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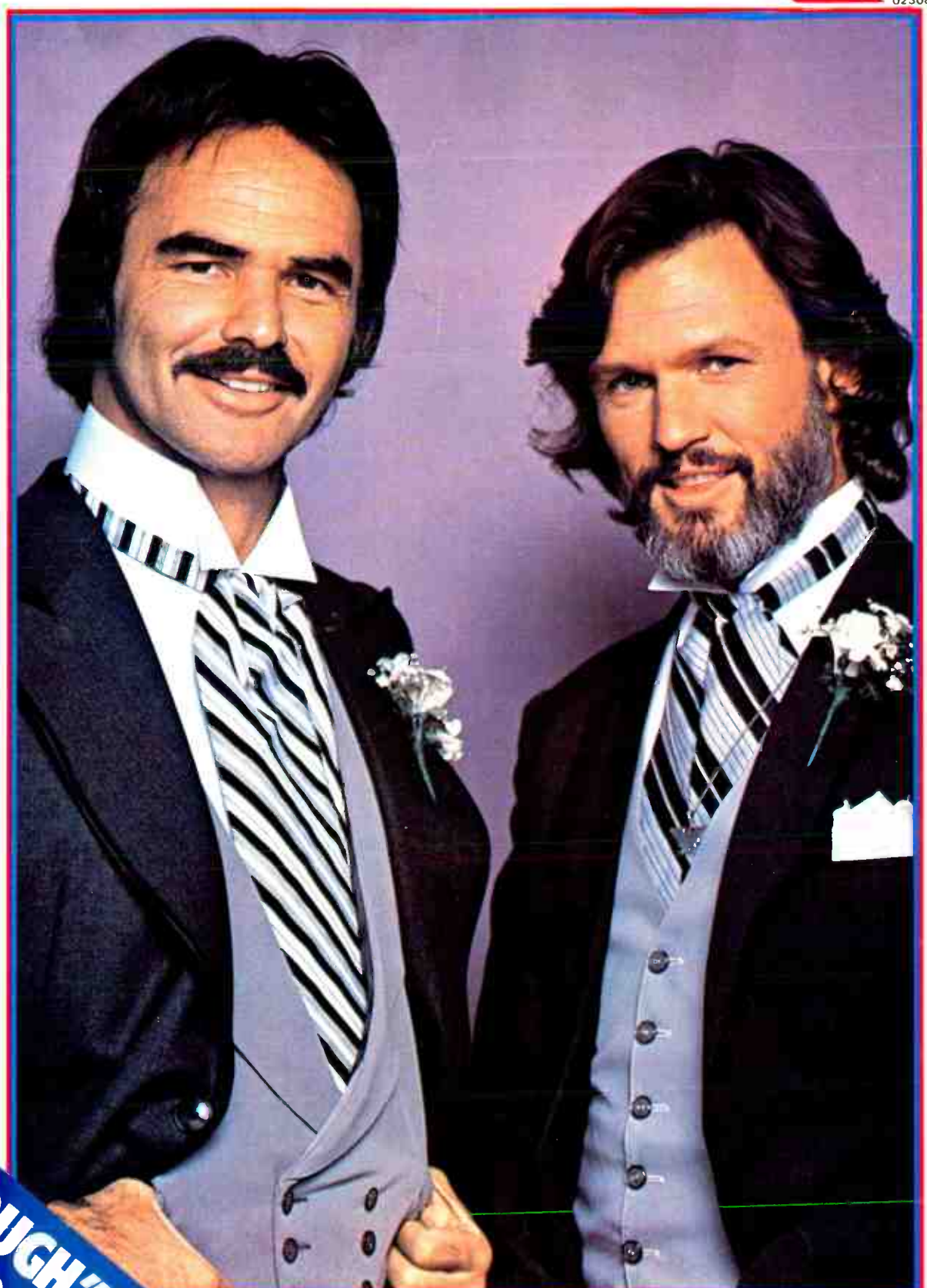

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Volume Six, Number Eight

May, 1978

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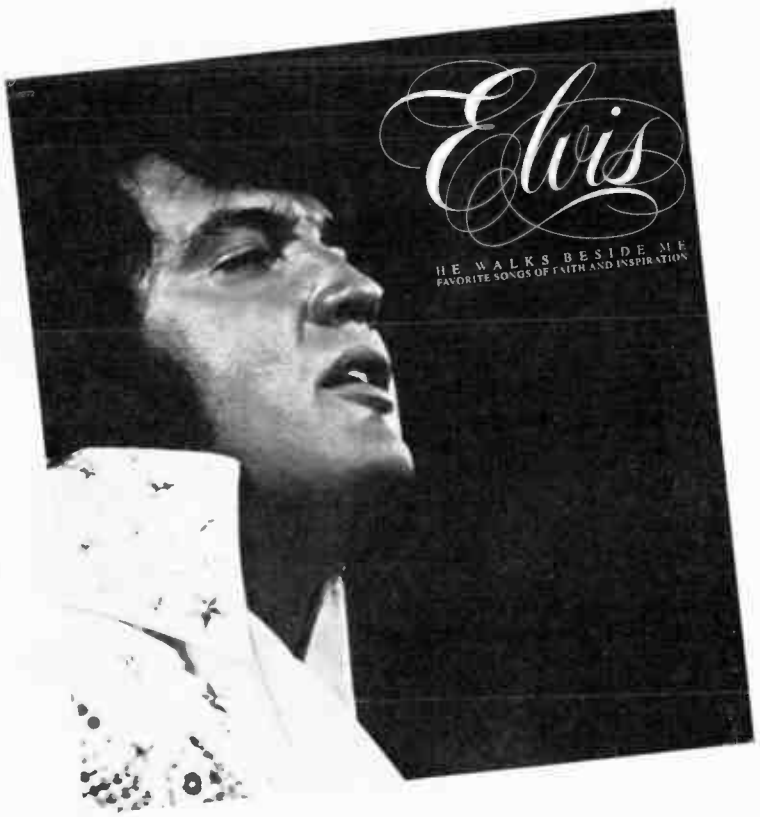

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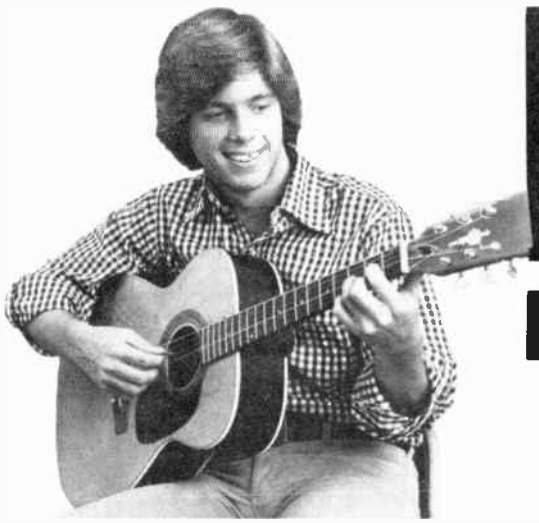

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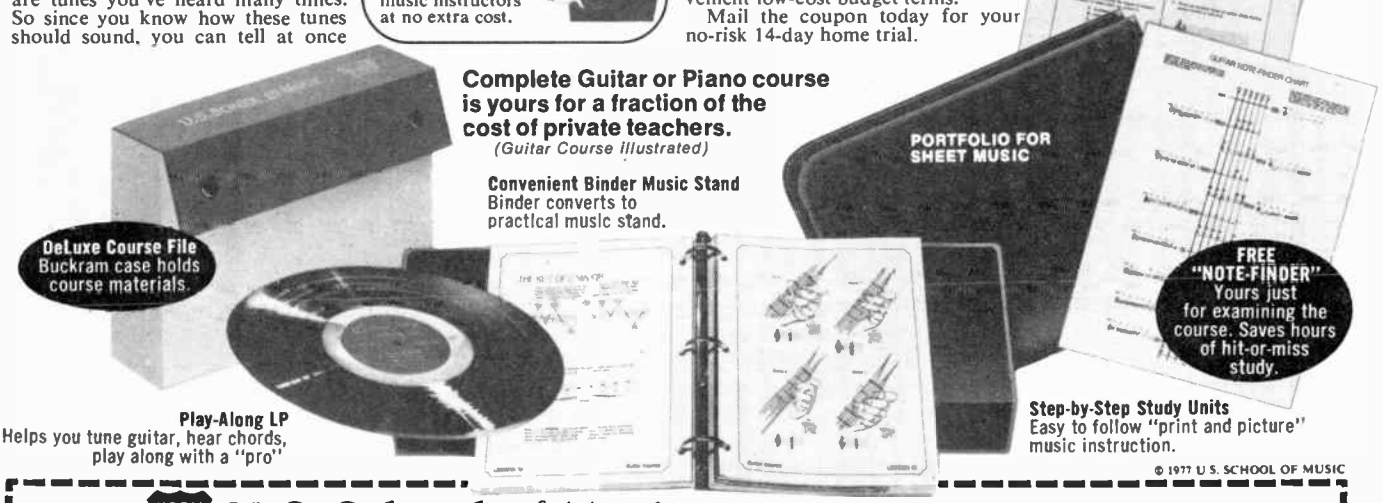

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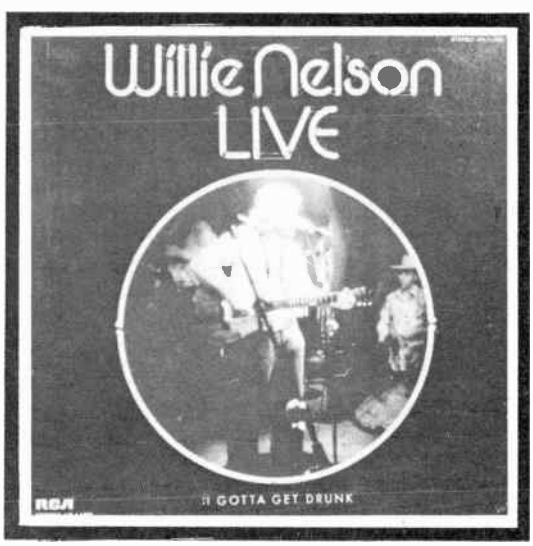
WILLIE– I'm A Memory
I'd Trade All My Tomorrows(For Just One Yesterday) She's Not For You



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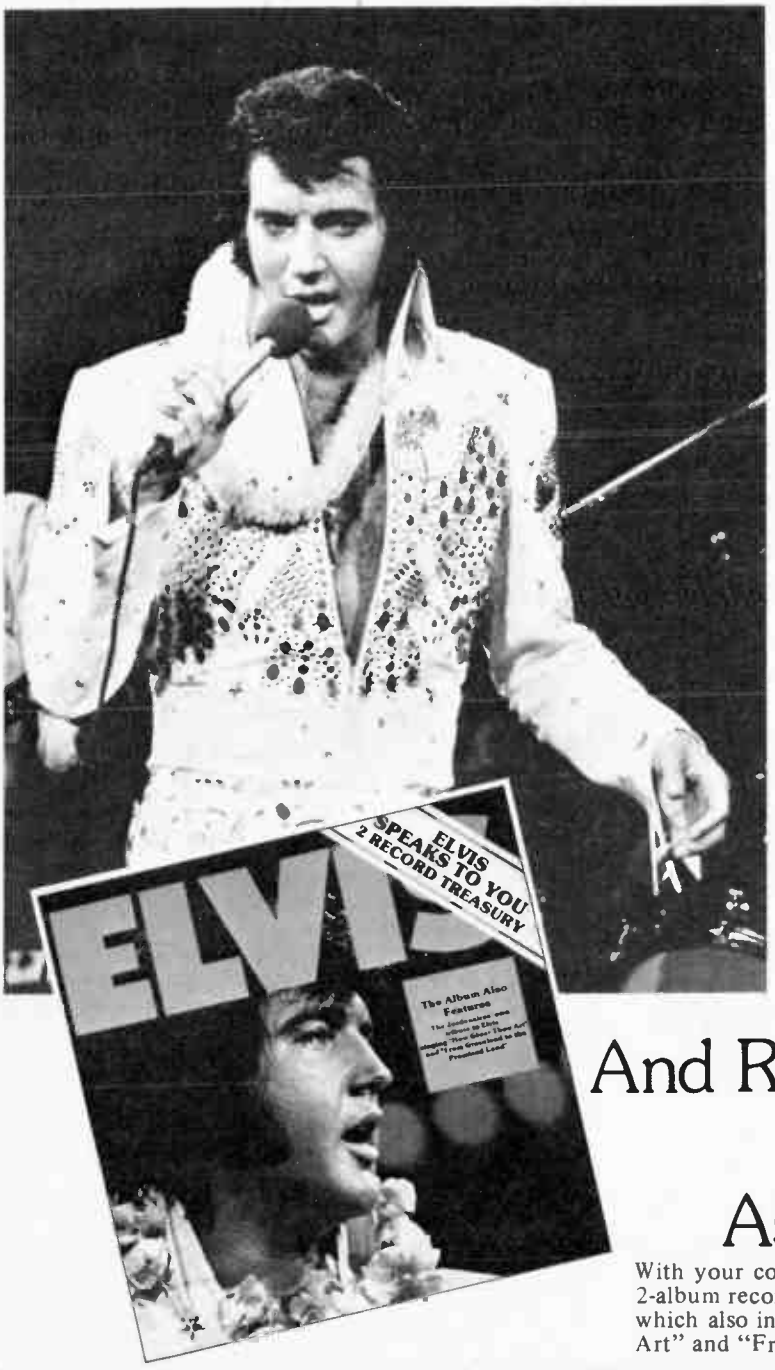

Elvis gave us so much in his lifetime. His music will be played over and over again for generations to come. The memory of watching him perform will stay in the hearts and minds of all of us for as long as we live. And Elvis' acts of generosity are legend, and not likely to be forgotten by any of us.

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CM-58

Editor's Note

My friend Al Bianculli called me a while back to talk about hit records, and what he said holds some water.

"You know," he told me, "If you knew what a hit record was, RCA would probably lock you in some little room and pay you all the money in the world just to listen. Nobody knows what makes a hit record."

Al probably is in a better position to say that than most people—he's the general manager of Combine Music Publishing in Nashville (the song publisher for such people as Kris Kristofferson, Larry Gatlin, Tony Joe White, Chris Gantry, Billy Swan, Donnie Fritts, Lee Clayton and others) and probably hears more good music in a week than you or I hear in months. What he was calling about, really, was Mel McDaniel, a talented newcomer that we at *Country Music* have been watching for quite a while.

Seems Mel has his first big hit in *God Made Love*, a pretty ballad co-authored by McDaniel, Combine honcho Johnny McRae and songwriter Dennis Linde, who sometimes gets tired of being identified as the author of *Burnin' Love*. The song was originally shopped around to several big name artists and producers, all of whom turned it down. But Johnny McRae was sure he had a hit, so they took it into the studio, with McRae producing, and cut the song on Mel McDaniel. This week, *God Made Love* is number eleven on the Billboard charts.

It just goes to show you, Al said, that *nobody* really knows what a hit is.

Which is what makes the music business so interesting. Debby Boone had to have her creative arm twisted to record *You Light Up My Life*, apparently one of the biggest selling records of this geologic era. *Lucille* was reportedly examined and found wanting by a whole host of heavyweights, who decided that the song had absolutely nothing to offer. And in this issue, we report on the Kendalls, who put a song named *Heaven's Just A Sin Away* on the "B" side of *Live And Let Live* (remember that one?).

Up until very recently, country music has subscribed to the "bolt from the blue" theory of artist management—keep everything cheap and throw singles out there until, lo and behold, a bolt from the blue made your boy or girl a star. Since nobody really knows what a hit is, and since the hands of fate are notoriously capricious, play it safe. Give the artist a singles contract, and let 'em cut singles until they get a hit or two hits. Or three hits. And there's no sense in supporting the record with publicity or touring or expensive stuff like that, since everybody knows that bolts from the blue don't discriminate one way or the other.

Which was all well and good for everybody but the artist, who, unfortunately, starved to death. And all too often, if that bolt did come, the artist was totally unprepared for the success.

Luckily, such things appear to be changing. Under the leadership of such people as Jim Halsey in Tulsa, artists are finally being treated as something other than a pair of dice. Halsey, with such acts as Roy Clark, Mel Tillis, Don Williams and others, has spearheaded the idea of career development, that while a hit record just might be the hand of fate, a high quality country show or country album is the result of hours and weeks and years of hard work.

Even in Nashville, that most conservative of towns, the flow of artist *out* of the city for their management (to Tulsa, to the West Coast, to New York) has caused some serious thinking at the highest levels of the music business. And while none of us may ever find out what really makes a *hit* record, maybe someday very soon even the barons of the Nashville record industry may discover what makes a *good* record.

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Michael Bane

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We Owe Our Subscribers An Apology...

Dear Subscriber:

On behalf of everyone here at Country Music, I want to apologize to all of you who may have experienced problems with orders sent to us during the peroid of August thru January.

We know we have been anything but perfect in handling your merchandise requests. But please believe us, it hasn't been all our fault.

First, we experienced an unusually high number of lost orders shipping 3rd and 4th class in the Christmas mail. (Third and fourth class is the lowest priority mail, and probably a bad choice by us for mailing during the hectic Christmas season.)

Second, the untimely passing of Elvis caused such a strain on record manufacturers that they were not only unable to keep up with the demand for Elvis albums, but also albums by other artists. Thus, like everyone else, we were in constant out-of-stock situations.

Third, our leading record and tape supplier changed ownership in the last quarter of 1978 and moved to the midwest. An entire new staff had to be hired and trained to handle customers like us. Only now have they started to catch up with our backlog of orders.

All this, occuring at the same time, resulted in the delays we are now working overtime to set straight. And set things straight we will. We are already catching up with all your complaints. We are reordering for all of you to whom we owe merchandise. No matter how long it takes, no matter how much the mistakes of others cost us, we will get you the products you have ordered. This is a promise.

While I have this opportunity, I also make you this promise; we will not again run into difficulties like last year. In most cases, we will now fulfill orders ourselves and not rely on manufacturers. Generally, we will ship UPS instead of relying on the mail. Finally, our recently revamped mail room is set up now to process your orders faster.

Yes, we have made mistakes, but we have learned a lot from them. And we are going to use what we have learned to repay your loyalty with the products, prices and service you deserve. And we will start this issue, with our brand new Spring Shoppers Guide. You'll find new products, new low prices, big new bonus offers, and my guarantee of first rate service.

So please forgive us for our past shortcomings and support us now. We need that support and promise to reward it with the kind of magazine and service you want and deserve.

Sincerely yours,

Jack Killion

Jack Killion, Publisher

What five records would you take to a desert island?

See desert island contest page 19

Letters

Merle's No Stranger To His Fans

I wish to thank you for a very wonderful Christmas present. I received my latest issue of Country Music Magazine on Christmas Eve with my #1 Entertainer on the cover—Merle Haggard. I realize I am not alone when I express what a great talent he is. Thanks Hag for the hours of pleasure you've given me without ever knowing it; and thank you, Country Music Magazine, for your fine feature article which I have anxiously been waiting for.

NANCY DEMASI
YONKERS, N.Y.

We have just completed reading the feature article on Merle Haggard in the February issue of Country Music Magazine, and would like to thank you Country Music and Nelle Phelan for a tremendous article on an outstanding performer who has contributed much to country music.

Also, thank you for the cover photo of Merle.

Let's have more articles on this "Strangest Stranger of Them All" and keep up the good work on a truly exceptional magazine.

CAROL & SUSAN WALKER
SPRING MILLS, PA.

I just received my Feb. issue of Country Music. Really enjoyed it. Especially the Merle Haggard interview. To me, Mr. Haggard is one of Country Music's greatest entertainers. . .

CLYDE R. WEBB
COLO. SPRINGS, COLO.

Country Music Magazine could have done without that horrible picture of Merle Haggard in that silly T-shirt on the cover and one of the worst stories in your magazine.

What kind of a man is Haggard anyway? Is he trying to lose what few fans he has left? We haven't been to a Haggard concert or bought any of his albums, for the last three years and won't ever again.

Where has all his loyalty gone? Fuzzy Owens and Bonnie Owens who have helped him when he had nothing, deserve better from him. His best records were with Bonnie, who is missed very much. Haggard has no where to go but down.

FORMER FANS
ELLIE & ERIC JOHNSON
BROOKLYN, N.Y.

I just finished reading the article on Merle Haggard in your February 1978 issue. I would like to add something to that interview that Merle definately left out. When he was mentioning the fact that none of his fans demanded a refund when he had ". . . had it up to here" and didn't show up for his concert. I was a victim of one such concert. It was at the Iowa State Fair this past summer. Merle was scheduled to

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CM5

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sing at one pm that afternoon, but as of five pm the crowd hadn't even seen Merle, let alone hear him sing. I had to leave at five so I didn't get to see the show (which, I found out later did go on) nor did I get my money back. The reason he couldn't go on was reportedly because he left his speakers in California. So it took 3½ hours to find some in Des Moines? That, in my opinion, sounds a little far-fetched and I would like to know how many other entertainers, country and otherwise, forget their entire speaker systems?

MIKE K. KLIPPING
BUFFALO CENTER, IOWA

A Star Rises

Certainly enjoy Country Music Magazine.

I particularly like when you do a story on a new personality. I enjoyed the one on Janie Fricke—"Up From The Doo-Wah's" —excellent writing—she sounds like a charmer—10 years singing jingles—unbelievable!

ALBERT E. MARKEY
ARLINGTON, VA.

Some More Thoughts On the CMA Awards

I watched the Country Music Awards for the last time this year. Country Music wasn't meant to look like a Hollywood carnival. Nashville, because of their high and mighty ways is dying a slow, choking death. People such as Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings have not only survived the snubs of the Nashville Establishment, but have flourished. The impact Waylon and Willie have had on Country Music in the last five years has been phenomenal. It all started in Texas and many great talents such as Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, David Allen Coe, Jerry Jeff Walker, John Austin Paycheck, Hank Williams, Jr., Bobby Bare and Charlie Daniels, just to name a few have brought Country Music to thousands of young people who never would have listened to Country Music had it not been for the Outlaw movement. People like Johnny Cash and Roy Clark will die a slow death. Like Hank Williams, Jr. says, "Old Nashville's Still Got a Song and Dance." Waylon puts it more simply "We need a change." Entertainer of the Year was surely Ol' Waylon.

KENT EBNER
WYNNEWOOD, OKLA.

I am writing in reference to the letters in your February issue that degrade the CMA awards. I completely disagree with those people who talked down such great artists as Ronnie Milsap, Johnny Cash, June Carter, Glen Campbell and the others who were mentioned. In my book, they are all much better than Waylon Jennings.

Anyone who talks down someone as talented as Ronnie Milsap is ignorant. They don't realize how hard and long he worked to get where he is today. I know others did, but they didn't have the strike against them that Ronnie did. I think he deserved the awards he got much more then Waylon Jennings would have.

As for what Johnny and Glen were and did in the past, there are a lot of people who do those same things every day of the year. And June Carter is definitely not dumb!

As for the groups who were mentioned, I'm glad that they were nominated for their categories. It proves that country music is gaining a much wider and diversified following. I enjoy all of them.

As for Elvis, I hope he gets elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame, because he deserves it, even though he's gone. His memory lives on in all of us who enjoyed him.

MARY LEE PIFER
SCOTTSBURG, N.Y.

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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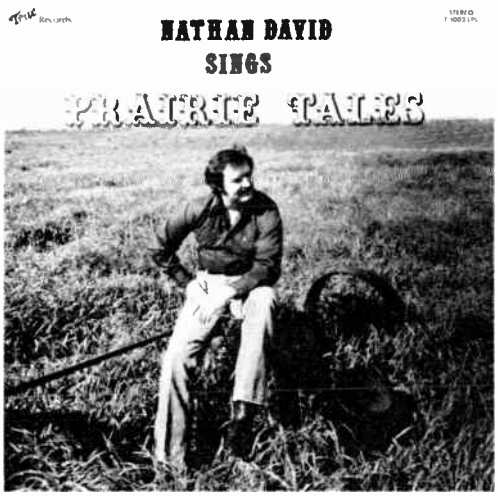

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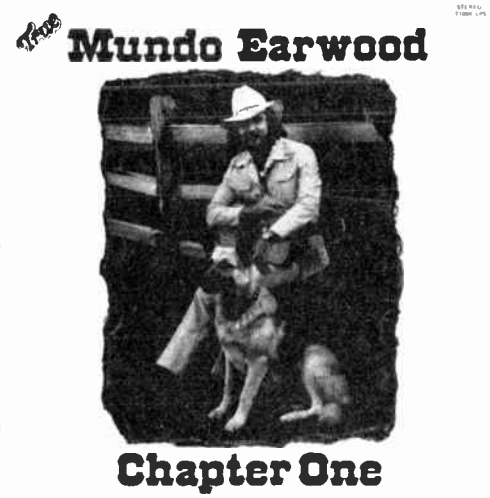

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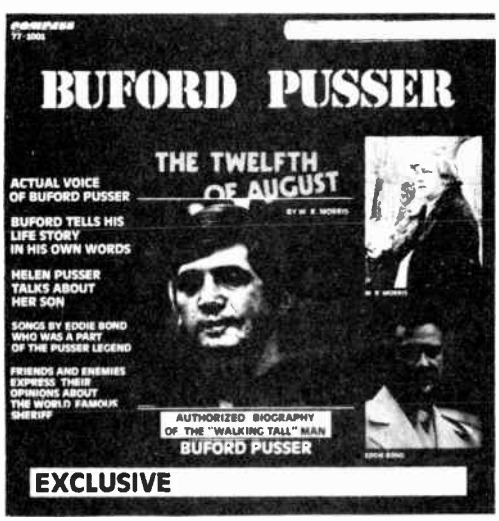

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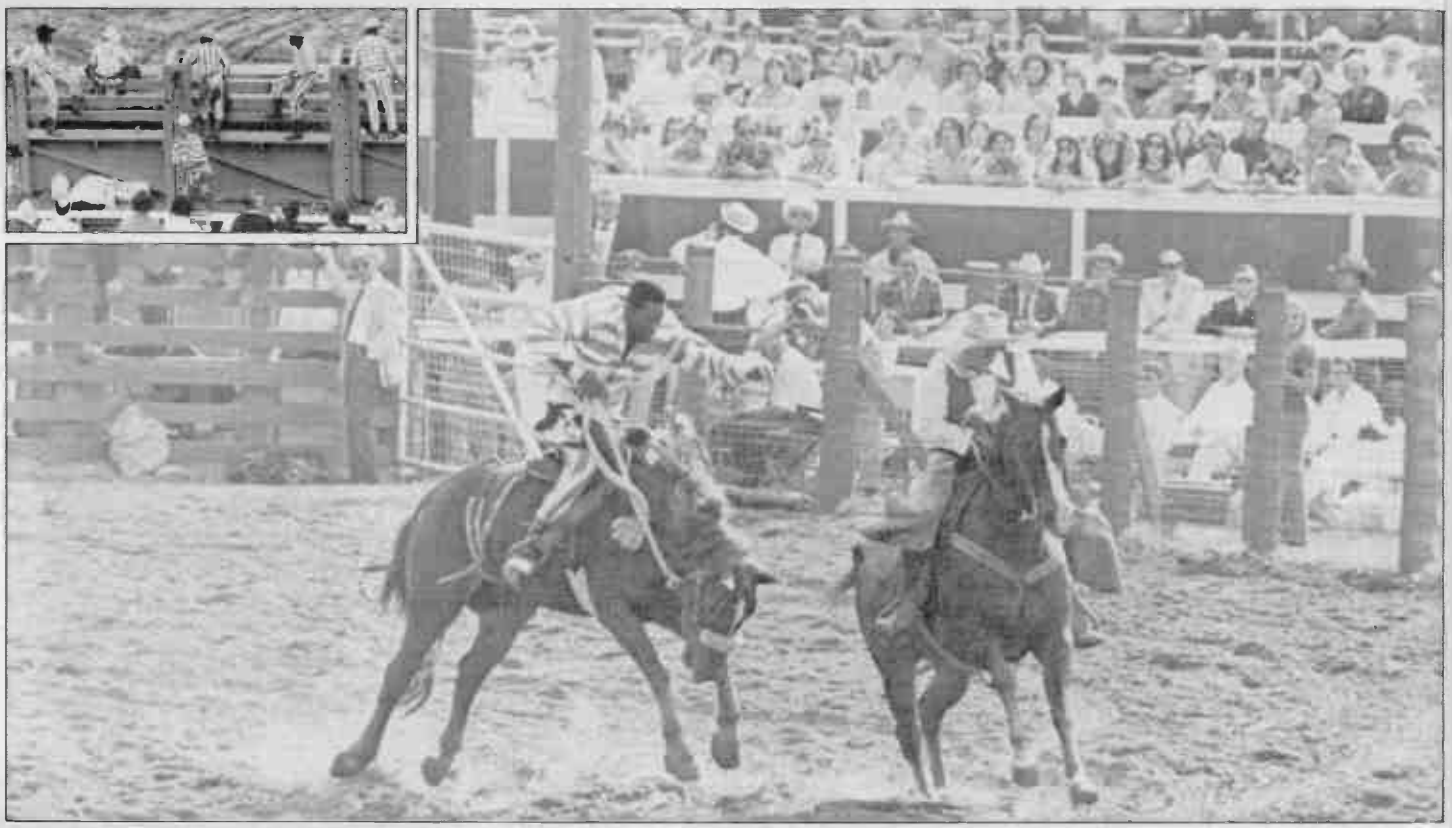


Texas Prison Rodeo: The Roughest Ride Behind Bars

They call it the roughest rodeo behind bars. The Texas Prison Rodeo, an annual event since 1931, held at the state prison's rodeo grounds in Huntsville. Fifty inmate cowboys outfitted in hats and spurs and black-and-white-striped uniforms compete in bull riding, saddle and bareback bronc riding, a wild horse race, a wild cow milking contest and the prison rodeo's own Hard Money which is the meanest rodeo event I've ever seen. The riding is exciting and hell-for-leather because, as the announcer continually reminds everyone, a lot of these boys don't have much to lose.

A prison rodeo? Perhaps it's not so unusual, since the first rodeo was reputed to have been invented in Pecos, Texas, on July 4th in 1883. The idea of course was borrowed from the Spaniards and Mexicans, but American rodeo has been a distinct and unique sport ever since. Rodeoing is a hard way to make a buck and earn a little glory. It's also one of the few ways to do either from inside the Texas State Prison.

Out of the 3-400 inmates who sign up to participate, only 50 are selected to enter the cowboy events and another 40 as red shirts (those who participate in the wild cow milking and Hard Money contests). The Hard Money is simple and vicious. A bull, picked for his hatred of the world and every living thing on it, is set loose with a bull durham sack containing $50 tied between his eyes. The 40 redshirts are released on foot and the man who snares the bull durham sack gets to keep it. At the sight of 40 redshirts stampeding in his direction the bull at first panics and then gets downright mad—the redshirts spend as much time fighting each other—at first to get to the bull, then to get the hell out of his way. The week-end I was there Tom T. Hall donated an extra $200 to the bull durham sack. Women are also represented, the girls from Goree (the women's prison unit) try their luck at greased pig and calf catching.

Country music has been a part of this rodeo since 1950. The list of performers includes Tom Mix, Richard Boone, Johnny Cash, Ernest Tubb, Fats Do-

Dolly was one of the entertainers on hand.

Tom T. Hall donated an extra $200.

mino, Johnny Rodriguez, Tammy Wynette, Willie Nelson, Tom T. Hall, Red Steagall, Mel Tillis and Dolly Parton. The first show this year offered some old Texas music stars—Leon Rausch, Floyd Tillman and Johnny Gimble. The rodeo is a favorite with country music entertainers and over the years some of them have donated something special to the prison. Freddy Fender once donated $4000 to the inmate education and recreation fund, and Willie Nelson has given many free concerts throughout the various units of the Texas Prison system.

Certainly the prisoners appreciate the concerts. But invariably the performer who draws the biggest applause from them is a little dog whose rodeo clown/master has trained to scale fences. "Remember," the announcer jokingly reminds them, "that little dog can show you how to climb that fence, but then he don't have them guards firing off caps at him either."

All Around Cowboy for the Texas Prison Rodeo this year was James Warfield from Crockett, Texas. Warfield, who is serving ten years for theft, came away with $206. A favorite and last year's winner is Willie Craig, now 57 years-old and doing a 30-year sentence. Willie was leading for several weeks but finally lost out to Warfield.

This year saw a record attendance—90,373 souls showed up and bought tickets to see the zebra-suited cowboys risk their hides for pocket money. However, most of the money generated from the rodeo goes to various prisoner's funds. One thing for sure—the roughest rodeo behind bars will continue until the day the stop putting men behind bars in Texas.

NELSON ALLEN

Singing Brakeman Posted For Posterity

A United States postage stamp bearing the likeness of legendary country singer Jimmie Rodgers was unveiled by Postmaster General Benjamin F. Bailar recently at the Country Music Hall of Fame.

left to right: Jimmie Rodgers Court (Jimmie Rodgers' grandson), Henry Young, who first proposed the idea of a commemorative stamp and Frank Jones.

The commemorative stamp, the first in a series on American performing arts and artists, depicts Jimmie Rodgers country music's first recording star.

The unveiling was presided over by Postmaster General Bailar; Bill Ivey, executive director of the Country Music Foundation; Ralph Peer II, head of Peer-Southern Organization, the publisher of all Rodgers' songs and the head of the Country Music Association committee which spearheaded the drive to obtain this stamp; Joe Talbot, representing the C.M.A. as president of its board of directors, and Frank Jones of Capitol Records, chairman of the Country Music Foundation's board of trustees.

Mr. Ivey said that the occasion marked a unique historical event: "The issuance of the Jimmie Rodgers stamp is an important symbolic event. Back in the late 1960s, when the idea for a Rodgers commemorative was first considered, I really think the concept was rejected because of a prejudice against honoring 'hillbilly' music in this way. To have this stamp in 1978 shows just how far country music has come in gaining recognition as an important part of American music."

Atlanta Honors Publishing Chief

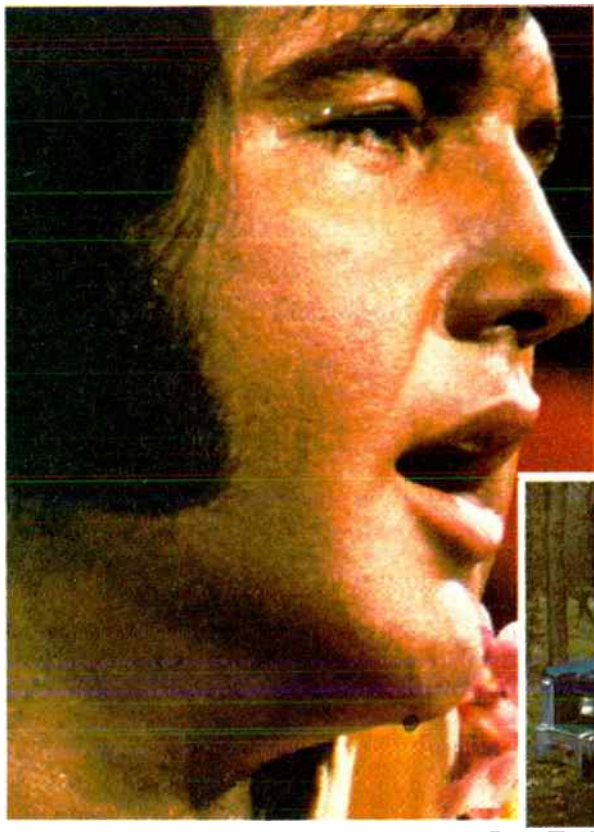
Bill Lowery is a rather rotund, extremely genial white-haired gentleman whose publishing companies, record production involvements and career management undertakings have either started or kept several prominent country and pop stars on a successful road.

Home base for Bill's 25 years in the music industry has been Atlanta, Georgia, and it was there, at the Civic Center where throngs of his friends, compatriots, and acquaintances gathered recently to honor him in the form of the Bill Lowery Silver Salute.

Open to the public, the festivities were highlighted by a show featuring a mini-concert by several Lowery finds, including Billy Joe Royal, Tommy Roe, Dennis Yost, Joe South. The Atlanta Rhythm Section, Sami Joe and Ray Stevens.

Backed up the the 32-piece Atlanta Pops Orchestra (whose violins sound like fiddlers, when need be) each act sounded as good, if not better, than on the record. Of further note was the fact that all door proceeds went into a fund to benefit scholarships at the Commercial Music Department of Atlanta's Georgia State University.

RUSSELL SHAW



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Country Scene

Farmers Still Slogging to Same Old Song; New Singer

Now and again in this new, slick, uptown world of country pop we are forceably reminded that things are not as sophisticated as they seem, most recently in Washington, D.C., where thousands of angry farmers drove their tractors to the Capitol to protest the farmers' decreasing share of rising food prices.

Leading them in song was a husky, weatherbeaten Texan named Larry Trider, whose recently recorded version of *The Farmer Feeds Us All* was voted the national theme song of the American Agricultural Movement—the protesting farmers—and he sang it with gust on the Capitol steps to some 5,000 demonstrating farmers on this January day and again inside the U.S. Senate building the following day.

That the farmer has much to complain about is nothing new: Fiddlin' John Carson worte and recorded the song as *The Farmer Is The Man Who Feeds Us All* on Okeh Records back in 1923, at the age of 55. He and his daughter, Moonshine Kate, cut it again for Bluebird in 1934, amending the title, for reasons unknown, to *The Taxes On The Farmer Feeds Us All*. Folk-pop singer Ry Cooder unearthed the song some years back and put it on an album, and Bobby Bare took Cooder's version and put it on his **Hard Time Hungries** album.

Trider, a nightclub singer in Lubbock, saw the west-Texas tractors heading east for the rally and thought "There's got to

Larry Trider and friend

be a song in this somewhere." He went home, dug out the Bare album and cut the tune last January. He had a record in his hands within a week and went from being a locally popular nightclub act to a folk hero among Texas farmers—with suitable local media attention—to rather suddenly being the national spokesman (songsman?) for farmer's rights.

You get the feeling that crusty old Fiddlin' John Carson would have been right proud of that big ole Texas boy singing his song to the President and to the nation. Or maybe he'd be depressed to find the farmer's economic situation so little changed in fifty five years that his song still struck home.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

As we went to press we learned of the death of Tootsie Bess, the longtime proprietor of Tootsie's Orchid Lounge. Tootsie was one of Nashville's originals, and her Orchid Lounge one of country music's landmarks. We will have more details in next month's issue.

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Mickey Gilley/Wild Side Of Life

Caught In The Middle/Now That I Have You/Breeze/I Still Care/Sad Faced Little Fellow/Fraulein, more!

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Porter Wagoner/Blue Moon Of Kentucky

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Dottie West/Would You Hold It Against Me

Make The World Go/I'm Sorry/With Pen In Hand/Would You Hold It Against Me/Suffertime, more!

Dolly Parton/Just The Way I Am

Little Bird/Just The Way I Am/The Carroll County Accident/Gypsy, Joe and Me/Mama Say A Prayer, more!

Dolly Parton/I Wish I Felt This Way At Home

Games People Play/I Wish I Felt This Way At Home/The Only Way Out/My Blue Ridge Mountain Boy, more!

Dolly Parton/Mine

When The Possession Gets Too Strong/But You Loved Me Then/Mine/More Than Their Share/Chas, more!

Dolly Parton/Just Because I'm A Woman

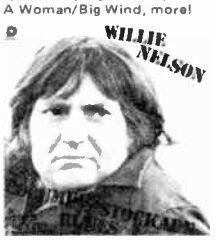
The Fire's Still Burning/Daddy/Mule Skinner Blues/Love Isn't Free/Just Because I'm A Woman/Big Wind, more!

Spotlight On Willie Nelson

Bloody Merry Morning/I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry/Today I Started Loving You Again/San Antonio, more!

Willie Nelson/Country Winners

I Walk Alone/The Party's Over/One Day At A Time/Night Life/Streets Of Laredo/Mr. Record Man, more!



Willie Nelson/Columbus Stockade Blues

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5. Mickey Gilley/Wild Side Of Life	☐ JS-6180	☐ P8-336
6. Bobby Bare/Folsom Prison Blues	☐ ACL-7045	☐ C8S-7045
7. Porter Wagoner/Blue Moon Of Kentucky	☐ ACL-7046	☐ C8S-7046
8. Dottie West/Would You Hold It Against Me	☐ ACL-0125	☐ C8S-0125
9. Dolly Parton/Just The Way I Am	☐ CAS-2583	☐ C8S-1207
10. Dolly Parton/I Wish I Felt This Way At Home	☐ ACL-7002	☐ C8S-7002
11. Dolly Parton/Mine	☐ ACL 1-0307	☐ C8S-0307
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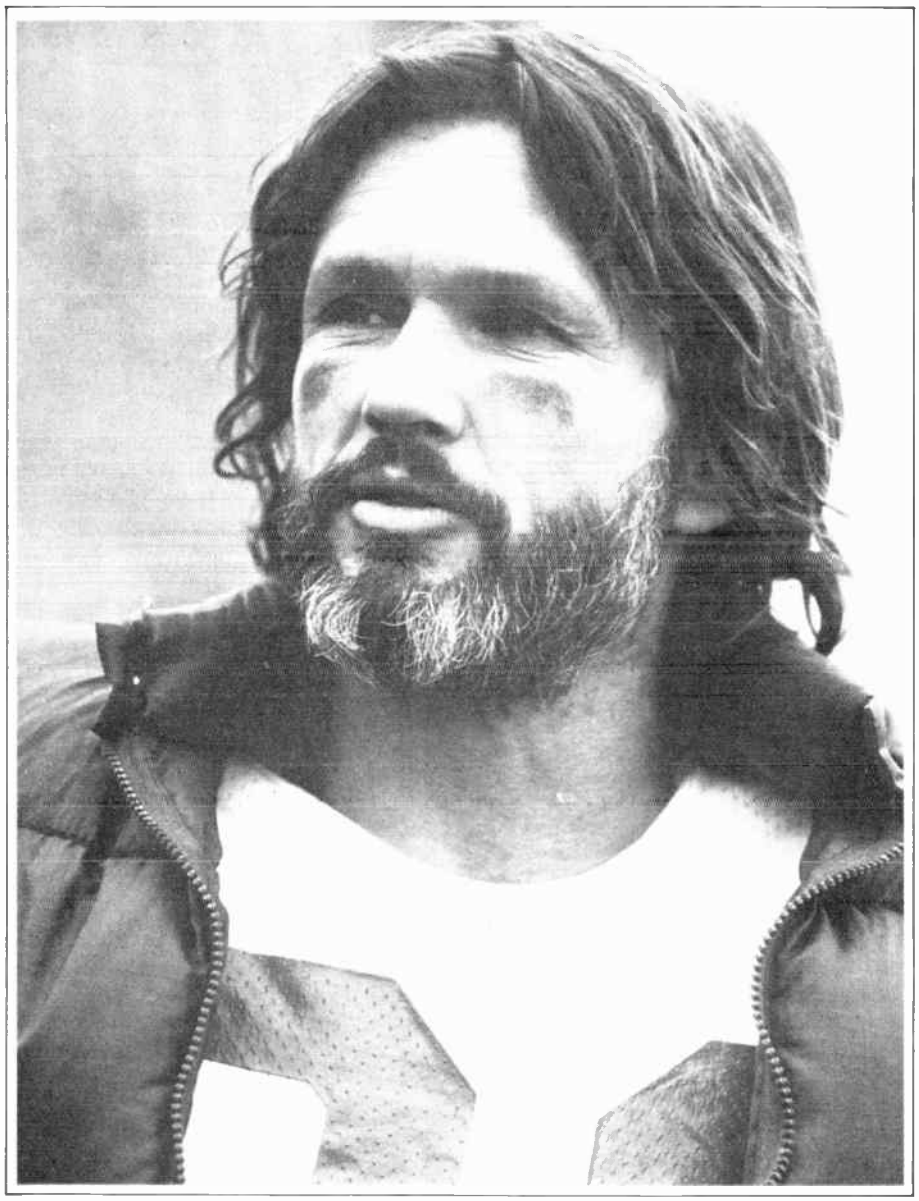


Funny how these things work out—first he's sweeping the floors in CBS' Nashville studios; next he's a giant recording star; next a matinee idol and genuine (accept no substitutes) sex symbol. Kris Kristofferson has definitely, as his song says, "kept right on a changin', for the better or the worse." Mostly for the better. The following interview with Kristofferson was conducted by internationally famous photographer Francesco Scavullo for his book, MEN, and is one of the best interviews with Kris Kristofferson we've seen.

KRIS KRISTOFFERSON

Singer, Songwriter, Actor

Mr. Scavullo: How did you begin singing?

Mr. Kristofferson: I always liked to sing. Not sure I can remember singing when I was raking out the corral, you know, in Texas. First thing I wanted to be was a boxer. That was at the age of eight or so. That's kind of in the league with cowboy and fireman. But I wanted to be Rocky Graziano. Then I wanted to be a writer. All through high school and college, I was a creative-writing major. I wrote short stories and stuff. Did very well in college—in fact, won a Rhodes scholarship. At one point, back in the fifties, I started to get into the music business but it wasn't the right time. So I joined the Army, and then I started writing songs again, in '65 in Nashville. About five years later I got asked to perform at the Troubadour in Los Angeles. And we went over real well and just stayed on the road ever since. So I sort of backed into performing and out of performing, and then the movie offers came. We were *hot*, you know.

What's more important to you, your music or your acting?

I feel kind of like a little kid and people say, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" I didn't know that you had to be one thing. I'd hate to have to limit it. I can have a lot of fun acting now. And it's working. I get satisfaction out of it. But the writing is something that's always in the back of my mind, it's always going. Not always as fast as I would like, but I'm always writing. I'll probably write until I die.

Write songs or stories?

Both. I'll probably write songs all the time because they just come out of my emotions. I hope I'm always that open. And I'm thinking in terms of longer stuff. I have a little project now, but I don't know whether it's a novel or screenplay. I'm going deeper into the thing. I'm really excited about writing something long for the first time in a long time. It's different from a song. That doesn't mean it's good. I was excited about my last novel, too, and I never got that published.

Do you ever get tired of touring, being on the road?

I was on the road about five years. And I was getting real weary. I didn't even know I was tired. Fortunately I was forced into a period of inactivity when they postponed starting *Semi-Tough*, because it was too late to schedule me on the road. So I ended up sitting around and got a little rest. And I think it was good to see where I was going. Anyway, we had a lot more fun after the break, had a better idea of what to do. Got so I used to live day to day on the road. I'd be eight months at a time just getting ready for that show that night, and the band would end up not having enough development musically because everybody was doing it—almost the same way we started out doing it, when I had to tell everybody what to do—and so everything was limited to how limited my imagination was back then when I told them.

How is your life now? You told me you've given up drinking. Do you have more energy?

I got a lot more energy. I feel twenty years younger. There are a lot of fringe benefits to giving up liquor—less calorie intake and less getting in trouble. Every time I got in trouble I was drunk. But I think the worst thing about it was the effect of the chemical on my brain and nervous system. I thought I just always got depressed, I didn't know that it had anything to do with whiskey. But I think whiskey had a lot to do with it, because I haven't been depressed since I gave it up. You know, those black things, where you think there isn't any sense in getting up in the morning. When I got to that point I figured I was doing something drastically wrong. Then I was lucky enough to see *A Star Is Born*. I watched the whole story, and the first time it was kind of rough. It was amazing.

And you just quit drinking, cold turkey?

Yeah. I didn't make a conscious decision; it was just the logical thing to do at that time. And I don't look back. But I never even considered quitting until I quit.

Do you smoke?

I did. I smoked four packs a day, but I quit that about three years ago. A member of the band had to, so we made a deal—if he didn't smoke, I wouldn't smoke. The doctor told me, "His throat's rotten like an old tubercular patient and if he keeps smoking he'll die." So I made this deal with him. And it's easier that way, because you're not just doing it yourself.

Do you exercise?

Yeah. I run, and I work on the bags. I feel a lot better for it. I've been exercising more than I have before. I got a rowing machine and I got—it's embarrassing—one of those huge Advent TVs and I set that up in front of the rowing machine. So I watch TV and just row.

What do you do to relax? Watch TV or go out to clubs or . . . ?

Don't go out much at all. See, everything that I've done in the last years has been influenced by the road. You get a road mentality. If you're out working for a month and you've got two days off, you come home, lock the doors and crash. And don't answer the phone. Because you've got two days to do nothing but enjoy creature comfort and then get back out on the road. It sounds like a shitty life. I got a Jacuzzi now. That's a great thing.

At what age did you get married?

The first time I got married I was twenty-four. And I married Rita Coolidge about three years ago, so I was about thirty-seven.

Why did you get divorced the first time?

It was difficult. She was an old high school sweetheart, and I hadn't seen her for a long time, and she knew me as one thing, as a Rhodes scholar, and then I was an Army officer. My next assignment was to teach English at West Point, which was a fairly respectable position, and to pass that up to become a janitor who wants to be a songwriter . . . it was hard for her to like anything about the music business because it represented everything that was taking me out of the house. And for me it was the thing that was bringing me back to life after the Army. And it was very selfish of me, but there's a point in your career or your development as an artist when you have to be selfish. You can't have a permanent relationship, because it will hold you back. You have to be free to go do it when the opportunity comes, and not worry about whether you might injure somebody else's feelings. It's just the selfish part of your life. It sounds worse than it is. It just means that you have to pay attention to your work more than anything else.

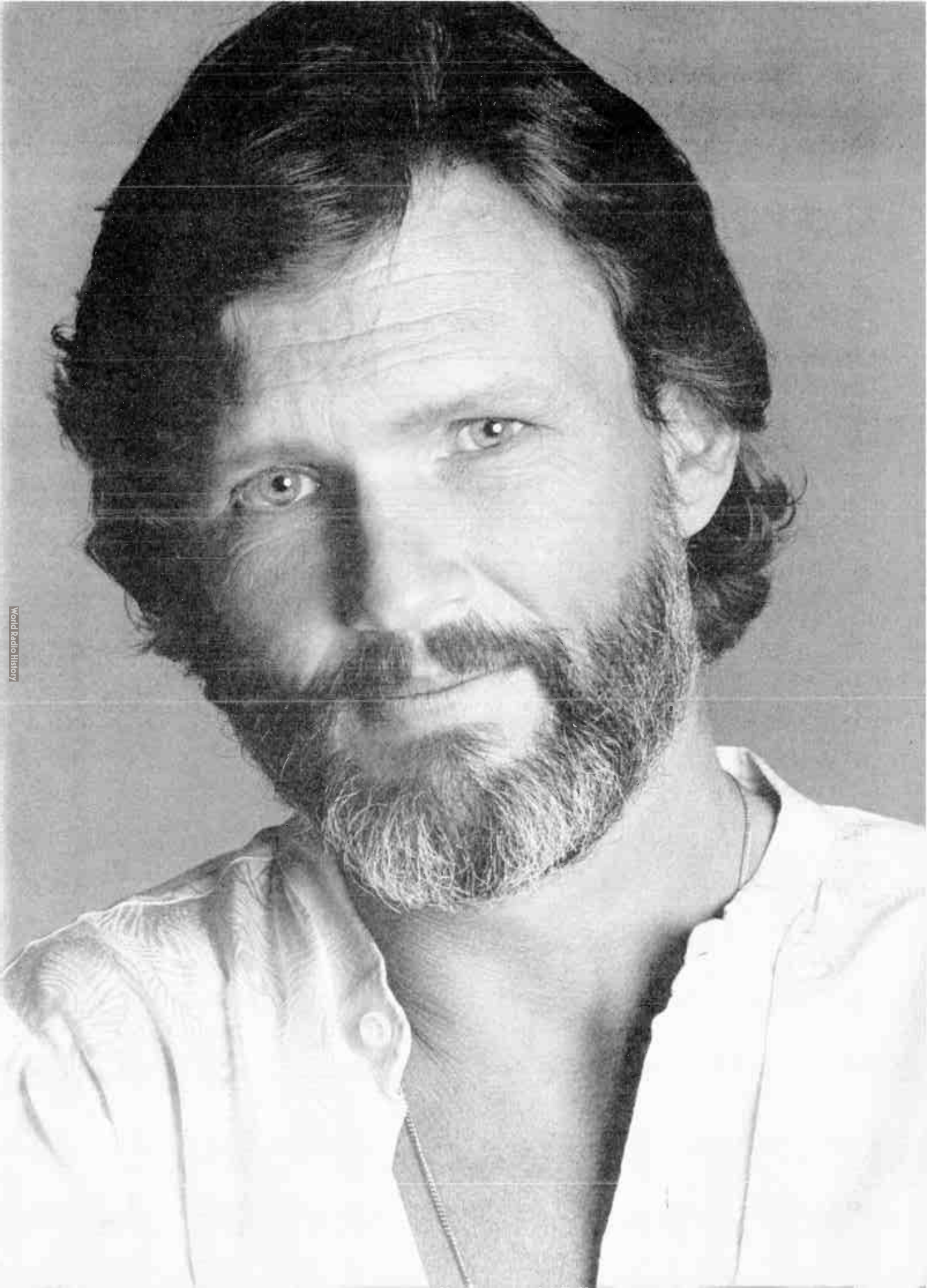
How many children do you have?

I got three. One from Rita, two from the other.

Do you like being married?

I must or I wouldn't be. I haven't done a whole lot of things

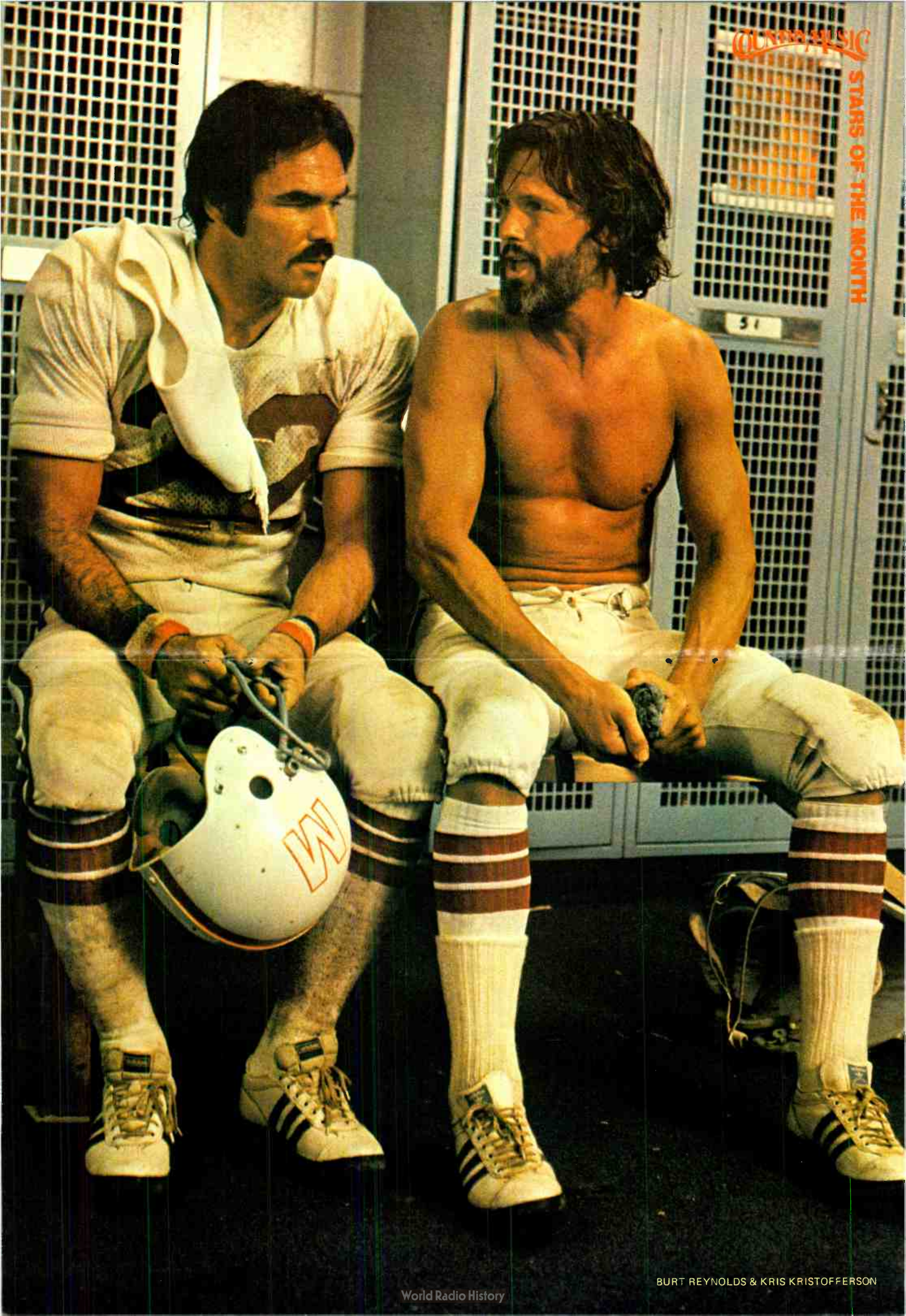
(Continued on page 58)



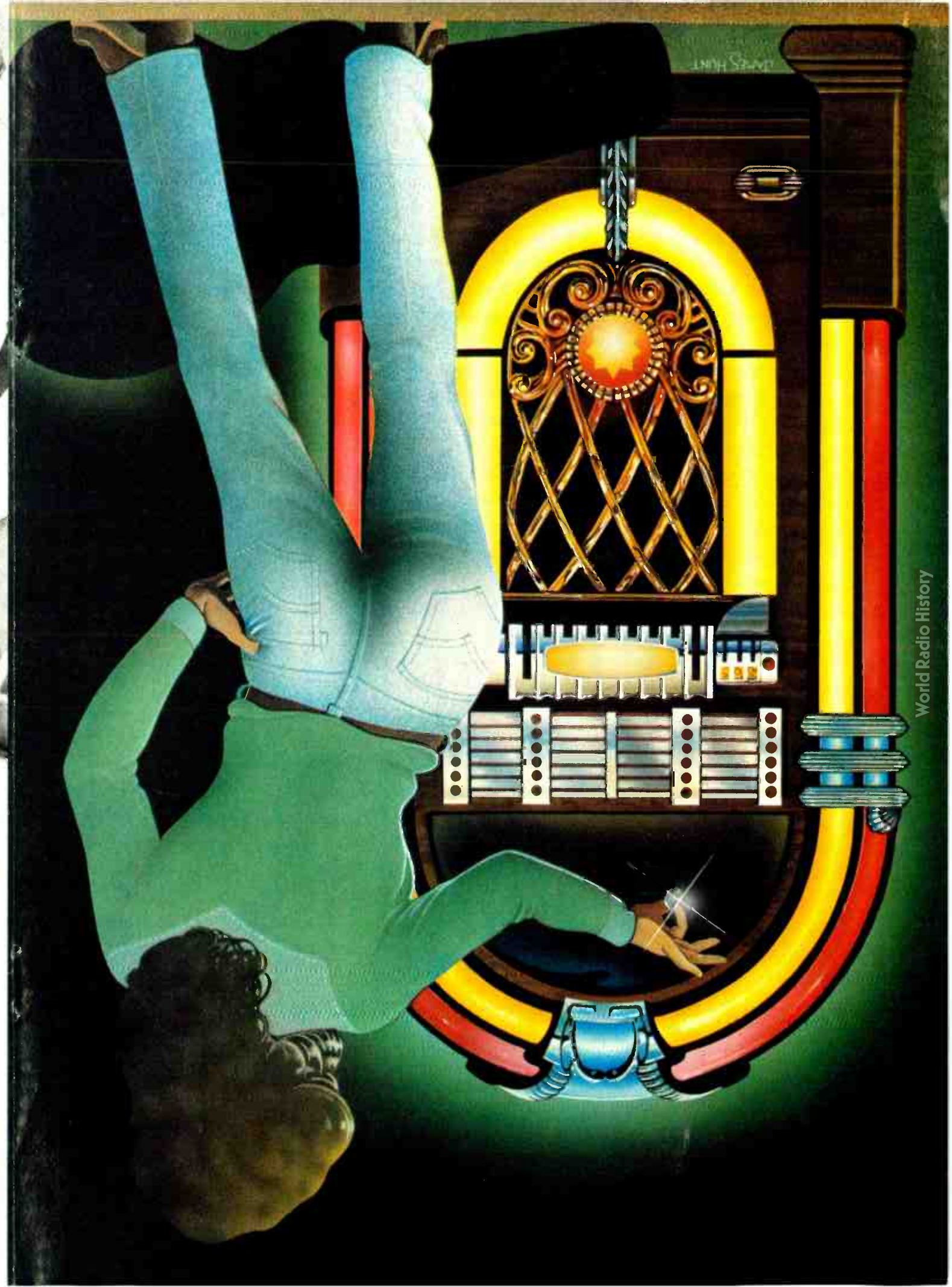
The New All-American Good Ol' Boys

Well folks, here they are, Mr. and Mr. Sex Symbol, Kris Kristofferson and Burt Reynolds together, as they say, for the first time on any stage. Kris' friend here is Jill Clayburgh, and all these photos are from the movie *Semi-Tough* which is about the two primary activities pictured here. One of those activities is football. We can expect to see more of Kris in Sam Peckinpah's *Convoy*, based (apparently) on C.W. McCall's hit song of the same name, and a new Burt Reynolds' epic can't be too far away. Is it too early to suggest a remake of *Nashville*, this time with real country music?

Photos courtesy United Artists Corp.



BURT REYNOLDS & KRIS KRISTOFFERSON



by JOHN MORTHLAND

When you walk up to a jukebox and you slip a nickel in
You can bet your bottom dollar that the record starts to spin
You'll hear a fiddle and guitar with a honky tonkin' sound
It's that hillbilly fever that's spreadin' all around
—Hillbilly Fever
Little Jimmie Dickens

Hillbillies and jukeboxes go back together a long ways—to the beginning of the jukebox industry, actually, but it was during the World War II years that country music literally took over the machines. Even now, with jukebox revenues declining, **Billboard** reports that the machines account for 70 to 90 percent of all country singles sales.

The jukebox is a Depression baby. The modern, multiple-selection jukebox, which evolved from such penny arcade devices as the coin-operated player piano and the music box, was invented in 1928, and marketed by Wurlitzer. At first it was simply considered a part of the coin-operated machine industry, but it soon became a craze that dominated the industry. Installed in urban taverns and rural jook joints, it was popularly called a "jukebox" almost from the beginning, despite the embarrassment that term caused the Coin Machine Operators of America.

"Juke" (spelled "jook" well into the Forties) is one of those dark and forbidding American slang terms passed along in oral tradition, and its actual derivation remains mysterious to this day. Several explanations have been offered. Jook may derive from the Gullah word meaning "disorderly," which itself derives from another African word meaning "black" (in the sense of "evil"). Old time music boxes bore the label of the German manufacturer, "Julius Juke und Sohne." In **Troilus and Criseyde** (1734), Chaucer used the word "iowken," meaning to rest or sleep; in mountain regions of the American south where Elizabethan English was preserved, the word became "jouke", and local inns and taverns became known as "jouke joints." Henry "Britches" Young, a black Florida man who lived more than 100 years, felt the word came from a dance known as the Jubilee, which consisted of two steps: the Walkin' Jawbone and the Jumpin' Jim Josey. When a couple expertly executed the latter, a buck-wing step, other dancers traditionally shouted, "Go on, jubilee!" This, Young recollected, got shortened to "Go on, jube!", then finally to "Jook it!"

Lastly, there was amateur criminologist Richard L. Dugdale's 1875 report *The Jukes: A Study In Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Humanity*. This, Dugdale claimed, began with an 1873 court case in Kingston, N.Y. A youth named Juke was on trial for receiving stolen goods, and five of his relatives testified for him. The family was thus so despised that "juke" was used locally to describe an incorrigible person. For his study, Dugdale traced the family lineage back many generations and concluded that 507 out of 709 Jukes were social detriments of one sort or another. This, he argued, proved that criminality was hereditary. His findings were accepted as gospel by many geneticists, sociologists and criminologists of the day. It wasn't until after Dugdale died that a crucial flaw was discovered, the Juke family didn't exist, and never had. Dugdale, himself a misfit who bounced from job to job and suffered several nervous breakdowns, had concocted the whole story to make himself an intellectual reputation. Still, "juke" remained a common slang term for derelicts, harlots and all manner of other ne'er-do-wells, and the term supposedly spread from New York to the rest of the country.

Whatever it's true origins, the word "jook" clearly implied something dangerous, and jook joints were considered dens of iniquity. Certainly many vices were indulged in the jook joints, but not everyone took the "menace" quite so seriously. Writing about Florida jooke joints in the 1942 book **Palmetto Country**, one Stetson Kennedy observed, "In the jook, profanity has degenerated into a mere manner of speaking, without which statements seem

lacking in conviction. Sincere cursing, though occasionally indulged in, takes the form of a dogfight, with much growling and little fighting. Indeed, advanced intoxication often renders fighting impractical if not impossible. The man or woman who attempts a haymaker often passes out before landing the blow."

The jukebox thrived in the Thirties. The records they played reflected regional tastes: swing in Harlem, hillbilly in the South, polkas in Milwaukee, grand opera in Italian neighborhoods. The lid came off when Prohibition was repealed in 1933. About 100,000 taverns opened around the country immediately, and most of them sported jukeboxes. These could be purchased for about $250 and played 12 records. Wurlitzer was still the leader in the field; competition came from Mills Novelty Co., Rock-Ola, Seeburg and the John Gabel Co.

It was also in 1933 that Wurlitzer introduced the P10, which allowed the customer, for the first time, to select a specific song from those offered on the machine. Jukeboxes thus became a vehicle for "breaking" records onto the national charts. During Christmas week of 1935, the Mike Riley-Eddie Farley Orchestra's recording of *The Music Goes 'Round and Around* became an overnight hit thanks to jukebox play. Others who would credit the jukebox for much of their popularity included Wee Bonnie Baker backed by Orrin Tucker's Orchestra *(Oh Johnny!, Oh Johnny! Oh)*, The Andrew Sisters *(Beer Barrel Polka)*, Bing Crosby *(The Singing Hills)*, Glenn Miller *(Tuxedo Junction)*, Artie Shaw *(Begin the Beguine)* and Woody Herman *(Jukin')*.

And just for the historical record, there was one more major technological advance in the Thirties—a remote control device that allowed one to choose a song without leaving one's booth or bar stool. This was advertised as a convenience for those tavern patrons who were "too tired" to walk across the room to the jukebox.

By the turn of the decade, about 300,000 jukeboxes were bringing in about $90,000,000 yearly—at five cents a pop, that's 1,800,000,000 nickels, the *New York Times* duly noted in 1941. Machines were now priced at $3-500, and offered 20, 24 or 40 selections. In 1940, Wurlitzer showed net profits of $1,050,132, or $2.39 a share (up from $1.79 the previous year). Known also as tombstones, Chinese coffins and milkbottles, jukeboxes were accounting for nearly half of all record sales.

And what machines they were!

As big and imposing as a linen closet, they had bubbles of liquid light moving up tubes around the edge of the case. The colors blinked and changed. Jukeboxes showed off ornate carvings and paintings on the glass grills.

World War II halted jukebox production because materials either were needed for the war effort or had been imported in the first place and were no longer available. But this was also when country music began to establish its firm grip on the jukes—partly because popular recordings were more scarce, but also because during the war Southerners migrated to all parts of the country, and of course the local jukes had to cater to their tastes even north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

The heyday of the jukebox came right after the war. New models were introduced in 1946. Wurlitzer was still on top, but the other companies were holding on, too, and new ones (Aireon Mfg., Bally, Packard) jumped on the bandwagon. Each tried to outdo the others with machines that were *bigger! louder! gaudier!* than anything before; one stood five feet tall and weighed 400 pounds. The *New York Times* checked in with new figures: $232,000,000, or 4,640,000,000 nickels. The U.S. Mint was forced to step up production of nickels to meet the demand.

Soon, country songs weren't just on the jukeboxes, they were often *about* jukeboxes as well. Hylon Brown pulled his truck into a Texas roadhouse, ordered a cup of coffee and told the waitress, "I'll put a nickel in the jukebox/And play the *Truck-Driving Man*," which just happened to be the name of the song he was singing. He wasn't the first to realize that mentioning jukeboxes helped get a record placed on jukeboxes, or that the juke was often a trucker's best friend.

The heyday of the jukebox came right after the war. . . The *New York Times* checked in with new figures (for yearly jukebox revenue): $232,000,000, or 4,640,000,000 nickels. The U.S. Mint was forced to step up production of nickels to meet the demand. . .

Actually, it can prove to be anyone's best friend—or even only friend. In *Stoned at the Jukebox*, a song as infinitely sad as any his father ever wrote, Hank Williams, Jr. finds himself in that position: "Now it's a cold hard dawn and I'm still here stoned at the jukebox/Playin' I can't help it if I'm still in love with you/Cuz that's the kind of songs it takes to get all that ol' hurtin' out/And Lord I love that hurtin' music/Cuz I am hurtin' too."

Johnny Paycheck, who once called himself *Jukebox Charlie* in a song, saw the juke (or rather, song *A-11*) as his enemy after he was jilted: "I don't know you from Adam/But if you're gonna play the jukebox/Please don't play A-11."

With *There's a Song On the Jukebox*, David Wills voiced a despair just as deep and twice as absurd: "I want a drink/And here's a twenty/And bring my change in dimes/There's a song on the jukebox/I wanna hear a thousand times." Suffering similar misfortunes in *I Just Started Hatin' Cheatin' Songs Today*, Moe Bandy took matters into his own hands: "I just threw my last bottle at the jukebox/When I heard that woman sing/'Darling let's go all the way'."

Though most jukebox songs do speak of sadness and helplessness, there are notable exceptions. Who among us, for example, could ever forget Jerry Lee Lewis' evangelical leer in *High School Confidential* when he commands his date, "Honey get your boppin' shoes/Before the jukebox blows a fuse!"

My own favorite has to be Onie Wheeler's *Jump Right Out of This Jukebox*, which begins, "Suppose that I should come to life/When they play this song/I could be in a lotta places at once/and see what's goin' on/If you believe it strong enough/You'll find it will come true/And I'll jump right out of this jukebox/And get a heart full of you." Now *that* must have startled solitary drinkers when they first heard it boom unexpectedly out of those big inanimate boxes in the mid-Fifties, and the rest of the song continues to identify singer, song and machine as one and the same, a nifty little twist on persona.

Needless to say, the *New York Times* no longer keeps track of the number of nickels put into jukeboxes; the nickel juke is long gone, and the jukebox itself is fading.

Sales continued to boom up into the Fifties, thanks in large part to the demand in Europe, but television started elbowing the juke out of many taverns. Except for the company's German plant, Wurlitzer got out of the jukebox business in 1973 to concentrate on pianos and organs. Seeburg and Rock-Ola, the two main manufacturers now, insist business couldn't be better, though neither would discuss figures and *Billboard* reports a steady downtrend in the industry. (Electronic games are now getting most of the coin.) Jukeboxes no longer break hits—radio does—and as the market becomes increasingly album-oriented, that's largely a moot point anyhow.

Meanwhile, there's gold in those old Wurlitzers. The 950 (1942, but in a limited number due to the war) is the most valuable, with collectors paying around $5000 for one. The 850 (1941) goes for about $3000; the 780 (1941) and 1080 (1946) bring about $2500 each. The most popular is the 1015 (1946); it runs about $1200, and one is on display at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

Which is not bad for a Depression baby with an embarrassing name. Not bad at all. ■

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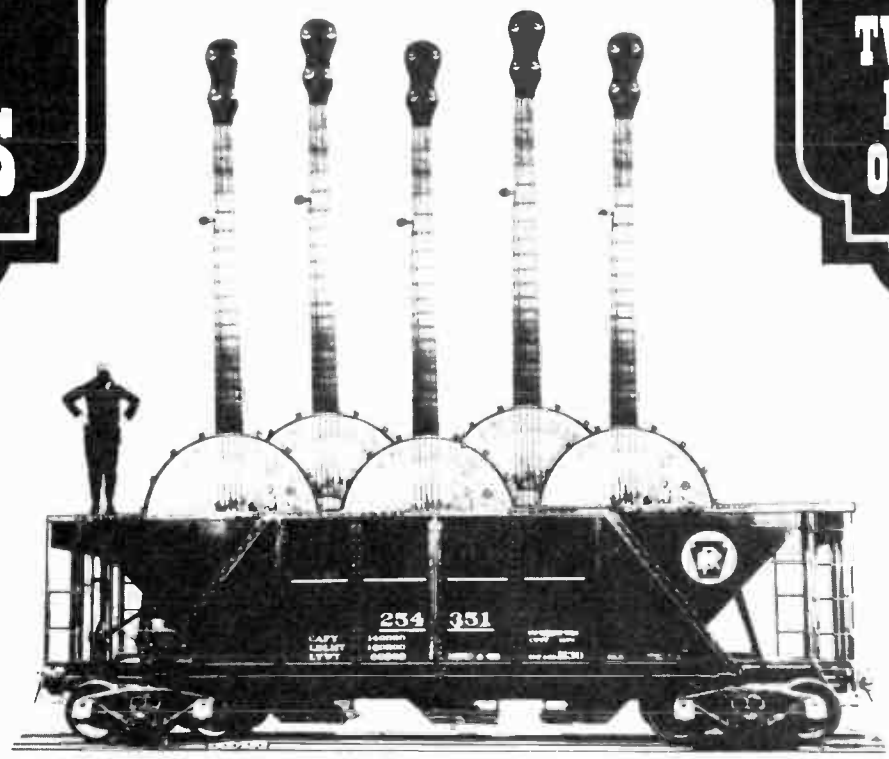

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THE WAYLON TAPES

by MICHAEL BANE

Storm clouds boil over an early afternoon sky in Nashville, and Waylon Jennings' office still hasn't returned the morning's call. Waylon and I are in our fourth day of negotiations, because Waylon does not do interviews and I want one. Like school children, our notes pass back and forth through intermediaries; potential interview questions are tossed hither and yon; subjects to be avoided are ventured tentatively by both sides.

"Let us make our position clear," said Bill Conrad, the soft-spoken, surprisingly gentle person in charge of public relations for Waylon's new organization, Utopia Productions; "Waylon is not scheduling interviews for anybody at this time. He's too often misquoted and misrepresented in print and would rather converse through his music."

There is, I admit grudgingly, a lot to be said for Waylon's position these days—at the age of forty, after laboring some twenty-five years in relative obscurity, Waylon Jennings is the biggest name in country music, perhaps the biggest star country music has ever produced. Along with his wife Jessi Colter, Willie Nelson and Tompall Glaser, he shares the billing on the only platinum album—one million copies sold—in the entire history of country music, **Wanted: The Outlaws!** His concerts have gone from fifteen-dollars-a-night one night stands in honky tonks all over the South and West to genuine, full-blown, rock and roll-style events. Along the way he has managed to both enrage and enrich his record company, RCA, and produce some of the finest records ever to emerge from the city of Nashville.

Waylon has also re-defined—albeit unwittingly—the meaning of what it is to be a country star, which is why he is so damned hard to find these days. Waylon is a star in the sense that Mick Jagger and Elton John are stars: When Waylon goes to J.J.'s Market to buy beer, that's news. A guest appearance by Waylon Jennings, once a fairly common occurrence, will now bring a concert to a grinding halt while the hordes swarm around *the* "Outlaw," the man who fought Nashville to a standoff and landed on his feet.

* * *

"We just wanted to find a place," Waylon says, sinking down into a squeaky chair and flicking his cigarette lighter. "Everybody thought we wanted to destroy, when actually we just brought another dimension to the music. Like our music. . . if you listen to my music, I go back to my roots to get a lot of it. But I'm not going to be tied down or chained to any one damn thing, 'cause our music, if it takes a kazoo to compliment the record and the song, then it's going to get it, buddy, right or wrong—I don't care. It's an art form, and I love it. It's my life. It's a part of me that goes out there, and I want it to be as good as I can have it, 'cause I never get it back. Once it's out there, it belongs to them, not to me. You owe that to the people, to do your best. But that's all you owe them.

* * *

"I couldn't conform," he says. "I wasn't understood, and some of it was maybe my fault—drugs, that stuff. They thought I was out to destroy, when all I wanted to do was survive. And country is. . .very suspicious. Country people are very suspicious and they're slow to change. And they're afraid change means destruction. But it doesn't. I wouldn't do anything to destroy anything. But there's a lot of wrong that's been done to us, and there's a lot of wrong still going on. And I'm not the big defender or anything, but I'll tell you what: If they put it in front of me, it'll be right or else.

"They say that I beat the system. I didn't do that, man—the system was after my ass. You know, it's like they were afraid of me, and the whole thing is the system, it don't know when to quit. There's nothing human about it. It runs itself. It was so sterile to me, I couldn't do it. There were still great records cut out of here with the Nashville Sound, but it was mass production, like an assembly line—four songs in three hours. I did eight damn songs one night in three hours! The pickers used the numbers system instead of chords—numbers written in order on a piece of paper, looking instead of listening. One time I took a gun—it wasn't loaded—but I took it into the studio and I said after the third rundown, 'The first guy I see looking at that [chord] chart, looking at that thing, you know, with the chords, the first guy that gives me a pick-up note, I'm going to shoot his fingers off.' I guess they believed it. They listened to the music."

It was the music they were listening to that set Waylon Jennings apart from the mainstream of Nashville music early on. Despite protestations of being from the great state of Texas and being weaned on Western Swing, Waylon Jennings' music remained deeply rooted in his Buddy Holly days. Instead of the creamy smooth Chet Atkins Guitar Course backgrounds that marked the Nashville Sound, Waylon's music had that mean rockabilly bite, that stuttering, chicken-pickin' guitar backed up with a pounding bass line that hit straight at the gut. And if that wasn't enough, Waylon refused to stick exclusively with the "safe" Nashville writers—the Harlan Howards and the Marijohn Wilkins. Instead, he looked around for new, up-and-coming talent, and he found it blossoming all over the place. Kris Kristofferson, Billy Joe Shaver, Billy Ray Reynolds, J.J. Cale, Gordon Lightfoot, Gregg Allman, Lee Clayton, Hoyt Axton, Mickey Newbury, Tony Joe White, Tom Rush, Mick Jagger, Lee Hazelwood—all found their way onto Waylon's albums. And still he culled the best of what Nashville had to offer—Harlan Howard, Mel Tillis, Bill Anderson. The result, when coupled with his own songwriting and that of his closest friend, Willie Nelson, was a collection of crazy-quilt albums the likes of which Nashville had never seen before. Who else, for example, would include *Honky Tonk Woman* by Mick Jagger on an album with *I'm Ragged But I'm Right* by George Jones? Or *Good Hearted Woman* (Waylon and Willie) on the same album with *The Same Old Lover Man* (Gordon Lightfoot), *Willie And Laura Mae Jones* (Tony Joe White) and *One Of My Bad Habits* (Harlan Howard)?

"I'll tell you what I am," Waylon says. "I'm an interpreter. I like to take another man's song and make it sound like I wrote it. I'm a fan of writers. Willie Nelson's the greatest songwriter who's ever been. I really believe that. And everybody knows I love Willie. But you go through his catalogue, hoss, and there ain't *nobody* wrote that many different types of songs, and someday they're gonna realize that. That Willie Nelson, he can write the *simplest* damn song and turn around and write *And So Will You, My Love*, which, I mean, is a deep song. For me, anyway. I can take one of his songs and it's a different song when I do it. Like *It's Not Supposed To Be That Way*. Well, that's actu-

The faces of Waylon Jennings (clockwise, from upper right), Waylon with David Allan Coe; in New York City with his band, the Waylors, 1973; with Rita Coolidge at Dripping Springs, 1972; on the road, 1973. A clean-shaven Waylon (center) considers his stardom.

ally about his little daughter [a painfully sad lament about a daddy who's away on the road far too long], but when I did it, I did it like a couple playing games. He [Willie] laughed, but he said, 'How did you get that? We sang the same lyrics.' I said, 'I thought that was what you meant, stud.'"

* * *

"Interpreter" is probably the right word. Like with the blues shouters who laid the groundwork for the rock and roll frenzy that was to come, the strength of a country singer lies—or at least, it did lie—in his ability to take a song and make it his. That's not surprising, since the blues and country share a deep-rooted common background, the hard times and dirt-poor farms of the rural South. In their own ways, the blues and country music became for a few moments an escape from the day's toil, a tiny buffer zone between sunset and the deadening reality of the next day's dawn. And lyrics, plainly and simply, just weren't enough. The music had to be *real*. It had to be able to play on the heart and touch the emotions immediately—not try and work down through the mind. First and foremost, the music had to say, "I understand; we share this." The burden for evoking this common bond fell, then, not on the song, but on the singer. It didn't matter so much what was said—many country and blues songs appear hopelessly trite when printed in, say, college textbooks—but how the singer chose to say it. In this sense, Waylon is as much a blues singer as he is a country singer—but in Waylon the two traditions are fused. And when they are fused, as in rockabilly or rock and roll or Waylon Jennings music, things begin to rock. But at the core of Waylon's music, there is that bedrock of country honesty.

"Rock hasn't had any honesty in so long it's pitiful," Waylon says. "The last real honesty that rock and roll music ever had was Fats Domino and Chuck Berry and part of the Beatles. Everybody liked Fats Domino—I still say I'd have loved to see him work on some country shows. Have you ever met anybody like him? Wouldn't any country audience freak out over somebody like Fats Domino? Any pop audience? He's a natural talent. I saw him in Vegas and thought, man, he'll be bad. He's probably washed up. But when he came out there and started: 'I found my thrill . . .' I thought, God almighty!

"That's what we gotta do, man. There's a lot of black people coming to our concerts now, and that's what I'm talking about—what the music can do. See, they put us in little categories, but that's what I don't like. I resent it. Hey, my name is Waylon, and it's Waylon's music. It's Willie's music *he* plays. It's not 'Outlaw' or 'contemporary' or 'folk-country' or 'country'—hey, man, that's *merchandising*. They keep it all in little neat categories. To overcome that, you become an individual, which is what you should be to begin with."

But getting put in categories is something like ending up on somebody's Worst Dressed List—you don't ask to be put on it, but once you're there it's harder to shake than a suitcase full of mud. You can't simply call a press conference and announce that you have decided to switch categories. If you announce such a switch, all that everyone else will remember is that you admitted to being in Category Number One in the first place. How, then, does Waylon Jennings plan to remove himself from the category he has found the most offensive—that of Outlaw?

"Well, see, I could whup most fellas," Waylon says, chuckling like a small grizzly in a leather vest. "Naw, I'll tell you what. I think I have about five categories, and I think that through record sales you rise above categories and become an individual, which I am. I am not any type of music, really. I love anything that is good. A lot of it I don't understand, because it shoots way over my head—I'm not too much of a musician. But I love music, and I don't care what it is.

"I never did call myself no Outlaw. Tompall once made up a bunch of things like pamphlets making people honorary Outlaws, which made me automatically sick. I said, 'That's stupid, man. You're taking the publicity too seriously. Play your music and forget that.' That's what I tried to tell David Allan Coe. Between Tompall and David Allan Coe, bucking the system is double-parking on 16th Avenue South." ■

For Emmylou Harris settling down comes as easy as, well, being on the road. . .

Emmylou Harris: Home At Last

by GAIL BUCHALTER-RAY

Emmylou Harris had Christmas dinner at home last year, and that's a pretty big deal.

It was a new situation for Emmylou, whose usual role was that of the visitor. Having altered her nomadic existence somewhat, she proudly points out her two new sofas and talks about how they are the first ones she has owned in thirty years of living.

The new year started out on a traveling note for Ms. Brian Ahern, a.k.a. Emmylou Harris, with a quick three day trip to Nashville. New Year's weekend also turned out to be a working holiday for a couple of Emmylou's friends—Linda Ronstadt and Dolly Parton.

"Dolly came up with the idea of the three of us doing an album. Linda and I have been together, or Linda and Dolly, or Dolly and I, but the three of us have only been together a couple of times. We're all on the road so much that it's hard for us to just sit around and sing. We've figured out the only way we're going to be able to do it is to say we're going to make a record, and eventually everything will be put down on tape.

"I have to have the input of energy I get from singing with people—that's the whole reason I do it. It's that kind of energy I try to transfer to my stage show and records.

"I remember the first time I felt that type of energy. It was the beginning of my suitcase-packing syndrome. I left home rebelling more against myself than my parents. They put a lot less pressure on me than I did. But I felt I had come to a standstill at home and had to leave to find something else.

"I decided to move to Norfolk, Virginia, where I got a job as a waitress and took a room in a boarding house. It was all very exciting and strange for someone who had never done anything. I stayed up one night, playing music until the sun came up and a whole new way of life opened up for me. Music was always something I had enjoyed but I had never had the depth of feeling for it that I had that night."

Music also helped Emmylou gain acceptance, not only with friends but with other musicians. Jerry Jeff Walker, Paul Seibel and David Bromberg took a special interest in her career while introducing her to the music of Jimmie Rodgers and bluegrass. She met these current day folk heros when she performed and passed the hat in the basket houses that had at one time lined the streets of Greenwich Village.

"I look back on my two year stay in New York as an experience, just not a positive one. It had always seemed like a fantasy land. Had I been an 18th century pioneer, I'm sure I would have had the same feelings while traveling West as I did as my brother drove me to the city.

"Things just didn't work out for me there. I got married and spent almost half of my stay there being pregnant. I wasn't playing music because I had a straight job, and music had always been an outlet for me. So, I packed up my two month old baby, my cat and a Billie Holiday poster, which I still have, and went to Nashville."

If New York was bad, Nashville was a disaster. Twelve apartments in two years sent Emmylou's cat away, scrambling through the countryside of Tennessee and, as she says, "When your cat splits you know you've got to get yourself together."

Emmylou followed her cat's lead and left Nashville to return to her ever-understanding family. Once back in North Carolina she regrouped and regained her strength for her next onslaught on the music biz.

Though born and raised in the South, Emmylou was not brought up with the sounds of the Grand Ol' Opry coursing through her ears. Country music did not find Emmylou but instead was found by her. A self-acknowledged eclectic, she picked her way through folk, blues and traditional country music until she created her own style and sound.

"I used to say I liked live performances and records were an arduous thing I had to go through. I'm starting to enjoy recording now that I'm learning about it. It took me a long time until I could listen to this album without cringing. We spent a lot of time mixing it

Emmylou in Boston – her friends in the photo are just fans, not arresting officers.

which was my fault. I started to hear things that I never heard before. As Brian says, 'I developed pimples on my ears.'

"He knows I'm learning and since we are partners when we make a record, he really wants me to be in on the mix. I think he would like all of his artists to work that closely with him. There's an enormous array of sounds that can be used on a record and what is finally chosen should reflect the artists' personal taste. I'm sure I'd be completely satisfied with anything Brian mixed. But at the same time, I want to be a part of what's happening in the control room. I think the technical aspect of a record constitutes as much a part of your musicianship as working up a tune or singing a song.

"The whole concept of an album is changing. It used to be that first you'd put out a single, and if it was successful, you'd do nine other songs and put out an album. Now more thought is being put into each song. I know each one is precious to me—there are no throw aways.

"I've been lucky with each album I've put out. **Elite Hotel** had three hit singles and **Luxury Liner** had two. We don't choose the singles until the record is over and then we try for a song that's basic to the feel of the album.

"I'm beginning to get a bead on singles but I admit I never would have chosen *Together Again*. It surprised me when it was picked and it really surprised me when it did as well as it did. I never would have picked *Sweet Dreams*, either. I was given the chance to pick the next single and I chose *One Of These Days*, which is still my all time favorite of anything I've done."

It's obvious from what Emmylou says and from the success of each album that she selects her material with care. Though no songwriter writes specifically for her, she does have several writers whose work she feels more comfortable recording.

One of these people is Rodney Crowell, who was living in relative obscurity in Nashville, when he was asked to join her band. That band, the Hot Band, has been together for three years and, if they are, as Emmylou says, as close to her as brothers, then Rodney would seem to be her twin. While he recently left the group to follow his own star, he left a part of himself and his music with Emmylou.

"I don't feel I gave Rodney his 'big' chance. Instead I feel privileged to have worked with him. It was like being in a candy store the way he'd give me first chance at what he'd written.

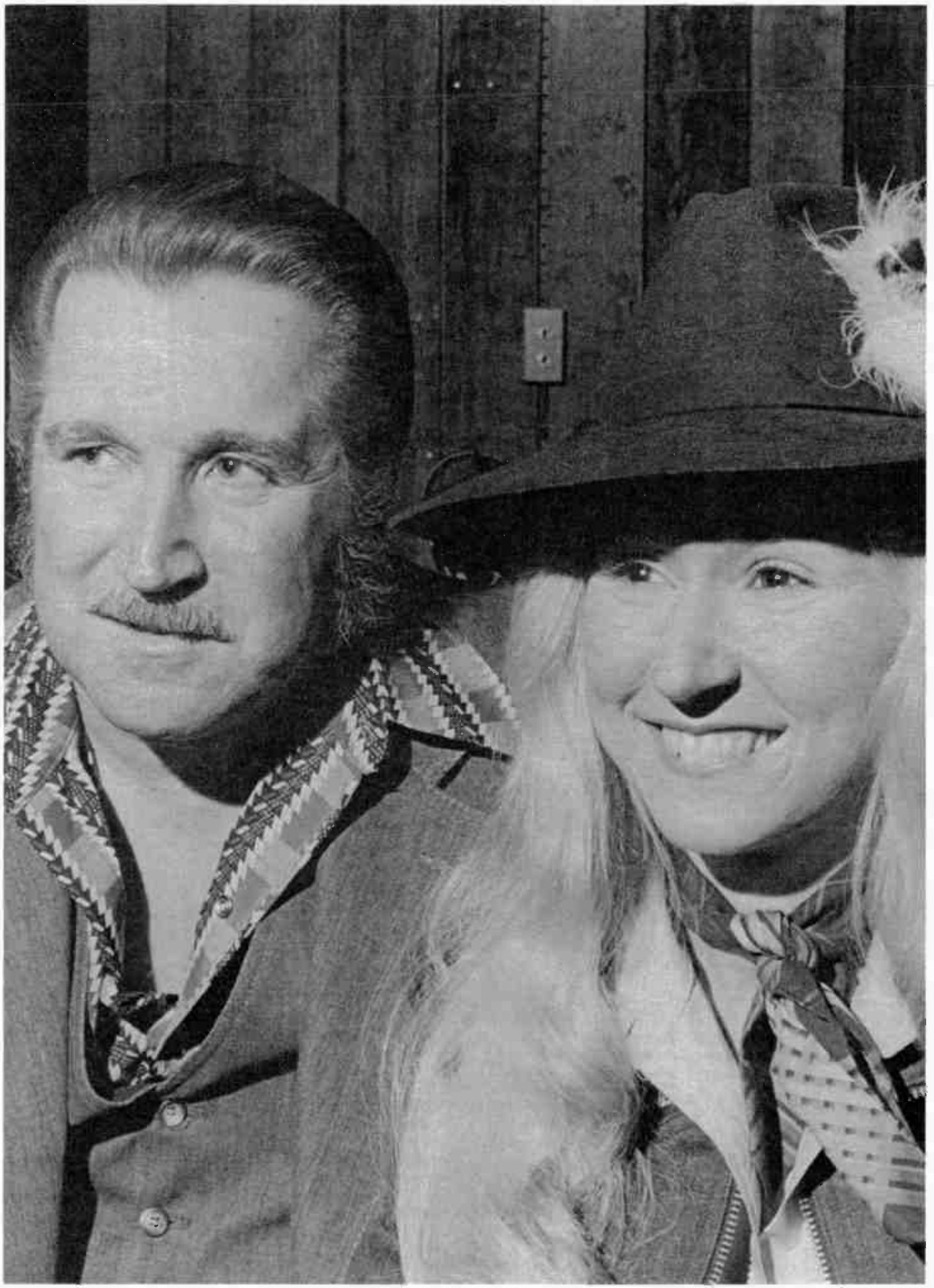
"It's hard for me to structure a song. I'm basically a lyricist and I find that melodies often give me a hard time. I get great ideas for songs, but lately I haven't had the time to get them to the point where I can sit down with someone and tell them what I'm feeling and hearing in my head.

"*Tulsa Queen* turned out to be a real 50-50 co-writing effort with Rodney and a very satisfying one. I had some of the lines for the song and the feel of it. I knew exactly how I wanted it to turn out. I went to Rodney with those thoughts and, at first, I found working with him to be real scary. When you go to someone with an idea like that you have to be able to trust that person implicitly. It worked out for us because I think Rodney's a great songwriter and that made it a lot easier for me to accept his suggestions."

Emmylou's belief in Rodney's talent extends to her entire band. She protested with indignation the fact that several articles concerning herself and her band stated the three "live" tracks on **Elite Hotel** were simulated. Though it can be considered a compliment to have live recordings be mistaken for well rehearsed studio cuts, such was not the case. Those tunes were recorded outside Los Angeles' Roxy in Brian's mobile studio, the Enactron Truck.

"My idea of heaven is playing two shows a night in a honky-tonk with a good sound system. I want people to be able to get loose, and hoot and holler while enjoying my music."

Judging by Emmylou Harris' tremendous popularity, there are a lot of people who would want to hang out in her heavenly honky-tonk. ■



Let's See . . . That's Sin Is Just In Heaven's Way . . . Uh, Heaven's Just Not Sinning's Way . . . How About Sinning's Just Not Heaven's Way . . . Heaven's Too Thin Anyway . . .

by EDWARD MORRIS

It's a long enough list of triumphs to almost make you believe in fairy godmothers and free enterprise:

- One Number One country hit for songwriter Jerry Gillespie—his first.
- One Number One hit for Chicago-based and new-to-country Ovation Records—their first.
- One Number One hit for producer Brien Fisher—his first.
- One Number One hit for record promoter Joe Sun—his first.
- One Number One hit for LSI Sound Studio of Nashville—their first.
- One new branch office in Nashville for Ovation.
- Five SESAC music awards.
- One new lease on artistic life for the father-and-daughter singing team of Royce and Jeannie Kendall.
- One crossover to pop—a first for all of the above.

The common denominator for all these happy occurrences is a hypnotically repetitive little ditty called *Heaven's Just A Sin Away*. There have been other left-field surprises from Nashville that have outshone and outsold *Heaven's*, but few have had such a quick and monumental effect on so many people whom acclaim had so long eluded.

The bare facts are these: Songwriter Jerry Gillespie, whose *That's When My Woman Begins* went into the Top Five for Tommy Overstreet, approached the Kendalls with *Heaven's Just A Sin Away* when they were putting together their first album for Ovation in early 1977. The song was casually accepted as an album cut, and nobody—but nobody—expected it to take on a life of its own.

After the album was released in March—under the original title of *Let The Music Play*—Ovation cut from it the single *Makin' Believe*. It hit the *Billboard* country chart at Number 100 in April—and was promptly blown away by the Emmylou Harris version. The next single, put on the market in July, had *Live And Let Live* on the "A" (or most emphasized) side and, almost as an afterthought, *Heaven's Just A Sin Away* on "B".

Says Jeannie Kendall, "Jay Diamond in Paducah (Station WKYQ) started playing it off the album, and he called us and said we *had* to put the song out as a single because it was getting more requests than *Teddy Bear* had. We thought he was telling us that because he liked us, but—just in case—we decided to put it on the 'B' side."

That's as close as anyone will admit to recognizing the song's potential.

"I got in my Volkswagen," says promoter Joe Sun, "and went all the way down to Florida and all the way back up through Ohio—it took me three or four weeks—and I had a wreck and totalled my car. And all the time I was promoting the wrong side of the record." Once it became apparent that *Heaven's* was picking up listener support, Sun says he pushed it by taping DJ raves and playing their comments to distributors, tradespeople and other jocks.

In October, the dark horse went to Number One in all the trade magazine charts and stayed there for weeks. It also crossed over to the pop charts, but with measurably less impact than it had had in country. Not one of the trade magazines noticed *Heaven's* when it first came out. But, says Royce, *Record World* was soon predicting that it would be the biggest "B" side since David Houston's *Almost Persuaded*.

Brien Fisher had worked for Ovation in Chicago as an independent producer, a profession he continued when he moved to Nashville several years ago. A friend of the Kendalls, Fisher arranged for them to sign with Ovation, and, as a result, now heads the label's Nashville operations while continuing to produce for them. "Seems like everyone involved was due a hit," he reflects, "and here it came."

The Kendalls had been performing out of Nashville since 1969, when they came there to record for Pete Drake's Stop label. On Stop, they came tantalizingly close to stardom with *Leavin' On A Jet Plane*, *Two Divided By Love* and *You've Lost That Loving Feeling*. In time, they moved on to Dot and then to United Artists, attracting little notice with either company. They had been without a label affiliation for six months when they joined Ovation. "We decided that we would either record the way we wanted to or not record at all," says Royce. "It's pretty good to have all you on a record—to know somebody else didn't do it for you."

In the midst of a weekend recording bout at LSI for their second Ovation album, the Kendalls take some time out to give Jeannie's voice a rest and to talk some more about the magic. With them is Fisher, Sun and songwriter Mike Kosser.

The Kendalls have just come from picking up an order of *Heaven's-Just-A-Sin-Away* T-shirts and are displaying them to the gathering.

"We got 12 dozen," says Royce.

"But what are you going to do for the second show?" Fisher jokes, referring to recent personal appearances at which all Kendall memorabilia was sold out.

Getting a song to the Kendalls is becoming a local obsession. And songwriters have been using every tactic to get a hearing—from singing to Fisher over the phone to coming to LSI, ostensibly to make demos, but mainly to pitch their songs.

Kosser, who co-authored *Don't Go City Girl On Me*, is one of the lucky ones. The night before, the Kendalls had cut a number he and Curly Putnam composed.

"I'll show you how your status has gone up," Kosser tells the Kendalls. "I went up to Killen's office today (Buddy Killen, president of Tree Publishing), and as I

(Continued on page 62)

Records

Delbert McClinton
Second Wind
Capricorn CPN-0201
Star Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Delbert McClinton writes love lyrics as romantic as Kristofferson's, creates imagery as sharp and evil as a blood-stained razor, and possesses a seasoned voice that sounds like it was weaned on Black Jack in a colored juke joint. Wholesome he's not, but those qualities are exactly why he rates in my book as the best singer-writer to surface in the last five years.

Obviously, the masses don't yet share my opinion, because McClinton's three previous solo albums have stiffed at the checkout counter, even though he was promoted at various times as a progressive country outlaw, a nasty blues harmonica player, and a brilliant composer of "real" country songs. Emmylou Harris discovered his *Two More Bottles of Wine* and put it on her latest album; sooner or later, some smart cookie will figure out that his *Victim of Life's Circumstances* is destined for the Top Ten. Meanwhile, as stardom waits, McClinton continues to make great, unheralded albums.

This one, his first for his new label, further obscures the distinction between black and white soul music; it's a combination plate of honky tonk standards and shiny new originals, all decorated with brassy Muscle Shoals horns for Duke/Peacock punch and bar band looseness, and it creates the at-home atmosphere McClinton has sought since he quit his old band, The Straitjackets. Like any artist adept at exposing the seamier side of life, he exercises impeccable taste in choosing his cover material. Fats Domino's lament *Sick and Tired* and the lurid *Spoonful* are both underbelly classics, and he makes Jesse Winchester's *Isn't That So* sound like one, too. Only once does he stray beyond his element, for *Big River*, a number best left to Johnny Cash. The clearest sign McClinton is bound for eventual glory is the five originals, two of which (*B Movie* and *It Ain't Whatcha Eat But the Way How You Chew It*) rank as instant morality tales for nightcrawlers. They won't stop anyone from drinking, but they sure help explain the intricacies of getting through the night.

JOE NICK PATOSKI

Ernest Tubb
The Living Legend
First Generation FG LP 001
Star Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Sixty-three-year-old Ernest Tubb, the Texas Troubador, is one of the last Grand Ole Men of country music. He's been playing, singing and touring since 1940, and he still sells out clubs and concerts from coast to coast. Most men his age would have long since retired from the tough life on the road, but Tubb wouldn't know how.

One side of **The Living Legend** consists of newly-recorded versions of five Tubb classics, including his deathless *Soldier's Last Letter*. Normally I run screaming at the thought of "remakes," but, amazingly, these modern re-recordings are not only every

Marcia Ball
Circuit Queen
Capitol ST-11752
Star Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Marcia Ball's long-awaited debut confirms all those glowing reports we've been hearing from Austin over the past year. Her whiskey voice and root-conscious individuality set her apart from the mobs of Linda Ronstadt imitators currently haunting Nashville, Austin and L.A., and though there were some obvious commercial concessions made in the studio, including a few strings here and there, she's managed to integrate a variety of material into a well-defined, cohesive musical direction.

She's most at home with up-tempo tunes of the sort that dominate her live shows, and several display her knack for adapting disparate material to her own needs. She transforms Marvin Gaye's 1964 Motown hit *I'll Be Doggone* from an inner city soul thumper into pure Texas dancehall music. Likewise, Neil Sedaka's *Good Times, Good Music, Good Friends* goes from banal pop song to infectious honky tonk anthem, and both *Big River*, the Johnny Cash Sun classic, and *Train to Dixie* become gospel-Dixieland celebrations. Her relaxed delivery of Rodney Crowell's *Leaving Louisiana* makes it one of the best C&W stream of consciousness re-

cordings around, while *Never Been Hurt* smolders with the spirit of Aretha Franklin.

The western themes she loves reveal a more reflective side. *Circuit Queen*, the album's most commercial number, is a pathos-ridden tale of a burnt-out, love-starved rodeo cowgirl. *Jackson, Oh Jackson* is equally desolate, and *The Lights of Cheyenne* conjures up the pure imagery of a Frederick Remington painting.

Right now I can think of but three women making musical headway without joining the Quasi-Ronstadt or Nashville Gingham Gown Society: Marshall Chapman, Chris O'Connell and Marcia.

RICH KIENZLE

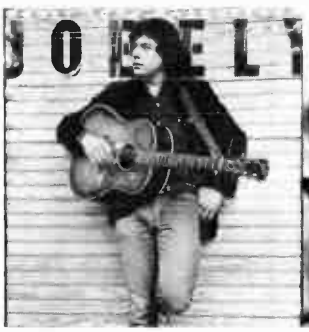
bit as good as the originals, they may even surpass them! Like fine old wine, Tubb's deep, velvety voice just seems to get better with age (even if, in Tubb's case, the wine is warm, red, and on the corner of a bar in a back-country Texas honky tonk). And the backup arrangements are tremendous—classically country-simple, no female choruses, no string sections.

The "new" side of the record is just as good, featuring two songs that deserve to become Tubb standards—and would have even in 1940: Linda Hargrove's *Half My Heart's In Texas* (in the great tradition of Tubb's *My Tennessee Baby*, with the great line about how his Texas training "leaves nothing out") and Justin Tubb's *A Month of Sundays* (with a line about "a month of Saturday nights"). Tubb brings the new material into his style so effortlessly that it's hard to believe these aren't golden oldies—and that's high praise in my book.

Can't I complain about anything? Yeah. What you get for your money here is exactly 26 minutes of music, and I think that's a short count—but I suppose we should be grateful for what we've got. Tubb is still going strong. Lord, I hope he goes on forever.

MICHAEL GOODWIN

Joe Ely
Honky Tonk Masquerade
MCA T-2333
Star Rating: ★★★★★



Joe Ely and company won critical, if not commercial, acclaim with his first album. **Honky Tonk Masquerade,** the important second album, proves also to be a diamond, easily the best thing I've heard thus far in 1978. It offers an exciting mix of Ely's west Texas rockabilly style, his searing vocals, the band's sizzling energy, and some of the best songwriting in American music today. Ely is fortunate to have found, in Chip Young, a producer who won't settle for less in the studio than the sound Ely gets live at Austin's Soap Creek Saloon.

From Ely's hauntingly evocative *Because of the Wind* to Butch Hancock's *Boxcars* (with a great refrain: "Big ole Buicks by the Baptist Church, Cadillacs at the Church of Christ . . . I'm going down to the railroad tracks and watch those lonesome boxcars roll") to Jimmie Dale Gilmore's aching blues ballad *Tonight I Think I'm Gonna Go Downtown*, **Honky Tonk Masquerade** shows us the best of Texas music. Given the recognition and airplay, the Ely/Hancock/Gilmore songwriting trio could very possibly do for country music what Lennon/McCartney or Jagger/Richard did for rock in the Sixties. There's none of the standard country music "alcohol/adultery/tears on my pillow" in these songs, yet the lyrics are closer to portraying country style and attitudes than 95 percent of what comes out of Music Row.

Ely's *I Keep My Fingernails Long So They Click When I Play the Piano* is a classic country rocker that would make even ole Jerry Lee jump around on the ivories. Or you can take the rollicking playfulness of a Hancock line like "Now only two things are better than milk shakes and malts, and one of 'em's dancin' to the West Texas Waltz"; now there ain't too many people that could do that line without sounding silly, but Ely and the band, sparked by Ponti Bone's super accordian licks, literally waltz off the record.

NELSON ALLEN

Tom T. Hall
New Train, Same Rider
RCA APL1-2622
Star Rating: ★ ★ ★

When Tom T. Hall hits a lick with a lyric, there are few who can match him. His can often say more in a ten-word couplet than many writer-singers can in an entire LP. Some of his earlier songs like *Clayton Delaney* and *Ballad Of Forty Dollars* deserve to go down in popular music history—they're pure slices of contemporary Americana.

As of late, however, ole Tom T. seems to be heading in new directions. His last LP, **About Love** (on Mercury Records), as well as the majority of cuts on

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

Records

New Train, Same Rider (his first for RCA), indicate that he is determined to become the Caruso of country music—a role better left to soft-core crooners like Tom Jones.

There are three songs on **New Train, Same Rider** that weigh in as first-rate Tom T. Hall material (and oddly enough, he only wrote two of them). *Come On Back To Nashville (Ode To The Outlaws)* is a lively, infectious song—one of the best he's written, and (I feel) a sure hit single; it's that good. The lyrics sparkle and you are *compelled* to sing along. *Mabel, You Have Been A Friend To Me* and *Dark Hollow* (written by someone named Browning) are right in there too.

Unfortunately, too many of the remaining cuts sound like stale left-overs from **About Love**. They are sincere, but uninspired, love ballads—the kind of slow-paced melodic songs on which Tom T.'s vocal endowments begin to stretch a little too thin. *May The Force Be With You Always*, the hit single, is a song so dumb and totally unaffected, that it's cute.

If it were mine to do, I'd give this LP some sort of award for its cover art. It's the best I've seen in a while. As for what's inside, well . . . I guess three good, solid, vintage Tom T. Hall cuts are worth the price of an LP anytime!

BOB ALLEN

Marcia Routh
Natural Born Fool
Epic KE-35278
Star Rating: ★ ★ ★

Marcia Routh has youth (she's only 25), a pleasant folk-tinged voice with a supple lower register and a considerable (if glib) songwriting talent going for her. Other than her longtime residence in Nashville and the production by Allen Reynolds, however, there is little to relate her debut album to country music.

The songs run the gamut of modern folk styles—a sort of blues, a sort of campy funk, a sort of country—but they are more suitable material for Phoebe Snow than Hank Snow, and the production fairly oozes "crossover, crossover." Ms. Routh, too, has an infectious, folksy voice—along the lines of a less affected Maria Muldaur—but it is, like her songs, glib, catchy and unchallenging. She does not display the ability (which ultimately defines the country singer) to dig into a song and really make you believe it. It works to her advantage that most of the songs on **Natural Born Fool** are not heavy loving and losing weepers, but are bouncy, medium-tempo easy-listening things.

It is not music which engages the listener, nor does it really seem to engage the singer. I don't think it denigrates Ms. Routh's considerable and promising talents to say that her first album is a pleasant, bouncy, enjoyable, dispassionate pop album. Why her label is attempting to market her in country is beyond me.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Tom Bresh
Portrait
ABC AB-1055
Star Rating: ★ ★ ★

This is Tom Bresh's second album with producer Jimmy Bowen. I used to think no one should ever say anything bad about Jimmy Bowen, because he used to play with the Rhythm Orchids and Buddy Knox. Then some years later, he also produced Frank Sinatra records, which probably fattened his pocketbook, but destroyed whatever class he had left.

So Bresh turns in a professional piece of work that's unfortunately marred by some of the worst excesses in pop/country songwriting history. The slick, hot Nashville lounge sound that permeated Bresh's first attempt (**Kicked Back**) overwhelms and overpowers on **Portrait**.

But lest his audience accuse Bresh of being too slick, he throws in some good ole country ditties, such as *My Lickskillet, Indiana, Home*, that proclaims his love of country roots. The problem with this (and with *Huckleberry Weekend*, another Bresh original) is that it tries too hard to sing the benefits of being country, and consequently ends up a parody of country music. There's nothing wrong with being "born in L.A. County" and not having a "field or crop to plow," as Bresh announces in *Lickskillet*, but why then proceed to hoke it up with a doo-wacka-wacka banjo refrain? Even all that wouldn't be so bad were it not for Bresh's downright condes-

cending treatment of the Merle Travis/Tex Williams classic *Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)*, in which he forces us to endure imitations of Howard Cosell, Bogart and Walter Brennan. To what point? It's not even funny.

A couple of songs here manage to climb out of the rut.

Bobby Braddock's *My Better Half* and Sterling Whipple and Curly Putnam's *A Woman Who Will* show off Bresh's smooth vocal styling and natural phrasing at their best. They indicate that the pieces are all here, they're just not yet put together in a winning fashion. Bresh's energy, his touted picking, a pleasant voice, and a proven producer ought to do the trick if he'll explore some other sources and pick material he can make his own.

NELSON ALLEN

Waylon Jennings & Willie Nelson
Waylon & Willie
RCA AFL1-2686
Star Rating: ★ ★

I sincerely hope this is the death-knell for the "outlaws." Not, mind you, that I have anything against Willie and Waylon, but I'd rather that they drop this whole pose and go back to being Willie and Waylon. When things have reached the point where Waylon Jennings has to cover a record that was the biggest ripoff of his whole sound ever produced *(Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys)*, with lyrics that are virtually a parody on all the magazine articles about "outlaw country," it's time to ventilate the room.

Not all the album is as bad as that. Some of it is worse: *I Can Get Off On You*, the stupidest C&W dope song ever. Or the in-groupy *Don't Cuss the Fiddle*, wherein Kris Kristofferson rewrites *Good Hearted Woman*, for some reason or another. And, bad as that one is, it's still better than *The Year 2003 Minus 25*, in which Kris reinterprets his last year's supply of Time magazines.

Well, there are good songs, too. *Pick Up the Tempo* for the

umpteenth time, for one, and *It's Not Supposed To Be That Way*, for almost the umpteenth time, neither version better than any previous one, and a fine Lee Clayton song, *If You Can Touch Her At All*, sung by Willie. And, of course, there's Waylon's latest two-sided hit, *Lookin' For A Feeling* and *The Wurlitzer Prize (I Don't Want To Get Over You)*, although neither one is A+ Waylon at all. Even Willie isn't picking his familiar gut-string guitar. Overall, the album sounds tired.

I wish every songwriter, in and out of Nashville, and every country picker with new ideas lots of luck; I wish Waylon and Willie long life and happiness.

ED WARD

John Wesley Ryles
Shine On Me
ABC AB-1056
Star Rating: ★ ★

In 1968, at the age of 17, John Wesley Ryles first tasted success with *Kay*, a lament that brought him the sort of sudden, precocious stardom experienced by Tanya Tucker with *Delta Dawn*. But unlike Tanya, Ryles never found a followup hit, and his career languished until he signed with ABC last year. There he produced one of the year's sleeper albums, *John Wesley Ryles*, a stellar country/R&B fusion and the hit single *Fool*; both made his comeback a true celebration. But **Shine On Me** is a sluggish disappointment in comparison.

Something's missing here. Much of the set displays listlessness, an intangible boredom that could only come from recording ten love songs in a row. *Shine On Me*, *We Can Make The Pieces Fit Again*, *Cry No More My Lady* and *That All Over Feeling* are all pleasant enough until you realize that they're identical to a few dozen other numbers: no intensity, just flowery platitudes and hackneyed melodies.

Worse yet is *All Day Rain*, which inspires more laughter than sensuality through the (drip) use of (rumble) silly, gratuitous sound effects (splat!).

Ironically one of the strongest tunes is *I Don't Want To Hear Your Love Song*, which nearly repudiates the album's entire focus. *Don't Let The Sun Catch You Cryin'*, a 1964 hit by England's Gerry and the Pacemakers, is well adapted to country-pop and *Kay*, still a compelling number, is completely redone.

I still think Ryles has the right idea, but another set as unsatisfying as **Shine On Me** could derail his comeback. It'd be tragic to see another artist of his potential reduced to recording sugarcoated musical valentines.

RICH KIENZLE

Records

Milton Brown & His Musical Brownies
Taking Off
String STR804
Star Rating: ★★★★

With East Texas still in the throes of the depression (1936), my grandmother's neighbors packed up and drove to Fort Worth to attend Milton Brown's funeral. "He woulda done the same for us," they claimed. And, be that as it may, it illustrates the immense popularity of Milton Brown & His Musical Brownies, one of the original western swing bands, and serious rivals to Bob Wills. In fact, had it not been for Brown's ultimately fatal car crash on Forth Worth's famed Jacksboro Highway, Bob Wills might not be known as the "King of Western Swing" today.

Brown was the first to split from the Light Crust Doughboys and form his own band. The first group included Jesse Ashlock and Cecil Brower on fiddles, Milton's brother Durwood Brown on guitar, Ocie Stockard on tenor banjo, Wanna Coffman on bass, the innovative Bob Dunn on steel, and Fred "Papa" Calhoun at the piano with Milton himself handling most of the vocals. Nine of the cuts on this album are taken from a January '35 recording session in Chicago with this lineup (with the sole exception of Ashlock who had left to join Wills in Tulsa) and the mixed-bag that is western swing is nowhere better represented. They include a timeless tempo-changing version of *St. Louis Blues*, *Little Betty Brown*, a country hoedown with Durwood calling the steps, *El Rancho Grande*, a bilingual duet by Durwood and Milton, another duet, *Sweet Jennie Lee*, *My Mary*, featuring Milton, and the western swing classic, *Taking Off*, written by Dunn. *Chinatown*, *Some Of These Days* and *Sweet Georgia Brown* were popular melodies of the day which allowed the fiddle, piano and steel to shine. Milton then added Cliff Bruner, giving the band twin fiddlers of top rank, and recorded again on March 1936 in New Orleans. *Fan It* and *Texas Hambone Blues* were popping bluesy numbers. *If You Can't Get Five Take Two*, a ribald comment on the times which would embarrass Conway Twitty, *Goofus* and *Washington and Lee Swing* were hot instrumentals which again show off the Brownies' amazing musicianship. Durwood tried to continue with the band for a while after Milton's death and two tracks are from a 1937 session in Dallas. *There'll Be Some Changes Made* and *Honky Tonk Blues* with Jimmie Davis doing the lead vocals. By 1938 the Musical Brownies were no more.

This record manages to span the career of the Brownies. Although they recorded a great many singles (old 78's) they are almost impossible to find in good condition. Leave it to the English, who seem to have always known our own backyard better than Americans, to put it all together. Tony Russell, the editor of Britain's *Old Time Music* magazine, compiled, annotated and produced this LP; and did an excellent job. These don't sound like modern recordings because they weren't, but the sound is amazingly clean. The music is as alive and infectious as it must have been 40 years ago. You may have to order this record through the mail if your local disc pusher doesn't have it, but for anyone interested in western swing, **Taking Off** is almost a necessity.

NELSON ALLEN

Slim Pickens
Blue Canyon BCS-506
Star Rating: ★★★

I'll bet you never thought that Slim Pickens, scourge of the not-so-silver screen, could sing. Well, relax: you were half right at least. He can't exactly *sing*, but he does have this sing-songy talking rasp that effectively conveys a character not unlike some of those he's played in the movies.

Though it is Slim's own manic energy that carries this album, the pickers are proficient and the songs are an interesting and entertaining lot. There's a couple originals in *The Fireman Cowboy* (co-written with Rex Allen) and *Rodeo Cowboy* (co-written with George Oja). There's *The Cabbage Head*, a new variation on an ancient traditional song previously done by countless bluesmen and country singers, and there's a passable version of *Desperados Waiting For a Train*. There's even surprisingly adept interpretations of two Kinky Friedman songs, *Carryin' The Torch* and *The*

Gospel According to John. Best of all, there's two instant classics. *A Stranger In Nashville*, an ironic song that digs at Music City's headlong dash for illusory, Hollywood-style "respectability," is right on target. And *Darlin' Commit Me* is destined to become a rubber room anthem, with lyrics as relentlessly ridiculous as any film lines Slim ever uttered.

I'm not recommending that everyone rush out and buy this record, as it clearly wasn't intended for everybody. But as a cult item, it's more than just serviceable.

JOHN MORTHLAND

Because of changes we are currently implementing in our mail order department, we have temporarily discontinued offering albums for sale in this record review section. We hope to resume this service soon.

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by Hans Fantel

AUDIO

Speculating On The Specs

You can buy a Honda strictly on its reputation without knowing a thing about automotive engineering, and you'll get good value and a good car.

You can buy a Mercedes the same way. And again you get good value and a good car. As the saying goes, they'll both get you there.

When it comes to component-grade stereo systems, the same thing applies. They all play music, so what's the difference? Just as with the Honda and the Mercedes, the difference is in price and performance. The trouble is that in stereo, the two don't always go together, and you've got to take a pinch of salt along with the old saying that you get what you pay for. As an intelligent buyer you have to compare specifications—the "specs" as they are called for short. Granted, they don't tell the whole story—only your own ears can tell you what a piece of equipment really sounds like—yet they do give you a convenient yardstick for judging quality.

But if you're like most people, you wonder what all those numbers have to do with the sound you hear. To help you understand just what the specs mean, we'll every so often run some basic definitions in this column. Because *frequency response* is perhaps the most often mentioned, but also the most widely misunderstood, of all audio specs, let's start with that one.

The whole range of musical sounds, from the lowest bass to the highest, extends from about 30 to 20,000 Hz (Hz is the international abbreviation for Hertz, which is a measure of frequency or pitch). Actually, the highest pitch of any musical instrument is only about 5000 Hz. But each note also contains overtones, which lend each instrument and voice their particular tonal color, and those overtones go all the way up to the limit of human hearing.

Often you'll see the frequency response of a stereo component listed as, for example, 20-20,000 Hz. This looks very good because it covers the whole audible range. In fact, it's almost meaningless. Strictly speaking, it tells you nothing more than the top and bottom note the equipment can handle. What's more important is what happens to all the notes in-between. The equipment should reproduce all those notes in exactly the same proportion as they are heard in the original music. Low, middle and high sounds should all keep their natural relationship to one another. The equipment must not emphasize some frequencies more than others, nor make some notes weaker than others. Every part of the frequency spectrum must sound exactly as it does in the "live" performance—every note must be given its exact due, no more and no less. That is what is meant by the often-heard expression "flat frequency response."

"Only your own ears can tell you what a piece of equipment sounds like."

Perfectly flat response—like perfection in so many other things—remains a perennial dream of audio designers. Still, well-designed equipment comes very close to it. To tell you just how close, look at the "plus-minus" figure (prefixed by the sign ±) in the printed specs, which should follow the statement of overall frequency response. For example, the frequency response of a cassettee recorder might be specified at 30-16,000 Hz ± 3 db. This means that at no point in the specified overall range does the response vary by more than three db from the ideal flat response. The db stands for decibel, which is the standard measure for loudness. The best way to interpret it is to remember that three db is about the smallest loudness difference detectable by the human ear. Since that particular recorder stays within that three db limit, you can be sure that its tonal balance between highs and lows will be quite natural. And a top frequency of 16,000 Hz is very good for a cassette deck. (Only phonograph records reach the upper limit of hearing at 20,000 Hz.)

What then is the frequency response you'd expect to get from components in different price ranges? Typically, a low-cost (about $150-200) cassette deck will give a range of 50 to 12,000 Hz ± 3 db, which is adequate for good sound. A more expensive deck ($200-400) will give you a range from 30-16,000 Hz ± 3 db, which is excellent and provides plenty of brilliance in the highs.

Only two kinds of components easily cover the whole range—the amplifier and the phono cartridge. Up-to-date amplifiers (or receivers) and photo cartridges go all the way to the top (20,000 Hz) and down to 20 Hz with practically flat response.

When it comes to loudspeakers, some of the smaller and cheaper models have trouble pumping out extreme lows. On speakers selling for less than about $80, you can't expect much output below about 60 Hz. But those very lowest notes don't really occur very often in most kinds of music, so this is not too much of a handicap. Besides, those speakers won't swallow up the lows entirely. The deep bass thumps just won't be coming through as big and sassy as they should. If you really want big, lifelike bass, you had better get a speaker with response down to 35 Hz or even lower. At the high end, modern speakers have no trouble, and their tweeters easily reach up to 18,000 or 20,000 Hz, even in the lower-priced models.

You'll notice that I haven't listed any ± figures for speakers. That's because most of them don't really have a flat response and often these data are not provided in the specs. Veering off from flat response is what gives each speaker its particular personality and tone color, and the only way to judge whether or not you like a particular speaker is by ear. ■

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MORE ALBUMS ON PAGE 320, THIS ISSUE'S SPRING SHOPPERS GUIDE!

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A Without-Tears Guide To Selecting Strings, Picks and Capos...

PICKERS

by RICH KIENZLE

Stringing Yourself Up The Easy Way

Few aspects of beginning guitar can be more frustrating and discouraging than selecting the right strings, picks and other accessories. Those "comprehensive" instruction books don't mention it and neither do most teachers. And just because a favorite guitarist of yours uses a certain string or other accessory doesn't make it right for you. In any case, reconciling yourself with the accessories market is as much a guitarists' rite of passage as those aching left-hand fingertips; and it's neither as difficult or intimidating as it seems—once you know the facts.

The Mechanics Of Stringpicking, or why you can't use wire from old window screens like Chet Atkins did

Strings are a guitar's weakest point. A dead, worn-out set on a $2000 Gibson can make it sound like a $10 Taiwan Special. Likewise, a new set can make that Taiwan Special sound $300 better. Two basic factors help classify strings: *gauge* and *winding*. Gauges are fairly simple. All sets of strings come in different thicknesses: heavy, medium and light, with variations on each. *Heavies* are ropelike compared to the others and not too comfortable for a beginner, save an occasional masochist. Only an experienced player can appreciate their advantages, a louder, longer resonance and a slowness to wear out. For traditional jazz, bluegrass and electric slide playing they're essential, and they also have therapeutic values. Some pros work out on a heavy-strung guitar and swear that when they return to a lighter string, they've built up added strength in their hands and fingers.

Mediums compromise the extremes. More flexible than heavies, they're more rigid than lights. Generally they're used for rhythm guitar work, too, where their brilliant ringing sustain is an advantage.

Just fifteen years or so ago, *lights* were in such little demand that rock players who liked to bend notes had to settle for banjo strings to avoid shredding their fingers. Today, when nearly every rock and country guitarist bends notes, lights have become the most popular gauge (a few old line rockers like Elvis's guitarist Scotty Moore still use heavies, but their chops are Herculean). Yet even standard lights are too heavy for some.

The answer? The even more flexible slinky and extra light sets. Of course there's a catch to this added comfort—lighter strings wear out and break faster than any other gauge, and because of this some manufacturers include extra first and second strings, the two that break first, in their sets. For the malcontents who want a lighter feel on their treble strings combined with a more solid bass, there are *light top/heavy bottom* string sets. Gibson took this independence a step further by filling a display case with six compartments, loaded with different gauges of each string so consumers can literally build custom sets themselves.

But gauging is only half the story. There are varied textures dictated by the bass strings. Bass strings (G, D, A, E) are built on a solid core of nickel or monel metal covered by a "winding" of bronze, copper, brass or other metals in a thinner wire applied by a high-speed machine. The winding is then polished and ground by other machines. In the end it's the amount of this polishing that determines the texture.

Round wound strings have a minimum of polishing and a ringing, sustaining tone because of that. They're still popular, but not with everyone. The ridges in the winding can be easily seen and heard. When fingers slide up or down the neck, they can create an annoying screech which, in the middle of a delicate solo passage, can be as soothing as fingernails on a blackboard. *Flatwounds* are the answer. These are polished and ground to a flat, smooth outer surface, eliminating the noise. Most sets are made for electrics only, though there are a few compatible with both electric and acoustic guitars and still others made for acoustics only. And, of course, the drawback: more grinding equals less tone. An alternative is a *ground wound* set, which has been polished sufficiently to avoid noise, but not enough to kill the tone. Other special sets include *silk & steel*, or *compounds*, which combine the ringing tone of two steel trebles and four bass strings made, like classicals, with a nylon or silk core and silver-plated winding. They're solely for steel-string acoustic guitarists who prefer less tension than standard strings. *Classical* sets are just what you'd expect—nylon treble strings and the bass strings just described. These are the *only* type of string that should be used on a classical guitar. A very few, like Martin's New Yorker, can also handle compound or all-metal sets.

There might be dozens of string brands on the market, but all of them are made by seven domestic string factories. These manufacturers sell them to other companies who package them under their respective names. In light of this, the insistence by some pros that a certain set is superior to anything else on the market is laughable at best. Without letting any cats out of the bag, here are the most popular and reliable brands: **La Bella, Gibson, Squier, Mapes, D'Addario, Ernie Ball, GHS, Picato** and **Guild. Nashville Straights** are a comparitive newcomer to the field. Their sets come uncoiled in sealed plastic and a long, thin box which they claim keep the strings from being damaged by coiling, an opinion many coiled stringmakers have been quick to rebut. It's really not such a new idea, since violin strings were once sold in long glass tubes, but they've been successful enough to inspire a few imitators.

In Search Of The Ultimate Pick

Ask twenty guitarists what consitutes a good pick and you'll get as many answers. This subjectivity comes from the fact that there are literally hundreds (or so it seems) of varied pick designs, made from plastic, nylon, rubber, felt, celluloid, fiberglass, metal and now stainless steel. And some guitarists don't even bother with them in favor of such exotic alternatives as credit cards, playing cards, paper clips, beer can poptops, matchbook covers or their bare fingers. Shapes of picks can vary from dimesize to huge triangular demons.

Few companies actually specialize in picks and like strings, most of those sold come from a very few sources imprinted with names of their customers. Several concerns do make special types that deserve mention. **Jim Dunlop** of California, one of the top accessory makers, offers *Gauged Jazz Plectra*, flatpicks with graduated thickness and a variety of tip shapes. Their standouts, however, are their gauged metal fingerpicks, which use differing thicknesses of metal to afford a guitar, banjo, dobro or steel player a choice between a thinner pick for a soft sound and a thicker one for a harder, abrasive sound. They range from .013" to .025" in thickness and can be literally molded around the finger. There's also a "mini" size for smaller fingers. **DR Products** makes an unusual, and expensive, stainless steel guitar pick for special effects. One of the finest flatpicks, however, comes from the **Herco** company. Their nylon flatpick in light, medium and heavy gauges is all but indestructable and totally devoid of the annoying clicks that often occur when plastic pick meets metal string. It's long been a favorite with Doc Watson and other top flatpickers who need a pick that will hold up.

Capos: The Most Misunderstood Accessory Of All

Capos have a simple purpose. They clamp to the neck and hold all strings against a chosen fret to facilitate rapid key changes that make it possible to use basic fingering on certain chords. Singers also prefer them because they can adapt the guitar to their vocal range quickly. Yet they've been derided for years as "cheaters' used by shamelessly incompetent musicians. Among the "incompetents" who use capos are Doc Watson and Hank Snow, neither of whom seem too concerned about it. They realize, as do others that a capo can also give chords a brilliant ring. A capo on the second fret enables one to play an A chord using G chord fingering, which sounds scintillating compared to a barred A on the fifth fret with no capo.

There are two basic capo types: the clamp models, which grip the neck tightly and seem to last forever, and the elastic models, which rely on an elastic band to hold the plastic-covered metal bar to the neck. Though clamps are solid, some types can rip heck out of the neck's finish. But refinements on certain brands have eliminated this problem. The **Linde** capo, for example, looks like a modified C-clamp and only one, well padded grip touches the neck and is held by a setscrew. Another newer clamp capo is the **Picker's Pal**, one of the first compatible models. It adapts to either curved or flat fingerboards, which most current models can't do. The junior model is an elastic cap that does much the same thing. But whatever you buy, if it's not a compatible, be sure that it will fit the fingerboard of your guitar. A curved model won't work on a flat board and vice versa.

And A Myriad Of Lesser Accessories . . .

One of the most monotonous moments of guitar maintenance is the point after you've installed new strings and are ready to tune them to pitch—it can take forever to get them there. A solution is a *string winder*, a simple plastic crank recessed at one end to accomodate a tuning key. Once a string's installed, simply push the crank onto the key, turn and in no time the string's at proper pitch if you're careful. If you turn too fast you'll wind up with a new, unplayed, broken string.

Straps are really a matter of aesthetics and people tend to choose them for appearance only. The varieties are unlimited. You can make or buy anything from tooled leather to macrame. The only restriction is that leather can hold anything while light cloth works best for small acoustics only—not heavy solidbody electrics.

I might have avoided writing this article, but the other day in my local music store I had a terrible time convincing the owner, a music teacher himself, that my mandolin just wouldn't handle four tenor banjo strings, which he tried to sell me when he realized he was out of mandolin sets. Clerks can be wrong, especially in mom-and-pop stores or those specializing in band or keyboard instruments. The bottom line is that the burden is on you to know what does and doesn't work for your guitar and what your preferences are. As long as you read the labels and know what you're getting, you'll do just fine. And once you've learned *this* lesson, you've accomplished the equivalent of one whole instruction book. ■

PICKER'S

NEW PRODUCTS

Washburn's S-Series

Washburn Guitars, known for their hand-crafting and good workmanship for years, has decided to reintroduce their solid-top acoustic guitar line. The "new" solid top series features solid spruce tops, herringbone marquetry, diamont-cut neck reinforcements and precision cast machine heads. Also available is shaved top bracing for a maximum tonal response.

The Washburn solid top "S-Series" is available from $259 to $549 from Washburn Guitars, Evanston, Ill.

The little drum inside the hardshell clam is a Ludwig UFO snare drum, the centerpiece of the **Ludwig UFO Snare Drum Kit**. Just exactly why it's a UFO we're not sure, but the purpose of the whole kit is to give the beginning drummer something other than a coffee can to practice on.

Ludwig UFO Snare Drum Kit

The UFO Kit features the Ludwig 404 Aeolite Snare Drum, a Gladstone practice pad (featuring a rubber pad with an imbedded steel plate for a natural rebound), a pair of sticks, a snare drum stand and an instruction booklet, all of which fit into the hardshell case.

The UFO could be just the thing for the picker who's grown tired of the guitar and is looking for something different, or, better yet, the UFO could be the perfect gift for that kid next door whose parents made you cut down your hedge because it overhung their property. From Ludwig Drums, Chicago, Ill. Think about it.

Good news for all you folks out there just waiting to become a session guitarist as soon as you can figure out how to tune your guitar. **Ovation Instruments** has come up with an inexpensive, virtually idiot-proof guitar tuner that threatens to make guitarists of us all.

Called, oddly enough, **The Tuner**, the tuner lets you visually tune your guitar with a stroboscopic light source. All you have to do is select the string you wish to tune first: E, A, D, C, B or high E. Set the knob on the tuner accordingly. Then place the tuner on the guitar so that the string you want to tune is directly over the tuning window. Pluck the string–if it is out of tune, you'll see a vibrating image in the tuning window. As you adjust the string toward the proper pitch, the movement slows. When the string is properly tuned, the image will be motionless.

We recently had the occasion to watch this little wonder work, and it lived up to all our expectations. The cost? $34.95, from Ovation Instruments, Bloomfield, Conn. A steal.

Ovation's Tuner

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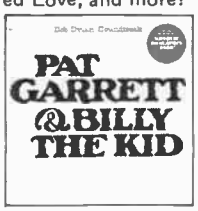

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MO58

KRIS

(Continued from page 29)

that I didn't like very long. I was talking with Rita the other day about it. If you're involved in a career, there are definite disadvantages to being married. But there are also advantages. You got a home base, You got some security somewhere.

Is it difficult with both of you having fairly successful careers?

The more success both of you have, the better it is. For a while it was very easy because we would perform together every time we performed—that was a piece of cake. Then I started doing movies, which she didn't want to do. I think she's looking forward to getting back to working together.

How do you satisfy your sexual drives on the road?

I've had Rita with me usually, since '72. I think that's about all I should say.

Is sex very important to you? Some performers or athletes don't have sex before they go on . . .

It's not part of my pre-game ritual, but it's very important to me in my life.

. . . a lot of people have an idea that sexual frustration leads to creativity.

I think that's bullshit. A lot of people have an idea that starvation does, too, and I think that's bullcrap. All it does is make it harder to be creative. You got to go out and get another job. That's oversimplification, because success, or *making it* as we know it, can be as limiting to your creativity as failure. You just have to learn to deal with both of them. With success I have to learn to deal with a lack of time and privacy. Before, all I had was time, and I had to deal with a lack of tension. Now I got too much tension and not enough time. But I don't worry about it, as I did before when there would be dry spells of not writing. I feel more creative now.

What kind of women attract you?

I don't know how I can limit it. I see different things in different people. I just like people, and half the people are women. I'm attracted to the same things I'm attracted to in a man: honesty, intelligence, and then whatever it is I just like about a person's mood, or the way somebody looks today.

What about women becoming stronger in the world today?

That's all for the better as far as I'm concerned. No, I think the best thing that ever happened to somebody, especially somebody that's a little shy, like me, is that there's more equality. Takes the load off the guy having to make the first move all the time. I mean, if I had to think about all the people that I ever talked into making love with me, I could probably limit it to one or two or three in my whole life, you know. It's usually something I fall into. It just seems to me, in anything, the closer you are to having two equals,

the more interesting it is. It's like a tennis match—not that I'm comparing a relationship between people with a tennis match.

Do you care much about clothes and appearance?

I care a little; I can't care too much, since everything I've got came out of the movies—I don't own any clothes that I didn't get out of wardrobe. But fortunately it's not necessary to wear a lot of different clothes. And God knows if I bought as many as Rita did, there wouldn't be room for us in the house.

How do you feel about getting older?

I don't feel as bad about it as I did ten years ago. Probably becuase of the way things turned out. It was almost like working out with 16-ounce gloves and then getting to go down to 8-ounce gloves, you see. I'm in better shape than I was in the Army. And feeling better.

Do you ever think about dying?

I think you think about dying more as you get older. When I was younger I didn't mind dying. I'd like to live for a long time now and be creative for a long time. I'd like to see my kids grow up.

What kind of father are you? Are you very strong with your kids?

I don't know how good a father I am. I mean, when you break up a marriage, that's not being the best father in the world. My kids love me, and that's more to my wife's credit than mine—for not badmouthing me while I was gone. But I feel like I'm a good father, because I have the love of the kids. I'm better now than I was because I'm not scrambling to find out who the hell I am, or to make a living, so I can take them with me on the road and on my times off.

Do you worry about the permissiveness in our society, pornography, drugs, in connection with your kids?

Life worries me in connection with the kids, but I think my kids are a lot smarter than I was at their age, for openers. I'm not worried about them. They seem to deal with things so well. I used to worry that a broken home would cause damage, but I look at the kids and they're beautiful and I see that they just came out okay on their own, anyway. I have to say that Rita does all the work and I get to enjoy the show. I get more into my kids as I've grown older. It seems funny to even say "older," because I think I'm younger now.

It's unusual that you've become such a star so late in your life.

I was thirty-four when I did my first film and I was that old when I first performed on stage in front of people for money. so it all happened pretty fast. The advantage of it is that you handle it better when you're older. I was pretty dumb when I was twenty-two; I even changed my name to Kris Carson once, that's how dumb I was. I was thinking of Freddie Prinze when he died. Part of the reason was because he was twenty-two. When you're

twenty-two you still don't know whether you're tough enough to survive. You haven't hit the bottom and found out that it isn't the end of the world like you think it is. When you're shaky, and you're young, you got nothing to compare it with. If I'm down and out, I know that I've worked ever since sixteen at construction jobs. So I know I'm not going to starve to death. I can do something I don't like to do for nine months. And a lot of young people haven't done that. The disadvantage of being older is that you don't feel like doing a lot of crazy things you would have done that might be advantageous to you. I don't know if they are or not. I'm just so goddamn lucky to get up here right now and be accepted on my own terms.

You're not a tempermental actor, are you?

I can lose my temper. It's easier not to when I'm not drinking. But I don't want to paint a false picture of sainthood here, because I just about cleaned out the crew on my last film. No, really, I get along with the people on the job.

Did you ever take drugs?

I don't do any hard drugs. I smoke grass. When I was working on the road, I'd take anything that was offered to me. Not to excess. I was never a speed freak or a coke head. My main problem was the juice. There's something about doing coke two days in a row that's very unpleasant. So I doubt that I'd get into that, but I'm not going to guarantee anything. I think the whole society is into drugs. But as far as the drug culture that they used to talk about, it's not as heavy as it was back ten years ago. Then everything in life revolved around it. And there were a lot of deaths. I don't hear about as many people on smack.

Do you think the government laws on drugs are right?

I think marijuana should be decriminalized. Everybody I know does. I think it's amazing how far human civilization has come lately. In the four million years that man's been on the planet, it's only been a century that he traveled faster than a horse. It's only been since the turn of this century that they had cars, and then about ten years later the airplanes, then jets for World War II, then satellites and things on Mars. All of this is like a nuclear reaction, going faster at the end. Technologically it's amazing. You don't realize it until you see somebody like Rita's grandmother, who is ninety-six or ninety-nine. And at age ninety-four she's flying out from Tennessee—the first time she'd ever been on a plane. She was born when Billy the Kid was alive, traveling in covered wagons. The change during her life compared to the whole length of time man's been on the planet is very remarkable. If it were all in an hour, it'd be like a minute that man was making other things to travel in, and maybe a second that he did the kinds of travel that he has now. And then I got to thinking, my God, if back in

the fifties there were politicians advocating the easing of marijuana laws, you would have thought the world was coming to an end. People who smoked marijuana were dope fiends back in those days. When the first one's free, the rest of them hook you for life. Remember that film, *The Cruel and the Crazy*, where a whole high school went berserk from one joint. Look at the difference today. I mean, like co-educational dorms. Christ, they wouldn't let you have a girl in the room with the door closed when I was going to college. I think it's for the better. But what is interesting is how fast the changes are coming. What're we going to take for granted twenty years from now that we are completely flustered by today?

It seems like you went through some kind of dramatic change in thinking, to go from a very straight career in the Army to wanting to be a songwriter.

I went through a change, yeah. It was a realization that if I stayed in this straight world, it was going to be a death sentence to me, because if you're doing anything that you're not suited to do, you're going to be miserable. And I can play the game —I didn't have a bad career in the Army —but I just wasn't suited for it. I was the general's pilot and it was fun to fly, but I hated to wear a uniform, hated to get up on time, hated to have someone telling me what to do.

You like freedom.

Yeah, but I don't think any more so than anybody else. Everybody would like to be free. But it's so easy to say that I chose this course and that I went out and got it through perseverance and all that crap. There's a lot of luck in it.

Do you like seeing yourself on the screen?

I'm fairly objective about it. I've liked it when I was good and I've been embarrassed when I wasn't. Like in *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*, I was bothered because of the look on my face, the make-up was almost like a mask. It was not the make-up man's fault, this is what we told him to do. But it gave me an odd expression that I couldn't ever forget. And anything that gets between you and an honest interpretation of the work is a failure, I think.

When you make a film, do you go see the rushes?

When I can. Because being as new as I am I feel like I'm learning all the time. It's like watching the game films in football.

Did you study acting?

No, I wasn't even in drama in college. But I studied literature, a lot of Shakespeare and stuff, but never acting as acting.

You always act like yourself, though, don't you?

I think most actors who are successful take from their experience what they can put into a character. I have played so many different roles, from a star in *A Star Is Born*, to a football player in *Semi-Tough*, to a square farmer in *Alice*

KRIS

(Continued from page 61)

Doesn't Live Here Anymore. So I'm playing myself, but I'm playing different parts of myself.

What kind of things bother you about life today?

My God, we haven't got that much time! Jeez. Well, it bothers me that I've only talked to two people who are remotely concerned that the House assassination committee was castrated, and that they probably will never try to find out any truth about it. That bothers me. I'm bothered by prejudice, by ignorance, in very vague ways. And I also get bothered by little shitty things, like somebody losing my wardrobe. I should say if there's one thing that bothers me right now, it's lack of privacy. But it's not something I can complain about, when I've forced it on myself. It's like a fighter going back in the corner and saying, "That son-of-a-bitch out there is hitting me."

What kinds of things make you happy?

My wife and kids. People that are great, getting close to people.

Are there any people that you admire?

William Blake is a hero, but he's dead; I have a lot of heroes—Johnny Cash is a hero, Willie Nelson is a hero. I have a lot of heroes, a lot of people that I respect, and the only reason I hesitate to get into them is I'll think of about ten more when I leave—god-dang, I didn't say Jerry Lee Lewis, you know. That's one of my biggest concerns now—amnesty for Jerry Lee. So long as everybody else is finally getting it, why not him and George Jones.

Do you believe in God?

I'm religious. I don't go to church. I would probably state it more like William Blake did than Jimmy Carter, or even Johnny Cash, would. But it's like Blake says: "You who are organized by the divine for spiritual communion, diffuse and bury your talent in the earth, sorrow and desperation will pursue you throughout life, and after death shame and confusion will face you to eternity." I believe that. I think it's the thing that probably distinguishes us from animals. ■

HEAVEN'S

(Continued from page 45)

walked by he said, 'Mike, congratulations on that cut.' I've written for Tammy, Charlie Rich, you name it, and he's never, never said that to me before."

"Even my dentist wants to get a song to the Kendalls," Sun says.

"We've got more friends now," Royce adds. "Some cousin from Texas called the other night that I hadn't heard from in 25 years."

They all admit that, as indefinable as its appeal is, they want to record material that is marketably similar to *Heaven's*. Songwriters are obliging.

Says Fisher, "If there are 10 songs we've seriously considered for this session, at least five have the words 'heaven,' 'sin' or 'hell' in them. We may have gotten as many as 50 submitted with those words. One we cut last night was *It Don't Feel Like Sinning To Me*."

"I know one writer," says Sun, "who did one called *Sinning Our Way To Heaven*. I told him, 'Man, we can't use that."

Despite their years of performing, the Kendalls are newcomers to the present level of celebrity and are understandably intent on savoring it, even in its smallest aspects: "I was in J.C. Penney's at Rivergate (a shopping center) the other day," Royce tells Fisher, "and I thought I'd check the song out. It was in Number One slot, but it was sold out. Then I went to Woolworth's, and it was in Number One slot, and *it* was sold out."

In a mood that might be described as humble cockiness, they all re-tell stories about how *Heaven's* gotten a series of unexpected boosts: About George Jones calling a station in Florence, Alabama, and requesting it—and Tammy Wynette doing the same in Florida. About the truck driver who bought a copy of the record and hand-delivered it to a Chattanooga DJ who had been hesitant to program it. ("I know you don't have this record," Royce quotes the truck driver as saying to the DJ, "or else you'd be playing it.") About a fan who called a St. Louis station asking for that song by "the Kendall sisters." About the ministers who thought it was a religious record. ("This sermon was brought to you by Ovation Records and the Kendalls," Sun intones. "*Inspired* by the Kendalls," Royce amends.

On a more prominent plane of popularity, the Kendalls have made appearances on *Hee-Haw* and *Pop Goes the Country*. Top Billing, which formerly booked them, is booking them again. And they now drive to their sold-out engagements in a new, CB-equipped motor-home.

Heaven's composer, Jerry Gillespie, continues to work as A&R man for Mercury, but he says he's back to writing more songs. He co-authored (with Ricci Mareno) *Gwen*, *Congratulations*, which went to Number One for Tommy Overstreet, but Gillespie says that *Heaven's* far and away his biggest success. Besides its more negotiable side effects, it won him the "Best Song of the Year" award from SESAC, one of the organizations which collects airplay fees for writers.

The other SESAC kudos were "Best Country Single of the Year" and "Best Country Album of the Year," for the Kendalls; "Best Producer of the Year," for Fisher; and "Best Publisher of the Year," for Lorville Music, which published *Heaven's*.

Like the Kendalls, Ovation had been a respected name in the music business for years. But the closest the company had come to gaining national prominence was through pop singer Bonnie Koloc. Signing the Kendalls was the label's first move into the country market.

"The pleasant part about it," says Ovation's general manager, Dave O'Connell, "is that the trades and consumers have been unanimous for the first time in Ovation's history. We've had a lot of critical acclaim before for our records, but the critical acclaim and the customer acclaim never coincided. We wanted to enter Nashville, but we're practical people who decided we should do something first and then figure out how to spend money and develop it. We're not going to try to come in at the top and then sneak out of town in six months when nobody remembers who we are." ■

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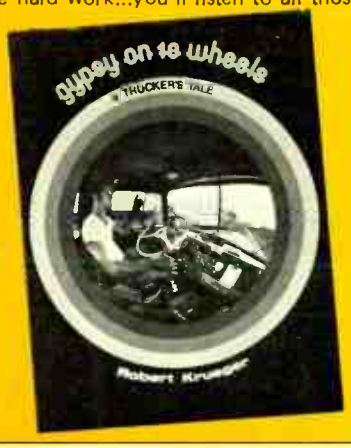

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That's why Fender integrated the MA 6 console with two efficient Thiele-aligned speakers that maximize frequency response and band-width. Translation: audiences hear *all* of your music.

So now what? So mix your next set with an MA 6 at your authorized Fender® dealer. With this kind of performance and this kind of value, you're gonna love what you hear.

Fender®
MADE IN U.S.A.