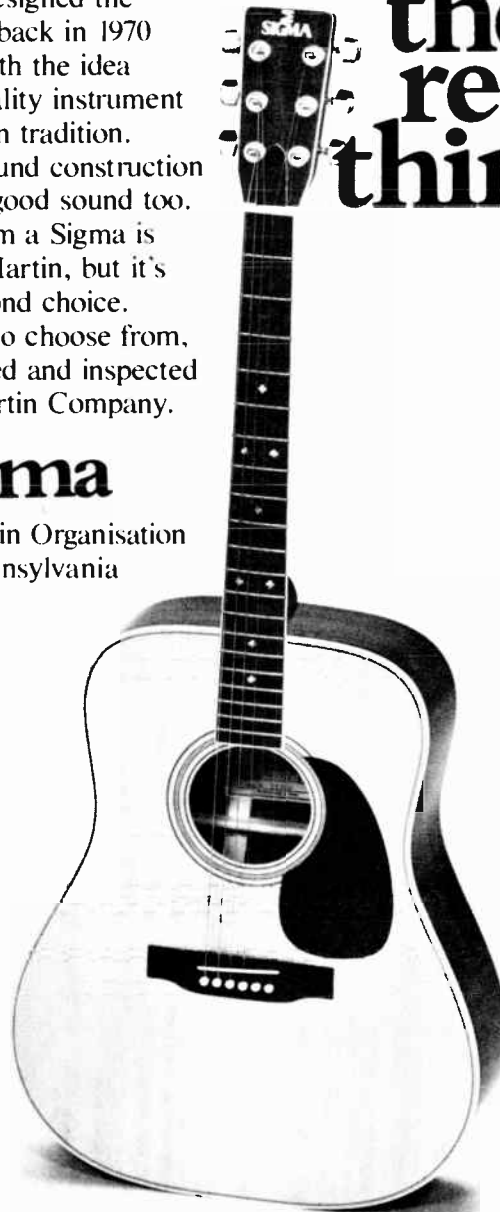


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