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Step Aside
Tammy...

CRYSTAL GAYLE

Is The
Woman Of
The Hour

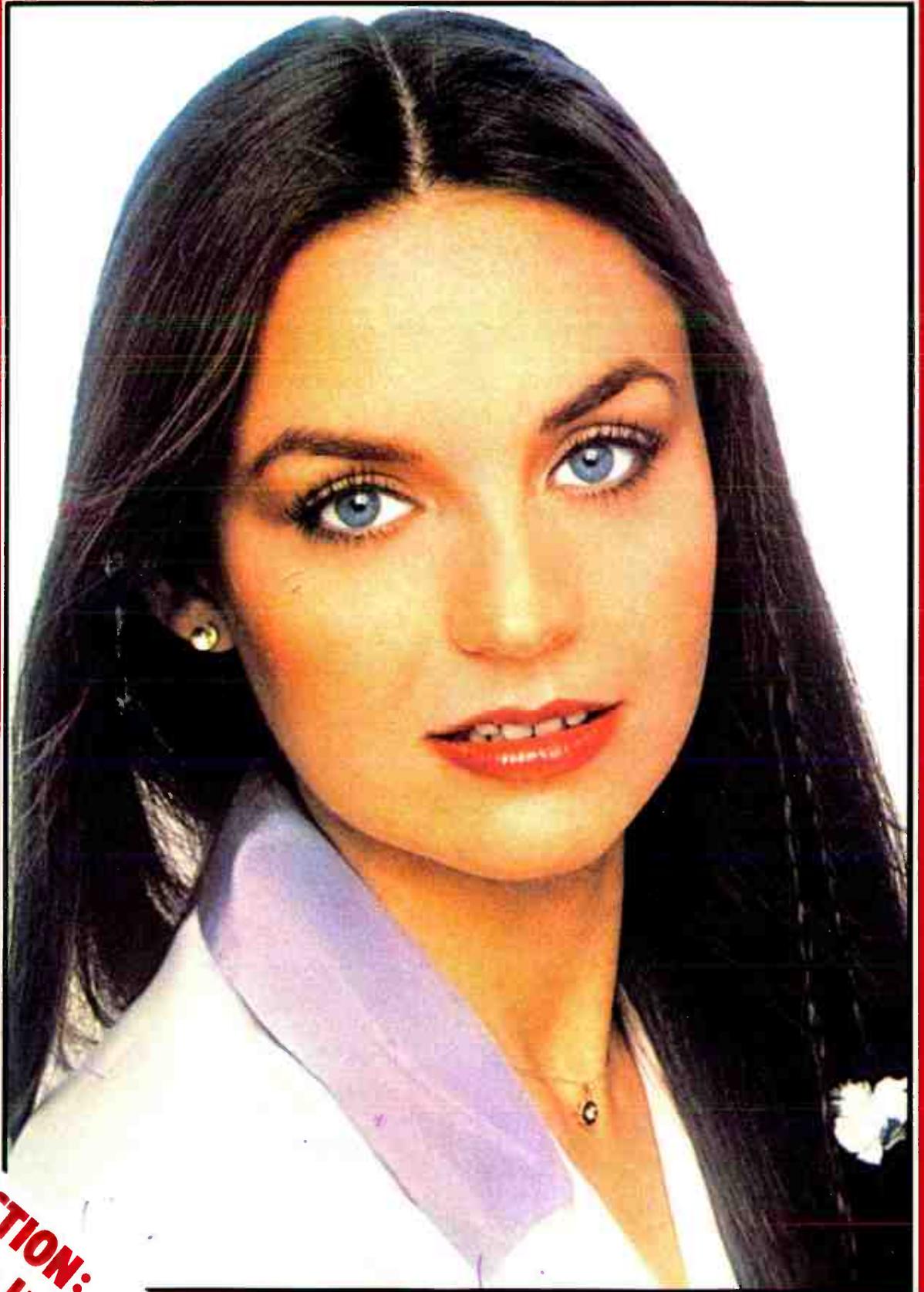
PORTER
WAGONER
Tells All!

No Broken
Hearts For

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SMITH

ZELLA
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One-Ups
Miss Dolly



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June	4 Connie Smith and Stu Phillips
12 Roy Acuff	5 Barbara Mandrell
13 Jim Ed Brown	6 Dottie West
14 Hank Snow	10 Roy Acuff
15 Ernest Tubb	11 Hank Snow
19 Four Guys	12 Bob Luman
20 The Carlises	13 Jimmy C. Newman
21 Bill Monroe	17 Lester Flatt
22 Jeanne Pruett	18 Larry Gatlin
26 Marty Robbins	19 TBA
27 Osborne Brothers	20 TBA
28 Jean Shepard	24 Bill Anderson
29 Jack Greene and Jeannie Seely	25 Dottie West
	26 Justin Tubb
July	27 David Houston and Dale Wood
3 To be Announced (TBA)	31 Marty Robbins

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COUNTRY MUSIC

Volume Six, Number Ten
July, 1978

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Cover: Courtesy UA

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COUNTRY MUSIC

Publisher:
John Killion

Associate Publisher &
Advertising Director:
Jim Chapman

Editor:
Michael Bane

Art Director &
Production Manager:
Cheh Nam Low

Assistant Editor:
Rochelle Friedman

Director: T.V. Marketing:
John D. Hall

Director: Circulation Promotion:
Gloria Thomas

Circulation Director
Michael R. McConnell

Director: Direct Marketing:
Anthony Bunting

Direct Marketing Assistant:
Eileen Bell

Director of Administration:
Olos Pitts

Executive, Editorial and
Advertising Offices,
475 Park Avenue South, 16th Floor,
New York, New York, 10016
(212) 685-8200
John H. Killion, President
R. Barnard, Secretary

Advertising

Nashville Operations
50 Music Square West
Nashville, Tenn. 37203
Jim Chapman
(615) 329-0860

West Coast (inc. Texas & Kansas)
The Leonard Company
6355 Topanga Canyon Blvd., #307
Woodland Hills, California 91364
(213) 340-1270

Midwest
Ron Mitchell Associates
1360 Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Ill. 60610
(312) 944-0927

New York
John Bradbury
Military Media
257 Central Park West
New York, N.Y. 10024
(212) 724-6707

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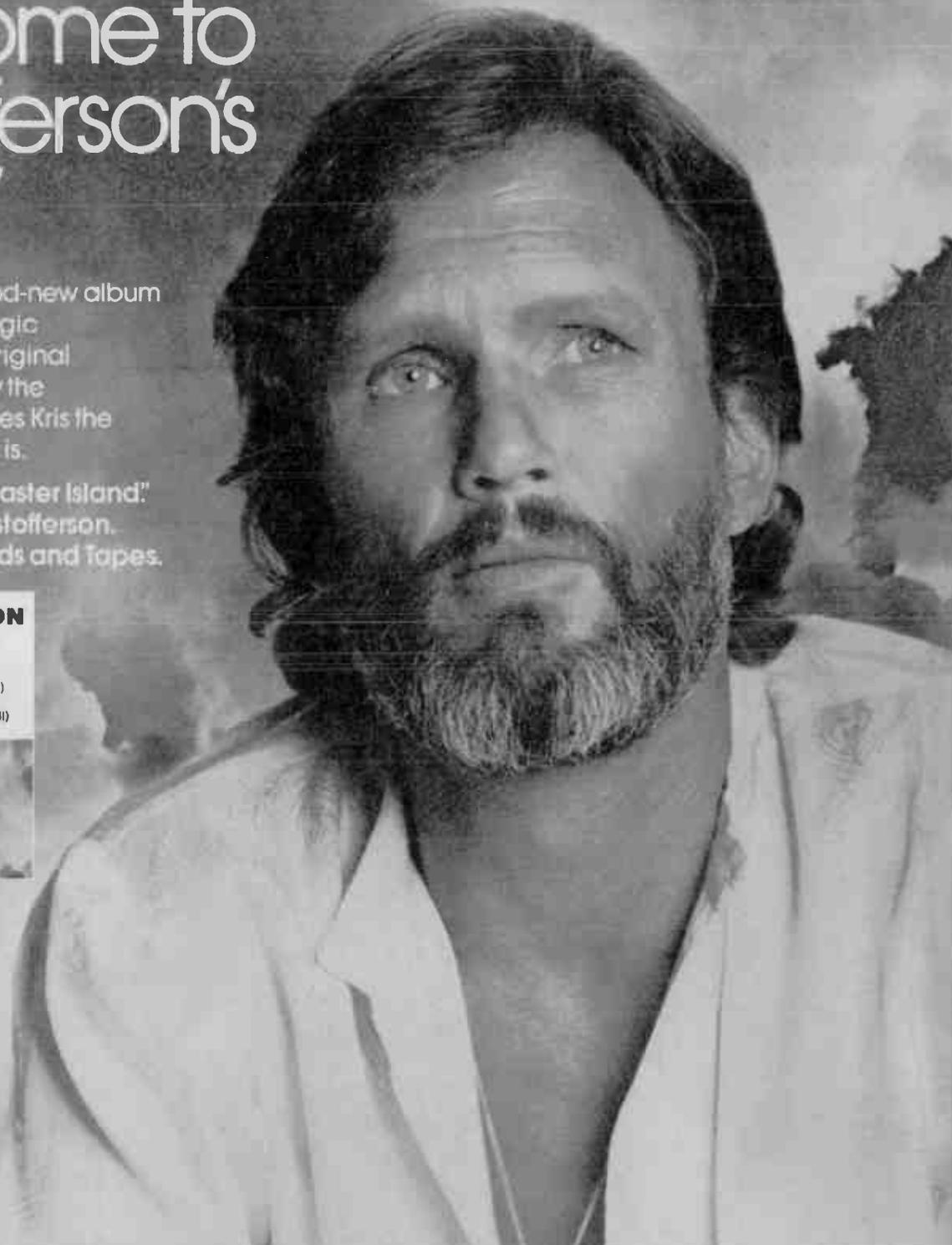
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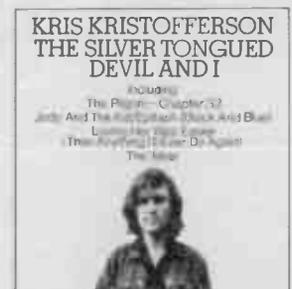


Produced by David A. Ross



Photograph Francesco Scavullo

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Editor's Note

I was all set to write about something else this month when, lo and behold, over Sunday morning pancakes and coffee I came across the strangest statement in my Sunday New York *Times*:

"Punks," the headline read, "Have Only Rediscovered Rockabilly..."

Interesting, especially after hacking through stories on urban gardening and the Dione Quintuplets, so I forged on. The rockabillys, I learned, were the "first punks," and, as if by magic, all the excitement generated by the new punk artists has resulted in the Frankensteinian resurrection of rockabilly.

"The smooth, mass-produced blandness of 70's pop made a raw, uninhibited new wave inevitable, and when it came along, in the person of the punks, rockabilly came with it," wrote *Times* critic Robert Palmer.

Really, Bob—you've been around Memphis and country music enough to know better than to try and equate two things as basically dissimilar as punk and rockabilly. The rockabillys were hardly, as you wrote, the first punks. If anything—and even this analogy wears a bit thin—the punks are only the latest in a long line of imitation rockabillys.

More importantly, Bob, your article seeks to legitimize punk rock by pointing out the rockabilly tradition for craziness, by equating punk with the fierce fury of rockabilly:

"At its best, rockabilly is fundamental, a great growling, yelping surge of newly discovered identities and primal urges..."

That's as good a definition of rockabilly as I've seen, but it doesn't carry the implications far enough. Rockabilly emerged not as a reaction to the blandness of music of the early 1950s, but as a reflection of an awakening generation. Remember the times—James Dean was getting ready to die; Marlon Brando was a saint; there were rebels, but no causes. There was tension—explosive tension—made even more violent by the fact that there seemed to be no rationale for that tension. The implied violence that lay just beneath the surface of even the craziest of the rockabillys (Sonny Burgess in his red suit?) was very, very real; very capable of exploding into the Real Thing. Rockabilly (and later rock and roll) said to the world "This is who I am. And if you don't like it, to hell with you!"

Contrast that to punk, with its coy flirtations with violence; its seemingly endless posing and posturing. By your own admission, Bob, punk arose as a reaction to the bland musical tastes of the 70s rather than from the social ennui that seems to have engulfed us all. Granted, the English version of punk seems to have some vague roots in that country's social unrest, but I fail to see how that transfers to this country. The music, quite frankly, lacks the universality to make the Atlantic crossing.

What it all boils down to, I think, is something Richard Betts of the Allman Brothers Band said when asked to explain the lasting popularity of the Brothers—"We play people's music," Betts said. Rockabilly is people's music. Punk isn't.



Michael Bane

Coming Next Month:



DOTTIE & KENNY Country's Hottest Duet

EDITORIAL CORRECTION:

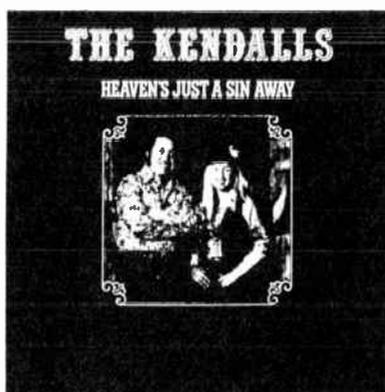
Our friends at Ovation Instruments, who helped us greatly in preparing our special section on musical instruments, were understandably upset at a couple of text-book copy-editing blunders we made in the Ovation story.

First, we misspelled the name of Charlie Kaman, inventor of the Ovation guitars and head of Kaman Corp. which produces them. Kaman pronounces his name like "command" but without the "d" sound—so, we spelled it "Command." One of the basic copy-editing rules is to double check the spelling of names, so we are particularly embarrassed and apologetic about this mistake. Remember the old adage: "I don't care what they say about me as long as they spell my name right."

Second, we described Ovation's Richard Bell as marketing director. His official title is National Sales Manager.

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Letters

All American Good Ol' Boys?

I began reading Country Music Magazine several years ago after picking up an issue—expecting to hear some music scene gossip and to have a chance to laugh at what I thought would be syrupy and over-praising profiles. I was surprised and impressed that the feature story and the record reviews were seemingly objective (though your record reviews often rate average and undistinctive albums a bit too highly) and that in both kinds of writing attention was paid to questioning why more or a particular artists' talent was not coming through in performance.

The last two years I have taken much less time to look at Country Music. In fact, if the idea of Reynolds and Kristofferson emerging as visions of the modern good ol' boy hadn't struck me on picking through my mail, I probably would have leafed through your magazine quickly and left it for some other, later time. Often I leave the latest copy in the bathroom where, if friends are bathroom readers, they will have no choice but to leave the room a little bit more aware of some aspect of country music.

But today I did begin to read and was amazed at the impressiveness of the Francesco Scavullo interview of Kris Kristofferson and at the quiet sense of direction and surprising intelligence the interview elicits.

I am pleased that Kristofferson's direct responses and candor about self-knowledge, sex, musical-group dynamics, religion, and drugs have appeared in such an accepted and well-established magazine and that his ideas will be read by many people. It's nice to read about someone famous who seems to have put his life in order and nice to have someone who commands attention and respect, publicly reject the need to smoke or drink.

So thank you for publishing the interview and the superb photographs with it. I won't cancel my subscription after all.
 BOB PATRICK
 WATERTOWN, CONN.

I have just received my May 1978 issue of your magazine and it is fantastic. The pictures of Burt Reynolds and Kris Kristofferson, the interview with Kristofferson, and the article and pictures of Waylon Jennings make it the best issue of the year so far. I will even ignore Ed

Ward's two star rating of Waylon & Willie.

DEBBIE J. CRUMPLER
 SMITHFIELD, VA.

I've just received May's issue and I want to say thank you for the great story on Kris Kristofferson. I truly enjoyed it and the section on Ol' Waylon, who I think is *the* entertainer of our time. I'm not going to put anyone down, as they have worked for everything they got. I say good for them, their life should be their own. . . .

DEE PHILLIPS
 WAYLON FAN CLUB REP.
 COLO. SPRINGS, COLO.

I truly enjoyed seeing Kris Kristofferson on the cover of Country Music's May issue. The interview with him was nice, but I think it was basically aimed at the new fans who have just discovered him. As far as I'm concerned, it's about time he was totally recognized.

I have been aware of Kris' talent and potential for nine years now. I followed his career as closely as possible and certainly felt the ups and downs, even the personal ones. For years, magazines, radio stations, T.V., the public, no one would recognize Kris or his work. Some of his songs were being recorded by other artists, but it wasn't the same.

All in all, Kris and Rita have made it now and they are famous. I'm really happy for them. I was able to talk with them backstage a couple of times, but I wasn't able to get near them their last visit through. Hopefully, someday I'll be able to talk with them again, but for now, I guess that's the price of wishing them fame.

MARY LOU POLVERARI
 WALLINGFORD, CONN.

Movie magazine or Country Magazine?

After reading the May issue with Burt Reynolds and Kris Kristofferson on the front cover (can you really rate a movie star and a song writer as Country Music stars) I am beginning to wonder if I want to continue my subscription.

I am interested in country music personalities and there are many that should have rated front cover picture and three or four pages of info.

As a disc jockey in country music, the

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people who tune in the radio are crying for country music and I know they also like to read about their favorites in magazines such as yours. I am beginning to wonder if you are America's #1 Country Music publication.

JERRY DALE
NEWPORT, KY.

If I found Evil Kneivel in the centerfold of Playboy, I couldn't be more disappointed, than the centerfold of Country Music's May 78 issue. I fail to see the connection with country music. . . With a few more centerfolds like the latest and a few less pages each month, you and my subscription will poop out at the same time.

HANK BITTER
DUNDALK, MD.

I received my May issue of Country Music. You sure know how to ruin a good magazine by putting Burt Reynolds on the cover. Then to open up the magazine and find him in the centerfold, that was too much to take.

MRS. GEORGE TODD
LEBANON, N.J.

Outlaw Blues

I'd like to make a comment on Ed Ward's ridiculous review on the Waylon & Willie album. It has already gone gold, and will soon be platinum. Thank God, some people still know good music when they hear it. . .

A WAYLON FAN
FROM TERRE HAUTE, IND.

I have been receiving your magazine for several months. I enjoy reading the articles on the artists. I liked the one on the Waylon Tapes. I did not care for the one Mr. Ward wrote concerning Waylon & Willie's new album. I have it and enjoy it very much. . .

I hope Willie & Waylon sing more and more songs because they have the best music. Mr. Ward doesn't have to listen to any of their music. . . but I sure will. . .

TOMMY DEFOOB
SHELBY, AL.

Mr. Ed Ward's review of Waylon & Willie made my "Outlaw" blood run cold. . .

BERNICE M. GALLAGHER
CHATTANOOGA, TENN.

I just bought the album Waylon & Willie because I wanted *Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys*, and *The Wurlitzer Prize*. In our area we can't get singles, so we buy albums, and I don't mind spending the money for Waylon and Willie anyway. But it really burns me to have five of the other songs



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That Loves You



2



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already on other albums, namely, *Pick Up The Tempo, If You Can Touch Her At All, Looking for a Feelin', It's Not Supposed To Be That Way* and *A Couple More Years*. Now these are all good songs, but any Waylon fan has got them already and is bound to be burned at the repetition. All they did was have Willie sing some of them instead of Waylon. . .

If finding material for an album is a problem, then why not look to the past, and I mean farther back than the last two or three albums. Why not dig up some of the stuff from fifteen or twenty years ago, some artists are doing that quite successfully. I wouldn't mind hearing a new version of some of his (Waylon's) original songs, even though I've been a fan of his for about twelve years (since Nashville Rebel) and have most of his records. . .

I don't blame the artists for the repetition on albums, because I think record companies are using this ploy to force people to buy more albums. But, it's not going to work forever. . .

MARLIE BEETS
WILLIAMS LAKE, B.C. CANADA

A Thank You From Our Fans

I have been reading your magazine for most of the time you've been around. I am an artist living deep in the city who has loved country music when people here called it, "ignorance put to music." That has changed, of course. Country Music is my lifeline to those musicians I dearly love.

That said, I want to compliment you on your outstanding photographs—particularly the work of Leonard Kamsler. His picture of Don Williams on your March cover was typically lovely. But his work is always great. . .

MALCOLM MACKENZIE
NEW YORK, N.Y.

I have a habit of writing lengthy letters of complaint to magazine editors but there's nothing to object about in the May issue of Country Music. The article on Emmylou Harris was particularly good; thanks for a great magazine.

SALLY ROSS
OAKLAND, CALIF.

. . . I would like to let you know that I think your magazine is just fantastic. I look forward to every issue. Thanks for such a great magazine.

BRENDA VANDER LINDEN
LEWISVILLE, TEXAS

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.

Not all machines need plugs.



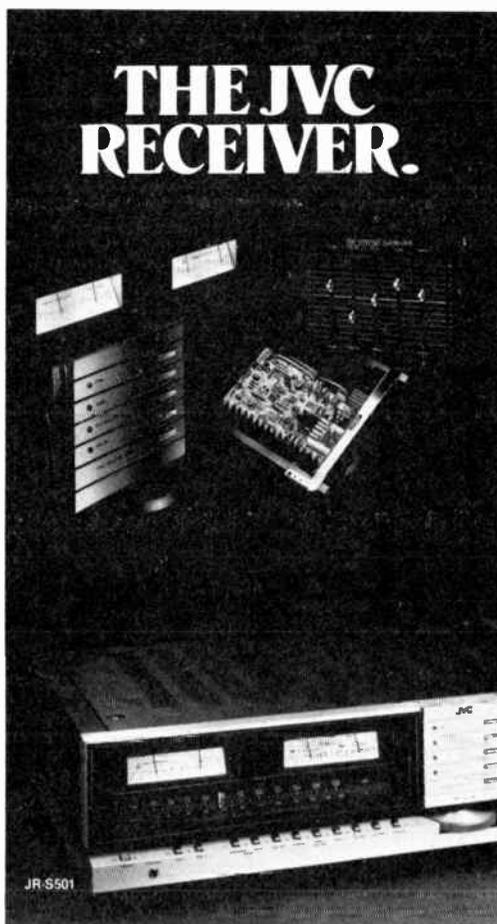
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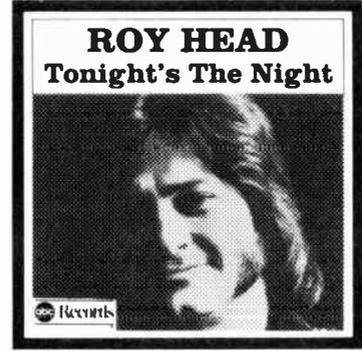
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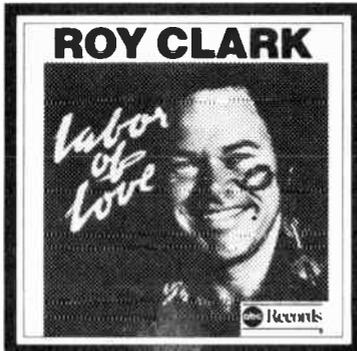
Freddy's new ABC album marks his return to the style that made him famous. "Swamp Gold," his most exciting album since "Wasted Days," contains 15 different Fender songs.



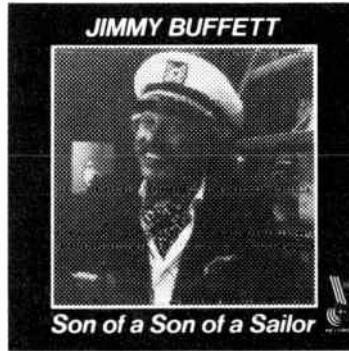
A new look at Don Gibson's classic Country style that produced such great hits as "I Can't Stop Loving You." Now Don returns with a new version of "Oh, Lonesome Me" and some soon-to-be classics such as "Here Comes The Rain Baby."



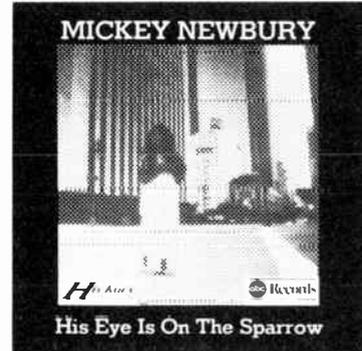
"Treat Her Right" was Roy Head's classic, but wait 'til you hear what this master performer has come up with on his brand new LP. Some of the songs he treats exceptionally right include "Tonight's the Night," "Pieces Of My Life," and three of the Beach Boys' Dennis Wilson tunes.



Everybody's favorite singer and instrumentalist, Roy Clark, has put together a collection of new and old favorites, including "Southern Nights," "Must You Throw Dirt On My Face," "It Was Almost Like a Song," and more. A brand new album by Roy Clark is a reason for celebration!



Buffett's love of the sea, and his seafaring ancestry, form the theme of his new album, "Son of a Son of a Sailor." Contains the hits, "Coast of Marseilles" and "Cheeseburger in Paradise."



One of the best lyricists in music, Mickey Newbury adds stunning arrangements to his new songs and one traditional hit, "His Eye is on the Sparrow," the title tune of his new ABC Album.



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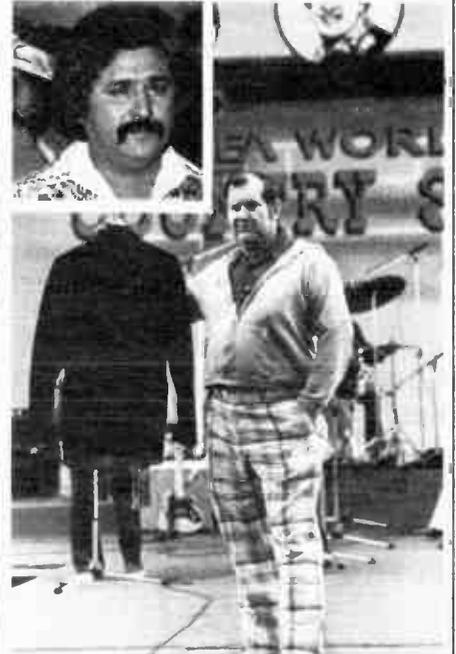
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CM-78

Country Scene

Pride Goeth Before The Dolphin



Barbara Mandrell, Freddy Fender, Minnie Pearl, Tammy Wynette and host Charley Pride were only a few stars at a recent taping of a national television show at Orlando, Fla., Sea-world park. (Above) A cameraman gets a light reading.

Albert Brumley Dies— His Songs Live On

I had come to Powell, Mo. to interview Albert E. Brumley, writer of more than 600 gospel songs including *I'll Fly Away*, a member of the Gospel Music Hall of Fame and of the Nashville Songwriters Association Hall of Fame.

"I usually take a nap over the noon hour," he explained when we met. "I told Shirley to wake me when you got here. Did you have any trouble finding Powell? His deep country voice left little doubt as to the part he sang, when many years ago, he traveled with a gospel quartet.

But that quartet experience, together with some other factors, had long ago convinced him that if he was going to be successful in the music business, it was going to have to be in the writing end.

Brumley was 26 when the song that was to become his most famous was accepted by the Hartford Music Company in 1932. *I'll Fly Away* has since appeared in count-

less song books and been recorded hundreds possibly thousands of times. Other songs that were to become standards soon followed: *Jesus, Hold My Hand*, *Turn Your Radio On, I'll Meet You in the Morning*, *If We Never Meet Again* and many others.

Study, meditation, and hard work went into all of Brumley's songs. While he believed in God-given talent, he didn't believe in direct inspiration. "I've had so many people come to me and say, 'I've got a song here that the Lord gave me,' and I've always wondered 'why the Lord didn't finish 'em up,'" he said.

Brumley saw a lot of changes in the more than 50 years he was involved in the music business. Songs used to become famous just by being published and by being sung by gospel quartets over the radio. Now, he said, everything must be recorded to make any show at all.

There were other changes too. "You used to go hear a quartet and come out humming the songs they sang." He felt that some of today's music lacked those

easily remembered melodies.

Brumley himself was often complimented on the naturalness of his songs. "I felt I could identify with many of the problems that people faced, their trials and tribulations, and I tried to write a song that would be of good cheer." He wrote his songs from what he called "plots." He would think of a phrase to describe a situation that would be applicable to a large segment of humanity, and in most cases this phrase would become the title of the song. The next step was to find a melody that would fit that particular phrase.

"I tried to write my songs in the same meter as you would say the same phrase," he said, citing *I'd Rather Be an Old Time Christian* as an example.

Albert E. Brumley was born in 1905, on a "bright October morn" according to his song *Did You Ever Go Sailin*. He died on November 15, 1977. But his songs—his words of good cheer and his melodies you can remember—will linger on.

JUDY KALLENBACK

Fuzzbusters & Police—Mutual Admirers

Radar detectors and police have learned to love each other, and it was painful. For instance, the legal and illegal static radar detectors have received from law enforcement officials the greatest publicity campaign in years—the sales, not surprisingly, are booming.

"We're pushing hard to get production up to demand," said Dale Smith, the founder of Electroert, the largest radar detector company. And now that everyone has heard about detectors, they are receiving favorable legislative rulings. Ironically, the product designed solely to check police speeder-spotters is now promoted by troopers; they actually simplify a patrolman's job. Radar detectors may be their most effective tool for speed control yet because, in effect, they increase the troopers' range of surveillance. The better the detector, the more radar picked up and the more drivers with detectors will be inclined to slow down, slowing consequently, the rest of traffic.

"Isolated cases against radar detectors

come and go but in most states they are perfectly legal," said Smith. Electroert has 34 legal firms defending the detectors, with Virginia the only state that specifically outlawed detectors. And cases of apparent abuses in that state are frequent.



Electroert's Fuzzbuster II

For example, one teamster-affiliated trucker from Chicago was pulled over by a Virginia trooper. He and the co-driver locked the bonded truck after presenting the officer with the license and state permits. The trucker told the trooper that the truck could not be opened without a war-

rant or company permission, but offered to call his boss for clearance. The officer allegedly disregarded the offer proceeded to break into the truck. In the sleeping compartment he allegedly found a brand new Fuzzbuster, an Electroert detector, still in its unopened box. The trucker was arrested for possession of the detector and for interfering with a police officer.

Bill Edwards, an engineer and advertising manager in New Hampshire, has filed a federal class action against Virginia for arresting his wife, who was traveling through Virginia en route to New England. The arresting officer has allegedly admitted that she broke no other law than possession of a detector. "My wife was harrassed and even forced to supply the tools to remove the detector from the car," said Edwards. He has charged Virginia with violation of interstate commerce laws and federal preemption. If successful, Virginia will be liable for the 5,000 detectors seized by police since '75 (which cost about \$100 each) plus all the fines collected (approximately \$100 each), plus at least \$1,000,000 in damages.

Dale Smith has been on both sides of the fence. He used to build radars but stopped in '72. "I was creating a monster. Then, it was not uncommon for radar calibration to be off by 15 miles per hour," said Smith. The National Bureau of Standard Law Enforcement Standards Laboratory in Maryland is currently studying the accuracy and validity of police radar. "Judges often accept radar evidence without question," said Marshall Treado, an electrical engineer heading the tests. "This places the need for accuracy on manufacturers and operators." In the meantime radar readings are given carte blanche in the courts.

As the battle rages about who will out do who, Washington and Iowa are taking advantage of the booming popularity of the detectors. They are installing solar powered "buzz boxes" along roads to activate detectors, causing motorists to reduce their speed. Officials believe that these "false alarms" will play a major role in speed control. If enough detectors go through an area to make it worthwhile, a patrol car parked outside of the station, leaving its radar on to travel unknown distances, does more to reduce the speed of motorists than waiting behind bushes to nab speeders. All parties concerned, it seems, are served by the units. Smith calls detectors, "The Logical Compromise." In other words—do a cop a favor and buy a radar detector today.

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MCA COUNTRY TOO BIG FOR THIS PAGE...SEE YOU AT FAN FAIR

Country Scene

5 Good Things And Bad Things About This Year's Volunteer Jam . . .

1 Instead of an all-star southern rock bash, this year's jam featured controlled performances by a number of fine groups who surely benefited by the exposure—Wet Willie, Grinder's Switch and most notable, Sea Level. And Charlie Daniels introduced to the Jam the newest wrinkle in his act, Ben Smathers and the Stony Mountain Cloggers, Opry fixtures for years.

2 A local TV personality was overheard to say he wanted to interview Dolly Parton as she took her first mouthfull of Space Dust.

3 Despite a flood of rumors before, during, and after the five-and-a-half hour marathon, Waylon and Willie were not there. Neither were Steve and Edye, nor Donnie and Marie.

4 CBS/Epic graciously provided endless supplies of food and drink for visiting journalists, assuring good reviews, little clear recollection of what actually happened and hangovers.

5 The bands played against a magnificent backdrop, a scene of huge mountaintops (more reminiscent of the Rockies than the Smokies), flanked by shimmering pines.

1 For all the number of underexposed bands there, there was not enough variation in style nor performance nor material. I'm not sure, but I think three successive bands played the same song for two-and-a-half hours.

2 The noise level in the auditorium was absolutely crushing. The highs were so powerful not a note could be distinguished amid the deafening roar. The lows were inaudible, but three

of my fillings came loose.

3 After the show the journalists were herded into a very cold hallway (they were loading the equipment onto trucks) for the better part of an hour. It's not that I mind being treated like cattle, but the milling and lowing got to me after a while.

4 Through the pale blue cloud-flecked sky of that stunning backdrop could be seen the faint image of folks walking up and down a ramp in Nashville's Municipal Auditorium. Sort of looked like ghost hikers in the sky.

5 The place was deluged with cowboy hats. Most popular, in order of frequency, were 1) the massive-brimmed Charlie Daniels hats, 2) those of more moderate (4-5") brimmed cowboy hats, 3) leather hats, 4) straw hats worn by the desperately faddish despite the 18° weather and 5) straw hats that good natured hucksters were selling at \$20 a crack to the hoards of teenagers who attended and a few aging adults not wanting to feel left out.

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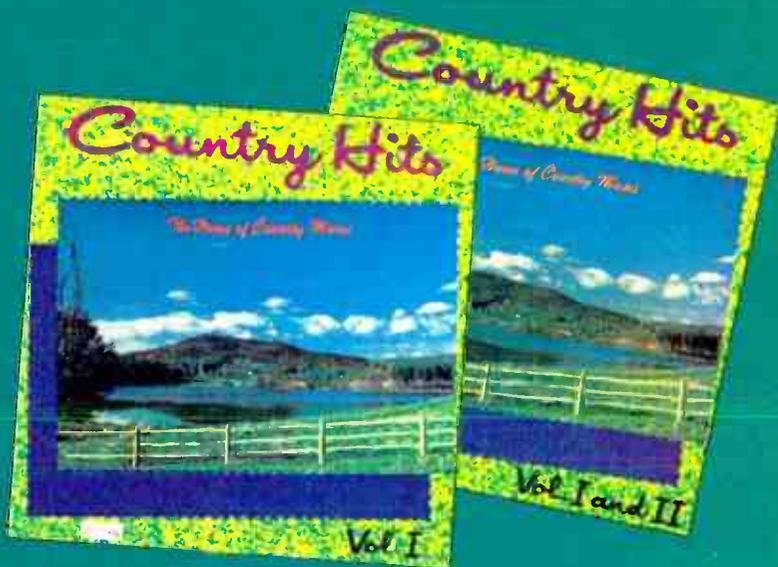


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Are we ready for just a good singer?

Just CRYSTAL

by MICHAEL BANE

Ill omens and bad feelings, a nagging sense of impending doom and arriving for my lunch with Crystal Gayle a full 15 minutes too early. No reservations and snotty uptown waiters.

Crystal *who?*

United *what* Records?

Wait *quietly* at the bar, and try to keep out from underfoot, if you please.

Bad karma, if you will. We are all seated, Crystal and her entourage and I. She is beautiful, a perfect miniature of a full-sized person crafted by someone with an eye for detail. There is a persistent tapping on my shoulder.

"Excuse me, sir."

It is the waiter, looking like a poorly dressed extra from a Vincent Price movie.

"Excuse me, sir, if you don't have a jacket, we'll have to ask you to leave."

I don't, as is fairly obvious, have a jacket. Crystal collapses in a fit of uncontrollable giggles.

"Would you, perhaps, like us to bring you a jacket?"

Oh, I say, mustering whatever *couth* I can muster on short notice, by all means. Please *do* bring me your latest in designer originals. Crystal has managed to throttle her giggles down to controlled snickers. I receive my frayed benediction from the Vincent Price extra, extending my most sincere compliments to the tailor and try desperately to remember what I'm doing here.

"Did you hear me on the radio?" Crystal asks, quickly filling a void between the giggles and the salad. "Being a guest deejay (on WHN, New York City's country station)?"

As a matter of fact, I say, I did. And then I giggle—it's catching, I suppose.

"Oh my God," says Crystal's road manager. "He's laughing!"

I'm sorry, I say, still giggling.

"Okay," says Crystal Gayle. "You're really getting off on the wrong foot."

"I thought you did an excellent job on the radio..."

Crystal at New York's Bottom Line...





"No, you did not. You can't even say that with a straight face..."

"I still think you really did a good job..."

"Did I giggle?"

"Not much..."

"Why don't," suggests a voice of sanity from across the table, "you talk about your new record, Crystal? Ask her about her new album."

"My new album?"

"Your new album?"

"Oh, yea." . . .

Enough of this levity, this giggling in the face of your basic Grammy and CMA award winner; this torch singer-cum-Loretta Lynn's little sister who sings like a (as they say) slumming angel and giggles like the girl next door. A little respect, *puh-lease*.

There is a whole school of thought about the interviewing of celebrities—and Crystal Gayle is certainly that these days

—and that school of thought holds that one should hang on every word; that each little nugget of thought is a diamond in the rough, to be carved and polished and carefully placed in an expensive journalistic setting, where all the rest of us can file by and reverently look under the glass.

—"Tell us, Crystal, what do you think about the continuing political crisis in Rhodesia?"

—"Tell us, Crystal, do you really see your big sister as the transcendental expression of lower-middle-class angst, that to understand the political ramifications of *The Pill* is to understand the central dilemma of working women in America today?"

—"Tell us, Crystal, are you sorry you weren't born in Butcher Holler? Can you really be a country girl without being a coal miner's daughter or an ex-beautician or dirt-poor from East Nowhere, Mississippi? Tell us, Crystal, do you ever feel guilty because, well, maybe you didn't suffer enough?"

The first time she played New York, at a funky little East Side club called O'Lunney's, an interviewer from somewhere or other came up to her after the set and asked her what the word "love" meant to her.

"He wanted me to give a definition of 'love,'" she says, still wincing from a question asked in 1973. "I don't remember who, but of course I didn't have an answer... I mean, love, you can take so many different ways... So that's my answer—you can take it many different ways... Love is a word taken many different ways."

She giggles—something, as you may have gathered, Crystal Gayle does a lot—at the absolute absurdity of defining love over a bowl of Hugh O'Lunney's chili one night.

"Be yourself, Crystal," says one of Crystal's companions.

"That's what I'm afraid of," says Crystal Gayle. "He really doesn't want that side of me, does he?"

I was in Nashville recently, I say, and I asked a bunch of people what I should ask Crystal Gayle.

"Don't take this personally," I say cleverly, "But about six people mentioned that you were a giggler..."

"I want their names..." Crystal grins.

"Well," Crystal explodes, "What's wrong with laughing? There was an article in the *LA Times*, and they had in there (something like) 'in my giggly, childish way.' Why does life have to go around looking dull and being serious? I mean, there's so many bad things happening in the world, why can't you go around giggling and laughing and having fun? I take things serious when they need to be taken serious. And people know when I'm serious..."

"I mean, like we're doing an interview, and you could go and *destroy* me when

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CRYSTAL GAYLE'S "WHEN I DREAM."



Produced by Allen Reynolds, On United Artists Records.



you write the interview," she says. "Really. You could really cut me down, and I'm saying I could really just get angry at you or something, but, see, why take that all seriously?"

• • •

From the Sunday, April 9, edition of the *New York Times*, titled *Crystal Gale's (sic) Singing Career Is A Lot More Than Luck*:

"At times, in talking with her, one has lingering doubts about the drive and seriousness she is willing to bring to her career. This is a woman, after all, who can joke cheerily that she does not mind it said that she backed into her success, because "I walk better backward than forward. . . ."

Ah, yes, lingering doubts. Again that strange ambivalence toward our culture heroes, whereby, on the one hand we can hardly condemn Dolly Parton for her calculated, expensive and dreadfully successful assault on the pop charts, while on the other we can tsk-tsk Crystal Gayle for not being serious enough. We'd prefer our heroes, be they singing stars or sex symbols, to be driven, obsessed with the necessity for creation, for making their art. We see—rather, we sense—some purity of spirit behind the plain-dirt roots of a Loretta Lynn that maybe, just maybe, is missing in the squeaky-clean Wabash, Indiana, upbringing of Brenda Gail Webb, christened Crystal by big sister Loretta in honor of a ubiquitous Southern chain of tiny hamburger joints. We want dirt; we

want soul; we want the Real Thing; D-I-V-O-R-C-E, blue-collar lusts and babies.

Are we really ready for just a very good singer?

• • •

Crystal Gayle is a very good singer who happens to have impeccable tastes in music. She also happens to have Allen Reynolds, one of the best producers working in music today, as her producer and mentor. The result has been consistently good, consistently, well, tasteful music, from *This Is My Year For Mexico* to *Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue*, the song that once and for all put Crystal on the musical map. And, perhaps more importantly, they have succeeded without once catering to the "common wisdoms" that keep Nashville resolutely anchored in the 1950s. Production quality, for instance—there are no compromises on Crystal's records, and they stand as the best produced records coming out of Nashville today. A willingness to try new things, to expand into new territory on the heels of success instead of huddling behind a "safe" follow-up record.

"We didn't look for a follow-up (to *Brown Eyes*)," Crystal says. "We looked for songs that we really wanted again. If I'd wanted a follow-up, I'd have released the perfect song off *We Must Believe In Magic*, which I knew would have been a perfect follow-up. But I didn't want to go that route. *I Want To Come Back To You* would have been the perfect follow-up.

But I didn't want to release a song like that. I wanted to come with a single that was more *me*."

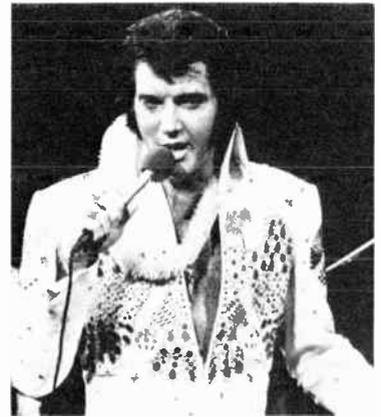
What she and Allen finally decided on was *Ready For The Times To Get Better*, one of Allen's own compositions originally recorded by Marshall Chapman. Nothing could have been further from the torchy *Brown Eyes*—*Ready For The Times To Get Better*, in fact, is something of a departure. The song carries none of the bubbly optimism of Crystal's earlier work, such as *Someone Loves You*, or the love-lost bluey feel of *Brown Eyes*. Rather, *Ready For The Times To Get Better* carries a hard edge, a tough edge: a woman who's had enough and is, quite simply, ready for the times to get better.

• • •

Okay, Crystal Gayle, the bottom line is this: you're distressingly normal and you've got tremendous taste, not to mention one hell of a voice. It's hard to pigeonhole a person who doesn't think that the sun rises and sets with next week's chart positions, who resolutely believes, as you seem to, that there's more to life than being tomorrow's superstar. You and Allen do things your own way, and in a city where the conventional wisdom is that, say, if you have a hit with the words "heaven" and "sin" in the title, you should spend the rest of your life recording songs with "heaven" and "sin" in the title, doing things your own way is nothing short of miraculous. Not that it matters, but I approve. ■

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brought to his music. But there was another side to the man—a side that was often overlooked amid all the glamour and publicity.

Elvis, the son of a Mississippi sharecropper, never forgot his roots and was never too busy to help. During the last ten years of his life, Elvis gave away nearly two million dollars to charities and poor people he met. Henry Loeb, the former mayor of Memphis, once said of Elvis, "I don't know of a single instance of genuine need which he heard about when he failed to do something. He was an incredibly caring person."

And he was equally generous with his time and talent—visiting children in the hospital, and doing benefits for countless worthy causes. Maybe his generosity went back to the Sundays he spent in the First Assembly of God Church in Tupelo, Mississippi, where Elvis learned to love Gospel music and developed a deep and abiding faith in God. Without publicity, without show, Elvis was always generous in a manly way.

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Margo Smith Breaks The Charts, Dons A Tux And Goes Back 20 Years

by MARY ELLEN MOORE

The boys in the band disagree.

"I think it would be a mistake, Margo," said one. "Medleys from the 50s are old news."

"It's the best part of the show," voted another.

"You need something up-tempo right there," voiced a third.

"Mistake . . . up-tempo . . . old news. . ." The voices mingled, and Margo Smith merely nodded at it all.

Mid-afternoon, mid-rehearsal, and she hadn't eaten a thing all day. And there was that triple-decker club sandwich just waiting to be consumed. Margo fondled the sandwich, trying to pay attention to the argument.

Hunger triumphed. Margo bit into the sandwich. Then, obviously fortified, she made her decision. The 50s medley would stay.

"Put that little nickle in, In that nickle-odeon. . .," she sang, imitating Theresa Brewer. And the band, forgetting the disagreement, played on.

• • •

Rehearsal ended, Margo came over, still carrying her sandwich. The belt had slipped out of her navy blue pants suit, leaving it shapeless (or as shapeless as it could be, considering her, ahem, Dolly Parton-esque figure) and her pants hem was coming out.

"I look tacky," she moaned. "I have a reputation for not looking tacky.."

"Not anymore," I told her.

"Ohhhhhh," she groaned, limping off to mend her disarray and eat her sandwich.

• • •

The next morning, Margo Smith had gotten herself back together. She fully deserved the reputation for not looking tacky, as she sat business-like dressed in blue velvet jacket and white pants. She's a small woman and her hair, a thick array of brown curls, almost seems out of proportion to her doll-like body. For someone very concerned about her public image right now, her good-natured moaning the previous day was understandable.

For the first time in her seven-year career, Margo had a number one song, *Don't Break the Heart That Loves You*. And it had stayed number one for three weeks, giving Margo and Warner Brothers, her record label, the impetus to establish an identity for her. Identity,

Margo admits, is something she's sorely lacking, although she's had many hits and has a unique quality to her voice.

"A lot of times, when I walk out on stage," she says in her husky voice, "people say, 'Oh, Margo, yeah, I remember her for one record or maybe two that were top 10!' They don't remember all my songs."

"People are buying my records. . . the records prior to *Don't Break the Heart That Loves You*. . . for the song, not for the person. That's what they're doing, and I know that, so now I'm trying to establish an identity."

She's doing this through her appearance, her music and her carefully staged shows. In fact, the success of *Don't Break the Heart* was actually a result of the first step in establishing such an identity.

"We decided to go back 21-22 years to try to establish a radio sound for Margo," explained Warner Brothers' Stan Byrd. "We weren't aiming for a hit, just something to be played on the radio. The intro to the song and the fadeout were both calculated for disk jockeys to talk over."

Despite the seeming scientific approach, the choice of *Don't Break the Heart* was purely Margo's—and pure instinct.

She had been unhappy with the production of one of her own songs and told her producer, Norro Wilson, "that's not what's happening in country music."

"Norro told me to go find two songs that I wanted to cut. Which I did. And that was one of them because a lady that used to babysit for me found that song. When she played it, I said, 'That is the record right there.'"

The old Connie Francis song was updated and recorded—and it hit bigger than anyone expected. So Margo continued her plans for recognition. They include a certain look: Satiny tuxedos with lacy, low-cut blouses and a bow tie; a certain sound: Delving back 20 years ago will continue with another song, *It Only Hurts for a Little While*, an entertaining show: including comedy, choreography, interaction with her band and oddly enough yodeling.

"I have to do all these things to make an entertaining show," she explains, "because I do not have that charisma, that superstar quality."



Margo at work with veteran songwriter Mack David.

"For example, I was on tour with Conway Twitty and probably Conway—I don't know how many number one records he's had, over 30—he goes out there and there's a magic about him, he's a superstar. He can sing these songs. I can't do that. What am I gonna do? Sing *Don't Break the Heart That Loves You* 17 times?"

She laughs. If it seems like Margo is planning her career with the strategy of an army general, it's understandable. You



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“People are buying my records. . . for the song, not for the person. . . So now I’m trying to establish an identity.”

can't be naive and expect things to happen by themselves—or they won't happen. And Margo, despite her constant good nature, admits that if she's one thing, it's tough.

“I'm very persistent. And when I set my mind to something I can do it. One of the reasons why, is I should give you some of my background as a child:

“When I was two years old,” she begins very matter-of-factly, “I was given away. My aunt and uncle took me in. This aunt was the greatest lady that God ever let breathe. She taught me to be really persistent and to say I love you or I'm sorry or I'm wrong. That's where the song *There I've Said It* came from.

“And I learned to be tough. Because even my brothers and sisters—who weren't my brothers and sisters, they were just cousins, but I accepted them as my brothers and sisters—although they loved me, when the going gets rough, kids can be totally cruel. Very honest and beautiful, but also very cruel, and say things like ‘We had to take you in.’ Things that really hurt me, that made me strong and made me tough. And I learned to be that way and I learned to do it on my own.

“And even though you've got a beautiful life, and you know these people love you, you can't help but think ‘I wonder why my mother gave me away.’ So when I was 19 years old, I met her. I decided I was going to meet her. I knew she would be at my grandmother's funeral, so I went to the funeral and there she was.

“I met her and to this day I love her like a sister. I don't love her like a mother, I love her like a great friend, because the only mother I will ever have is the aunt who blew my nose and wiped my tears when I was growing up.

“My mother has three children by another marriage, and these kids didn't even know I existed. They didn't know that there was a Margo. So she went and told them—I told her not to, I told her it was fine—but she did, and now we all have a great relationship.

Another childhood jeer that Margo was forced to bear, ironically, was taunts about her “funny voice.”

“I have a very unusual voice,” says Margo in her very unusual (gruff) voice. “All my life I hated my voice. . . there were always people who would call me ‘the girl with the funny voice.’ And I'd have older people come up to me and say, ‘Boy, if you were just growing up, you could play Baby Snooks. . .’ They'd make fun of my voice all the time.

“Then I started teaching school, and kids are so beautifully honest, that's what

I love about little kids. They'll say ‘Boy you sure look a wreck today, teacher’ or ‘Your hair's really pretty.’ But they'd say, ‘We just love the way you talk and especially the way you sing because you sound just like a chipmunk!’

“And I'd laugh,” says Margo gritting her teeth and making a fist, “and say ‘Isn't that sweet?’”

The children got plenty of chances to hear their teacher's chipmunk voice because Margo used her kindergarten class as a little stage, singing, playing the guitar and piano for her tiny audience.

“But I never sang professionally. I said I would never work the road until I had a good record. By a good record, I was hoping for a top 15 or a top 10 record. And when I got it, I quit teaching.”

That was in 1975 when Margo recorded *There, I've Said It* for 20th Century Records. When 20th Century phased out its country division, Margo signed with Warners where she continued cutting hit records, including *Save Your Kisses*, *Take My Breath Away* and *Love's Explosion*.

She's correct in saying people buy her

records for the song, not the artist. When Margo sings a medley of her hits, you're likely to hear a murmur, perhaps even murmuring yourself: “I remember that . . . was that Margo Smith?”

She took her hit songs and her band, Love's Explosion, on the road, determined to make it. Staying behind in New Carlisle, Ohio, are her husband Ken and two children, Jeff, 13, and Holly, nine.

Ken Smith, like Dolly's husband Carl Dean, prefers to stay in the background. Unlike Dean, he does go to Margo's shows whenever possible. And Margo, when home, stays in the background, letting her kids and husband live their own lives as they want to.

“You make the time at home count,” she believes. “It's not the quantity of time, it's the quality that's important.”

Quality is also what she strives for in her business world. Despite her reputation for being good humored, she is always on top of what's going on. She's been known to get angry (“anger with dignity,” she calls it) and feels that it is good business to let those she works with know how she feels. *(Continued on page 63)*



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Zella Lehr's Still Doing Her Balancing Act...

... With her rendition of Dolly's *Two Doors Down*. And if Dolly wants it back, well, that's okay, too.



That's Zella Lehr over there, just unicycling her way down Music Row in Music City, and, one supposes, into the hearts and minds of folks everywhere via *Two Doors Down*, a tuneful ditty written by (you may have heard of her)

Dolly Parton.

Zella is unicycling because, well, because Zella likes to unicycle—she has, after all, been doing it for quite some time. Seems that Zella comes from your basic show business family. Early on, Zella found herself touring Europe with her family doing, of all things, a vaudeville act.

The Lehr family jumped rope, rode unicycles, juggled, sang and danced their way across Europe, the Middle East and Asia, with little Zella learning the unicycle and to juggle somewhere around mid-Europe. (Her singing debut, according to her bio, came in England at the tender age of six.) The act, confides Zella breathlessly over the telephone, almost ended in disaster when an Arabian potentate (actually a sheik, if the truth be known) offered to buy Zella into a harem. Mr. Lehr wisely refused, pointing out to the sheik (or potentate, if you will) that while harem girls were a dime a dozen, a good juggler was hard to find.

Two Doors Down proved to be the proverbial bolt out of the blue, a song so successful that, when RCA considered pushing the song pop as well as country, Miss Dolly interceded and released her own version from her *Here You Come Again* album. ■







PORTER WAGONER

The Last Of The Hillbillies Speaks His Mind/By John Morthland

The song is called *The Arizona Whiz*, and it appears on *Porter*, which, when he released it last fall, was Porter Wagoner's first album in way too long. Like all the songs on that album, it was of a type you don't hear so often these days—a hard-core country song about an old man who was called in to fill a college date with just his harp and acoustic guitar after a "king of rock and roll" had cancelled. The man is described as "old and wrinkled, bent and broke, wearing blue jeans and a scarf around his throat." He was not what the kids had come to see and hear, but he won them over anyhow with his songs of "matrimony, broads and booze and love and war."

I was thinking about that song as I sat downstairs in Porter's Fireside Studio in Nashville. *The Arizona Whiz* seemed ominous. Was this to be Porter's fate? After all, the syndrome had taken many a good man before him, and so very much had happened since Dolly quit Porter and Porter quit the road more than two years ago. The man had become almost invisible, and as Nashville continued to act more and more like Hollywood, there didn't seem to be as much room for an unabashedly hillbilly singer like Porter. He seemed to have become some sort of proud relic of the past, and one could wince at the possibility of him many years hence being trotted out to a group of col-

lege kids who would sit in curious awe of this alien man singing about a time and place they could never have known themselves.

Fat chance.

That was made instantly clear as Porter himself bounded downstairs to greet me. He was dressed casually in blue denim pants and jacket, a blue baseball cap with a *JBaitCo* logo covering his hair, still that outrageous straw color, but not all pumped up like it is in his publicity photos or when he appears at the Opry. He looked healthy and energetic, and he was smiling widely.

Yes, a lot has happened in those two years, but Porter has hardly been idle. He has built a whole new life—off the road—for himself and consolidated his future. To hear him tell it, he's never been more relaxed or happy, and the move was long overdue.

There is the studio itself, originally built six years ago as a demo studio. Porter has since put half-a-million dollars into making these facilities as modern, and as comfortable, as any studio in Music City. Porter's own first Nashville session was in 1953, using a two-track tape machine in a garage covered with baffles. "When a truck went by outside," he grins, "you could hear it on the tape and you'd have to cut the record over." Since then, he's learned a thing or two.

This studio has a separate piano room so when someone is recording, there's no sound leakage from other instruments. The vocal room has sand in the walls to contain sound. Porter had always felt that Nashville was "behind other cities in terms of drum sound," so he built a drum room with sloping walls and ceiling; drums, he says, are so loud the sound will ricochet in a square area, but here they have more "room to breathe," and sound more like drums should, "deep but bright." Porter's studio engineers, Tom Pick and Roy Shockley, have worked out a system whereby each instrument and voice has been assigned its own special microphone, carefully chosen not just to capture that vocal or instrument, but also to complement it. The whole operation has been meticulously thought out so nothing is left to chance, which seems to be Porter's standard operating procedure for anything.

Certainly nobody but Porter could have designed this studio, which strikes the eye much like one of his dazzling rhinestone stage costumes. The roof of the piano room is shingled; at one end of the small studio is a fireplace, with flowers on the mantle and a portrait of Porter on the wall above it. The floor is covered with green carpet, and there are colorful couches, rocking chairs and coffee tables arranged around the studio. Merle Hag-



Porter and Dolly during the "good ole days" of their television show...

“Country music is big, but a lotta times a person gets discontent if there isn’t something *real* big or exciting happening at the moment...”

gard found it so cozy that after booking the place for two hours, he wound up staying two weeks and cutting 25 sides. Merle picked and sang from a rocking chair, the other musicians gathered around him in a circle, like they were playing in the parlor.

If the downstairs is designed to attract outside bookings, the upstairs is more like Porter’s personal domain. Sure, the tiny studio is sometimes used for one-man overdubbing, but it is primarily used by Porter, working alone, on his own projects. Here’s where he spends most of his time, while Tom and Roy take care of business down below. Off to one side is a small refrigerator where he keeps “my hillbilly steaks—bologna and stuff like that.” The console is lined with crushed velour; the board raises and lowers, so Porter can work standing up or sprawled out on the pillows on the floor. There’s one of those revolving, reflecting glass balls overhead, colored lights blinking around the dark room, a few shrine-like objects sitting on the ledges. Just as I’m starting to feel like I’m in a disco in Bombay, Porter puts a tape on the machine and chuckles, “I wanted to get more of

the interview done when I played this so you wouldn’t think you’d been trapped in here by a wildman.”

What comes booming out of the speakers, believe it or not, is disco music—not country dance music, but real urban disco music, with that big rigid beat, clarinets and harmonicas, and lots of sputtering synthesizers. The songs are called *Down And Dirty* and *A Piece of The Rock*; they are written and arranged by Porter and played by four Nashville studio musicians under the group name *Down and Dirty*. Porter, it turns out, is a fan of disco, and he also sees some big bucks there; he figures Nashville should get some of that action. But he is also working on his own music, which of course is nothing but country, and he is cutting sides on Linda Moore, a dark-haired beauty who quit college in 1972 to come to Nashville and wound up with Dolly’s old job on Porter’s TV show. It’s only recently that she gained the confidence to record, and Porter is now trying to find her a label. Coincidentally, Linda arrives at the studio just as Porter is playing her tape.

“She’s good on the stage, does a great

job,” Porter beams as Linda looks away, perhaps a tad embarrassed. “She smiles a lot, and people like that. They like the sincerity that she’s got, and that’s what it takes—you got that, you can’t hardly go wrong.”

The TV show continues to thrive, but it, Fireside, his publishing concerns and the various recording careers, are not the extent of Porter’s activity. He is regarded as one of the cagiest businessmen in Nashville, the only artist in town, it is whispered along the gossip grapevine, who can walk into a bank and come out later with a million dollars and on the basis of his good name. That may be an exaggeration, but it *was* Porter who plunked down the \$500,000 which bankrolled Jimmy Dean’s Pure Pork Sausage business. Porter also owns several duplex houses he rents out. He owns a loan association for business and professional men, and he has stock in the Downtowner Motel Chain. This is not a bad track record for a Missouri farm boy who didn’t get past sixth grade, and Porter is obviously not hurting for things to do with himself—even if he has quit the road.

“I just never did get finished, there was so much to do,” Porter sighs over a dinner of chicken, creole spaghetti and apple-sauce at a nearby restaurant. Quitting the road was not an easy decision, but it was probably a necessary one. At the time, he was doing his own records, Dolly’s and their duets. Whenever his bus rolled back

(Continued on page 61)

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LIONEL HAMPTON'S FAVORITES
MCA-204 ALBUM \$2.98
Flying Home; Everybody's Somebody's Fool; How High The Moon; Blow-Top Blues; Midnight Sun; AirMail Special; Hamp's Boogie Woogie; Red Top; Gone Again; New Central Avenue Breakdown; Hey! Ba-Ba-Re-Bop; Rockin' In Rhythm.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-204 \$4.98

WOODY HERMAN'S GOLDEN FAVORITES
MCA-219 ALBUM \$2.98
Woodchopper's Ball; The Golden Wedding; Who Dat Up Dere; Yardbird Shuffle; Down Under; Indian Boogie Woogie; Blue Flame; Four Or Five Times; Irresistible You; Chips' Boogie Woogie; Las Chiapanecas; Wood-sheddin' With Woody.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-219 \$4.98

LOUIS JORDAN'S GREATEST HITS
MCA-274 ALBUM \$2.98
Choo Choo Ch'Boogie; Let The Good Times Roll; Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens; Saturday Night Fish Fry; Beware; Caldonia Knock Me A Kiss; Run Joe; School Days; Blue Light Boogie; Don't Let The Sun Catch You Cryin'.
NO TAPE AVAILABLE

BILL MONROE - I'LL MEET YOU IN CHURCH SUNDAY MORNING
MCA-226 ALBUM \$2.98
I'll Meet You In Church Sunday Morning; Drifting Too Far From The Shore; Master Builder; I Found The Way; We'll Understand It Better; Let Me Rest At The End Of The Journey; Going Home; One Of God's Sheep; Way Down Deep In My Soul; On The Jericho Road; Farther Along; The Glory Land Way.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-226 \$4.98

TED LEWIS' GREATEST HITS
MCA-258 ALBUM \$2.98
When My Baby Smiles At Me; She's Funny That Way; Just Around The Corner; The Sweetheart Of Sigma Chi; The Old St. Louis Blues; Tiger Rag; Wear A Hat With A Silver Lining; Down The Old Church Aisle; I'm The Medicine Man For The Blues; King For A Day; Three O'Clock In The Morning; Good Night.
NO TAPE AVAILABLE

GUY LOMBARDO - GOLDEN MEDLEYS
MCA-103 ALBUM \$2.98
Blues In The Night; The Birth Of The Blues; I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues; Memories; Let The Rest Of The World Go By; My Secret Love; Love Nest; Love Is The Sweetest Thing; Something To Remember You By; The Very Thought Of You; You're My Everything; Kiss Me Again; A Kiss In The Dark; I'll See You Again; By The Light Of The Silvery Moon; Shine On Harvest Moon; Moonlight Bay; As Time Goes By; Bidin' My Time; Breezin' Along With The Breeze; I Want To Be Happy; I'm Looking Over A Four Leaf Clover; Happy Days Are Here Again; April Showers; September In The Rain; I Only Have Eyes For You; If I Could Be With You; It Had To Be You; In A Shanty In Old Shanty Town; Three Little Words; Baby Face; Somebody Loves Me; Don't Take Your Love From Me; What Is This Thing Called Love.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-103 \$4.98

LORETTA LYNN - DON'T COME HOME A DRINKIN' - MCA-113 ALBUM \$2.98
Don't Come Home A Drinkin' With Lovin' On Your Mind; I Really Don't Want You To Know; Tomorrow Never Comes; There Goes My Everything; The Shoe Goes On The Other Foot Tonight; Saint To A Sinner; The Devil Gets His Dues; I Can't Keep Away From You; I'm Living In Two Worlds; Get What 'Cha Got And Go; Making Plans; I Got Caught.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-113 \$4.98

LORETTA LYNN - HYMNS
MCA-5 ALBUM \$2.98
Everybody Wants To Go To Heaven; Where No One Stands Alone; When They Ring Those Golden Bells; Peace In The Valley; If I Could Hear My Mother Pray Again; The Third Man; How Great Thou Art; Old Camp Meetin' When I Hear My Children Pray; In The Sweet Bye And Bye; Where I Learned To Pray; I'd Rather Have Jesus.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-5 \$4.98

LORETTA LYNN - YOU AIN'T WOMAN ENOUGH - MCA-6 ALBUM \$2.98
You Ain't Woman Enough; Put It Off Until Tomorrow; These Boots Are Made For Walkin'; God Gave Me A Heart To Forgive; Keep Your Change; Someone Before Me; The Darkest Day; Tippy Toeing; Talking To The Wall; A Man I Hardly Know; Is It Wrong; It's Another World.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-6 \$4.98

LORETTA LYNN AND CONWAY TWITTY
WE ONLY MAKE BELIEVE - MCA-8 ALBUM \$2.98
It's Only Make Believe; We've Closed Our Eyes To Shame; I'm So Used To Loving You; Will You Visit Me On Sunday; After The Fire Is Gone; Don't Tell Me You're Sorry; Pickin' Wild Mountain Berries; Take Me; The One I Can't Live Without; Hangin' On; Working Girl.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-8 \$4.98

JIMMY MARTIN - SUNNY SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN - MCA-79 ALBUM \$2.98
Sunny Side Of The Mountain; It Takes One To Know One; Guitlar Picking President; Shenandoah Waltz; Poor Ellen Smith; I'd Rather Have America; There's Better Times A' Coming; 20-20 Vision; I'm Coming' Back But I Don't Know When; Snow White Grave; John Henry; In The Pines.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-79 \$4.98

MILLS BROTHERS - GOLDEN FAVORITES
MCA-188 ALBUM \$2.98
Paper Doll; I'll Be Around; You Tell Me Your Dream; I'll Tell You Mine; Till Then; You Always Hurt The One You Love; Don't Be A Baby, Baby; Across The Alley From The Alamo; Be My Life's Companion; The Glow Worm; Queen Of The Senior Prom; Smack Dab In The Middle; Opus One.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-188 \$4.98

WAYNE KING'S GOLDEN FAVORITES
MCA-94 ALBUM \$2.98
The Waltz You Saved For Me; Josephine; Now Is The Hour; Near You; Dancing With Tears In My Eyes; Lonesome; That's All; Goofus; Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day; Together; True Love; Deep Purple; Meet Me Tonight In Dreamland.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-94 \$4.98

RUSS MORGAN'S GOLDEN FAVORITES
MCA-92 ALBUM \$2.98
Does Your Heart Beat For Me; The Object Of My Affection; Do You Ever Think Of Me; Cruising Down The River; Linger Awhile; Stumbling; The Wang Wang Blues; So Tired; Josephine; You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You; Wash Blues; Johnson Rag; Dogface Soldier.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-92 \$4.98

OSBORNE BROTHERS - FAVORITE HYMNS
MCA-125 ALBUM \$2.98
I Bowed On My Knees And Cried "Holy"; How Great Thou Art; Rock Of Ages; Steal Away And Pray; I Pray My Way Out Of Trouble; Will You Meet Me Over Yonder; Light At The River; What A Friend We Have In Jesus; Medals For Mothers; Jesus Sure Changed Me; Where We'll Never Grow Old.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-125 \$4.98

WEBB PIERCE'S GREATEST HITS
MCA-120 ALBUM \$2.98
In The Jailhouse Now; Slowly; I Ain't Never; Wondering; There Stands The Glass; If The Back Door Could Talk; Tupelo County Jail; I Don't Care; Alla My Love; Don't Do It, Darlin'; Missing You.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-120 \$4.98

JACK TEAGARDEN - THE GOLDEN HORN OF JACK TEAGARDEN - MCA-227 ALBUM \$2.98
WITH RED NICHOLS, ADRIAN ROLLINI, LANG-VENUTI, EDDIE CONDON, AND LOUIS ARMSTRONG ORCHESTRAS.
Basis Street Blues; Someday Sweetheart; Beale Street Blues; After You've Gone; Farewell Blues; The Sheik Of Araby; Body And Soul; Somebody Loves Me; Rose Of The Rio Grande; My Bucket's Got A Hole In It; Riverboat Shuffle.
NO TAPE AVAILABLE

ERNEST TUBB'S GREATEST HITS
MCA-16 ALBUM \$2.98
Walking The Floor Over You; Rainbow At Midnight; Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello; Another Story; Thanks A Lot; Half A Mind; I'll Get Along Somehow; Waltz Across Texas; It's Been So Long Darling; Mr. Juke Box; I Wonder Why You Said Goodbye.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-16 \$4.98

ERNEST TUBB'S GOLDEN FAVORITES
MCA-84 ALBUM \$2.98
I'll Get Along Somehow; Slipping Around; Filipino Baby; When The World Has Turned You Down; Have You Ever Been Lonely; There's A Little Bit Of Everything In Texas; Walking The Floor Over You; Driftwood On The River; There's Nothing More To Say; Rainbow At Midnight; I'll Always Be Glad To Take You Back; Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-84 \$4.98

KITTY WELLS - DUST ON THE BIBLE
MCA-149 ALBUM \$2.98
Dust On The Bible; I Dreamed I Searched Heaven For You; Lonesome Valley; My Loved Ones Are Waiting For Me; I Heard My Savior Call; The Great Speckled Bird; He Will Set Your Fields On Fire; We Buried Her Beneath The Willows; One Way Ticket To The Sky; I Need The Prayers; Matthew Twenty-Four; Lord I'm Coming Home.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-149 \$4.98

KITTY WELLS' GREATEST HITS
MCA-121 ALBUM \$2.98
It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels; This White Circle; Mommy For A Day; Release Me; I Gave My Wedding Dress Away; Amigo's Guitlar; Heartbreak U.S.A.; I'll Repossess My Heart; Password; Searching; Making Believe.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-121 \$4.98

KITTY WELLS AND RED FOLEY
GOLDEN FAVORITES - MCA-83 ALBUM \$2.98
One By One; Just Call Me Lonesome; As Long As I Live; A Wedding Ring Ago; Make Believe; Candy Kisses; You And Me; Memory Of A Love; I'm A Stranger In My Home; I'm Throwing Rice; No One But You; I'm Counting On You.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-83 \$4.98

BILL MONROE - A VOICE FROM ON HIGH
MCA-131 ALBUM \$2.98
Let The Light Shine Down On Me; Lord Protect My Soul; Wait A Little Longer Please Jesus; A Voice From On High; I'm Working On A Building; Don't Put Off 'Til Tomorrow; He Will Set Your Fields Afire; Get Down On Your Knees And Pray; Boat Of Love; Walking In Jerusalem Just Like John; River Of Death.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-131 \$4.98

BOOK SALE

NEW!



An Inside Look At The Lives & Music Of Nashville's Biggest Stars

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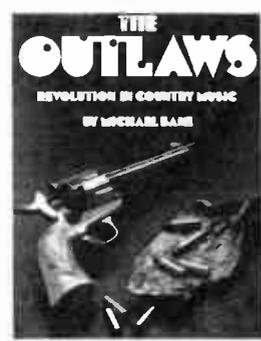
At last, there is a book that focuses on country music at the gut level. Our hat is off to Frye Gaillard. He digs deep into the soul of country music and comes up with a clear picture of the poor, confused, fun-loving people and the songs that help them cope. Through Gaillard's telling portraits you'll meet Willie, Waylon, Loretta, Dolly and the rest of Nashville's headliners as they really are, and not as some would try to have us believe. Gaillard has even included the complete lyrics to 55 of the greatest all-time country hits. So don't wait, get your copy today. You'll be glad you did.

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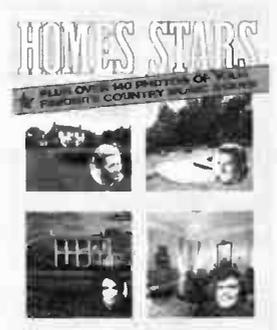
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THE EARS HAVE IT

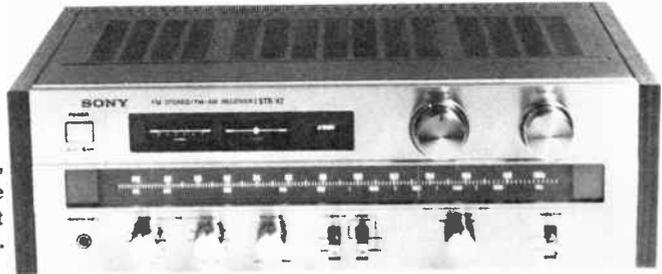
The good news is that country records are getting better and better. Production budgets are up; quality is the by-word. Nashville schlock finally seems on the way out. And if you really want to take the most advantage of those top-quality country records, you're going to need a top-quality stereo system to get it.

But before you mortgage the farm, take heart—there's good news on that front, too. High quality stereo is getting cheaper and cheaper, and *Country Music's* ace audio columnist, Hans Fantel, is determined to see that you get all the breaks. Our 1978 Audio Section, *The Ears Have It*, will give you a little background in stereo itself, help you choose a dealer who knows the score and guide you in your selection of the best sound system for your needs.

You've got a lot of good listening ahead of you.

THE EARS HAVE IT

Outstanding performance specifications, plus sophisticated circuitry, make the Sony STR-V2 receiver one of the best available buys for \$240.



I started out as an audio reporter just about the time stereo first got off the ground. In fact, one of my first assignments was to report on the birth of stereo just twenty years ago.

My boss scribbled down an address, mumbling something about two-channel sound, and handed me a \$5 bill for cab fare—"Check it out," he said.

Crossing Manhattan all the way to a shabby neighborhood on the West Side, I found that my destination was an old garage. At the time, it served as both headquarters and warehouse for a small record company known as Audio Fidelity. The company had already earned a reputation for making recordings that were technically far ahead of their time, so I expected a demonstration of another sonic blockbuster. But not a sound was to be heard. Instead, the company's president, a bustling gentleman named Sidney Frye, greeted me and several other reporters with a hushed and secretive air that clearly indicated we were about to witness something important.

After we had settled in his office, Mr. Frye lifted a disk from his desk, held it up to see, and announced: "Gentlemen, this will change the world of music. This is the first stereo record."

Our reaction was one of instant disbelief. Anybody in the music business knew that large companies like CBS, RCA and English Decca had all been working for years to produce a record capable of providing stereo sound, and they all had been stymied by the difficulty of putting two separate sound tracks into a single record groove. Considering the vast research facilities of the big companies, it seemed unlikely that these giants had been outpaced by Sidney Frye and his little outfit. So, we asked, could we hear the record, please?

Mr. Frye shrugged. That would have to wait a while because no stereo playback equipment existed as yet in early 1958. A phono pickup capable of playing his record still had to be invented. If we wanted to make sure that the new record was really stereo, why not just look at the grooves?

A binocular microscope—the kind used in medical laboratories to make blood counts—was placed on an adjoining table. Through it, we peered at the record and

could see an unusual groove pattern with both vertical and sideways wiggles—a sign that two separate sound tracks had actually been cut into a single groove. At that moment, we realized that we were looking into a new era of sound. We had witnessed the birth of stereo.

Now Mr. Frye played his trump: "I will put these records into the stores. Tell the electronics industry that it is now up to them to furnish the equipment to play these disks."

The concept of stereo went all the way back to 1931, when an almost forgotten English engineer and music fan named Alan Blumlein first patented the basic design for two-channel disk recording. At the time, in the middle of the Depression, nobody was willing to put money into what seemed a crackpot idea. Deeply disappointed, Blumlein turned to other work and soon got busy on the urgent task of developing Britain's air-defense radar. He died in a plane crash while testing some of his devices and never heard any of the music that, in later years, would flow from his invention.

But after the war, with a growing number of listeners getting interested in good sound, the idea of stereo surfaced once again. Blumlein's old patents were dusted off and intensive research began. By early 1958, a company named Westrex had built a successful stereo record cutter, proving that Blumlein's ideas were practical. Still, the record and electronics industries didn't believe there would be sufficient demand to make stereo pay off financially and failed to produce either records or playback equipment.

It was Sidney Frye's audacity which broke this bottleneck. Using the new, still experimental stereo cutter, he produced his records even though nobody could play them. By being already established in the record business, Frye was able to get his disks into the stores to stimulate curiosity about them and demand for equipment to play them. At that point, the industry could hold out no longer. Within months, the first stereo pickups and amplifiers were coming off the assembly lines.

Oddly enough, stereo at first seemed a flop. Not comprehending the basic idea being two-channel sound, people resented the need for two separate speakers and a special pickup and amplifier. They had

been listening happily to mono all along and regarded stereo as a promotional gimmick by the audio industry to double its business by trying to sell two of everything.

Today—almost a generation later—listeners still seem confused about the basic notion of stereo. People still ask, "Is stereo better than hi-fi?" Which is like asking if a convertible is better than a car. Fidelity refers to the quality—the naturalness—of sound. Stereo means that it is presented in two channels to capture the "space dimension" of music.

Far from being a new invention, stereo as a concept dates back millions of years to the time when two-eared and two-eyed creatures first appeared on this planet. The reason our eyes and ears come in pairs is not to provide a spare in case one gives out, but rather to make sight and hearing three-dimensional. When you look at something with both eyes, you see it in a perspective lacking from any one-eyed view.

Something similar applies to two-eared hearing. Since each of our ears points in a different direction, the two ears perceive any given sound differently. And from these differences the brain computes the direction and distance of the sound source—in other words, the space in which the sound happens. That's what we mean by stereo hearing.

"Okay," you say, "But I always listen with both ears. So why do I need stereo sound equipment?" The point is that listening to monophonic (single-channel) radios or phonographs is like listening with only one ear because the single channel gives you only one signal. To get the space dimension in reproduced sound, you need two separate signals as input to your brain, and therefore you need two separate transmission channels.

Stereo equipment provides just that. The second channel is the electronic equivalent of your "other" ear. In effect, stereo puts "both" your ears in the studio or concert hall. Stereo puts into sound equipment the same two-channel principle nature designed into our heads. That's why you need stereo to bring you music in its natural dimensions. But the equipment must be capable of high fidelity so that the sound itself will be just what you'd hear if you were there. ■

Buying a stereo system involves a lot of questions and decisions, and you may need a few honest answers and competent advice along the way. That's why choosing your hi-fi dealer is just as important as picking the right components.

Naturally, not all dealers are either honest or competent. Let me tell you what happened to my friend Jeff, just so you'll know what to watch out for. Not long ago, Jeff was trying to buy some components I had suggested. Instead of giving him the equipment asked for, the salesman told Jeff that he had made a poor choice. Badgering Jeff with a bar-

rage of technical doubletalk, the salesman tried to make him buy an entirely different system. Jeff said he'd think about it; then went to the nearest phone booth to call me up and ask my opinion.

The salesman's argument, as Jeff told it to me, was plain gobbledygook, but I got the point immediately. I saw right away why the salesman didn't like the components I had recommended—for one thing, they didn't cost enough. Higher-priced items yield more profit. Besides, some brands allow the store a bigger mark-up or better credit terms than others—often that's what the salesman

has in mind when he touts a particular make. In this case, I have to admit that all the equipment they tried to sell Jeff was really excellent. At about twice the price it would have sounded just as good as what I had recommended.

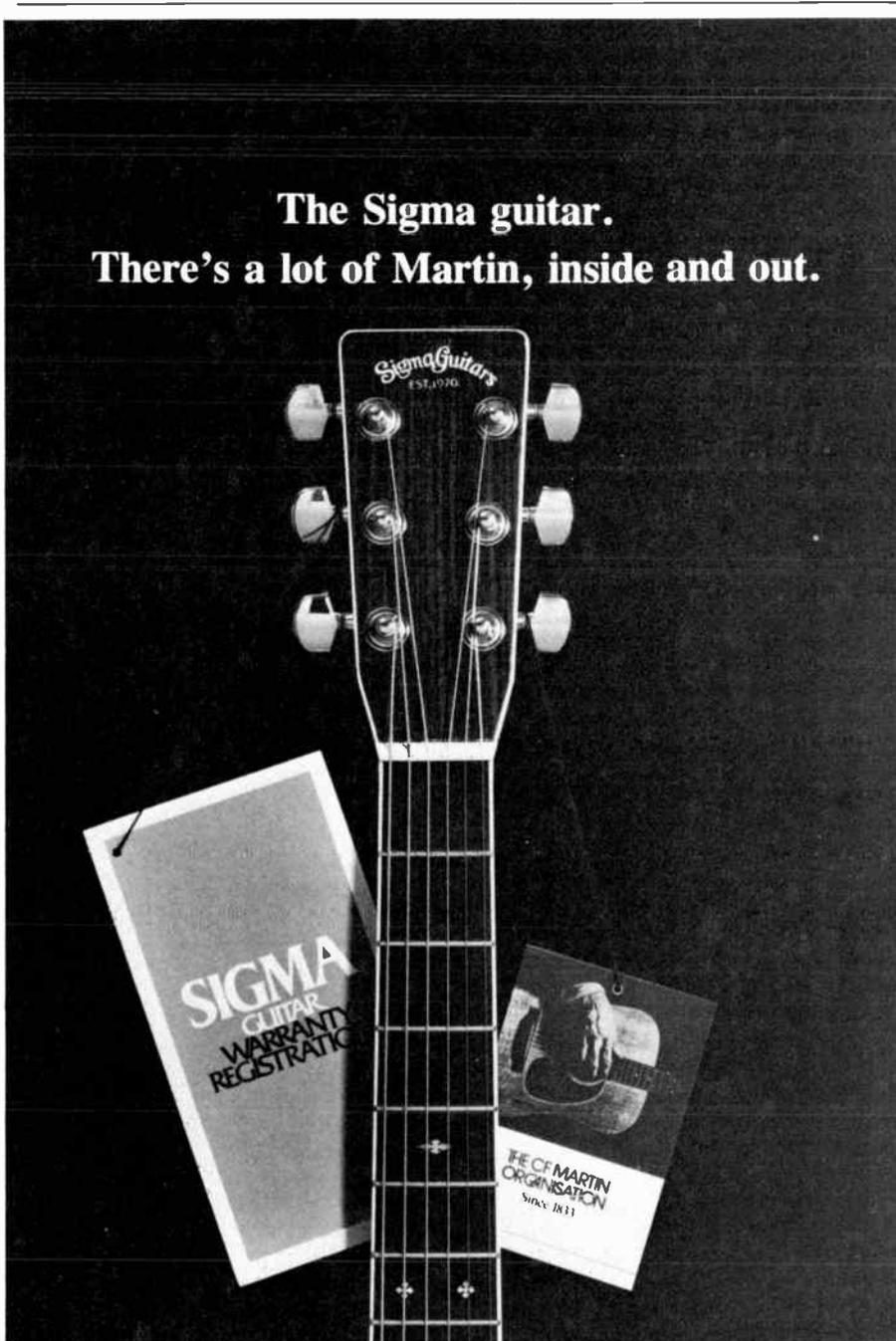
Price and performance, unfortunately, don't always go together, and some makes and models give you lots more for your money than others. The old saying that you get what you pay for must often be taken with several grains of salt—especially if the salesman is working on commission. Come to think of it, if a salesman seems to be persistently plugging an expensive item, he may well have an ulterior motive, and it may be a good idea to ask him outright if he's working on commission or salary. He may not answer truthfully, or not at all. But the question itself will put him on guard and make him less likely to palm off a turkey on you.

All of which points to the importance of seeking out a trustworthy dealer. Finding him is easier if you know what to look for and what to avoid. It's not too difficult, despite a nasty sprinkling of fast-buck artists in the trade, the majority of audio dealers are strictly ethical and honestly concerned about the satisfaction of their customers and the quality of the equipment they sell.

If you are a newcomer to audio and need reliable guidance, your best bet is one of those specialized audio shops where you get unhurried attention and the chance to compare different models in a pleasant atmosphere designed for relaxed listening. Prices in such shops may be about 10 to 15 percent higher than in discount outlets, but the listening facilities and the thorough consultation (plus the fact that such dealers stand behind their product) may be well worth the difference. Many of these shops display the emblem of the Society of Audio Consultants, which means that the owner or his staff have passed a special audio training course and really know their merchandise. Other highly reputable dealers are accredited by the Institute of High Fidelity, which also provides a special decal to be displayed at the door or the shop window. You can locate such dealers in the Yellow Pages of the phone book in almost every larger city under such headings as "Audio," "High Fidelity" or "Sound Equipment." Also, you can find very good audio components in such chain stores as Radio Shack and Lafayette Radio, but the choice there is largely limited to house brands.

By all means, steer clear of those catch-all trade emporia that sell all kinds of marked-down merchandise from washing machines to alarm clocks, with stereo

The Sigma guitar. There's a lot of Martin, inside and out.



THE EARS HAVE IT

(sometimes of doubtful brands) thrown in on the side. Nor is it a good idea to shop for components in small neighborhood stores where the available stock is too limited to give you a broad choice of products. That way you lose one of the great advantages of component audio: picking among a great variety of equipment to find exactly what appeals to you in terms of sound, features, price and appearance. In this respect, too, the specialized audio store has the most to offer.

Most audio equipment nowadays give years of trouble-free performance if properly and carefully used. But just in case

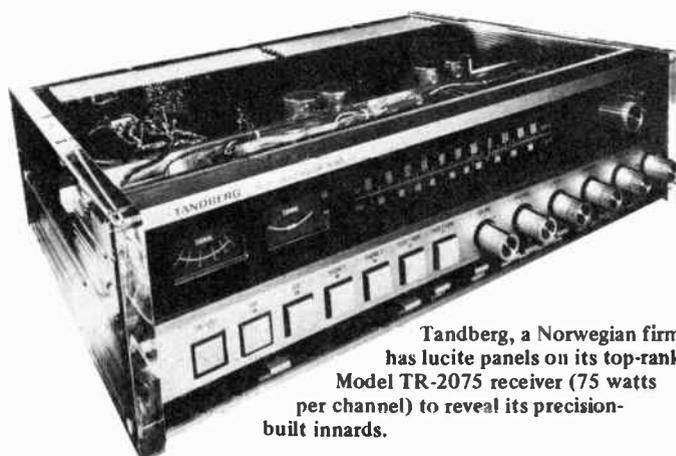
anything goes wrong, check out the kind of warranty obtainable from the dealer. Many stores, you'll find give no warranty at all. So if your equipment starts acting up, you'd have to re-pack it and ship it back to the nearest factory service center, which may be hundreds of miles away, maybe even in some other country, and usually backlogged for weeks. That's why it is a good idea to seek out a retail store which guarantees your equipment, and all you have to do in case of trouble is take your equipment back to the shop. Such shops often have their own repair facilities where most troubles can be fixed.

Walking into a strange store, you need some way to size up the salesman's competence. So try testing the salesman as well as the equipment. Ask for a specification sheet on the equipment you are considering and then ask for an explanation of some technical term in those specs. If the reply is patient and plausible—if the salesman seems genuinely concerned about *your* understanding—chances are you're dealing with a man who turned his hobby into his profession. Him you can trust.

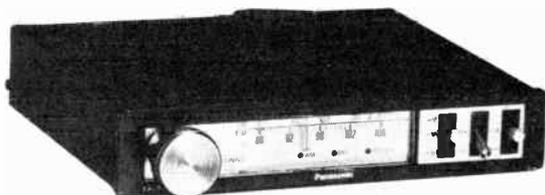
A dealer of this kind really likes and knows his goods, and he'll try to share



Packaged in a neat vertical rack finished in simulated rosewood, this entire Toshiba system (DS-201) sells for \$800. An optional cassette recorder (\$200) can be added in the empty space.



Tandberg, a Norwegian firm, has lucite panels on its top-ranking Model TR-2075 receiver (75 watts per channel) to reveal its precision-built innards.



Panasonic's CA-9500 underdash AM/FM-stereo tuner brings high-quality FM reception to car stereo and can be combined with a matching amplifier and cassette deck.



Four tweeters firing sound at odd angles give the Bose 601 a unique sound projection pattern creating an impression of spaciousness.

THE EARS HAVE IT

with you his understanding of what he has to sell. He won't push you into a corner, clutching his order pad. In fact, he won't expect to write up a sale on your first visit. He'll take the time to get acquainted with you and your particular needs. And if you're smart, you'll give him some of your time also. Let him know exactly what you expect from your equipment. Tell him what kind of music you mostly listen to—country, rock, jazz or pop. Be sure to let him know if you occasionally play classical records, because big orchestral sound puts special demands on sound equipment. Tell him whether

you usually listen with full concentration, paying attention to every detail in the music, or whether your listening habits are more casual. Also, tell him the size, furnishing and basic layout of your main listening room. Such information helps him steer you toward the kind of components that will give you the most pleasure for whatever amount you can afford to spend.

And speaking of money, be frank about your finances. It saves both time and confusion if you tell the dealer right away how much money you can spend—whether you are in the market for a

budget system, a medium-priced rig or a deluxe setup. Tell him also if your system is to include a tape deck and if you want speakers in more than one room.

With this information the dealer can set up several alternate component systems for you to listen to—all geared to your particular needs and budget, and you can then let your own ears guide you in the final choice. Such mutual cooperation between you and your audio dealer will help cut right through the usual hassles of stereo buying and make your trip to the store a foretaste of the pleasures awaiting you. ■



Sony's brand-new PS-T1 brings down the price of a semi-automatic direct-drive model to \$130.



The Uher CR-210 is one of the finest portable cassette machines for both recording and playback. It provides professional-quality sound, can be adapted for under-dash installation.

JVC, a company mainly known for its excellent turntables and receivers, is now adding a line of loudspeakers. The SK-500 covers the range from 40 to 20,000 Hz, is highly efficient thanks to a vented enclosure, and sells for \$100 apiece.

THE EARS HAVE IT



A simple, slap-in vertical cassette holder makes Sansui's Model SC-3100 one of the most convenient to operate.

As this issue goes to press, audio manufacturers are putting the final touches on new equipment to be introduced at the big annual hi-fi jamboree in Chicago, the Consumer Electronics Show. This exhibit is the traditional place for the latest models to be unveiled. Though most of them are still under wraps, *Country Music* has been able to sneak a look and a listen at some of them during private previews.

A few surprises from **Sony** reflect that company's new approach to audio components. In the past, **Sony** concentrated most of its renowned engineering know-how on TV and portable equipment. Now the company has come up with a whole new line of components spanning all price classes.

Two of the new **Sony** items are real bargains for the budget-bound. One is their **PS-T1** turntable, featuring direct drive and automatic tone-arm return. It has an excellent rumble rating of -68 db, which means that for all practical purposes there is virtually no background noise. Its servo-regulated speed keeps wow and flutter to an inaudible 0.045 percent. And with a price tag of \$130, the **PS-T1** makes direct-drive design competitive with belt-driven models.

The other outstanding budget item in the **Sony** line is the **STR-V2** AM/FM-stereo receiver delivering 25 watts-per-channel at no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion over the entire frequency range from 20 to 20,000 Hz. Using such advanced circuit features as Phase-Locked Loop for better stereo separation and tuning stability, it provides remarkable performance for \$240.

If you're looking for really fine-sounding speakers to hook up to a budget system, there's more good news. **Infinity, Inc.** has just introduced its first low-cost speaker featuring the same samarium-magnet tweeter that has earned wide acclaim in their more expensive speaker models. The new **Infinity Model Qe** is extremely compact—hardly bigger than a shoebox—so it won't belt out those bottom notes with the kind of wall-shaping wallop you get from larger speakers. But the sound is well balanced even in the lower range, and that fancy tweeter puts out just about the clearest highs you're likely to hear anywhere. The tag is \$105.

Another top bargain among new speakers is the **Acoustic Research AR-18**. At \$65 it is probably the cheapest speaker now on the market putting out clean, sweet, balanced sound. One unusual feature of the **AR-18** is its liquid-cooled tweeter. Originally developed for big discoteque speakers, liquid cooling now also helps small speakers handle higher power without overloading. A single tweeter can now take signal levels that formerly would have required costlier designs with multiple tweeters and separate mid-range units to spread out the load. That's how the **AR-18** manages to take up to 60 watts per channel despite its small size.

But don't get the notion that all current design activity concentrates on low-cost items. There's plenty going on in the higher brackets, too. For example, the new **Bose 601** speaker, selling for \$179, features an unusual pattern of four tweeters firing sound in various directions to create multiple reflections from the adjoining walls. The resulting sound scatter produces a big, spacious effect, giving you the impression of sitting in a large concert hall even when you are listening in a small room.

A quite different kind of sound—very sharply defined in terms of its source, emerges from **Optonica's CP-5000**, priced at \$400, which uses a so-called ribbon-tweeter in which the customary tweeter cone is replaced by a lightweight metal ribbon vibrating within a magnetic field. It produces an extremely clear, sharply defined sound right up to the top of the frequency range.

A newcomer among tape recorders is **Sansui's SC-3100**, which is extremely easy to operate. No lid to lift and no fiddling with holding brackets as you put in the tape. All you do is slap the cassette into the vertical holder and you're ready to roll. As for performance specs, they're every bit as good as you would expect from a sophisticated tape deck priced at \$430.

Another exceptional new tape deck is **Kenwood's KX-1030** with a total of three magnetic heads. The third head lets you monitor the tape as you record it, so you can make instant control adjustments if it doesn't sound right. The monitor channel also has its own Dolby noise suppressor so

you know during the actual recording process what the tape you're making will sound like in playback. With all these unusual features, plus excellent performance specs, the **Kenwood KX-1030** is a real buy for \$375.

Toshiba, along with **Pioneer**, **JVC**, and **Sansui** are now designing their excellent new components to fit into special decorator-designed, handsomely finished equipment racks which greatly simplify the problem of component placement in the home. Rack-mounting of this kind seems to be a growing trend.

Interest continues strong in better sound equipment for cars and vans. In fact, many companies known for their excellent home-style stereo are now jumping into highway hi-fi. Famous brands such as **ADS**, **Advent**, **KLH**, **Pioneer**, **Sony**, **Superscope**, **Sanyo**, **Uher** and **Marantz** are now along for the ride.

Output power, necessary to overcome road noise, has been stepped up in recent models. Where three or four watts per channel was standard just a couple of years back, you can now get in-dash models rated up to 20 or 30 watts per channel with add-on power boosters going up to 100 watts. Naturally, car speakers had to be developed to take that kind of power, with **ADS**, **KLH** and **Marantz** leading the way. The better car units now have separate treble and bass controls—a great improvement over the single "tone control" (usually a simple treble-cut) common in the past.

Stereo cassettes have long been crowding out eight-track cartridges as favorites of the road, and with today's better car amplifiers and speakers, the superior sound of cassettes is clearly evident. An increasing number of car cassette players now come with automatic reverse—a handy feature if you want continuous music without having to take your hands from the wheel.

This, naturally, is only a scant sampling of what's coming up this year in audio, with just a few early items grabbed out of the bag. We'll continue this survey of recent audio designs after the Chicago exhibit and the new hi-fi show in Atlanta—sponsored by the Institute of High Fidelity—permit a more balanced overview of current trends and latest entries. ■

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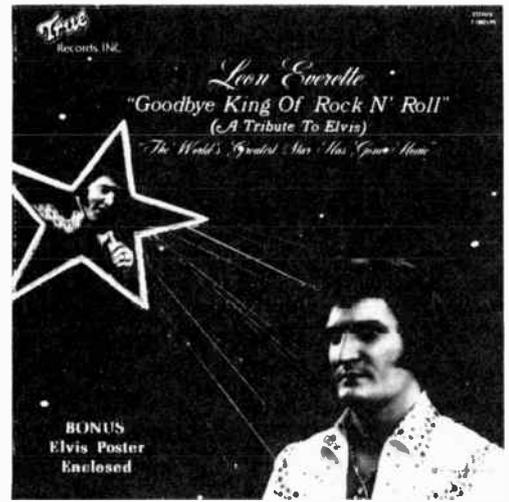
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- And 4 Others



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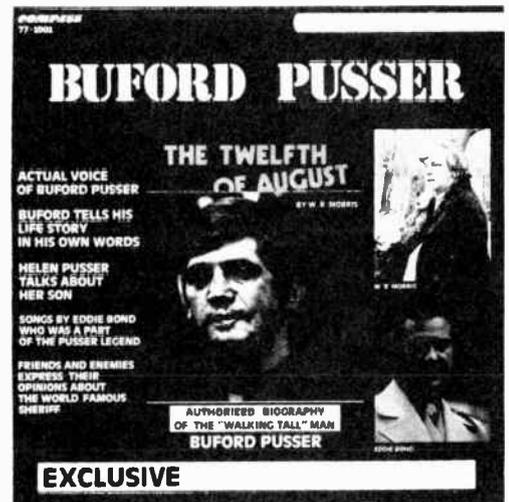
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Jack Clement

All I Want To Do In Life
Electra 6E-122

Star Rating: ★★★★★

Gone Girl, We Must Believe In Magic, Good Hearted Woman. When I Dream, All I Want To Do In Life, You Ask Me To. most songs here will already be familiar to anyone who knows the work of people like Tompall and the Glaser Brothers, Sandy Theoret, Bob McDill, Allen Reynolds, Crystal Gayle, or Waylon and Willie. Clement has worked in the past with nearly all these people, and this album is a virtual primer for a new kind of songwriting that's been coming out of Nashville the last few years. Clement, heretofore known primarily as a behind-the-scenes man, has now cashed in his chips as a recording artist.

I say this because it's not every day I'm held spellbound by an album made up almost entirely of songs I already know quite well by other artists. But there's a first time for everything, and this is it, since Cowboy has made every song seem brand new and strictly his own. In sound, I guess the album is most reminiscent of Don Williams—particularly



the light, loping beat—but where Williams' records often sound stiff and sleepy to me, this one is brimming with the controlled passion of the master bluesmen, who, no matter how much emotion they express on the surface, always leave you with the impression there's plenty more beneath the surface. This is brilliant late night music, full of muted horns and weird percussion effects that are heard almost sub-

consciously, and as idiosyncratic as these cuts sound, nearly every one could be a hit, pop as well as country.

It is often said around Nashville that Clement is either a genius or a madman. But judging from the intensity he brings to these performances, I'd say he's a True Believer more than anything else. Give him half a chance and he'll make one out of you, too.

JOHN MORTHLAND

Willie Nelson

Stardust
Columbia JC-35305

Star Rating: ★★

Willie Nelson has always been recognized as a great songwriter, but acclaim for his singing was a long time coming. So it must be with immense self-satisfaction that Nelson releases *Stardust*, a collection of ten pop standards already associated with some of the finest vocalists of the century.

Therein lies the problem. While there is a certain nobility to Willie's decision to record such sentimental favorites as *Moonlight In Vermont* and *September Song* in the midst of his "outlaw" success, there's also a great deal of hubris. And the superb country stylist who so subtly guided us through the myriad emotions of his *Red Headed Stranger* and so skillfully evoked the haunting anguish of Lefty Frizzell in *To Lefty From Willie* is still no match for the likes of Frank Sinatra or Ray Charles.

Essentially, Willie Nelson is just too mellow, too restrained,

Dennis Linde

Under the Eye
Monument MG 7608

Star Rating: ★★★★★

What do you know about Dennis Linde? That he wrote *Burning Love* for Elvis, sure; that he's a Nashville songwriter, yeah; that he's considered eccentric and reclusive, okay... Not much, huh? Being a critic, I'd heard some of his previous albums, but they didn't prepare me for *Under The Eye*.

Odd because Linde uses such uncanny tricks as a Buchla synthesized bass and multiple overdubbing, and good because it has more hits per square inch than anything I've



heard in an age: the whole first side just kills me, especially *Down To the Station*, which should have been a hit for B.W. Stevenson, but should be a hit for Linde now because his version's better. Its bass hook is totally irresistible, as is the

chorus of the following song, *There Goes My Heart Again*, which should have been a hit for Ronnie Sessions. And the reworking of the classic *Ghost Riders* is *creeeepy*! The other side isn't too shoddy, either, what with the title tune (a little meditation on UFOs Dennis wrote three years ago) and *Strange Groove*, which sure is.

Calling this record country may be stretching it some, but Linde uses a country sensibility in his songwriting and fine Nashville sidemen on the few tracks he doesn't do himself. I think he should have pop hits galore, but til he does, I recommend it heartily.

ED WARD



How We Rate The Albums:

5 Stars...Album of the Month
4 Stars...Excellent
3 Stars...Very Good
2 Stars...Fair 0 Stars...Poor

to convey his love for these songs with any conviction. Perhaps because *Georgia On My Mind* is closest to his own roots, he here manages to muster some credible emotion, and I also rather like his slowed-down, sad and soothing interpretation of *Blue Skies*. But in general, this is cocktail lounge music, with Nelson rarely sounding like he actually believes the words he's singing.

As produced by Booker T. Jones, the most interesting aspect of *Stardust* is the instrumental backing. Not that the arrangements are unconventional—without benefit of a full orchestra, they still often have that big band sound. But the few flashes of passion are left to Willie's guitar and his touring musicians, and, to me, the real star of this album is harpist Mickey Raphael. Willie may sing the lyrics of *Unchained Melody*, but it is Raphael's harmonica that captures the song's lonely rivers and poignant pleas.

As a songwriter, Willie Nelson knows why these songs are classics. But unfortunately, as a singer, he more often detracts from, rather than adds to, their power and mystery.

SUSAN TOEPFER

Gary Stewart

Little Junior
RCA APLI-2779

Star Rating: ★★★★★

Good news, Gary Stewart fans: Gary's back. Some people were pretty alarmed by his last album, because it had so many guest stars it seemed like Gary was pushed into the background. But you'll find no Rodney Crowell, no Emmylou Harris, no Mickey Raphael, no, not even Willie or Tracy Nelson. We have Gary Stewart, right up front, singing the sort of songs that made him famous, not mundane drinking songs by Malibu cowboys, but hard country songs of heart-break and hard living.

Oh, it's true that *Whiskey Trip*, the album's first cut, sounds like *Drinkin' Thing* mixed with *Margaritaville*, but it's the worst thing on the record. Much better—if you must have a drinking song—is *Tequila After Midnight*, with its chilling lines: "They say tequila kills you/If you drink too much/Lord, I hope they make tequila/Long enough." You like his bluegrass stuff? Listen to him transform the Marshall Tucker hit *Can't You See*, not walking through it the way he did *Pretend I Never Happened* on that last record.



He rocks and roars on the traditional *I Got Mine* and on the self-penned bragger *Little Junior*, and he gets tender with a sincerity he hasn't recorded before on *You're Running Wild* (great bluegrass-tinged harmonies on this one!) and *If My Eyes Touch You*, two of the best new country ballads I've heard.

I guess Gary got caught up in his own image on that last record, although it was still pretty good. But I vastly prefer

him when he's singing songs by Nashville songwriters (and by himself—he's got two good ones here) and playing with Nashville pickers. You get too self-conscious about what you're doing in a style like Gary's and you get to sounding removed from it. That's what I meant when I said he's back. Now, all you have to do. Gary Stewart fans, is go out and buy the album. After all, we wouldn't want RCA thinking it isn't commercial! EDWARD

Freddy Fender

Swamp Gold
ABC/Dot AA-1062

Star Rating: ★★★★★

Freddy Fender and manager/producer Huey Meaux found themselves at the end of their contract with ABC and proceeded to make what is without doubt the best album of Freddy's career.

The music is pure Texas/Louisiana R&B; El BeBop Kid comes alive on cut after cut, his original style pounding life blood back into a series of Gulf Coast standards and some new tunes that could belong to no one else. Included are Doug Sahm's *She's About A Mover*,



I'm Leaving It All Up To You, the immortal *Tell It Like It Is* and *Talk To Me*, a great Freddy-produced rendition of Jimmy Donley's classic *Please Mr. Sandman*, and a definitive

stone knock-out version of *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do*. A single could be culled from almost anywhere, but look for either of two bluesy numbers, *The Clock* or *When It Rains It*

Really Pours. The musician-ship shines throughout, but perhaps special note should be made of the blues guitar and electric sitar work turned in by Joey Long. This may not be the kind of stuff that got Freddy on the Dinah Shore Show but it's what made him a Texas legend.

Freddy and Huey are justifiably proud of *Swamp Gold*. The other day in Corpus Christi, Texas, Freddy put it simply, "You know," he said, "this is really the first Freddy Fender record." If Freddy Fender/Baldemar Huerta ever gets to heaven, it'll be because of this album.

NELSON ALLEN

Asleep at the Wheel

Collision Course
Capitol SW 11726

Star Rating: ★★★★★

Asleep at the Wheel is no longer playing in the style of the Bob Wills bands of the Thirties and Forties—they're playing the way Wills' bands might play if they were younger and playing today. *Collision Course* can hold its own with any Texas Playboys' greatest hits collection and come out ahead. That's a strong statement, but not too strong for this record.

The Wheel has never rolled over so much ground or covered it so well. I'm beginning to think they aren't really asleep at all. They do a version of Randy Newman's *Louisiana* that's as good as Newman's own. *Pine Tree Blues* sounds as authentically cajun as anything you'd hear on the bayou. *Pipe Dreams* is

right out of a Thirties night club, *Song of the Wanderer* is more like something you'd hear in a night club in the Forties, while *Don't Forget the Train* is prime Seventies honky



tonk. *Ruler of My Heart* is an R&B classic from the mid-Sixties. *Ghost Dancer* is a haunting song of the modern-day red man that isn't brainless or condescending like most songs written by whites about

that subject. *Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens* is classic Asleep country boogie, and Count Basie's *One O'clock Jump* moves with a sophisticated swing. Finally, *Texas, Me and You* could cross into pop or middle-of-the-road programming without batting an eyelash. It's a lovely, lilting ballad that feels like grass waving and sunshine on your back.

The one hitch I've had about Asleep at the Wheel is that they do too much straight country boogie. I've been hearing boogie for more than thirty years, and the last ten hasn't been as much fun as the first twenty. This record breaks the pattern. *Collision Course* takes the western swing approach into all sorts of new directions. Country jazz? Surely as good as country rock. And this is the band that's delivering it.

PETER STAMPFEL

Jimmy Buffett

Son of a Son of a Sailor
ABC AA-1046

Star Rating: ★★★★★

Jimmy Buffett responds to the call of the water the way other singers do to the "road," and his sun-stroked flakiness makes for country music with a Caribbean flavor. He's carved out his own territory, an atmosphere of philosophical hedonism, and he spins tales that celebrate rowdiness, laziness and, as he puts it in *Cowboy In The Jungle*, intuition over ambition.

Son of a Son of a Sailor, Buffett's second album with producer Norbert Putnam, his first since his platinum breakthrough with *Changes In Latitude—Changes In Attitude*, follows the pattern that crossed him over from cult acceptance to mass popularity. Buffett cogily mixes his sense

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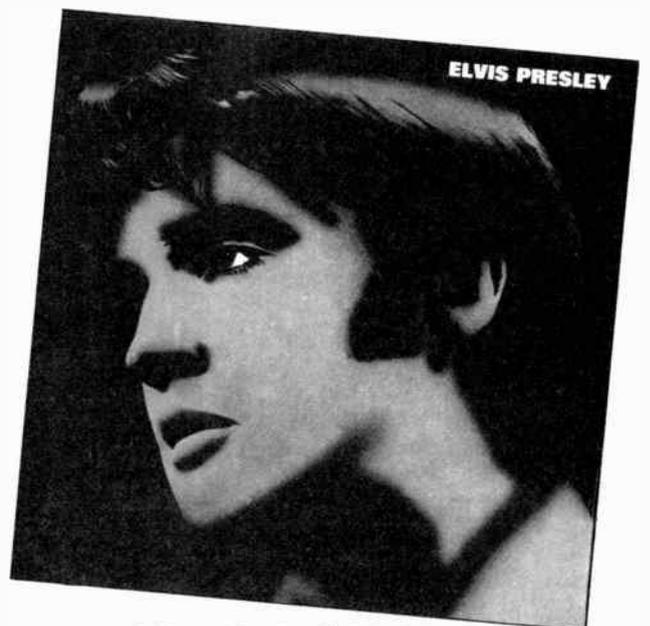
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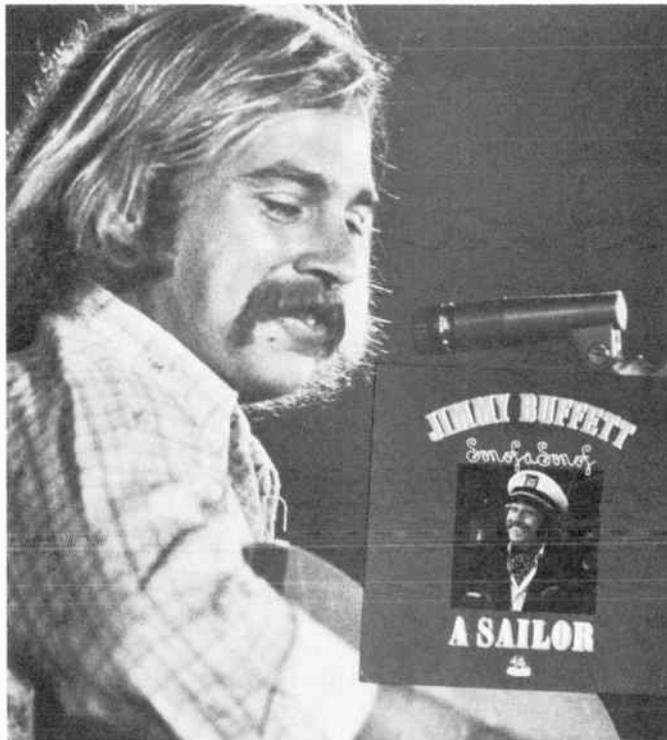


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of absurdity with a cozy voice, sensitively detailed anecdotes, slick picking by his Coral Reefer Band and reflective aphorisms that support his sea-struck existence.

His album is like whimsical ship-to-shore correspondence, like well-composed postcards from ports of call, and it's a kind of pleasure to coast along with Buffett as he breaks away. Although he gets predictable in rhyme and meter ("Read dozens of books about heroes and crooks" is typical), Buffett can also draw a telling, witty scene, as on *Manana* and *African Friend*, and make tangible and simple joy of "Heaven on earth with an onion slice" (*Cheeseburger In Paradise*).

This extremely pleasant LP is kept from excellence not by lack of talent but lack of tension. Buffett shares a crazy cowboy attitude with novel-



ist-screenwriter Thomas McGuane—*Livingston Saturday Night*, the LP's lustiest rocker, is from the McGuane-scripted movie *Rancho Deluxe*—but that's not enough. He sounds too complacent, his "roll with the punches" point of view is shallow, and his "what did I do last night" hangovers aren't at all bad-tempered. Unlike McGuane, he shuns sex and violence and doesn't show how booze, sun and inertia can combine to explode.

Maybe that's asking too much from a singer-writer whose outstanding asset is his amiability, and it's hard not to like someone who faces up to the prospect of cutting a new record with the confident assertion that his songs will come "through the people and places and Caldwoods Rum."

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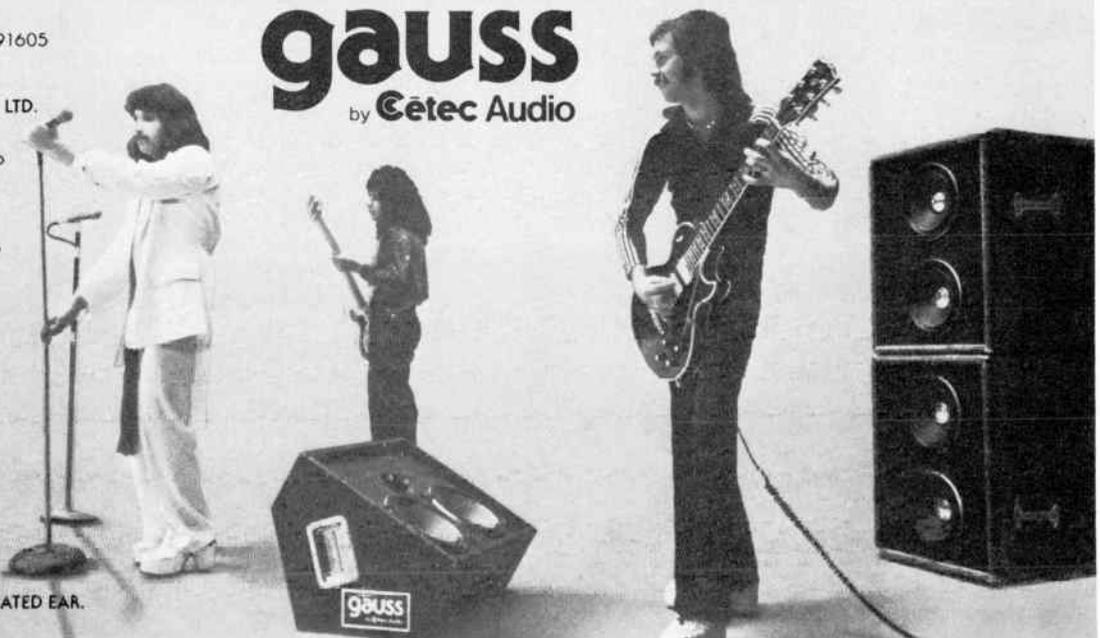
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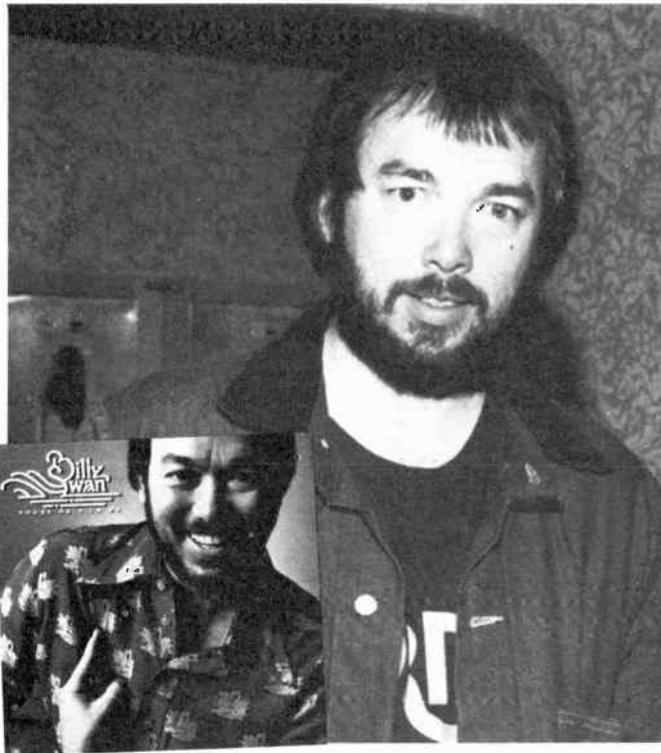
Billy Swan

You're OK, I'm OK
A&M SP 4686

Star Rating: ★★ ★

Billy Swan is one of those performers that you're pulling for; each time he releases a new album you keep hoping that it'll finally be the one to bring it all together, the one that will fuse Swan's talents as a composer and an interpreter of material that rather nonchalantly bridges straight ahead country, rockabilly and pop into one tight package. In the past, his records have followed a familiar pattern—a few gems, an overall good feeling, but a twinge of disappointment for the listener because one senses that there's more to Swan than what's on the LP. *You're OK, I'm OK*, Swan's first album for A&M is, I'm afraid, yet another "almost, but not quite" affair.

As usual with Swan, his heart's in the right place when it comes to covering old classics. *Please Help Me I'm Falling* is Swan at his languorous best, bringing to the song just the perfect touch of wistful resignation, and his revved-up version of Doc Pomus' *Lonely Avenue*, with a *Mystery Train* styled arrangement that comes complete with a biting Scotty Moore guitar solo, is exquisite. But other than these two tracks



and the two Swan originals that lead off the record, (the title track is a kind of belated postscript to *I Can Help*, and *No Way Around It (It's Love)*, swings quite nicely), there is little to praise here.

Throughout his career, Billy Swan's best moments have come when the music around him has been somewhat tense and edgy, neatly counterpoint-

ing his smooth, easy singing style—*I Can Help*, *Don't Be Cruel* and *Everything's the Same* are good examples—and his new album just doesn't have enough of those moments. *You're OK, I'm OK* is just that—OK, but with Swan's capabilities, it's too bad that that's the best you can say about it.

BILLY ALTMAN

Vern Gosdin

Never My Love
Elektra 6E-124

Star Rating: ★★ ★

Vern Gosdin's debut album, *Till The End*, was one of the strongest new albums of 1977. But, as is often the case with follow-up albums, *Never My Love* falls short of the grandiose promise made by the debut LP.

Included on *Never My Love* are a few good new songs like *I Sure Can Love You*, written by producer Gary Paxton and his wife; *Without You There's A Sadness In My Song*, by Cathy Gosdin; and *Forget Yesterday* (which sounds like a rewrite of Vern's earlier hit, *Yesterday's Gone*, but what the hell: the *Yesterday* "hook" knocked 'em dead the first time around, so why not try it again!) by Wayne Bradford (who, incidentally, also wrote *Yesterday's Gone*.)

But the bulk of *Never My Love* consists of reworked hits like *When I Need You*, *Catch*



Eddie Rabbitt

Variations
Elektra 6E-127

Star Rating: ★★ ★

At his best, Eddie Rabbitt is almost a Seventies incarnation of Jim Reeves, a purveyor of durable country tunes that work in any number of contexts. Rabbitt, the songsmith who created both the evocative, enduring *Kentucky Rain* for Elvis and the hard core *Two Dollars In The Jukebox* for himself, is equally broad-minded. *Variations*, on the other hand, is an unsettling album. *Crossin' The Mississippi* is lascivious country boogie of the Jerry Lee variety, and *Plain As The Pain On My Face* sounds like an out-take from a Gary Stewart session. *Hearts*

On Fire, *The Room At The Top Of The Stairs* and *Hurtin' For You* are solid, if not arresting, numbers. Like his better work, they fit into a variety of styles. None of these, however, surpasses *Song Of*



Ireland, an intensely personal, *Roots*-like journey into his [and country music's] Irish heritage.

Sadly, other tracks seem to be crassly crafted for MOR audience. *You Don't Love Me Anymore* and *I Just Want To Love You* are melodramatic schmaltz of the worst kind, and the semi-disco overtones of the latter are unnerving. His carbon copy of Presley's version of *Kentucky Rain* was a serious mistake, for it spawns the inevitable comparisons and Rabbitt comes off second best.

Rabbitt deserves the recent accolades he's received, for his focus is, as *Song of Ireland* proves, fresh and unencumbered. The last thing he needs now is to get caught in a web of marshmallow lyrics and oozing orchestrals. I'll keep my fingers crossed.

RICH KIENZLE

The Wind, *Break My Mind*, *Anita*, *You're Dreaming*, and the title song. This material, needless to say, covers a broad stylistic range, and the songs seem to have all been carefully chosen to fit Vern's limited, but highly effective, vocal style. Still, warmed-over hits are sort of like cold pizza: not nearly as good the second time around. The arrangements also seem a little flatter this time.

All that aside, however, *Never My Love* is still a strong album—its main strength being Vern's distinctive voice, and Paxton's almost instinctual awareness of Vern's strengths and limitations.

BOB ALLEN

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Direct from the pages of medical journals and leading American magazines come reports of an incredible "fat burning" breakthrough by medical researchers at one of Boston's foremost medical schools! Reports of a new "crash-loss" program (featuring a remarkable natural substance) that safely yet surely steps up FAT-BURNING METABOLISM . . . forces your system to ATTACK bulging pockets of fat . . . and starts to shrink and burn that fat in just a matter of hours!

Yes, from one of New England's leading medical centers comes the new SUPER FAT-BURNER way to turn up your "inner furnace" . . . unlock those clinging pockets of fat . . . break them down SO FAST . . . you burn off excess bulge at the unbelievable rate of up to 6 POUNDS of both fluid and fat BONE the very first weekend alone!

Think of It! You actually burn away more fat each 24 hours than if you ran 12 to 14 miles a day! Lose more inches each week than if you did 300 sit-ups each morning and 300 push-ups each night! Actually LOSE as much as A FULL SIZE THE FIRST 7 DAYS . . . and from 3 to 5 inches off your waistline the very first month!

That's right! Weight-loss results and inches-off wonders that absolutely stagger the imagination. Just look:

U.S. ARMY OFFICERS LOSE WEIGHT 3 TIMES FASTER THAN EVER BEFORE!

Case History #1: When medical researchers in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles first tested this new hi-amino concept on a scientific weight-loss program . . . they reported astonishing results of as much as 12 POUNDS LOST IN JUST THE FIRST 7 DAYS! — 16 to 18 pounds gone by the end of week number two — and most mind-boggling of all — U.S. Army Officers actually losing weight 3 times faster than ever before! As much as 50 POUNDS GONE, like that!

WAISTLINES SHRINK UP TO 3 INCHES IN 7 DAYS — A FULL 5 INCHES SMALLER IN A SINGLE MONTH!

Case History #2: When first rumors of this medical breakthrough leaked out to professional actors, actresses and

celebrities . . . they immediately rushed to the offices of America's leading weight-loss specialists to get their hands on this "magic compound"; and no wonder! Because the first week alone they carved away as much as 2 pounds a day . . . 13 pounds a week . . . were forced to take in their belts 3 notches smaller in just 10 days!

DOCTORS REPORT: AVERAGE LOSS — 57 POUNDS!
Case History #3: But most significant of all . . . when universities, hospitals and medical schools, (such as New York's Leading Medical School and Cleveland's largest hospital) tested this newly discovered "crash-loss" program on patients who all their lives had been hopelessly overweight . . . they reported astonishing losses of as much as 2 pounds a day at the start . . . 20 to 30 pounds a month . . . as much as 70 pounds lost over a single summer season! — by simply stepping up their fat-burning metabolism and burning, melting, oxidizing 50, 70, 100 pounds of hard-set fat . . . FASTER, SURER than they had ever dreamed possible!

WORKS LIKE "POWDERED HEAT" — MAKES YOUR INNER FURNACE BREAK DOWN BODY FAT!

What is this wondrous new development that helps safely stimulate fat-burning metabolism and shrink your body's fat cells the moment it starts working in your system? It is a totally new concept in the war against fat. An ANTI-FAT WEAPON unlike anything you've ever seen, or tried in your life. A FAT-BURNING aid that helps you convert body fat to body fuel AUTOMATICALLY . . . and EVAPORATE excess pounds and inches starting the very first day!

Think of It! A medically proven formula that is such an effective reducing aid . . . that when combined with the food you eat on this "crash-loss" program . . . burns off as much fat each 24 hours as if you jogged up to 14 miles a day . . . or played 3 hours of tennis in the most brutal heat!

The name of this wondrous amino formula is "THERA-SLIM-100" and here is precisely how you use it to win the body and figure of your dreams as you:

- LOSE UP TO 4 TO 6 INCHES OFF YOUR WAISTLINE
- LOSE UP TO 2 TO 5 INCHES OFF YOUR HIPS
- LOSE UP TO 3 INCHES OFF YOUR THIGHS
- LOSE UP TO 4 INCHES OFF YOUR BUTTOCKS
- LOSE UP TO 4 INCHES OFF YOUR STOMACH

and as we've said before, starting not in weeks, but in mere days.

HELPS YOUR BODY CONVERT STORED UP FAT TO BURNED UP ENERGY! At this very moment — having read this far — you are but one short step away from LIFETIME IMMUNITY TO FAT! Now comes your FINAL GIANT STEP into a whole new world of LIFETIME SLIMNESS.

Of course, there is one thing you must keep in mind. With the "THERA-SLIM-100" way to LIFETIME SLIMNESS you cannot gorge yourself on all sorts of fattening foods, candies and desserts. Not that you'd ever want to, because with "THERA-SLIM-100" — due to your new, stepped up metabolism — besides enormous weight-loss you also experience a loss of hunger. Which makes it one of the easiest ways to lose weight fast. Now here's how simple it is:

STEP #1 — YOU EAT

In addition to the wide and tasty selection of food you enjoy morning and night, (all scientifically programmed to help maintain a high-level of FAT BURN-OFF) . . .

STEP #2 — YOU TAKE "THERA-SLIM-100" hi-amino compound.

Once a day, you take "THERA-SLIM-100" in a glass of water, (just like refreshing fruit juice). This hi-amino intake helps keep the fat-burning chain-reaction going ALL 24 HOURS OF THE DAY — NON STOP!

STEP #3 — YOU HAVE AUTOMATICALLY STEPPED UP YOUR FAT-BURNING METABOLISM — SO YOU AUTOMATICALLY BURN OFF EXCESS WEIGHT!

In virtually no time at all, you make your inner furnace accelerate fat burn-off. Safely, gently, yet surely you cause a gradual change in your fat-burning metabolism as you "rev-up" that inner furnace.

The result: Your body begins to eliminate stored-up fat and fluid at a rate so incredibly fast, the very first week-end alone YOU ORAIN AWAY AS MUCH AS 5 OR 6 POUNDS!

In short, with the "THERA-SLIM-100" weight-loss program, you force your body to automatically convert body fat to body fuel . . . automatically shrink fatty cells . . . drain off excess flab . . . flush it right out of your system ONCE AND FOR ALL!

Never before has medical science offered you a surer, faster, more effective weight-loss method, (short of total fasting) than this super fat-burning breakthrough developed at one of Boston's Leading Medical Schools.

THE FACTS ARE IN! THE RESEARCH IS DONE! THE INCREDIBLE WEIGHT-SLASHING RESULTS HAVE BEEN PROVEN BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT BY MEDICAL SCHOOLS — HOSPITALS — DOCTORS — AND SCORES AND SCORES OF OVERWEIGHT PATIENTS! NOW THE FINAL STEP IS UP TO YOU!

REMEMBER: You must see dramatic results in just 24 hours — results you can measure with your scale and your tape measure . . . you must lose:

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- up to 12 lbs. the first 7 days
- up to 7 lbs. more the next 7 days

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IF YOU READ NOTHING ELSE — READ THIS!

What you see on this page is the announcement of the latest breakthrough by medical science in the war against fat. Developed at one of Boston's leading medical schools, the incredible weight-loss results this new "crash-loss" program delivers are so astonishing (average loss 57 lbs) it has been featured in every leading medical journal . . . given headline coverage in the medical-news columns of many major newspapers. Aside from — ABSOLUTE STARVATION — there is no surer, faster, more effective way to slash away pounds and inches than with this Boston Medical School discovery. However, before starting we advise you to consult with

your physician to be sure you are in normal health and your only problem is excess weight. Individuals with gout, heart disease, diabetes or pregnant women should not use it at all. As a matter of fact, we insist that you show this entire program to your family physician . . . have him check you regularly to make sure you're not losing too much, too fast . . . and advise when you've lost enough. See if he doesn't agree that the "THERA-SLIM-100" road to Lifetime Slimness, including the recommended progressive daily toneup, isn't by far the most effective approach to the conquest of excess weight ever developed by medical science.

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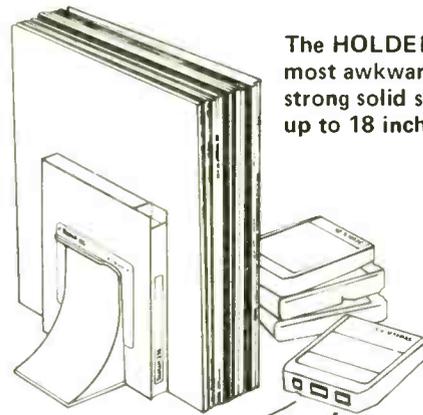
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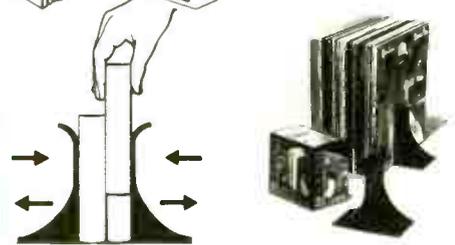
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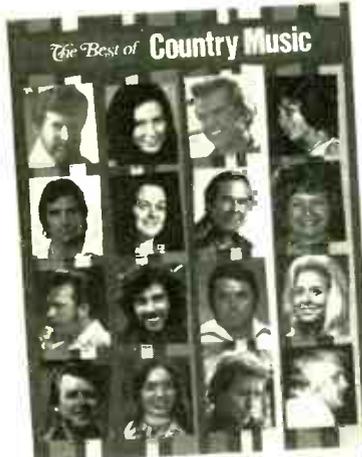
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AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

Public television discovers public music

The people who bring you grand opera from New York, Masterpiece Theatre from London and Big Bird from Sesame Street, are now succeeding with country music from the capitol of Texas.

by CARRIE A. IZARD

Right around the time when Texas Music, Texas Beer, Texas Turkey Trots, armadillos and jalapeno peppers were teasing the curiosity of an onlooking world, a group of conscientious, television-type folks brought country music, Lone Star Beer and a Texas audience into Studio 6 A. They adjusted the lights, turned on the cameras and let the artists and the audience do their thing. The result: "Austin City Limits", country music television series, devoid of commercial interruptions, flashy gimmicks or elaborate stage settings. In the beginning, someone said it would never work with a title as regional as "Austin City Limits", but three years later it is viewed on 157 Public Broadcasting System (PBS) outlets from Alaska to Pago Pago.

Up front, "Austin City Limits" is a weekly country music television series produced by KLRN-TV in Austin, for PBS. Televised from February to May, it is an attempt to transmit the artist and his music from a live concert environment into the viewing homes of America. Now heading into its fourth season (taping starts in July), each hour segment is an edited version of two concerts performed by country music artists in the KLRN studio. Operating on a budget of less than \$200,000, it is funded by The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (Washington, D.C.), individual PBS stations, The Ford Foundation and The Lone Star Brewing Company.

Behind the eye of the camera, "Austin City Limits" is an uptown, sophisticated, high powered production with a gut level appeal. Because of the creative energies of the producers, and because country music is the series' lifeblood, "Austin City Limits" manages to give the viewer a good solid hour's worth of down home country music.

"Austin City Limits" draws its lifeblood from a broad spectrum of country music. The series presents the roots of country, but showcases the progressive rock offspring and any other sounds that lie in between. Artists like Willie Nelson (who did the first pilot show), Merle Travis, Earl Scruggs, Johnny Rodriguez, Steve Goodman and The Lost Gonzo Band have all done some pickin' and grinnin' off the "Austin City Limits" stage.

Executive producer Bill Arhos is a good-looking, easygoing Texan and 17-year veteran of KLRN-TV. He also is a professional, with a fine sense for what will make it in terms of an ongoing series for PBS. When "Austin City Limits" was a seed concept, Arhos believed: "There was so much traditional country music on commercial television, we felt we could sell it with a progressive country rock twist, which really was a new form of music. . . . When the series first began, it had an advantage as this scene was just beginning to peak."

A lot of good things have resulted from the "Austin City Limits" series. Earl Scruggs played a segment, took the sound track back to Nashville and made it into his *Live! From Austin City Limits* album. In Jacksonville, Florida, the show has climbed to one of the top rated programs on WJCT-TV. Lesser known artists have been given an opportunity to showcase their talent, and the bigger names in country music have a chance to appear on television for longer than a four or five minute spot. The end result is a lot of positive reaction from artists, viewers, television programmers and local Texans, who get in on the sessions when they are being taped.

"On commercial networks, series don't allow the artist to develop, they usually sing just about two songs and that's it. On 'Austin City Limits' they will be seen for at least 30 minutes each. This is a big factor in the popularity of the series with the artist," says Arhos. "We give an artist an opportunity to develop, not just two songs to make or break themselves. We take away that fear."

When Johnny Rodriguez taped an "Austin City Limits" segment, Willie Nelson showed up in the audience and before the cameras shut down, Willie and Johnny shared stage and harmonies. After the show (another one of those famous Austin impromptu musical happenings) Willie said, "I don't usually like to do television, but I like to do 'Austin City Limits'. . . it's a lot freer."

One of the creative minds behind the scenes of "Austin City Limits" is Terry Lickona, another easygoing Texan via upstate New York. Lickona handles much of the nitty gritty work for the concert phase of the production, often spending up to 40

hours in preparation for one session.

"'Austin City Limits' is just a year-to-year progression, but it gets easier every year as it has a bigger and better reputation. When we first started it was hard to get talent to come down here to do the show. Performers didn't know what 'Austin City Limits' was, but now it seems to be the gig to do. . . it's very gratifying," says Lickona.

No performer is going to get rich from taping a segment of "Austin City Limits", as the series pays no transportation or overnight expenses. The shows must be scheduled for the artists' Austin stopover, and the pay is usually minimum scale.

Viewer response to the series is as



Willie Nelson joins Johnny Rodriguez for an improvised duet, (above). Johnny goes solo, (above right), and Bill Arhos, creator and executive producer in the control room while Johnny Rodriguez, on the monitors rehearses.

strong as the artist response. Both Arhos and Lickona receive mail and phone calls from fans who want to know more about the series or who simply want to let the producers know they have been successful. When a local group called Denim ap-

peared on the show, Arhos received a phone call from Mel Torme, whose son had watched the series. Impressed with Denim, Torme's son wanted to know more about the group.

"I get calls from all over the country with suggestions about other artists and inquiring about the unknown artists they see... The series' audience began with ones who knew about this type of music and told people who had never heard or seen it, and they like it," says Arhos.

From the reports filtering in from other parts of the country, viewers are tuning in and turning on to "Austin City Limits" for reasons other than sound. For some years now, myths have been whispered about Texas audiences—a group of people who go into hand-clapping, foot-stomping, hee-hawing convulsions at the sound of any string vibrations. "Austin City Limits" is one of the first opportunities for a non-Texan audience to glimpse at a prime example of a Texas audience, and a Scruggs' banjo breakdown is enough to get the blood flowing and the feet stomping, especially when combined with the shots of The Lone Star Beer Crowd.

Locally, it is more and more difficult to get a ticket to a taping session—and the tickets are free, by the way. The Lone Star Beer is also free, and the entertainment is usually priceless.

There is no individual seating in Studio 6 A. The crowd sits on bleachers or on the floor surrounding the stage. Approximately 300 people fit comfortably in the studio, specially designed to bring the artist and the listening audience together in an intimate relationship.

A lot of "Austin City Limits" will never be seen by the viewer at home—not in terms of edited portions of the concerts, but in terms of the hours and hours of work that go into the making of the series. The viewer will never see the rehearsals, the sweat, the structure, the beurocracy or politics. The viewer will never see Lickona standing in a pair of blue jeans and his "Austin City Limits" tee shirt telling the audience the do's and don't's for when the cameras start rolling. The viewer won't see the security guards, the ushers, the beer servers or the people in the sound rooms, the director, or the small army of people who work with "Austin City Limits".

To the credit of the sensitive and professional crew, no segment will be stifled or compromised, and it is country folk rock, a little science fiction, gospel gum, exis-

Here's a tentative line-up for the 1979 series:

Crystal Gayle
 Dolly Parton
 Emmylou Harris
 Linda Ronstadt
 Jerry Jeff Walker
 Hoyt Axton
 Jerry Reed
 Larry Gatlin
 Ray Stevens
 Tompall Glaser
 Anne Murray
 Ozark Mtn. Daredevils
 Pure Parire League
 Eric Clapton
 Gordon Lightfoot
 England Dan & John Ford Coley
 Seals & Crofts
 America
 Leon Redbone
 Poco

Check your local listings for time and date in your area.

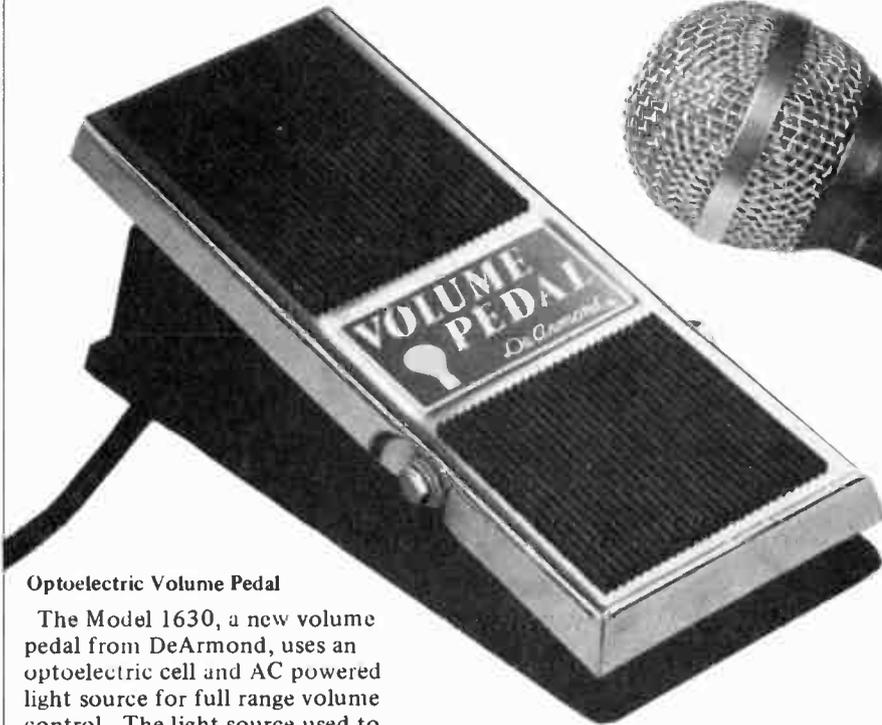
tential, bluegrass guacamole opera music. But more than that "Austin City Limits" began and continues to present country music in the flavor of the music itself: honesty.

As Arhos says, "The only plastic in this show is in the picks." ■



PICKERS

NEW PRODUCTS



Optoelectric Volume Pedal

The Model 1630, a new volume pedal from DeArmond, uses an optoelectric cell and AC powered light source for full range volume control. The light source used to activate the optoelectric cell is operated at only ¼ rated wattage to extend its life.

Use of optoelectrics eliminates the need for pots, gears and batteries, resulting in a smooth, almost effortless pedal action. Volume control starts from absolute zero sound level with pedal up, reaches full volume at bottom of pedal travel.

Life-testing of the pedal action indicates that the nylon treadle bushings will withstand over a million top to bottom movements without

difficulty.

Compatible with all instruments, the Model 1630 can also be used with synthesizers and PA's, or it can be used as a master volume control for mixing and recording equipment.

Equipped with a heavy duty power cord and encased in a cast aluminum base, the low-profile design unit is basically black, highlighted by chrome treadle ribs. Available from DeArmond, 1702 Airport Highway, Toledo, Ohio 43609.



Ball End Zeron Mike

Two new ball end Zeron mikes, which have low impedance dynamic cardioid elements made in Europe are now available from St. Louis Music Supply.

One model (No. 9240) is made of satin black chrome, while the other (No. 9241) is made of a gun metal grey enamel finish. Both mikes have mesh ball ends with built in wide screens.

Special European dynamic cardioid elements are installed in these mikes which give an exceptionally good flat response desired by rock groups, professional entertainers or church vocalists. Each Zeron mike comes with a special response chart which graphs the frequency characteristics of the mike.

Both these new Zeron mikes are low impedance. A separate low to high line transformer is included with each mike so that these mikes can work with any P.A. system.

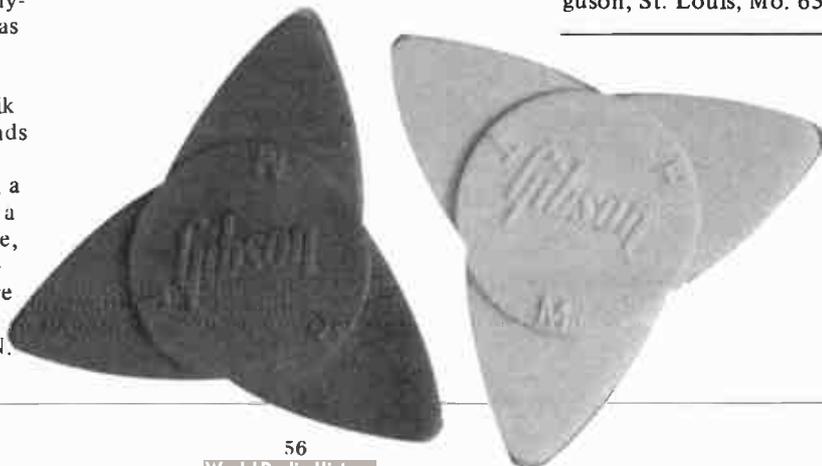
There are seven Zeron mikes available. Each mike comes with special XLR connectors on a balanced low impedance shielded 7.5 mm heavy duty cable.

From, St. Louis Music, 1400 Ferguson, St. Louis, Mo. 63133.

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J.D. Crowe And The New South: You Can Have Her/Devil In Disguise/God's Own Singer/Ten Degrees And Getting Colder, more!
LP No. SLP-489
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The Lewis Family-16 Greatest Hits: In The Garden/Did You Ever Go Sailing/The Man Of Galilee/The Purple Robe/Sing, more!
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8 TK No. SLPT-13019



New Grass Revival-Today's Bluegrass: Cold Sailor/Pennies In My Pocket/Great Ball Of Fire/Lonesome Fiddle Blues, much more!
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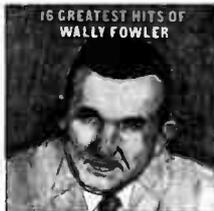
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LP No. SD-3001
8 TK No. SDT-13001



Carl Story-16 Greatest Hits: Daddy Sang Bass/Family Reunion/Mighty Close To Heaven/Sweeter Than The Flowers, much more!
LP No. SD-3004
8 TK No. SDT-13004



Brown's Ferry Four-16 Greatest Hits: The Arm Of God/Over In The Gloryland/Bound For The Shore/Rock Of Ages, much more!
LP No. SD-3017
8 TK No. SDT-13017



Wally Fowler-Greatest 16 Hits: Turn On The Radio/I'm In His Care/Farther Along/Closer Walk With Thee/Little Talk With Jesus, more!
LP No. SD-3020
8 TK No. SDT-13020



Roger Miller-Painted Poetry: Under The Spell Again/Poor Little John/Play Boy/I Ain't Never/Country Girl/Pillow, more!
LP No. SD-3011
8 TK No. SDT-13011



Oak Ridge Quartet-Sing & Shout: At The Roll Call/Behind Your Tears/Do You Know Jesus/My All I Give/Keep Me, many more!
LP No. SD-984
8 TK No. SDT-1984



Jimmie Skinner-No. 1 Bluegrass: Everybody Ought To Have A Song/It's Blowin' Away/This Old Road/Whoopie Liza, more!
LP No. SD-988
8 TK No. SDT-1988



B. J. Thomas-Best Of: Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head/Most Of All/Mighty Clouds Of Joy/Rock & Roll Lullaby, many more!
LP No. SD-992
8 TK No. SDT-1992



Billy Joe Burnette-Welcome Home Elvis: The Colonel And The King/I Haven't Seen Mama For Years/I'll Fly Away, 8 more!
LP No. SD-994 X
8 TK No. SDT-1994 X



David Houston-Ain't That Lovin' You Baby: So Many Ways/The Twelfth Of Never/Unchained Melody/Love Is A Miracle, more!
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8 TK No. SDT-1990 X



Moon Mullican-Greatest Hits: I'll Sail My Ship Alone/Louisiana/Mona Lisa/Bottom Of The Glass/Jole Blon/Farewell, many more!
LP No. SLP-398
8 TK No. SLPT-1398



Dolly Parton & Others-Release Me: Two Little Orphans/Release Me/3 Sides To The Story/Angel On Paper/Weeping Willow, more!
LP No. PO-299
8 TK No. PO-1299



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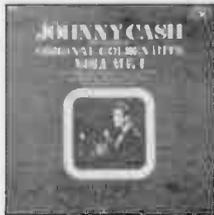
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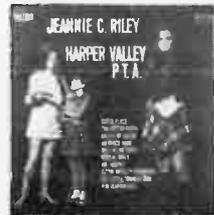
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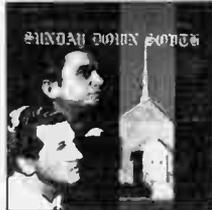
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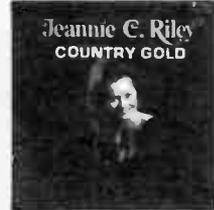
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PORTER WAGONER

(Continued from page 36)

“I will listen to ideas of Dolly’s... But there has to be someone who says yes or no...”

into Nashville. “I had to go in and book it in the studio or in my office. Keeping up the activities I do here in town and working on the road is a never-ending job. I had been on the road 20 years steady, and it had become work for me.

“I still sorta miss the performing part of it, I just can’t hack all that time between concerts—on the bus, in hotels. It got to where I didn’t look forward to going out and meeting the audience after a show, because I was tired. So instead of wanting to go onstage and meet my friends and sign autographs for the people who bought my records, I wanted to go lie down and rest. And I felt it was unfair to my fans to go to a place and just do a show and then leave. I think that’s a big part of our business: your meeting the people who have bought your records and helped make you what you are. And rather than just not do that, I would rather do it this way. It’s more fair to them. I still work the Opry every week, and I would have to say that if that isn’t enough for the fans, I’m sorry it isn’t, you know. Because I will not work on the road and perform in front of an audience if I can’t give ‘em their money’s worth.”

In addition to his Opry appearances, Porter is playing on five huge package shows this year. (The first, in Pontiac, Mich., was televised.) But these are concerts he can fly in for and then fly right back out. He is a hired entertainer, not responsible for the entire show, as he was when he traveled with his revue.

One benevolent side effect of all this is the Porter album. He claims that his last few albums had been inferior, because he was putting all his effort into the live show, Dolly’s records and the duets. On this one, for the first time in years, he took all the time he needed and got it right. Though the album didn’t sell as well as past efforts, and Porter’s stock with RCA is not as high as it used to be, he remains proud of the album, if only because it is country through and through.

“I think Nashville and the industry are just sorta searchin’ for a direction,” he says. “Country music is big, but a lotta times a person just gets sorta discontent if there isn’t something *real* big or exciting happening at the moment, and they start searching for different directions to go. Sort of like a guy lost out in the country that don’t know which road to take.

“The disc jockeys, the guys that play the records, are going more towards a modern country. Maybe that’s great—I think anything that’s successful and that’s healthy for the industry is fine. But not for

me. If I was tempted to make a pop record, I would do it. To me, it don’t take no more talent to cut that kind of record than it does to cut any other kind. But I’m just not tempted.”

Though Porter insists that he feels no bitterness, Dolly’s decision to leave him obviously still smarts. When Dolly made her move, she explained her position thoroughly to the press, but Porter remained strangely silent throughout. Actually, that was very much in character for him; he is, at least by show biz standards, a reclusive man, rarely seen out and about in Nashville. Porter says now he stayed silent for a reason.

“It’s hard, in fact it’s very difficult for me, to tell the story exactly how it happened without injuring Dolly’s career. And I don’t wanna ever do that. I don’t want anyone to feel that, ‘He’s just bitter because she left his show and went on to bigger and better things.’ I would *want* the bigger and better things for a person I had worked seven years of my life for. It was the way the move was done, the manner in which it was done, that was so wrong.”

Porter recounts a series of meetings with Dolly and RCA on the subject of her “going pop.” He says he volunteered on several occasions to step aside if there was a consensus that he was the wrong man to produce such records. “But the entire move was done behind my back between her and RCA, and that’s a very discoloful way to do a person.”

“Had I not produced the last duet things that were number one records, had they not have been that, I would possibly be in the nuthouse somewhere, trying to figure out what I had done wrong,” Porter adds. “The thing that kept that from happening is the fact that number one is not bad. And they were all number one’s up to this time. Had it not been for that, I would have been in serious trouble. With myself.”

He further points out that when Dolly initially left his show, he continued working the road at first and also remained her producer. His decision to quit the road was based on his feeling that he simply didn’t have time or energy for both jobs. When Dolly dropped him as producer after he’d quit the road, he felt doubly betrayed.

We are back at Fireside now, sitting in the control room of the main studio downstairs. Porter is staring at the tips of his boots and nervously tapping a pencil on the edge of the console as he talks. When I note that Dolly had cited lack of

creative freedom as her reason for finally severing all ties with Porter, he looks up and speaks to the question bluntly.

“We were gonna do things my way because that’s the kind of person I am. Dolly Parton’s career up until she left me was done my way because that’s the only way it could be successful working with me. I signed the checks at that time, and the way I was born and reared, if you paid a man to work for you, he worked for you. He don’t tell you what to do; if he did, that would be called an advisor. And that’s the way it would be if you were to start recording for me tomorrow and hire me as a producer. We would do it my way, because that would be what you hired me for. I’m the kind of person that . . . I will listen to ideas of Dolly’s, if she’s working with me. If I feel that they’re good, I’ll use them. But there has to be someone who says yes and no. I was that person. I think that was the part that she was talking about, being trapped. But I feel like that trap was pretty nice to her.”

Those are strong words, but Porter is also quick to point out that in the record business, only the strongest survive. It seemed as though he was saying he didn’t want to be involved in any projects that he couldn’t command.

“As far as functioning business-wise, you’re right,” he responds. “I’m involved in many things that I’m not in control of, but as far as the music business, I don’t wanna be involved in production of someone unless I have ahold of the reins, so to speak.”

It’s this philosophy, Porter suggests, that accounts for his business acumen and for a recording studio as classy as Fireside. And while it’s not to everyone’s liking, it’s this philosophy, I am thinking, that will ultimately keep Porter from winding up like that Arizona whiz, no matter how unfashionable hillbillies become.

“I feel that although I only had a sixth grade education, God gave me a lot of common sense; a person that don’t have a big education watches stuff that’s going on around him and learns more than a person that feels they learned it all out of a university,” he emphasizes. “I didn’t learn electronics at school; they didn’t teach it there. We was trying to get the lamp wick trimmed to burn the coal oil lamp.

“But still, through my years of recording and working with electronics, I never forgot one thing that’s important. Because that’s my teaching there, and had I read it in a book somewhere I might go right past it. So that’s the part of my mind that I feel is good for business—seeing things happen. Just being able to look at things with common sense.”

That said, Porter Wagoner offers a final big smile and a final strong handshake, then heads back upstairs to his inner sanctum, where he has plenty of work still to be done. ■

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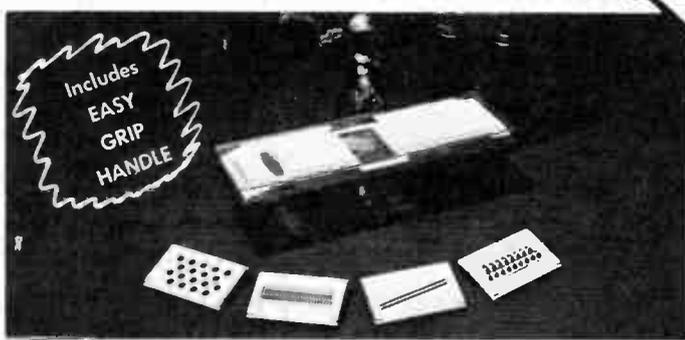
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MARGO

(Continued from page 31)

"After all," says the tough side of Margo, "I am running a business."

The show Margo and her band had been rehearsing for is over. Despite a fairly drunken crowd, Margo pulled it off. Her voice was strong, her comedy funny, her enthusiasm contagious. And she'd been under-stating it when she said her tuxedo blouses were low-cut.

As I was leaving, she pulled me over to her, exhilarated from the show's success.

"You ain't gonna write anything to make this ole girl look bad, are you?" she joked.

And as I towered over her, looking straight down that identity-creating tuxedo, very conscious that although her voice may not yet put her in Dolly's league, her other natural attributes certainly did, I assured her:

"No way, Margo. There's no way anyone can make *you* look bad." ■

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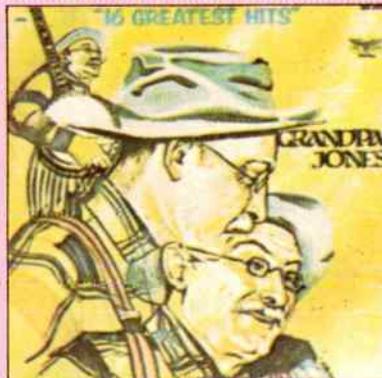
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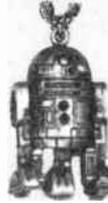
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