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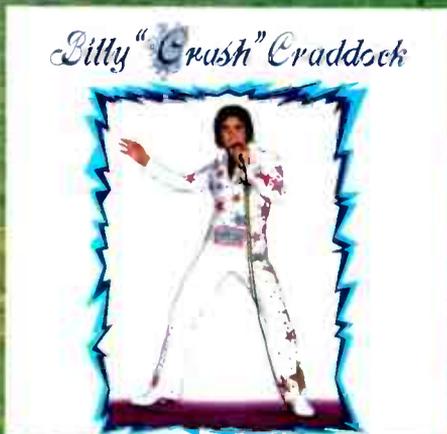
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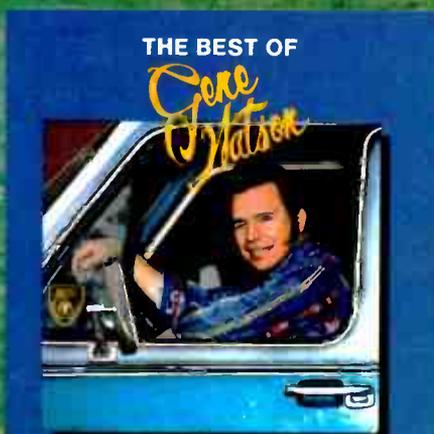
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P. 40 Tompall Glaser, country music's own Pinball Wizard.



P. 22 Dottie West, the Coca-Cola Kid teams with Kenny Rogers.



P. 29 Mel McDaniel, our Rising Star.

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Editor's Note

Call it jaded ear, if you will, or just plain overexposure, but one of the drawbacks to writing about music is forgetting what the music is all about. An occupational hazard, getting sucked up into what critic Joe Nick Patoski calls "The Music Bidness," a euphemism for the production-line assembly of dreams. In our own little way we participate in taking somebody's heartache or somebody's love or somebody's loss and turning that into chewing gum, this week Number-34-With-A-Bullet, watch 'em cry on Mike Douglas and read all about it in *People* (or *Country Music*). Somehow, along the way to the Top Ten, we manage to forget what the music is really all about. We forget that music is magic.

Magic is a funny, maligned word, battered and abused by a million Amazing Somebody-Or-Others with their Incredible Disappearing Somethings. What magic *really* is anything that has the power to change us, however tiny that change might be. A sunrise can be magic. Or a song.

I heard a magic song a while back, and it was like having a glass of ice water thrown in my face. I hear a lot of songs, and I suspect there's some inverse rule about the number of songs you hear and how much each song means to you. But I heard this song, and it moved me, and it haunted me, and it almost made me cry. It's been a rather long time since a song almost made me cry. Perhaps too long.

A song like Jack Clement's rendition of Sandy Theoret's *When I Dream*, then, is—at least, to me—the pay-off on all those other things, those mechanical things like production and budgets and pickers and accountants that seem so damned important these days. But like the masterpiece it is, *When I Dream* transcends the bits and pieces of its creation, the whole being far greater than the sum of its parts. That's the magic part, you see, when you finish listening to a song and it echoes long after the record is ended. When the first thing you can think of to say isn't: "Say, I really like that production!" or "Hey, man, who's that great steel player?"

When I Dream, as well as the rest of Jack's debut album, *All I Want To Do In Life*, is the work of genius, Music City's resident madman-guru-saint putting the gospel on record. It is inspired, the finest record I've heard this year and as much of last year as I can remember.

But The Music Bidness isn't set up to handle inspiration, and genius doesn't swing any weight on the charts. Remember, the business we're in is a packaging operation, and inspiration tends to defy neat little cubbyholes.

In the meantime, I guess I'd like to thank Jack Clement and Sandy Theoret and all the people who made *When I Dream*, because it's people like them who keep the magic alive, and while the magic's alive, the world is just a little better place. I'll leave you with a thought, also from Jack's album, from a song written by Allen Reynolds, Jack's protege, and Bob McDill, titled, appropriately, *We Must Believe In Magic*:

"But we must believe in magic
We must believe in the Guiding
Hand

If you believe in magic
You have the universe at your
command..."
Thanks again, Jack.



Michael Bane

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Our President Visits The President

President and Mrs. Jimmy Carter, long time country music fans and friends of many country performers, recently hosted a group representing the country music industry for an evening at the WHITE HOUSE - and I was invited. The invitation came through the mail in a plain envelope carrying THE WHITE HOUSE as the return address. The invitation clearly specified that the evening would be Black Ties *only*. All would get underway at 7:30 p.m.

I was scheduled to fly from Newark Airport on a 4 p.m. flight, arrive in Washington at 5, rent a car, check into a nearby motel, and change into my rented tux. But, things do not always work out the way they are planned.

The plane was delayed nearly two hours. When I arrived in Washington, at nearly 7 o'clock, my only choice was to change into my tux in a crowded airport men's room (imagine the strange looks!!)

I picked up the car keys, ran through the airport (feeling like O.J.), hopped a shuttle bus for the rent-a-car parking lot, grabbed the car and headed for downtown Washington and the WHITE HOUSE, with one eye on the road and one eye watching for radar.

I was about ten minutes late, but there were others arriving behind me. Once inside, I found myself in line at the bottom of a long, turning marble stairway, loaded with other guests in formal attire (not a pair of overalls in sight). The line moved slowly into a huge room and past uniformed honor guards, a pack of journalists and photographers, and up to a Marine standing next to the President and Rosalynn. The Marine took the names of each person approaching the Carters and made the appropriate introductions.

Once the 100 or so guests arrived, a Conway Twitty, Tom T. Hall, Loretta Lynn concert started. It lasted about an hour. After the concert there was a buffet dinner (salmon, roast beef, etc.) with wine and champagne. The dinner lasted over an hour with the guests spilling over into the five or six rooms. Senators were there, Jody Powell was there, record company presidents were there, congressmen were there, the mayor of Nashville was there, Sam Phillips from Sun Records was there, and members of the Country Music Association were there, among others. During the dinner, the wine and champagne flowed freely, everyone relaxed, and the President and Mrs. Carter moved through the guests



Clockwise starting below: The President introducing Talley, with Tom T., Rosalynn and Conway, Daniels squeezing the First Couple, Loretta squeezing Jimmy.



totally at ease. (Secret service agents, although tough to spot at first, were everywhere, watching everyone).

About 10 o'clock, people started drifting back into the concert room where an impromptu country "jam session" started with President Carter acting as the M.C. for his good friends James Talley, Charlie Daniels and others.

With a Marine dance band playing in the next room for those who preferred to dance, and the spur of the moment country concert going on with President Carter as the M.C., it was obvious that this was a night all of us would remember.

Sometime after midnight the guests

started to leave (although the Carters were still going strong). I was among the last to go, since I had the feeling that somehow I would never again have this unique opportunity to mix with a group like this in the historic atmosphere of the WHITE HOUSE.

Back in my motel room, sitting on the bed in my tux, and eating a bag of "Big Mac's," I was wishing that all of our readers could have experienced a night like I just had. And I thought about the blue pick-up truck parked outside the WHITE HOUSE gates with the bumper-sticker that proudly proclaimed, "Keep It Country."

JACK KILLION



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Letters

It's All In The Family

I am answering two letters that appeared in your June issue about Mickey Gilley. I have followed his style of music for more than forty years and honestly believe these two women represent the wrong fan club. Mickey Gilley has not done anything, in my opinion, except an almost perfect imitation of Jerry Lee Lewis.

I do not think that Gilley could even carry Lewis' piano stool. Thanks for taking the time to read this and as long as Jerry Lee can show Mickey "how to do it," Mickey will survive.

WM. I. NACE
 PENNSBURG, PA.

where it all started for Merle.) It is distributed by MCA Records and Fuzzy Owens and Louis Talley are still his managers (CM—June 77).

In CM—March 1977, Bonnie Owens was reported to have sued Merle for "irreconcilable differences." Merle was reported as saying "I'm not going to fight it. I hope we are parting as friends; certainly not enemies." Since this time Bonnie Owens has been touring with Merle's road show and singing back up on his records—we know because we saw them perform together in July 1977.

We feel that everyone is certainly entitled to their own opinion but when such a letter as this degrading our favorite artist is written, it cannot go without some form of a rebuttal. We feel that you have missed out on some outstanding work from a truly outstanding performer.

CAROL & SUSAN WALKER
 SPRING MILLS, PA.

I'm writing in regard to a performance by Jerry Lee Lewis at the Old South Jamboree in Walker, Louisiana on April 1, 1978. The show was a real April Fool's joke. He was rude, sarcastic, didn't finish any songs and was obviously drunk. He put down Mickey Gilley, and now that I've seen them both perform, I know Mickey is much better.

Too bad it cost me \$30 to find this out, but I'll make it up by not buying any more of Jerry Lee's records or tapes.

I really enjoy your magazine.

MRS. SHARON BEVIL
 GRAMERCY, LA.

Views On Our Reviews

I enjoy Country Music so much, the time between issues seems so long.

Loved the cover and centerfold of May, 78 issue but must take Bob Allen to task for his review of Tom T. Hall's **New Train—Same Rider**. He was very taken with the cover but I feel he either didn't listen to the record or he doesn't know that T.T.H. is the greatest "Story Teller" we have and the words are what count. I'm glad I got the record before I read your review or I'd have missed out on some good listening. Listen to *Burning Bridges*, you'll like it.

GERRY TIRHUNE
 RIVER VALE, N.J.

God bless Ed Ward.

Most of the time the record critics in this magazine make me want to throw up. I usually go out and buy what they don't like and pass up what they like. I



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have found it to be a good way to get really good country records. So you see what I think of your music critics. Mr. Ward has finally said what a lot of people would say if they had the guts. I am so sick and tired of the word "Outlaw." Webster defines it as a "notorious criminal." I have never heard of Waylon or Willie holding up banks, have you? Let's leave the Outlaw bit to Frank and Jessie...

CARL GLOVER
CARLSBAD, N.M.

I had just purchased *Quarter Moon In A Ten Cent Town* by Emmylou Harris and also *Luxury Liner* just before I received the April issue of *Country Music* in the mail. I never buy records or albums unless I am overcome by a strong emotion. It seems that some of the music the radio stations have been playing by Emmylou really grab me... so I ran out and made sure I wouldn't miss a thing and bought both albums.

Emmylou seems authentic and I feel close to her. Her albums are great and nothing seems ridiculous or out of place. It seems like John Pugh just plain doesn't like her and shouldn't be trying to be objective about her.

BETTE MICHAEL
ALBANY, CA.

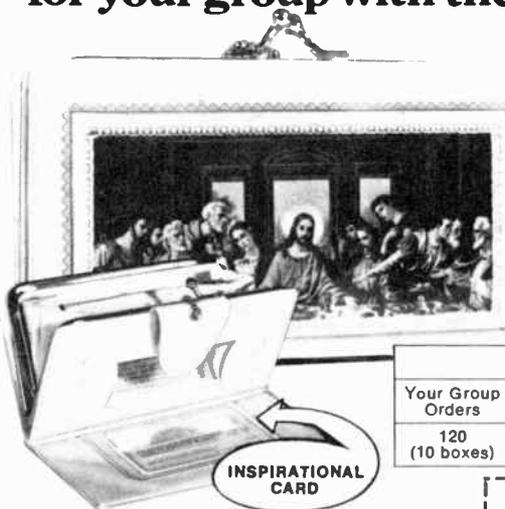
Been To Music City

I have been a subscriber to your magazine for a long time and must say I fully enjoy each and every copy I receive. I enjoy all the pictures and the write-ups on each and every star. Enjoyed the write-up and pictures on Nashville in the April issue. We have gone there several summers in a row and find so much to see and do. My family loves Opryland, we think it is the best park in the U.S. and we've been to almost every one.

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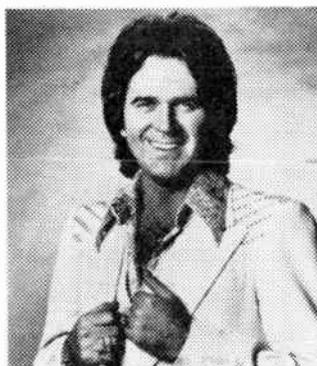
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Country Scene

DOLLY: First Female Country Artist With Million-Seller



Dolly Parton is presented a platinum disc for her album *Here You Come Again* by RCA Division Vice President Jerry Bradley.

Dolly Parton, whose platinum hair is a trademark, now has a platinum record to go with it.

The award is given by the Recording Industries Association of America for albums selling a million copies.

Dolly's album, *Here You Come Again*, is the first by a female country artist to earn the award. Terms for the average recording

contract would earn the artist something like \$500,000 in royalties for selling a million albums. In Dolly's case, it could be a lot more. For one thing, Dolly wrote four of the songs on the record. Her writer's royalty alone could be another \$100,000.

More Dolly's Dollars, Movies, Posters, Concerts

Movies

Rumors are flying that Dolly Parton has signed multi-movie contract with 20th Century Fox. A company spokesman says officially, "We have no word on that, officially." An informed source says, "With all the rumor mongers running around, it must be true." The "rumors" say that it is a multi-million dollar, three or four movie deal, with scripts tailored around the real Dolly.

Posters

Dolly has joined the superstar poster parade which includes Farrah Fawcett-Majors, Suzanne Somers, Cheryl Ladd, Cheryl Tiegs and the like.

The poster, which features Dolly as "Daisy Mae," is marketed by Star City Inc., whose president Hal Tippler says, "We expect to sell in the hundreds of thousands, at least. We've been selling posters for 12 years and we got more requests for Dolly than any we've done." That's saying something since the company also sells Linda Ronstadt and John Travolta posters. Dolly could gross \$50,000 or more. (Our

centerfold was taken at the same photo session).

Personal Appearances

"Stage shows, fairs, TV specials and the rest will bring in well over a million dollars this year for Dolly." Says one insider, "maybe two million."

It's Not All Profit

Before you decide that Dolly is a country Rockefeller, remember the expenses. First agents, managers, publicists and so on take a big slice off the top, at least 25%. Then touring expenses, salaries for the band, costumes, arrangements all add up to big numbers. Take what's left, send half of that the IRS and you know why Johnny Paycheck worries about "... Uncle Sam's hand in my pants...."



Barbara Eden Socks It To The Harper Valley PTA

Barbara (I Dream of Jeannie) Eden was in Nashville recently to record the soundtrack of the movie version of *Jeannie C. Riley's* hit, *Harper Valley P.T.A.*

The movie, which also stars, Ronny Cox, Nanette Fabray, Louis Nye, Susan Swift and Pat Paulsen is playing in theatres around the country.



Barbara Eden with producer, Shelby Singleton.

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MO88

Country Scene

WATCH THIS FACE: Con Hunley

He's a little bit of soul, a little bit of blues, a little bit of rock 'n' roll, a little bit of bluegrass, a little bit of honky tonk, a little bit of country.

But one thing for sure—Con Hunley is much more than a little bit talented.

Hunley is so talented, in fact, that anybody who hears him sing for the first time just *knows* he's going to be a star. Bonnie Rasmussen, public relations director for Warner Brothers in Nashville, knew it the first time she heard Con play in his hometown of Knoxville.

He certainly was so convincing that others from Warners traveled to Knoxville, took one listen, and urged Hunley to sign with their label. Meanwhile, however, other record companies had heard the news and a total of *five* labels ended up in the bidding for Hunley, including RCA.

"One of my biggest thrills," says a very shy, very hungover Hunley, "was sitting in RCA with Chet Atkins and having Chet offer me a recording contract. It was one of my dreams."

But Hunley felt if he signed with RCA, he would be in direct competition with Ronnie Milsap for material, since he also plays the piano. So rather than take a chance of getting only second-best material, he selected Warner Brothers, much to the delight of his advocate, Bonnie, and his new producer, Norro Wilson.

His first record, *Cry, Cry, Darlin'*, was a modest hit, and his second, *Weekend Friend*, was selected as a pick hit by Billboard. Not bad for a beginner.



Hunley's first job was not quite as successful—in 1964 he earned \$12. But then, he only knew five songs.

"When I auditioned," he recalls, "I played the heck out of those five songs—but they didn't realize they were the only five songs I knew."

He dabbled in music while in the Air Force, then "really got the bug in California. By that time, I'd gotten myself together. I could play more than five songs."

After bumming around for a while as a mechanic and pumping gas, Hunley returned to Knoxville and finally got a job playing the piano at the Corn Lounge. There he met Sam Kirkpatrick, who signed him to his own independent label, Prairie Dust.

There he also got together with his band, the Rhythm Masters, and began playing at the Village Barn. It originally held 500, but then it burned down and it was rebuilt to seat 1500—and Con and his band still packed the place.

About this time, Bonnie Rasmussen and Warner happened along and signed Con Hunley to the big-time. He still lives in Knoxville,

but his trips to Nashville are becoming more frequent, as he continues to prove that he's more than just a little bit talented.

Like when he rock and rolls with *Honky Tonk Woman*... or does a little bit of bluegrass with *Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms*... or adds a dash of country with *What a Difference You've Made In My Life*... or rivals Joe Cocker with *You Are So Beautiful*—and dedicates it to Bonnie, he makes the evening just about perfect.

MARY ELLEN MOORE

JOHNNY DUNCAN: She Can Put Her Shoes Under My Bed Anytime



As soon as Johnny Duncan's single, *She Can Put Her Shoes Under My Bed Anytime*, hit Number One on the charts, the Granbury, Texas singer started getting shoes in the mail from fans around the country. "It's even more interesting," says Johnny, "that ladies at my concerts are now bringing shoes and *other* articles of clothing up to the stage."

Those who are wondering what happens once "the shoes are under the bed," may get a hint from the title of Johnny's new album: **The Best Is Yet To Come**.

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Chester & Lester

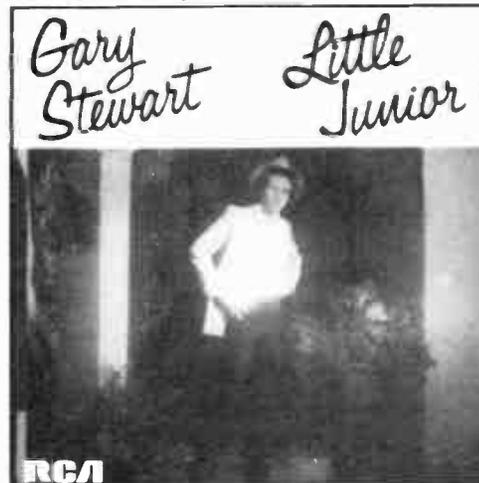


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Country Scene

“Ray Charles is the best country singer ever to come through Nashville” . . . Waylon Jennings

“That’s sweet, I think I know what he means by that, and that’s sweet.” . . . Ray Charles

At a Charlotte auditorium not long ago, Ray Charles made his cautious way in the direction of a piano. He moved slowly, settling himself on a padded stool, his body bending slightly forward, elbows in, head drooping toward his chest. Then, after a pause for dramatic effect, he leaned back stiffly, kicked out a foot and banged out the opening chords.

Nobody, including Charles, was sure what would happen from there—which notes he would hold, or



Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, June Carter Cash and Ray Charles were guest stars on Johnny Cash's recent TV special, "Johnny Cash: Spring Fever," filmed at the Grand Ole Opry.

which he would bend, moan or simply leave out. "That's just me," he explains "I'm never sure how I'll do it. But when you sing *Georgia On My Mind* or *I Can't Stop Loving You*

a thousand times, you have to be spontaneous about it. I don't know what I would do if I always did it the same."

But if the unpredictability is always there, giving his music a raw and distinctive edge, it's also true that you can find some constants—ingredients that are present every time Ray Charles leans toward a mike. One of those ingredients, at least as important as any of the others, is country music. It has been a part of Charles' life ever since he was Ray Charles Robinson—a little blind kid with skillful fingers, growing up in the hard-times Panhandle town of Greenville, Fla.

He was a Depression baby, a child of the blues, born in 1932 when times were bad and getting worse—and when the future seemed devoid of hope. Music in that kind of setting was more than a pastime. It was the people's equilibrium, a desperate source of sanity and perspective that made heroes of the bluesmen—Muddy Waters, Tampa Red, Blind Boy Fuller and all the rest.

Ray Charles grew up with the blues. It was all you could get, he says, if you were black and listened to a juke box. But his family also owned a battered, living room radio, and sometimes on Saturday nights he would curl up next to it, battling the

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Country Scene

static, until finally he had tuned in WSM and the Grand Ole Opry.

"I always liked that," Charles explains. "Country music is very much like the blues. There is a simplicity and a directness. A cat will sing, 'I missed you and you and I went out and got drunk.' That's something you can relate to."

So Ray Charles took all that—the blues, the hillbilly soul from Nashville and even the sophisticated big band sounds beaming down from the North—and he went away to the Florida State School for the Deaf and Blind. He mastered the piano and one or two other instruments, and then set out to make his way. Oddly enough, one of his first big breaks came with a country band—a Tampa-based group called the Florida Playboys, whose piano player had turned up sick.

Charles, then 17 and hungry, was called as a replacement, and as he remembers it, "picked up a nice little piece of change." It was a peculiar sight in the deeply segregated South of the 1940s, but it heightened in Charles a fondness for country music that never went away. When his career took off a dozen years later, some of his biggest hits were country songs—Hank Williams' *Your Cheatin' Heart*, Don Gibson's *I Can't Stop Loving You*, and Harlan Howard's *Busted*.

He did them all in a style so strong and poignant that Waylon Jennings once asserted flatly: "Ray Charles is the best country singer ever to come through Nashville." Waylon wasn't contending, of course, that Charles became a hillbilly, or that he bore even the faintest musical resemblance to Charley Pride. But Charles did understand the intertwining traditions of country and blues, and therefore, in Waylon's view, helped put Nashville music in a broader and more accurate perspective.

"I think that's true," says Charles. "Or at least I would like to think so. I wasn't trying to be a country and western star. I used choir sections

and string sections, and I sang the songs my way. But they were songs I felt comfortable with, and I think it did do one thing for country music: I think it caused a lot of people who had never paid any attention to start appreciating it.

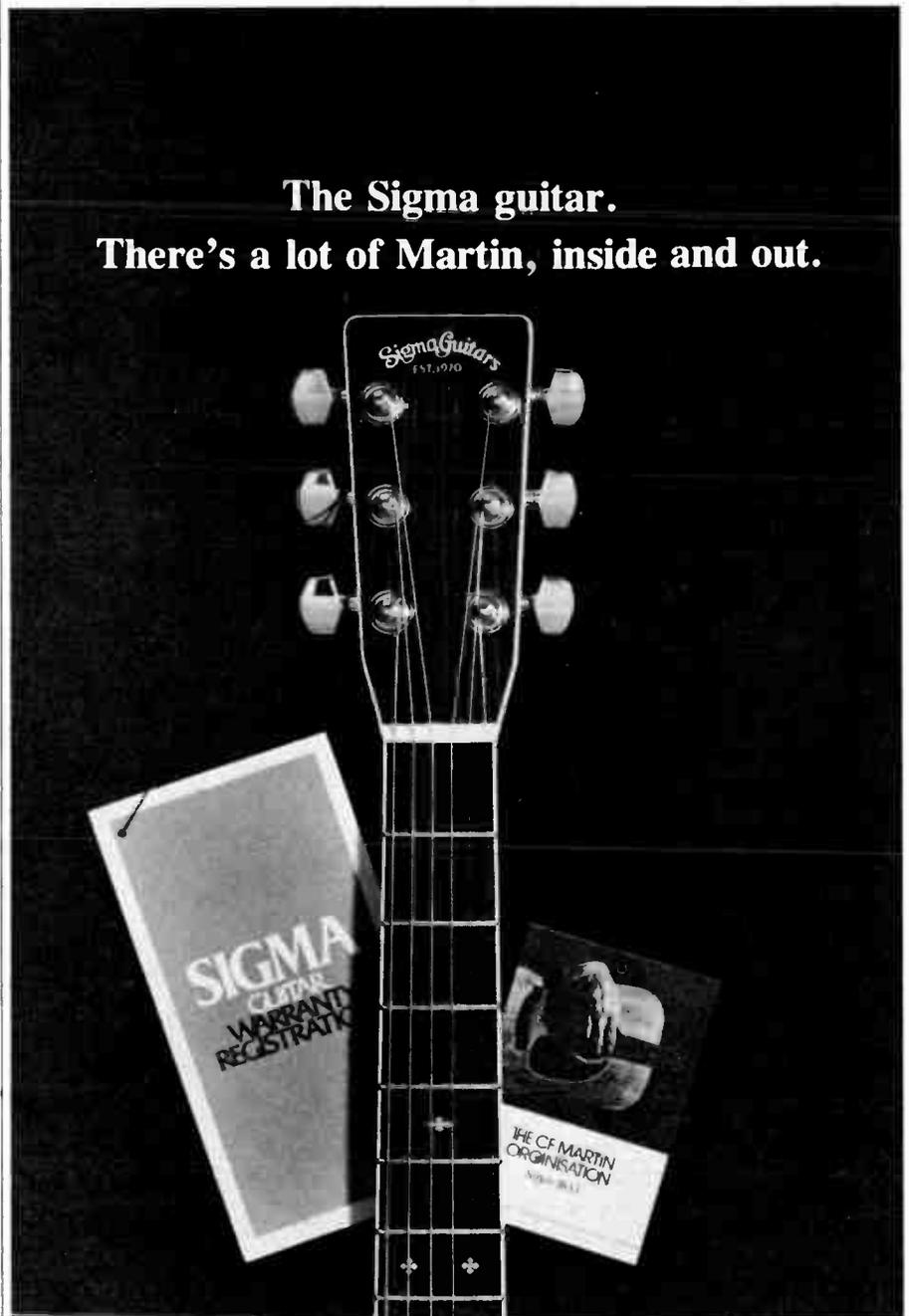
"Loretta Lynn in her book has

some nice things to say about my introducing country music to people who weren't familiar with it. I take that as a great compliment, because country music has certainly done a lot for me. The whole thing, really, has worked out well for everybody."

—FRYE GAILLARD

The Sigma guitar.

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



Country Scene

I.R.S. Gets Paycheck



Now it's Uncle Sam trying to get Johnny's Paycheck.

It's Rabbitt Day In New Jersey . . .



Eddie Rabbitt was honored in his home state of New Jersey by Governor Brendon Bryne who declared April 30 as Eddie Rabbitt Day. Eddie was presented with a key to the city by the Mayor's of-

face of Eddie's home town of East Orange, and a live WHN concert broadcast. Many old friends were on hand to welcome Eddie home, including WHN's Jessie (pictured left of Eddie).

. . . And Prophet Day In Tennessee



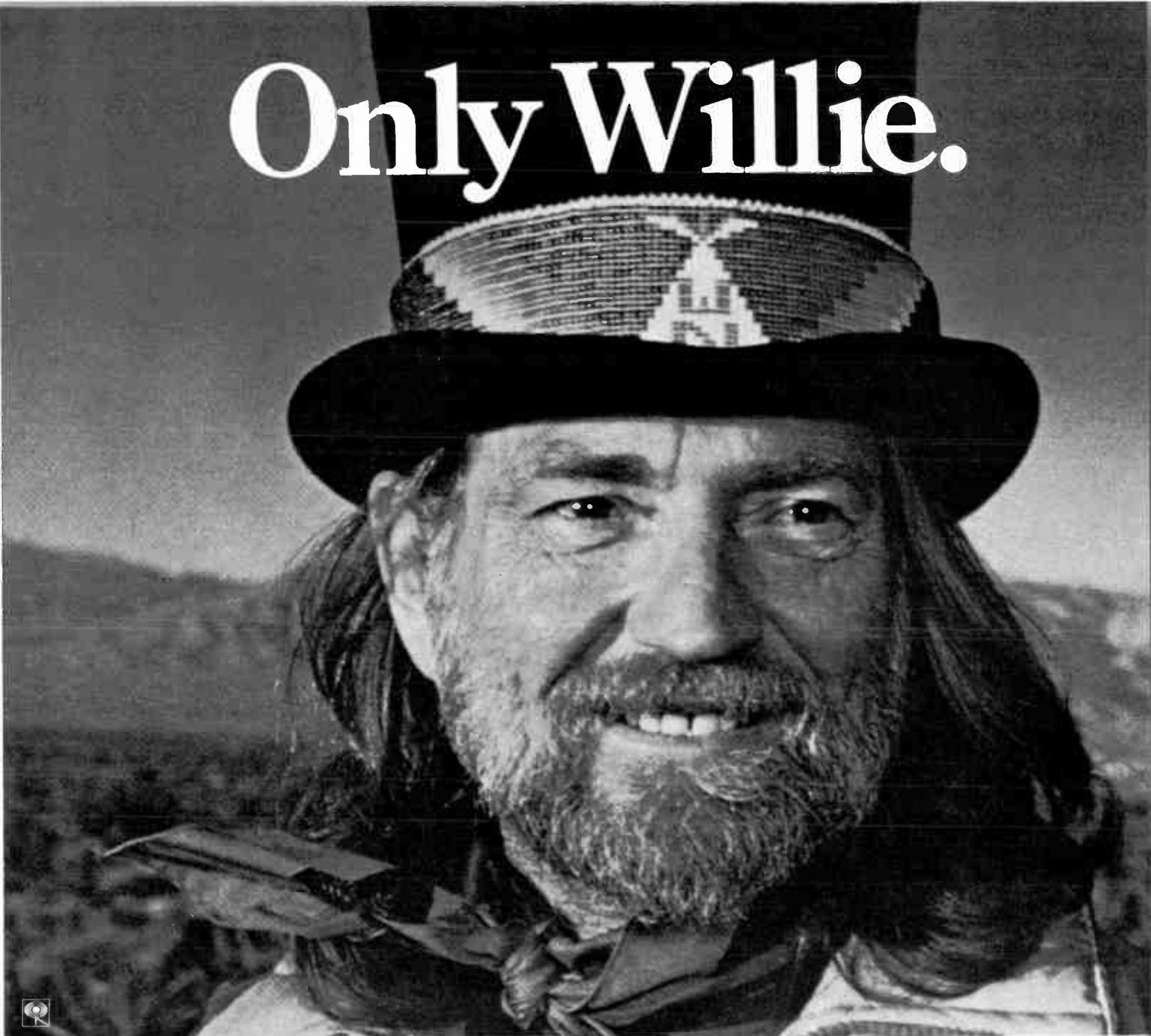
Tennessee's Governor Ray Blanton proclaimed April 27 as "Ronnie Prophet Day" in honor of the Canadian singer's contributions to promoting Tennessee in his radio, television and personal appearances. Governor Blanton said that wherever Ronnie appears he carries with him an unflinching enthusiasm for Tennessee.

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On Fifth Avenue: the throng at the Lone Star Cafe.



Belushi sings.

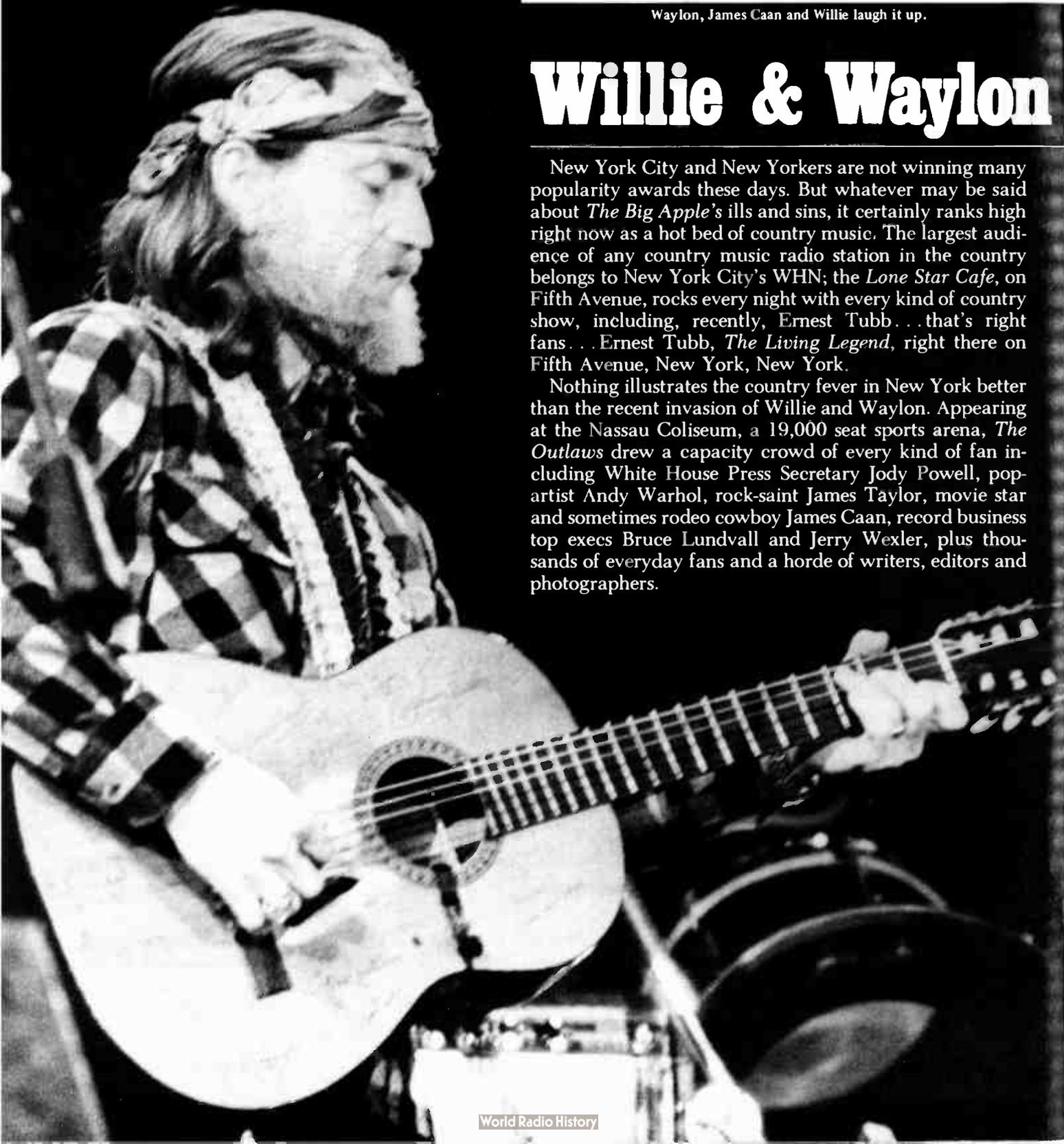


Waylon, James Caan and Willie laugh it up.

Willie & Waylon

New York City and New Yorkers are not winning many popularity awards these days. But whatever may be said about *The Big Apple's* ills and sins, it certainly ranks high right now as a hot bed of country music. The largest audience of any country music radio station in the country belongs to New York City's WHN; the *Lone Star Cafe*, on Fifth Avenue, rocks every night with every kind of country show, including, recently, Ernest Tubb...that's right fans...Ernest Tubb, *The Living Legend*, right there on Fifth Avenue, New York, New York.

Nothing illustrates the country fever in New York better than the recent invasion of Willie and Waylon. Appearing at the Nassau Coliseum, a 19,000 seat sports arena, *The Outlaws* drew a capacity crowd of every kind of fan including White House Press Secretary Jody Powell, pop-artist Andy Warhol, rock-saint James Taylor, movie star and sometimes rodeo cowboy James Caan, record business top execs Bruce Lundvall and Jerry Wexler, plus thousands of everyday fans and a horde of writers, editors and photographers.





Jessi Colter, hangin' on.



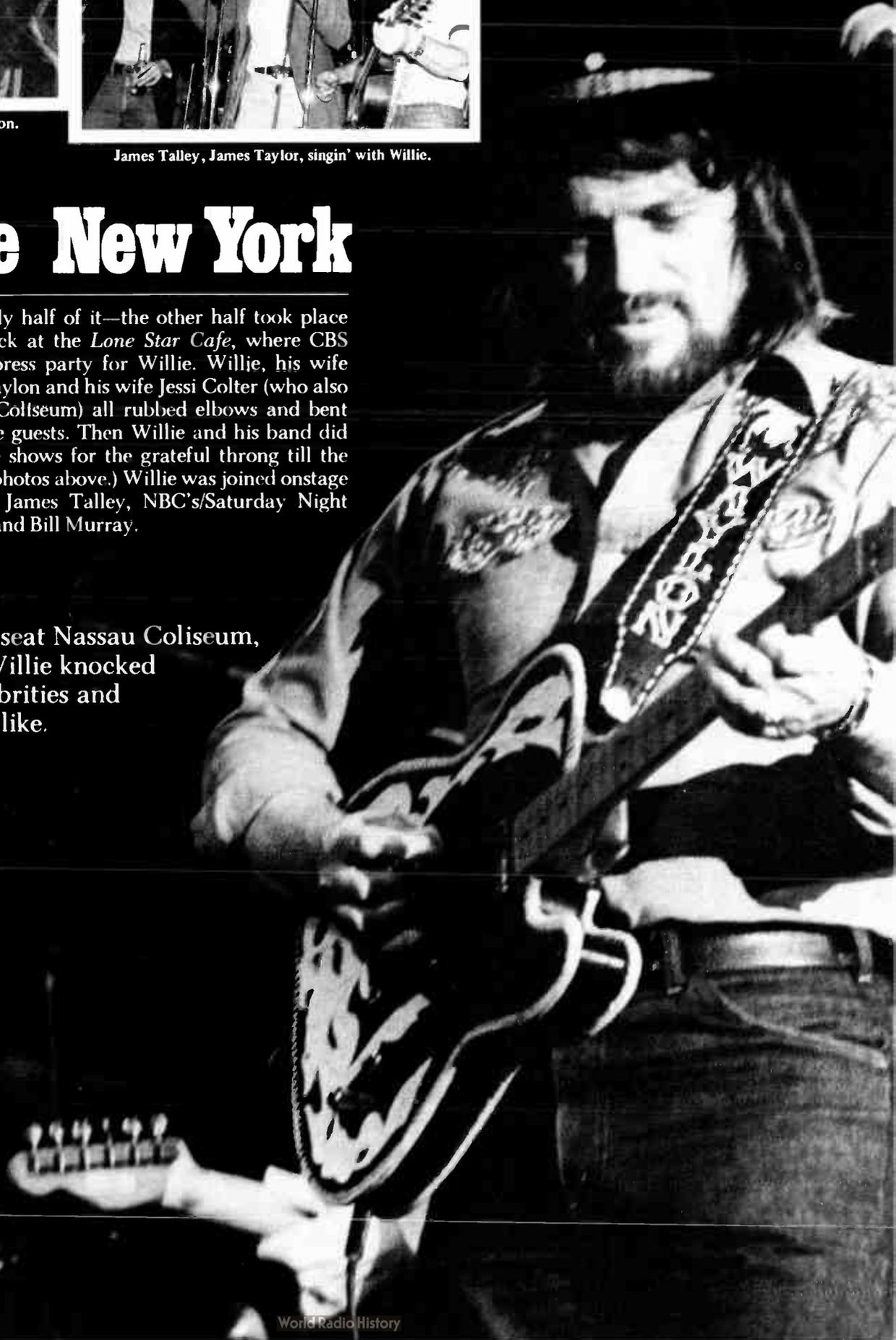
James Talley, James Taylor, singin' with Willie.

Invade New York

But that was only half of it—the other half took place the next night, back at the *Lone Star Cafe*, where CBS Records threw a press party for Willie. Willie, his wife Connie Nelson, Waylon and his wife Jessi Colter (who also performed at the Coliseum) all rubbed elbows and bent elbows with all the guests. Then Willie and his band did two full, dynamite shows for the grateful throng till the wee hours. (Small photos above.) Willie was joined onstage by James Taylor, James Talley, NBC's/Saturday Night stars John Belushi and Bill Murray.

ON STAGE:

At the 19,000 seat Nassau Coliseum, Waylon and Willie knocked 'em dead, celebrities and suburbanites alike.



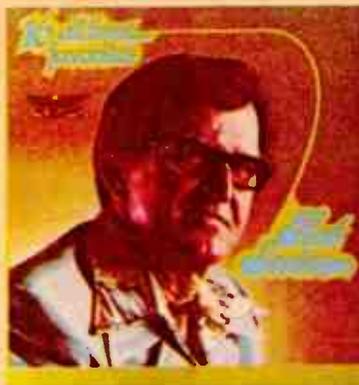
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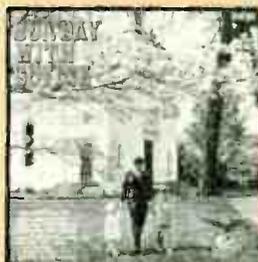
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Country's Hottest New Duo

DOTTIE & KENNY

A Talk With Dottie West

Dottie West's name keeps coming up.

Jeannie Seely, when pressed to find a last-minute replacement for a recent television show, called on her friend, Dottie West.

Connie Smith, when discussing the culinary skills of people she knew, raved about Dottie West's memorable Thanksgiving dinner.

Dolly Parton and Emmylou Harris, when listening to the tapes which eventually produced Emmylou's version of Dolly's *To Daddy*, had a visitor—that's right, Dottie West.

Dottie West—native Nashvillian, Coca Cola girl par excellence and good friend to all.

And now her name has been linked—musically—with another of Nashville's favorites, Kenny Rogers. The two have gotten together in a duo that rivals Conway and Loretta, with their first single, *Every Time Two Fools Collide*, rising to the top of the country charts faster than bubbles rise to the top of a Coke.

Dottie, pencil poised to sign a poster of her and Kenny, explains how country music's Mr. and Miss Popularity got together:

"First of all," she says softly, "because we were both on United Artists. It had been thought of, of course, but not really seriously talked about. Our producer, Larry Butler, thought that it would be a good idea. But it really happened in December.

by **MARY ELLEN MOORE**

"I was doing some overdubbing because I was working on my own album. And the song, *Every Time Two Fools Collide*, was a song for me. And Kenny came in because he had a session for later on that night and he sat down and was listening as I worked. I came in to listen to the playback on another tune, and when I sat down—there was just Butler and Kenny and me—he paid me a really great compliment.

"In fact," she momentarily demurred, "I don't even want to repeat it, it was so beautiful. But he said that I was his favorite female singer. I was just really flattered, embarrassingly so, because he... I think so much of him and his work. I guess I've got every album Kenny Rogers has ever made, since First Edition and way back."

Dottie, searching for a way to repay the compliment, told Kenny, "Y'know, no matter how long you've been in this business, you always have new goals. You wanna hear my newest one?" Kenny said yes, and Dottie said, "I'd like to record and sing with Kenny Rogers."

Kenny shook her hand and said, "You've got it," and Dottie returned to the business of laying tracks on her own album when Butler suddenly informed her that, yes, there would be a

West-Rogers duet, and the time to do it was right now. So Kenny joined Dottie on her former solo, and the rest is, as they say, country music history.

"I'll tell you," Dottie continues, "that's what I mean when I say a song has its time to happen. That song at that moment—there was just magic; there were almost sparks flying."

The song also sent Dottie's career soaring. Never exactly a nobody, Dottie nonetheless has not had that many super-big records. She's probably most well-known for the Coca Cola theme song (which she also wrote), *I Was Raised On Country Sunshine*. She's a prolific writer, and is responsible for *Here Comes My Baby*, which was her biggest seller (in 1965), and was subsequently recorded more than 100 times, providing gold records for Perry Como and Lou Martin and a hit for Ray Price.

Since she's been recording, she's had four duet partners, including Kenny. Jim Reeves, Don Gibson and Jimmy Dean all recorded with the dynamic redhead while she was with RCA.

Dottie, obviously, never did believe in standing still.

"I think it's good to do something different. It's interesting to the fans and to the record-buyers. I buy a lot of albums myself. And I can't wait 'til Dolly and Emmylou and Linda Ronstadt's album comes out. It's gonna be great—I can't wait for that, as a fan myself... You just have to have new

goals, try to reach more people, and that's what I'm doing."

Kenny Rogers agrees with Dottie's evaluation. While recording together boosts her career considerably, it also helped him, by all rights already a

superstar.

"It solidifies me with the country music audience," Rogers believes, echoing Dottie's earlier guess that "If Kenny had to have a reason for singing with me, I think it's that he is try-

ing to be more well-known with the country fans and have a relation with the country music, because he really admits that he loves country music, and has all along."

While Dottie enthuses about Kenny Rogers' infectious energy, it's hard not to be caught up in her own energizing personality. When she first walked into the office, she seemed to tower over everyone, and everybody present immediately drew near her, like flies to honey. She's extremely good-looking, with traffic-stopping looks that she makes the most of—tight t-shirt, form-hugging pants, high-heeled boots, a classy cowboy hat atop her red hair.

As her career takes off, she's joining Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers in their reliance on Los Angeles firms for booking and management. Her own solo album cover, released in May so as to avoid conflict with the duct album, is one of the classiest covers to be seen on a country music album in a long time.

But then, that's the word that fits Dottie West as neatly as her t-shirt: classy. And relying on Bob Mackie (designer for Cher and Marie Osmond) for fashion design, didn't hurt either. That is, it didn't hurt her image: it killed her feet.

Mackie designed the outfits Dottie wore when she and Kenny co-hosted the NBC country music special at the Pontiac Silverdome arena in Michigan. And, said Dottie a couple of weeks after the taping of the show, "It went fantastic. But I still haven't gotten over the new high heel boots I wore yet; they were really spiked heels that Mackie made for me."

Dottie is as excited about the recent abundance of women on the music charts as she is about her own success; she thinks it's long overdue.

"I came to Nashville in the early 60s (returned, after a stay in Ohio), and that's when Patsy Cline was hitting with *I Fall to Pieces* and *Sweet Dreams*. Until then, even the record people didn't pay that much attention to female singers because I don't think they believed that we could sell records. I don't get into women's lib that heavy because... I think it's mainly because I haven't had to, being sort of independent as a singer. I mean

Dottie & Kenny Host The World's Biggest Indoor Country Show



Kenny and Dottie take a moment to relax backstage at the Silverdome in Pontiac, Michigan before going onstage.

"This show was so unprecedented that there was no set parameters. Five acts in a hall seating 10,000 had been done a million times before, so it's very simple. But the Silverdome for country music? That's something else entirely!"

With these words Gary Cappy, head of promotion for NBC television's Big Event, The Largest Indoor Country Show at Pontiac, Michigan's, Silverdome, launched his project.

"In terms of advertising and promo, I had four basic priorities: to stage the world's largest indoor country show; to present the stars of the Grand Ole Opry on tour; to tape a show for NBC and to see to it that there were 20 top acts."

Did they succeed?

Well, yes. The NBC Big Event, which aired on April 5, 1978, with 80,000 attending was very probably the biggest "indoor" country show ever, neatly skirting the issue of Willie Nelson's annual Fourth of July "outdoor" gatherings. The Grand Ole Opry stars were on stage, including Porter Wagoner, Jeanne Pruett, Minnie Pearl, Charlie McCoy, Don Williams, Larry Gatlin, Red Sovine, Grandpa Jones and the Oak Ridge Boys, as well as hosts Kenny Rogers and Dottie West, among others—many appearing before a national television audience for the first time.

The show was the brainchild of Rudy Callicut, head of Rudy Callicut productions.

Born in North Carolina, Rudy Callicut came to Washington in 1949. He was a

barber, and remained one until he retired last year to devote his full time to his thriving country music business. (He once had a barbershop at the Pentagon where he shaved many powerful heads, including General Westmoreland's once a week for three years.) But his country roots grew strongly into a deep love for its music.

"I love country music, even the modern. But I grew up and cut my teeth on the old stuff—bluegrass, the old mountain, traditional country music. We called it string music when we were kids, not hillbilly or country music.

He started booking Nashville acts in 1963, and set up the biggest shows in the Washington area at the time featuring the likes of Johnny Cash, George Jones, and Roy Acuff. The combination of barbering and promoting country music continued until the summer of '76.

"I had an idea to do a big concert in the Capital Centre. Johnny Cash came in and did a concert that drew only 10,000 people. So I thought, "If Johnny Cash can only draw 10,000 people here, who could top that?"

"Then it dawned on me one day, that if I could get the Grand Ole Opry up there I could fill the place. So I called Bud Wendell, who was the manager of the Grand Ole Opry and told him what my idea was and he said, 'Rudy, we've never been approached with this idea before. I wouldn't tell you it couldn't be done, but write a letter with your intentions and I'll take it in to the board and we'll vote on it.

"So I sent the letter and exactly 10 days later a letter was in my mailbox with an approval to use the name Grand Ole Opry as long as I used 75% of the Opry stars.

"So one day my wife Erin and I got in the car and drove down to Nashville and looked through the phone book for all the agencies and started calling them. And we put together a dynamite show! We had 21 acts—Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl, Grandpa Jones, Bill Monroe, Osborne Brothers, Bill Anderson, Little Jimmy Dickens—and the people in Nashville thought I was crazy. Everybody requested a 50% deposit because they thought I'd have the biggest loser ever."

But Rudy made all the deposits, started promoting the show in November, and on April 16, 1977, he broke all attendance records for an indoor country show—27,000 people and a gross of \$224,000!

Just before the show, NBC contracted Jim Fitzgerald, Executive Producer of Rudy Callicut Productions, and offered to do a live special on the NBC-affiliated station in Washington. Rudy declined, feeling it might hurt ticket sales.

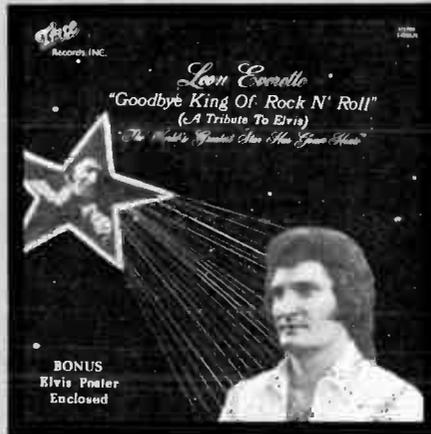
"It was already too late to tape the show

(Continued on page 26)

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I have been—so to speak— the breadwinner in the family; I really haven't had to feel that way, except in a couple of areas.

"Now, I don't feel that female songwriters get that much attention either. I don't think the publishers really push their songs; they don't really respect women. And women can imagine, if anything *better* than men.

"And the other thing is, when they build a package, a country music package, when you go out on the road and tour, they would have five or six male singers and one female singer, I would be added to it, and I would really feel that I wasn't added because I was a record-seller or an entertainer, I'd feel that it was because they needed a skirt, a dress on the show.

"But it's changing some, though. Like this morning, we had a contract come in that we're playing a festival that's Kenny and me and Dolly. And that makes me happy, because usually it would be Kenny and me and the Oak Ridge boys, or... And I really like that. For one thing, I've never gotten very much time to spend with the girl singers on the road, because we're usually alone in the dressing room. Like, there will be several guys on the show, and they all get to visit backstage and talk about the business part of this business, songwriting, whatever.

"But I would be alone in the dressing room."

Dottie has one advantage on the road that most girl singers don't—her husband of five years, Byron Metcalf, is the drummer in her band, Cross-Country.

In fact, her entire family is totally involved in music: Daughter Shelley Lynn West, formerly part of her mother's show, has moved to Orlando, Fla., where she performs regularly in a nightclub. Son Alan Dale, 15, recorded with his mother before he was old enough to go to school and is now learning to play the drums from Byron. And in addition to his duties as drummer and husband, Byron handles the business end of the business. As a bonus, he's a gourmet cook.

Dottie can't believe one girl can be so lucky in life: Good career, good friends, great family. . .

"I have a ball at what I'm doing. I just can't believe that I get to make a living at something I love to do so much. My husband is always with me, and I don't have to do anything except get dressed and sing and put on my make-up and write songs."

Dottie lights up just talking about it and finally, with a flourish, she finishes signing the poster in front of her. As things break up, someone asks her about her hat: Is it suede, they wonder? Dottie thinks not, it's probably felt, but she checks the label.

"I bought this hat in Las Vegas," she says. Then, "Well excuse me, it's *mink*, that's what it says. I knew it was a good hat, but I didn't know it was *that* good. Well, I'll baby this thing."

Like we said, Dottie West's all class. ■

Dottie & Kenny Host The World's Biggest Indoor Country Show

(Continued from page 24)

itself, but they said that if we planned another show to let them know way ahead of time. So we did and Jim contacted them, and on October 8, 1977, we did another show that was smaller and taped 14 hours in the parking lot and backstage, and it was edited into two local NBC specials called 'Country Onstage/Backstage.'

"I got the idea that this thing would be a natural television concept presentation, so I went ahead and put together a very low budget show with three cameras, no TV stage lighting or makeup, but it basically caught the concept we wanted: a live concert presentation of what country music is. We also wanted to show a bit of what goes on backstage—the excitement, chaos, jam sessions, things like this. So we taped the show and made two one-hour specials out of it and sent the footage to New York last October."

The man they worked with in New York was Aaron Cohen, the vice president of program administration covering special and late night programming at NBC.

"Callicutt and Fitzgerald came up to New York and sat down and outlined what they had done in Washington and showed me a bit of the tape, which, although it had been made on a modest budget, showed potential. We then discussed a number of different possibilities based on the Grand Ole Opry road show that they had booked into a number of different halls. Because of timing and the size of this place, we settled on trying to put together a package based on a show here at the Silverdome.

"We knew that the Detroit area was a very big center for country music and that it contained a great many southerners and middle southerners that had moved up as early as the World War II years and had made this a base of country music in the East, so we felt positive about being able to draw a full house for the show.

"And that's part of what I think is going to make this show exciting: 80,000 people hooting and stomping and clapping—reacting to the performers. The amount of energy that the performers will feel from that crowd I hope translates into their performance and that we get some of that on the screen with the closeups of intercutting the performers with the crowd."

"I feel very honored to be part of the show," answered Roy Acuff to my obvious question.

Bill Monroe: "I think it's really great, and



Dottie, singing to an audience of 80,000.

to get to have my bluegrass and me on it, well, it really makes me feel wonderful."

Little Jimmy Dickens: "It's a great thrill to see so many people, and it shows that the folks still love country music."

Porter Wagoner: "I think this show today will be a super thing for everybody that loves country music, whether it be a person like Larry Gatlin or myself or the Oak Ridge Boys or Roy Acuff. I think anybody that has an interest in country music will have to be awful proud when they walk out and see 80,000 people sitting there to watch them and hear them."

Johnny Gimble: "I didn't have any idea what we were getting into. I'll let you be excited and I'll be worried."

Jeanne Pruett was the only person taking it all in stride.

"This is the most bodies and the most talent that I've ever had congregated in one auditorium to work with, but just to be a part of country music is the biggest show on earth as far as I'm concerned." Jim Bessman

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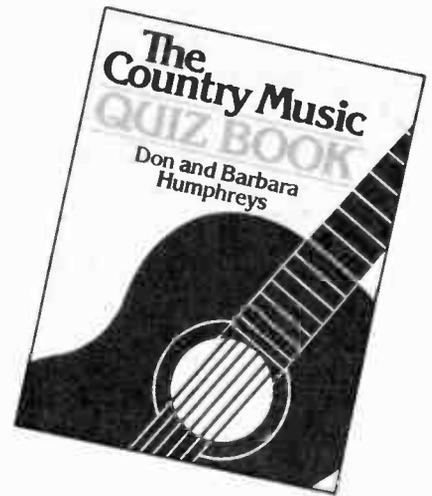
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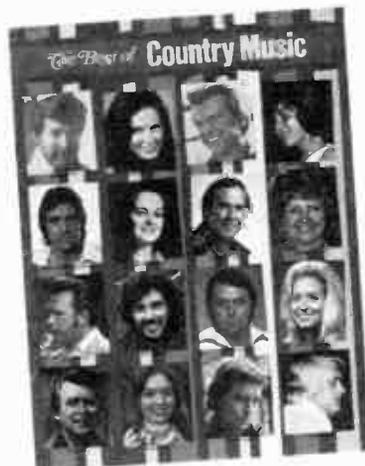
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RISING STAR AWARD



MEL McDANIEL

One of a common breed in country music: the fifteen year, overnight success.

by **ED WARD**

Mel McDaniel is one of those people who puts you completely at ease from the moment you meet him. He's got a warm smile that crinkles the edges of his eyes, a soft voice layered with a pure southern accent, and a handshake that makes no attempt to disrupt your bone structure. He's polite and downplays a fan's mention of the success that's come to him recently with a sort of well-we-do-our-best attitude. It doesn't do him any good, though. All you have to do is turn on the radio and hear *God Made Love* with its gently insistent beat loping out of your speaker and you realize that here is a singing, song-writing talent with plenty in reserve, someone who, with a little luck, is going to be around awhile.

Why, he'll even try and make you believe that he's honored to be opening for the Dillards at North Hollywood's famed Palomino Club on a

weekday night even though he's the one with the hit. Hey, maybe he really is, even though this writer was one of the many who walked out in the middle of their set. I wanted to see Mel again, but there's just some stuff I can't take, and it seemed as if the rest of the audience agreed with me. The Dillards' speedy, frenetic, un-funny show clashed with the quiet, understated communication Mel was dishing out, and it was clear that that was exactly what the folks had come to see.

It's hard to realize, in the middle of all this, that Mel's only had a professional career for a few months, because he acts like he's a veteran. He is, but not of the big time—Mel McDaniel's one of a breed that's pretty common in country music: the fifteen year overnight success.

Mel's story began 35 years ago in Checotah, Oklahoma, smack in the

middle of the Indian country near Muskogee. His parents divorced when he was young (although they recently remarried after 27 years), and he was raised by his grandparents in Tahlequah, his mother in San Jose and Delano, California, and his father wherever the construction business took him. It meant a lot of traveling for young Mel, a lot of time spent in cars across flat, boring country. "Yeah, but on those long drives I'd just sit there and sing the whole time," he remembers. In the fourth grade, inspired by a cousin, he picked up the trumpet and joined the school band, although he was already a country music fan.

"I quit playin' the trumpet because it made too much noise," he says, sidestepping the question of whether he was asked to stop. "so I started in playin' guitar. Elvis happened when I hit high school, and I started a little

band called the Rebelaires that played around the local VFW bars and sock-hops. I didn't really play my guitar, and I still don't—I just sort of chord it a little—but I was a singer, and that's what I'd always wanted to be. When I graduated from high school, I packed up and went to Tulsa and started playin' around the clubs there. I married Mary, my wife, when I was 19, so in order to keep my family together, I took all kinds of screwy jobs. But Tulsa wasn't happening, so we moved to Columbus, Ohio, for about six months and finally decided the hell with it, might as well try it. We went to Nashville around 1970. I was there two years, workin' out at the airport and I just couldn't do anything. The time wasn't right, I wasn't right, there wasn't anything right about it at all.

"Now at this time, my brother was up in Anchorage, Alaska, sendin' us money to help us out, and one day he called and said 'Mel, I believe you could get a job if you came up here.' So we loaded everything into the pickup, me, my wife, our daughter Danielle, two dogs, and we went to Alaska. Second night I was there, I got a job at the King's X Lounge making \$80 a night as a single, workin' an eight-hour shift. I guess that's the only thing that I ever planned out that went just the way I wanted it to. I worked two years up there, saved enough money to pay off all my bills, and moved back to Nashville.

"The King's X was a well-run club, and it gave me my education. When I first started, I knew about five songs all the way through, so I got a book with all these songs in it from a friend of mine in Nashville, and I'd set it up on the stage on a little wire music stand and sing out of it. First night I had it up, the whole thing just fell onto the floor, and that scared me to death, but I just set it right back up and went on. They encouraged me and gave me the chance to learn, and I can never thank them enough. I still have a following up there, everyone from policeman to hippies, and they all came to this club, and set on opposite sides of the room. In all the years, there was only one fight, and they went outside to do that one.

"But back in Nashville, I got a job

at the Holiday Inn on Murfreesboro Road, and worked myself into the ground, just overdone myself. At the end of nine months, I weighed 160 pounds, I was sick, it was awful. I knew I wanted to be on records, because I could see what sittin' there in clubs night after night was doin' to me; it couldn't do nothin' but kill me. So Mary went back to work and I went back to Alaska for six weeks to raise some money, and as soon as I came back, I ran into a guy I knew from before who I'd offered to do demo work for, and he said 'I've been looking for you because I'm gettin' ready to go ahead with some demos.' I took my tape out to John MacRae—Dawg—as they call him, and he liked what he heard, so he set me up with

“
**I knew I wanted to be
on records because
I could see what sittin'
there in clubs night
after night was doin'
to me; it couldn't
do nothin' but kill me.**
”

my first demo session.

"Poor Dawg, man. I was scared to death. At the end of the session, Dawg took Chip Young aside and said 'I can't use that boy no more. I don't have the heart to put *nobody* through somethin' like that again.' But for some reason, he didn't give up, and it got to where I was doin' all the demos for Combine Music, and bunch for Chappell Music."

Now, a lot of people who get to this point think they have it made. What Mel was doing was singing on the tapes that songwriters send to recording sessions in Nashville—and other places—in hopes of getting their songs cut. Some songwriters don't sing very well, believe it or not, so they hire a singer to cut the songs for them. Combine, the publisher that

handles Kris Kristofferson and Dennis Linde (and now Mel McDaniel), cuts their demos in a tiny studio in the basement of their Music Row office, called The Rat Hole. But the sad fact is that few demo singers get out of the demo-singer business. Few producers snap to attention and demand to know who that voice is because they're more interested in the song.

Which is why we next find Mel reacquainting himself with the subtleties of the regular/premium/unleaded market at the Texaco station on Two Mile Pike outside of Nashville. He'd already tasted success as a songwriter when one song from his Alaskan stay, *Roll Your Own* got recorded by first Hoyt Axton, then Commander Cody.

He wanted to be a performer, but singers who don't write have a real tough time in any part of the music business, and in country music, it's even worse.

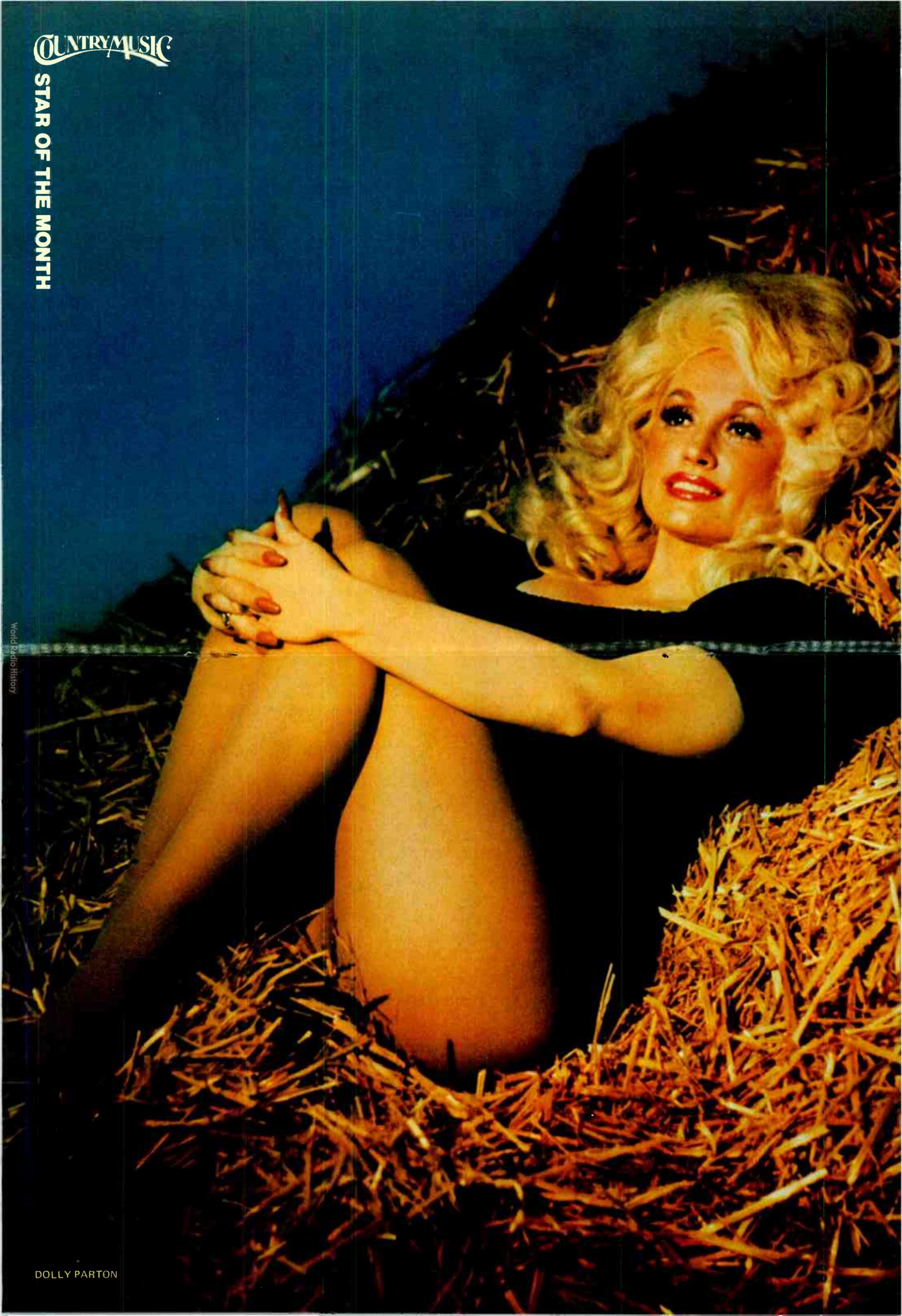
But one day Mel got a call at the Texaco station from MacRae asking him to come in to Combine. "I took the day off and Dawg told me 'I think we finally got the song for you.' It was *Have A Dream On Me*, and I went into the studio and cut it. The next thing I knew, Dawg had made a deal with Capitol. And there it was, what I'd wanted all those years I was killin' myself in those nightclubs."

Mel's looking to the future, too, looking forward to a songwriting career and long association with Combine. "I want to be a songwriter," he admits, "But it's a very hard thing for me to do. I have to have a lot of help with it, but I'm very fortunate in being with Combine, with people like Bob Morrison and Dennis Linde and Dawg helping me on the things that I do write, I think I'll eventually come up with somethin'." But even now, he has Conway Twitty riding the charts with *The Grandest Lady of Them All*, a collaboration with Bob Morrison, and, of course, his own records aren't doing badly at all.

Right now, he's touring selected spots in Larry Gatlin's old 12-seater van with a six-piece band that can rock or be gentle with equal ease. The situation isn't the easiest, but Mel says they all get along well enough, "and, of course, all of 'em is about half-crazy, and that helps a lot." ■

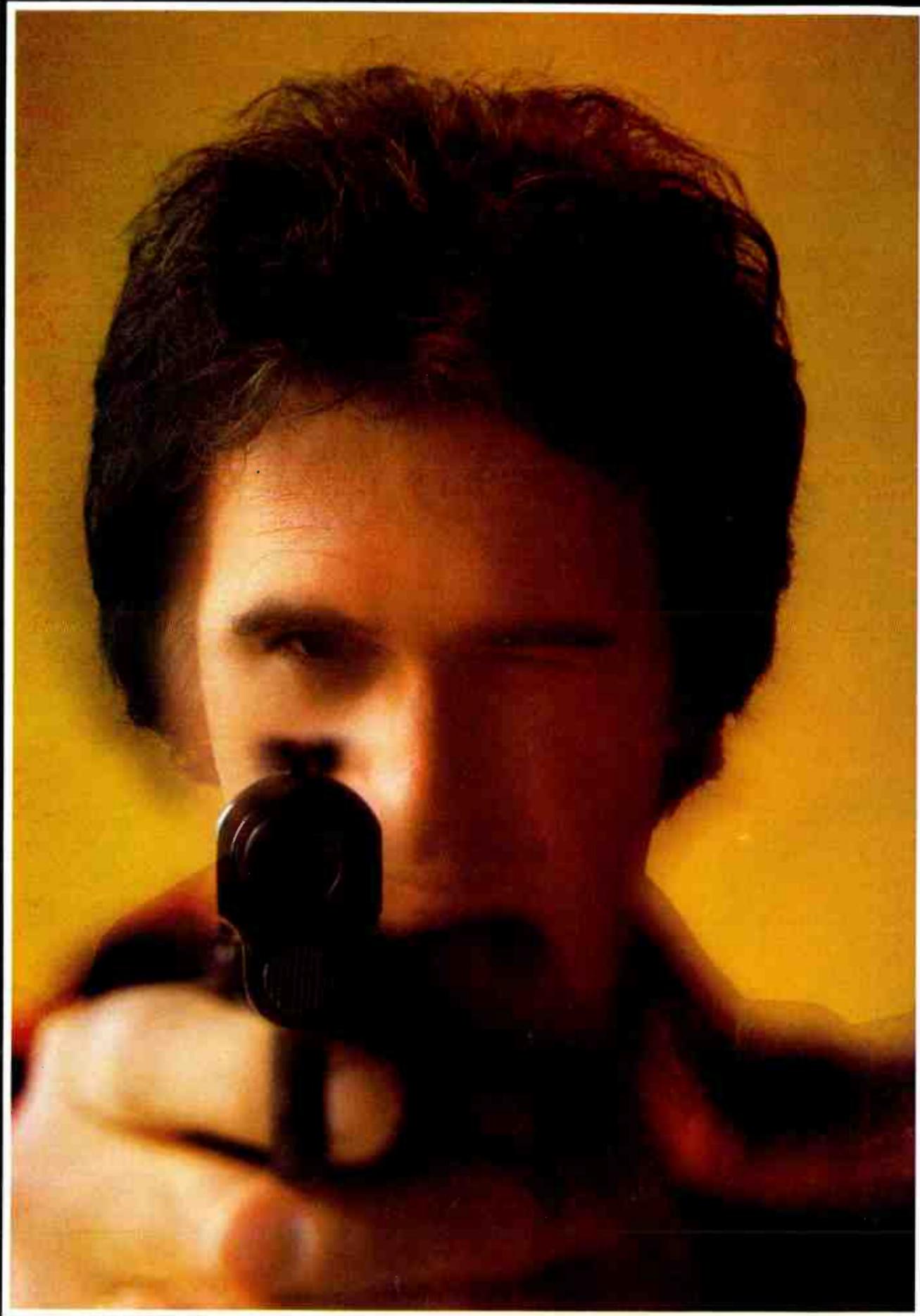
COUNTRYMUSIC

STAR OF THE MONTH



World Radio History

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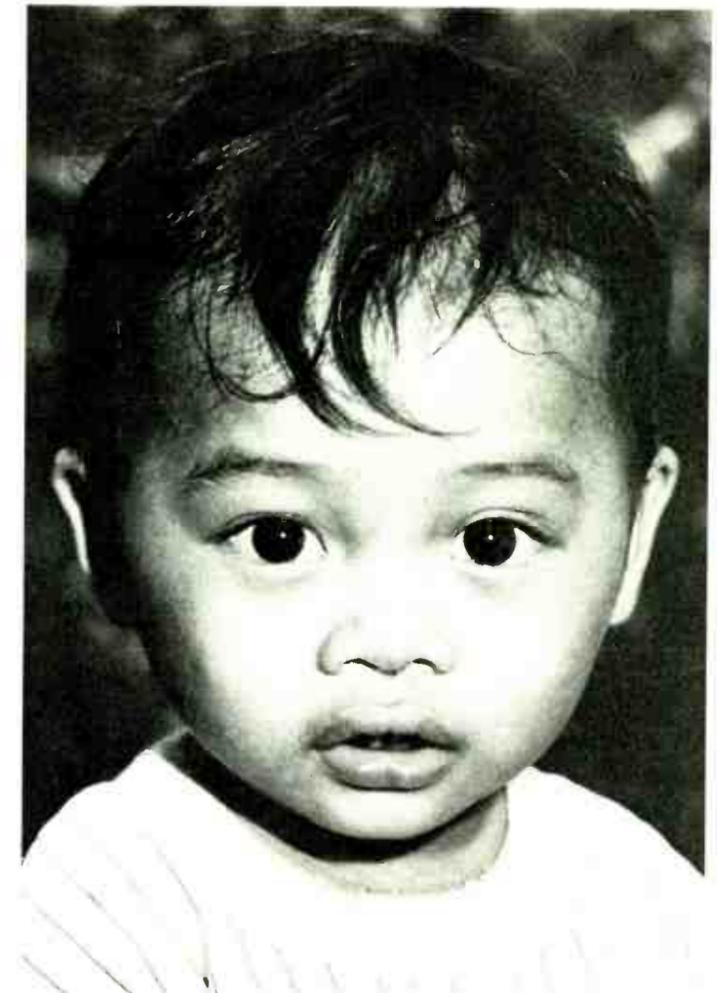
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A Loaded Interview With:

T.G. SHEPPARD

by NICK TOSCHES

N.T.: Tell me about the gun. The one Elvis gave you.

T.G.: It's a gold-plated .45 that was owned by General Patton. There are only five of them in the world. Elvis had them all, then he gave me one of them. He also gave me a Trailways touring bus when I decided to become an artist three years ago. I had known him since 1961, and I worked for five years as a sort of liaison between him and RCA. We were very close.

N.T.: How many guns do you have?

T.G.: About a hundred. Mostly handguns, pistols. I love to shoot.

N.T.: Ever shoot at human beings?

T.G.: I've had to a couple of times. I'm a lieutenant with the Shelby County Police Department, in Memphis. I've been a lieutenant for eight years. I had to become one. It's against the law to carry a gun in Tennessee unless you're a commissioned officer. So I had to go and become a commissioned officer, just to be able to carry a gun. I can carry a gun legally in every state except New York.

N.T.: Where did you come from?

T.G.: Humboldt, Tennessee.

N.T.: Were there a lot of black people there? Did you listen to black music when you were a kid?

T.G.: Yeah. I've always been into gospel. My mother was a gospel singer. But I drifted into rock 'n' roll. I moved to Memphis in the late Fifties, and lived there until 1974, when I moved to Nashville.

N.T.: When did you decide to become a singer?

T.G.: Well, in 1961 I recorded for Atlantic, with Jerry Wexler. It didn't do anything, and I figured I wasn't gonna make it as an artist, so I got involved in promotion. Then one day in 1974 a guy knocked on my door and gave me

this song called "Devil In The Bottle." After I heard the first fifteen seconds, I said, "I been lookin' for this for about fifteen years," I cut it, put it out on Motown, and it was a Number One country hit. Then we followed it up with "Tryin' To Beat The Mornin' Home."

N.T.: Is booze your favorite subject?

T.G.: Well, this new one we've got out on Warner Bros. is quite a change. It's almost a gospel sound to it. Deep Southern, I call it. I like all sorts of songs. A song-plugger asked me, he said, "What do you look for in a song?" I told him, "A hit." And that's about the size of it.

N.T.: Did you ever try to get Elvis to cut your songs?

T.G.: Yeah. I'd pitch him songs. He'd pitch me songs. His favorite country song was "Devil In The Bottle." I think eventually he would have cut it. We sang it together all the time, while we were playin' racquet-ball.

N.T.: Do you still listen to rock 'n' roll?

T.G.: Sure. I'm surrounded by it. My band's a rock 'n' roll band. Most of 'em been playin' R&B all their lives. I converted 'em over to country. I carry from five to nine pieces with me on the road. I carry three girl singers, the Holiday Sisters. They're the same girl singers that Elvis used. They live here in Nashville.

N.T.: Everybody should have girl singers on the road.

T.G.: Yeah. I'd love to do a duet with Emmylou Harris. I even have the perfect song. But I haven't talked to anyone about it.

N.T.: Well, I guess you're on the right label.

T.G.: I guess so.

N.T.: How old are you?

T.G.: Thirty-three. With a bullet. ■

Watch out—you're looking down the business end of T.G. Sheppard!

Courtesy Warner Brothers "Waxpaper"



The Carpenters Go Country?

Sweet, Sweet Smile by Karen and Richard Carpenter has been on the charts for 15 weeks. After ten years at the top of the squeaky-clean pop music field, after millions of records sold, this is their first country hit. They seem a little surprised and confused. Yes, they are happy with the hit, but don't seem to know what's next.

by **NANCY NAGLIN**



The Carpenters' hometown—New Haven, Connecticut—with its church spires poking through the drizzle and the gulls huddled in the reeds alongside the railroad tracks is a long, cold way from sunny L.A. Years of back-to-back touring, inhuman schedules and an obsessive attention to detail, sometimes bordering on the neurotic, have brought them light years away from their humble New England beginnings. But even comfortably at home in their A&M Records office, sister Karen and brother Richard, basking in the deflected glow of their 18 gold records, are sun-stroked yet with the sudden success of *Sweet, Sweet Smile* from their *Passages* album.

"I knew it was off the wall," says Karen absolutely mystified by the tune's success. She has just come from an all night session, putting the finishing touches on a TV special and although exhausted, she is still revved up. "A true workaholic." Richard's word to describe them both.

"Ever since *Top of the World* happened with Lynn Anderson, people always ask us how come we didn't have a hit on it in the country field." She turns to brother Rich—partner, arranger and companion—and shrugs. He opens his mouth to answer; she blithely reads his mind.

"It's because we released ours as a single pop after she had the hit. Ever since then we always thought it

The Carpenters have 18 gold records in the pop field. Are they ready for the country?

would be possible but we never did anything." Rich nods agreement.

The Carpenters, for years the darlings of the squeaky-clean, middle of the road, easy listening sound, with their TV specials and Vegas shows, have wandered across the charts into Opry land and they're not quite sure how it happened.

"We're kind of soft, easy-going country," Richard concedes, groping for the words to properly describe his sound.

"We always try to get one country song on our albums," adds Karen. "Not for any specific purpose but because we like it. We don't go in and say we got to record a song that will get on the country charts. We always just go in with what we like." Then she flashes her famous down-home smile, bright with the reassurance fo a flight attendant's welcome.

For although the Carpenters, versatile survivors of a dozen years and almost as many music trends, are bewildered by their tune's success, they are genuinely delighted in finally finding a country audience. In the hard rock days of the late 60's, they nearly got left behind before they really started. Then James Taylor floated in with the easier sound of the 70's, and they felt redeemed. Through it all, the Carpenters have remained a self-sufficient, inward-looking team who select, arrange and produce their music without ever going beyond the family circle. "Yeah, it's always been that way," says Richard. "It seems

like if you ask five different people, you get five different answers."

"It was like when we first got started and we were mixing *Ticket To Ride*," recalls Karen. "It finally got around to where we were asking so many people that it seemed that the next person we were going to ask was..."

"The security man," says Richard, his voice coming in on top of hers.

If their music now has a country flavor it's because, self-consciously or not, the sound has filtered through Richard's ear. According to Karen, when album time rolls around, Richard goes home with a carload of material and begins "the ever-long search through the piles of things that come in."

"No, I don't write. It's sad, isn't it?" she says brightly, as Rich stares at the floor. "Nothin' ever came out."

By chance, Karen was visiting a friend who played a tape of *Sweet, Sweet Smile*, written by singer-song-writer Juice Newton. She brought it home to Rich, and as soon as he heard it, he wanted to add a few things—like a banjo.

"When I hear country, all of it sticks," he says, tilting his head to the side as if he's reading off a sheet of imaginary sheet music. When he was a kid, his father was a big fan of Spade Cooley, and Richard spent hours listening to 10-inch LP's recorded in the early 50's. Cooley's sound was smooth with full brass and reed sections. "Then there was the steel guitar. See, I remembered it," he says tapping the side of his head.

(Continued on page 58)

TOMPALL VS. The Devil Machine

by Bob Allen

In the early afternoon, or in the small hours of the morning, there's usually something going on at Daddy Wakers, a small bar and game room just off Music Row, on Nashville's 20th Avenue South. With equal intent of purpose, customers—be they unemployed songwriters, off-duty session pickers, college kids from nearby Vanderbilt, big-time record producers, high school drop-outs, lawyers, roadies from Waylon Jennings' road show, or even music celebrities like Tom-pall Glaser—stop briefly at the bar, where they order a drink and change their five, ten, or twenty-dollar bills into quarters.

Having done this, they head for the back of the room where stands a row of four or five of those squat, four-legged, evil machines, with their weird and gaudy pop art designs—those sinister electronic seducers, with their nasty little lights and bells that practically cry out: "FEED ME A QUARTER!!" And having been fed a quarter (a quarter that could better be used to feed starving children or buy babies new shoes, if we are to be swayed by the tirades of local legislators), those devil machines entice their all-too-willing victims even further. With a barrage of blinking, multi-colored lights, sensuous chimes and the confident staccato of

shifting odds, they practically beg them to, "FEED ME AGAIN! YOU ALMOST BEAT ME! TRY AGAIN!"

Mind you, these are not your innocent little fun-type flipper machines. These are the big leagues of pinball: Genuine flipperless gambling devices. The State of Tennessee remains today, one of the last frontiers of the pay-off pinball machine. And on these machines, in a long night's playing, an individual can possibly lose or win several hundred dollars.

During the years that the pinball business has flourished in Tennessee, it has maintained a shaky truce with the powers-that-be. Tennessee is one of only two or three places in the entire country (including Las Vegas) where pay-off pinball is sanctioned. Oddly enough, its whole *raison d'être* is based on a loophole in a 1957 anti-gambling law, and it is the only form of gambling that is permitted in the state.

"The law says it's not illegal to pay off on 'em, and they don't say it's legal either," says John Powers, the owner of the Tennessee Novelty Company, which has about 200 pinball machines in various locations around Nashville. "They've been operating under this law for years."



Pinball and the Music Business: Flashing Lights, Cold Beer and a Fresh Roll of Quarters

Who can really explain the lure of the pinball machines?

Perhaps it is because of their availability at all sorts of crazy hours of the day or night. Or maybe it's because—if you've got the money to burn—pinball can be such a reckless, devil-may-care, and, ultimately, relaxing way to spend an

evening. Maybe it's because one of those seemingly innocent machines, once it has been fed the proper diet of quarters, can become an aggressive, implacable opponent. The machine asks no quarter, but takes as many of them as it can get. You can coax it, cuss it, (and if you're sly about it) hit it and kick it. You can fondle it and love it to death; you can vent your wrath against it, pull your hair out over it, and walk away in disgust. And the very worst it can do back to you is "tilt," or leave you broke at the end of an evening.

Perhaps it is because, as

more than one dedicated player pointed out to me, pinball is actually a form of "therapy": The level of concentration that a dedicated pinball freak will sustain for hours on end will be found nowhere else, short of an air traffic control tower. It can be a deep, almost trance-like involvement in the game, and for that period of time, all the problems of the world are laid aside, and there is *nothing* beyond the universe of those flashing lights and that rolling steel ball.

Perhaps it is for all of these reasons (or possibly for none of

them) that the pinball machine is so popular within Nashville's country music world. Whatever their motivation, numerous celebrities, including Jerry Lee Lewis, Tom-pall Glaser, Waylon Jennings, Donnie Fritz, Bobby Bare, and Captain Midnite have logged long hours feeding quarters to those insolent machines, partaking in a national pastime that has been called everything from "a great American art form," to "a deliberate waste of time."

And the motif of pinball in country music has by no means been a passive one. Like

the pot-bellied stove in the country store, or the smoke-filled rooms of the politicos, the pinball machine, to the musician, has sometime offered a casual sort of forum, free from the constraints of the record company board room or the "Time-equals-\$" tension of the recording studio, for the relaxed meeting of creative minds. Some important decisions and landmark deals have actually been negotiated across the top of a pinball machine: Songs have been written, records have been promoted, and careers have been launched. Music Row veterans fondly recall one respected promotion man who first made his name in Nashville and ended up as a very powerful record company vice president in New York:

"He would go over to a pinball machine somewhere and open up his telephone book and sit there and play pinball machines all day and make telephone calls," recalls Jerry Bailey, a promotion man at ABC Records. "And that was his office. He must have done pretty good; before long, he was a big shot up in New York."

"There's a couple of big music producers and stuff that come in here now and then to play," says Steve Blunkall, the manager of Daddy Wackers. "One of 'em doesn't come back anymore, though. He came in one night and wanted somebody to buy him a beer. Nobody would buy him a beer, so he got mad and left."

The Shot Of The Century

At 7 p.m., Tompall Glaser double-parks his 1977 Fleetwood Brougham Cadillac on the sidewalk (blocking in at least one car in the process) and walks across the street to Daddy Wackers. A faint wave of recognition runs through the crowd as he nonchallantly changes a \$20 bill into quarters and heads for the Bally Miss America flipperless machine in the back of the bar. But after a few moments, everyone quickly goes back to their drinks and their conversations. Tompall is obviously a regular here.

"Sometimes Tompall comes down here two-three nights in

Nashville's Great Pinball War

As one of the last remaining frontiers of pay-off machines, Tennessee's pinball business is a lucrative one. 1976 studies showed that more than \$5 million a year was being spent on new machines and service, and that the machines themselves were taking in at least \$100 million a year.

According to insiders, the cash flow is even bigger. They insist that pinball plays a bigger part in the state's commerce than many people realize: Club or store owners, they explain, can make upwards of \$500 a week, *per machine*, and for many of the smaller, independent establishments, they insist, pinball is the only thing that keeps the wolves away.

Naturally, pinball results in a large flow of largely unregulated—hence, untraceable—cash. During 1974-76, a serious struggle was said to be underway within Nashville's pinball industry. Fire Marshall Howard Boyd testified that 21 fire-bombings and dynamitings of taverns, lounges, with pinball machines in them caused nearly a million dollars damage. Some

proprietors of these establishments began going armed to protect their interests.

An unidentified source told the *Tennessean*, Nashville's morning paper, that "a war is underway to gain control of the pinball machine business. . . There are some pretty wealthy people involved. . . This is bigger than people think."

To this day, however, many pinball operators deny there ever was a war at all. "That was something they made up," insists John Powers of the Tennessee Novelty Company. "It was just something they blewed all out of proportion. I'm not saying it couldn't happen, but that's something that's not in this business. I know the whole state of Tennessee, and there ain't no organized crime or anything like that goes on. It's just a bunch of little private operators like myself. We're organized and have our own lobbying group and our own association. And it's just a bunch of good people in it!" Maybe so, after extensive investigations, no significant arrests were made.

a row," but then he won't come for a week or so," says Steve Blunkall. "He's a regular, but he's not like clockwork.

"I've seen him come in here at seven or eight at night, and at three o'clock in the morning, he'll still be here," Steve continues. "We close at one, but if somebody is putting roll after roll of quarters in there, it's worth our while to lock up and let him keep playin'!"

Lighting up a cigarette and dropping a handful of quarters in the machine, Tompall begins working the ABCDE selector buttons on the left side of the machine with the cold detachment and precision of a computer programmer charting the course of a Trident Missile.

The "in-line" flipperless machines like the one Tompall is playing are the type on which most gambling is done. They are actually quite a bit different from the more widely known, recreational flipper

Tompall with author, Bob Allen.

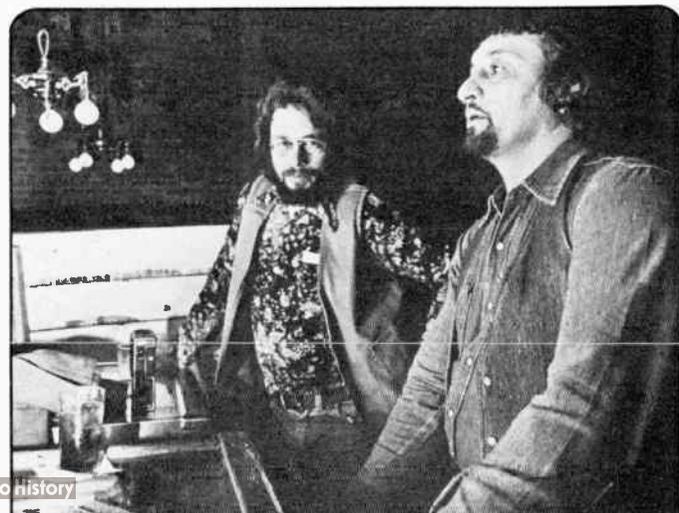
a movable board. If you put in enough quarters, you are able to play the selector buttons which move the horizontal lines of numbers on the "card" back and fourth, allowing you a greater number of options.

And more quarters will, of course, buy you even more options, and allow you to move more lines, more spaces. They will also entitle you to additional features: extra shots, "double or nothing" options, or a chance to light up the "mystery light" that is included on some machines. Most important, more quarters will jack up the odds even higher, and make the potential jack-pot even bigger.

For the novice like myself, these machines can be intimidating. It took me \$10 worth of quarters to even begin to figure out what all the flashing lights, shifting numbers and special features were all about. But a seasoned player like Tompall not only understands it all, but he also knows all the juxtapositions in which the numbers on the board can be arranged to work to his best advantage. In order to get the board just right, he will often put in quarter after quarter, before he even takes a shot.

"I jack around with the machine for a long time sometimes," he explains out of the side of his mouth, his eyes riveted to the board and his fingers nimbly working the selector buttons like keypunches. "The more money you put in, the more numbers you can move. (His long-neglected cigarette ash falls on the glass top.) Once you shoot the ball, they lock."

After this bit of initial instruction, Tompall lapses into silence. Again, his cigarette ash grows long. . . The butts pile up on the floor. . . His





drink stands untouched. *Nobody* gets between the man and the machine.

An hour rolls by quickly. Then another. Tompall's face is bathed in the soft glow of the pinball lights. The women and the drunks come and go, but Tompall doesn't seem to notice; he's oblivious to the loud conversation and the blaring juke box. At one point, he has his winnings up to 128 games (128 nickles). But he remains glued to the machine, as if through the pulsation of invisible electric currents, their metabolisms are intertwined.

Alternately, as he shoots each little steel ball, he applies subtle "persuasion" to the machine by pressing against it with the palms of his hands and his midriff, carefully avoiding the dreaded "tilt" mechanism which ends the game suddenly and voids all earnings.

"When you're going good, you can control the ball," Tompall says softly. "It's like within a ten or twelve-inch radius, you've got this force. It's like... *animation*."

Slyly, Tompall looks over his shoulder to see if he's being watched. More "persuasion" is obviously needed: He slams the top of the machine with his fist. Then, like a dancer, he leans back against a stool, raises his foot over the machine and gives the register button a precise, sharp kick with the heel of his cowboy boot. Then he rams the front of the machine hard with his pointy toe. "Sometimes," he explains, "I believe in brute force."

Despite all his coaxing, the Bally Miss America Machine is not giving. After two hours or

Pinball Politics

Meanwhile, in the Tennessee State Legislature, another pinball war was afoot. It began in March, 1976, when state Representative Neal Small (Repub., Memphis) sponsored a bill to outlaw pinball machines for gambling purposes. (Pay-off pinball machines were officially sanctioned in 1957 when the state Legislature adopted an amendment to Tennessee's anti-gambling statutes which excluded the machines from its definition of gambling devices.)

The anti-pinball bill never made it out of committee. Charges of bribery, secret contributions, and undue influence on the part of the pinball industry echoed through those staid chambers. The *Banner*, Nashville's evening paper,

called it "one of the most embittered conflicts in its (the state House of Representatives') history."

"I tried to tell House members that many of the individuals backing pinball gambling are not legitimate business people, but arguments from lobbyists and special interests were stronger than my warnings," said Representative Small.

The head of the House Commerce Committee where Small's Anti-pinball bill had been log-jammed (or, in legislative terms, "under study") for over a year, was nearly drowned-out by the laughter of spectators when he said he didn't know when the bill would ever be ready.

Meanwhile, the great pinball debate continues.

so, it's still way ahead of Tompall.

"You ain't doing worth a damn tonight, are ya, Tompall," a friend of his chides him.

"Sssshhh!" he cautions in a serious monotone, "this machine is sensitive. If you think positive, it'll pick it up! ...OK! OK!" he suddenly announces. "Tompall's about

to make the shot of the century. Nobody's allowed to talk but HOWARD COSSELL!"

But the shot of the century hardly leaves the launching pad, and in the enduring battle of MAN Vs. MACHINE, the evil pinball wins another round. As the machine clicks, blinks, rattles, and flashes in a staccato of triumph, Tompall kicks it again for good mea-

The Evil Machine

Ever since a Brooklyn executive of the firm, Murder Inc., was found at the bottom of a Catskill lake strapped to a pinball machine, the game has had sinister connotations. Though pinball fans today include in their ranks Hugh Hefner, Ann-Margret, Elton John, and King Hussein of Jordan, the colorful machine is still looked upon with suspicion by many. (Pinball is still a touchy subject around Nashville. When I pressed one club owner too closely on the subject of pinball pay-offs, he cautioned me in a friendly sort of way, that if I wrote too much about all this, I might end up at the bottom of Webb Pierce's swimming pool—tied to a pinball machine.)

In a statement to the press last year, Nashville Metro Police Chief Joe Casey denounced the devil machines: "The glitter of the pinball machines," he said, "has been known to have an addictive effect on young people (as well as adults) resulting in the loss of hard-earned money often needed for the necessities of life."

"Somehow, pinball was always considered *naughty* around here," Tompall Glaser adds. "When Waylon and I did this pinball thing, we did it to piss people off. We wanted to stir up a stink... People pay promotion men bundles of money to find something like this... But it was just crazy... We didn't plan it... How the hell could you figure it out!?"

sure.

"*** **!" he grimaces. "I missed the big money... This machine's got a memory bank: It can remember when I played it last; it won't let me win but every tenth time!"

Flashing Lights, Cold Beer & Enter The Outlaws

It was the advent of the Outlaw Movement, and the musical alliance of Tompall Glaser and Waylon Jennings that recently focused attention on the pinball machine. Captain Midnite, a long-time Music Row regular, recalls that as long ago as eight years—long before the word "Outlaw" was even a gleam in a promotion man's eye—he and Tompall and Waylon were making the rounds of the Nashville pinball circuit.

"It played an important part in bringing Tompall and Waylon together," Midnite recalls. "They were both into pinball, and they'd talk stuff over as they were playing. Sometimes we'd go twenty-three hours,



straight. And then we'd come back to the office and work in the studio or listen to tapes or whatever... Then we'd go back out... They made some pretty big decisions that way."

In Michael Bane's recently published book, *The Outlaws*, Tompall recalls that it was over a pinball machine that he originally persuaded Waylon that he could produce his own records:

"I got stoned once playing



those things, and I said to Waylon, 'Ain't no reason you can't do "Loving Her Was Easier" right now,' I went over to the phone and put a dime in and set it up. We went over and did that session and he'd never touched the red button before."

The Nashville Pinball Circuit

Nashville's pinball circuit has many stops. Daddy Wackers, The Pickin' Parlor (a well-known listening room), the Key Truck Stop, the Speak-Easy, the Burger Boy, and the Gold Rush are just some.

Around 10 P.M., with the machines still ahead of him, Tompall pulls himself away from Daddy Wackers and heads over to J.J.'s, a small grocery market where a row of the evil machines stand in the back, right next to the dirty book rack. Over one of the machines is a large, hand-written sign: "WE'RE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY TILT WINS."

"They put that up there because of me," Tompall assures a spectator. "I won three rolls of quarters on a tilt game. . . . Sonuvabitch!" he agonizes as a close shot barely misses landing in the hole of the needed number. "If you hit (win) on one of these (machines) too many times, they'll change the odds on 'em!"

But gradually, Tompall's luck begins to change. Before long, he is definitely *HOT*: He's got his "animation," or whatever it is, going on the machine at J.J.'s. In less than 20 minutes, he wins \$17. While he's still ahead, he quickly cashes in, and heads his Cadillac downtown.

Pinball Wizard Drops \$70,000

Tompall hesitated to be interviewed for this story because he felt, "the pinball thing has been worked to death." He'd much rather just play and be left alone than he would talk about it.

Nonetheless, Tompall concedes that he's spent as much as 72 hours at a stretch, matching wits with the *Evil Machines*. He claims he once dropped as much as \$70,000 worth of quarters in those beckoning slots over a one-year period, and that he wrote (or attempted to write) a least part of it off on his income taxes.

"Why not play them!" Tompall philosophizes. (He's slightly defensive on the subject.) "I make a lot of money. In a three or four year period, I made over one-and-a-half million dollars. And I don't think that's anything that anybody don't know.

"I look at it like this," he continues. "I don't go to the country club—there ain't no country club for hillbillies. . . . I can only drink so much Jack Daniels. . . . I think it's stupid to put a thousand dollars a week up your nose. . . . So I play pinball.

"I do it for release," he continues. "It's a good release of hypertension. If I have a bad day, instead of firing my secretary, I'll come down here and get mad at the machine. . . .

"It's an excuse to be alone in a crowd," he adds. "And I ain't the only one who does that! Sometimes you don't feel like being alone, but you don't feel like talking to nobody. . . . I come away from here relaxed—sometimes exhausted."

How To Adjust The Machine . . . With A Bar Stool

At the Pickin' Parlor, on Second Avenue North, in downtown Nashville, just around the corner from Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, there is a 35-year-old Bally machine that Tompall seems to favor. On this older model, the shifting lines of numbers are controlled by a dial instead of selector buttons. Tompall is soon poised in front of the devil machine in a state of deep concentration.

An hour passes, but the machine's not giving much tonight. Finally, Tompall glances furtively over his shoulder, picks up a bar stool and bounds the wooden top of the machine—which is already splintered from previous assaults—so hard that it makes the glass rattle. "Sometimes the points get jammed," he explains.

"I took a stool one time and beat one of these sunuvabitches 'till it was no longer standing," Tompall recalls in a soft voice without taking his eyes off the board. "Just reduced it down to a nice pile of rubble. . . . People that owned the place, just came over and shook my hand," he adds with disbelief. "They said they'd always wanted to see somebody do that!"

(Continued on page 59)



How The Machine Plays You

The arguments that have been exhausted to explain away this pinball thing are endless, but one writer who studied the matter merely came to the conclusion that most pinball addicts don't realize that it's the machine that's playing them.

The fact is, pinball machine manufacturers have spent years studying the psychology of this matter, and when they design a new machine, they include every strategy they know to keep people hooked.

According to an engineer at the Bally Corporation, a machine must have several essential features before it can pull its weight in the marketplace: First of all, a good machine "can't be *too* hard and it can't be *too* easy. The player will get discouraged if he doesn't think he has a chance, but he'll get bored if he wins too easily."

Second, the player must feel that "no matter how far behind he is, . . . he can bail himself out on the last ball."

Finally, there must be the "came-close-try-again" appeal: "If a player thinks he can win with just a little more skill or luck, he'll keep playing."

The general view is that Tennessee's pay-off flipperless pinball machines are about like the slots in Vegas (where incidentally, some of the ritziest hotels now sport pinball machines in their lobbies): You can't really beat them.

"If any man ever told you he's ahead of the machines, he's a liar," one club owner told me. "I don't think anybody exists who ever won more than they put in. The machines take in four-to-five times what they give out. They weren't made to be beat."

"If I wanted to beat the machines, I'd buy one," adds Tompall Glaser. "It's just a pastime. It ain't no obsession."

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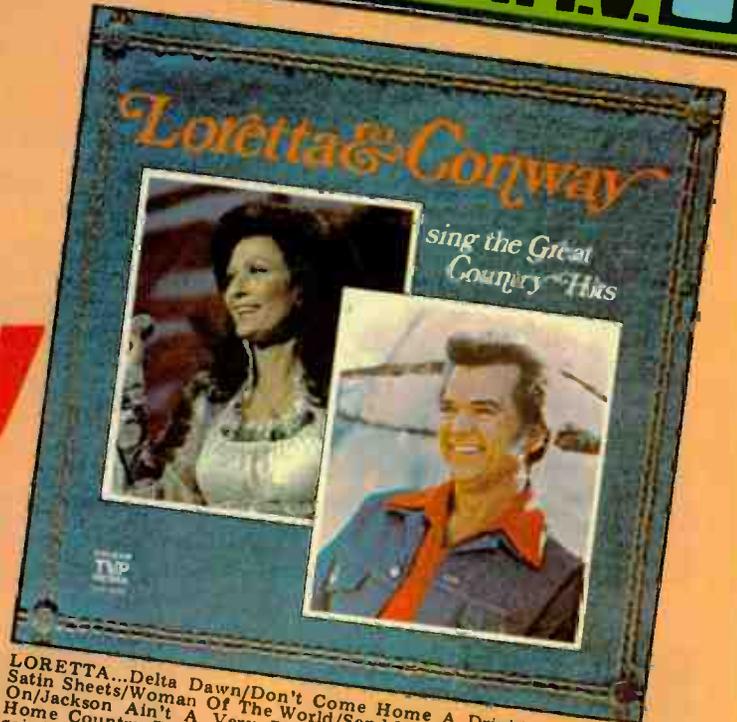
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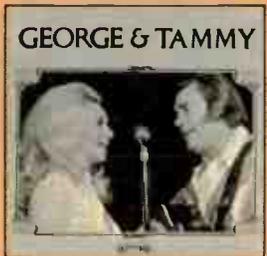
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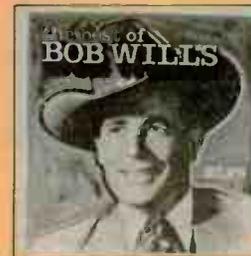
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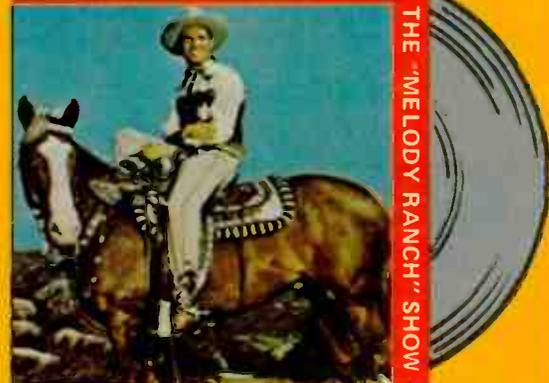
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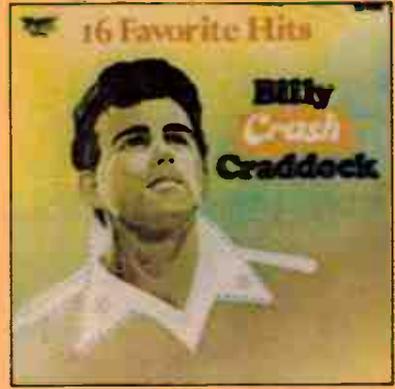
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Records

Johnny Cash

I Would Like To See You Again

Columbia KC 35313

John R. Cash, like the rest of us, has been looking for the old Johnny Cash.

In fact, his latest LP is an exercise in "looking back," starting with the title cut: "Thinking about old times, some old time, some old friend; suddenly it crossed my mind, I would like, to see you again." That theme continues through several songs, most noticeably with *Abner Brown*, where Johnny sings, "Lord, take me back to the cotton land, to Arkansas take me home again; Let me be the boy I once have been, Let me walk that road to the cotton gin." The culmination is *I Wish I Was Crazy*

Again done with Waylon Jennings, "Yes she keeps me off the streets, and she keeps me out of trouble; (But) Sometimes at night Lord when I hear the wind, I wish I was crazy again."

Well, I wish he was crazy again too, because Johnny Cash singing about the old Johnny Cash is not Johnny Cash. But he's the best Johnny Cash we've got and this is hardly a *bad* record. The man couldn't make a bad record if he tried. Both of the cuts with Waylon Jennings, which Waylon and Johnny produced with Billy Sherrill engineering, are great, particularly *There Ain't No Good Chain Gang*: "There ain't no good in an evil hearted woman, and I ain't cut out to be no Jesse James; You don't go writin' hot checks down in Mississippi and there ain't no good chain gang." *Lately*, *Hurt So Bad*, and *I Don't Think I Could Take You Back Again* are fine Cash ballads. *After Taxes* is kinda silly and I could do without the child's voice on *Who's Gene Autry*, which makes me miss Gene's original version of *Back In The Saddle Again* anyway.

Anytime I criticize Johnny Cash I feel like a fool 'cause he's done more than me or any ten of my friends will probably ever do. Still, *I Would Like To See You Again* ain't gonna get played as much around my house as, for instance, *Ride This Train*.

NELSON ALLEN

Rex Allen Jr.

Brand New
Warner Bros. BSK-3190

Lately, there has been an obvious trend afoot among Nashville artists and producers to scatter-shoot for wider public acceptance by including renditions of well-known pop songs on their new al-

Rex Jr. can handle with ease any number of different musical styles.

The material included on *Brand New* nearly runs the gamut. There's a western cowboy song (*Kin To The Wind*); there's a hard country, fall-out-in-your-beer, honky tonk, 19th nervous breakdown song (*She*



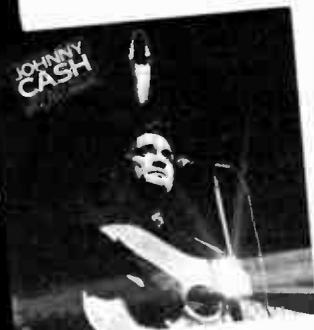
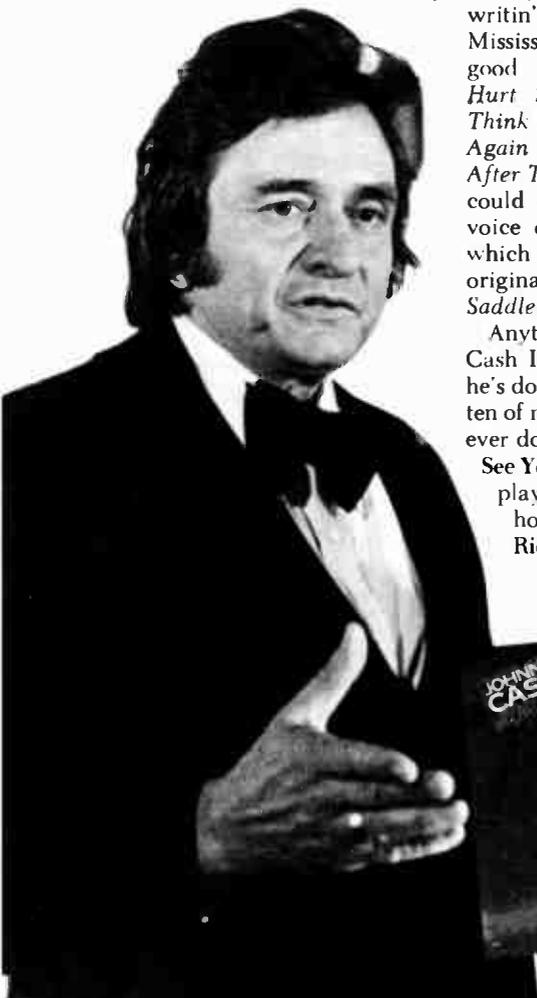
bums. And too often, in doing this, they fall flat on their face, as their renditions come out sounding clumsy and contrived.

More or less the same thing has been done on Rex Allen Jr.'s *Brand New*. The only difference is, this time around, it works—and it works well. When Rex Jr. takes on such songs as David Gates's *Diary*, or *I Got A Name* (the unofficial anthem of the late Jim Croce), there is nothing clumsy and contrived about it all. Though he doesn't always sink his teeth into each song as far as he could, *Brand New* is proof that

Is The Dream); and there is the full-blown pop material. Only on a slow ballad like Linda Hargrove's *Memories*, does Rex's versatile vocal style fail to provide the nuance that the song deserves.

Still, *Brand New* leaves something to be desired. Though it comes close to hitting the mark, it sounds a little too facile here and there. It leaves a lingering feeling that Rex Allen Jr.'s true qualities as a singer are still being hinted at. I'm still waiting to hear him really sink his teeth in.

BOB ALLEN



David Allan Coe

Family Album
Columbia KC 35386

I gotta hand it to David Allan Coe. He's a regular Houdini. Whenever he seems to have deep-sixed for good, he bobs up again like a cork. Only a few months ago, the local ten o'clock news zoomed in on him at Traders' Village in Grand Prairie selling his bus, his boots, his guitar—all his

worldly possessions. Now all of a sudden, he's back with a new LP while he sees Florida on the Jimmy Buffet Early Retirement Plan.

The mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy is dead. In his place is a character dedicated to honoring his heroes gracefully, which is a vast improvement over *Willie, Waylon and Me*. In the course of this album, he takes up George Jones's flag in



the Life Is A Cheatin' Song category with *Whole Lot of Lonesome*, credits Jerry Lee for inspiring *Million Dollar Memories*, emulates either Tom T. Hall or Johnny Cash with *Family Memories*, out-protodies Whitey Shafer on *Houston, Dallas and San Antone* and *Sad Impressions* (the latter introducing a passable Gary Stewart warble to DAC's repertoire of bad impressions), and even tips his hat to Buffet and his conch-country sound with the silly *Divers Do It Deeper*.

The songs could all be durable country standards. Trouble is, DAC has Houdini down too good. He reminds me so much of his heroes when he sings their styles that it makes me want the real thing instead of just an illusion.

JOE NICK PATOSKI



Mel McDaniel

The Farm
Capitol ST-11779

Though he has yet to establish a distinct identity for himself, Mel McDaniel is definitely on the way up. (We picked him as our Rising Star.) As one who can straddle that area between traditional and "progressive"—his records are not exactly Nashville Sound, but neither are they an uncomfortably radical departure—and he even makes it look easy; he draws fans from both camps. And he has the kind of grainy, haunting country voice that never fails to tug at the ears when it comes over the radio.

Though he does do *They'll Never Take Her Love From Me*, Mel is not one to cry in his

beer. He seems much more at ease with devotional love songs such as *Dim The Lights (And Pour The Wine)* and *It's About Time*. Yet one of the album's highlights is *Bordertown Woman*, a classy Spanish-styled song about being unable to pull away from a seductive *senorita*. McDaniel also sings a lot about the supposedly simpler life of the past, but that may be mainly the influence of Dennis Linde, who wrote both the nostalgic title song and *A Black and White Memory*. (Linde's best contribution here is the western ballad *Oklahoma Wind*.)

This album also includes McDaniel's version of *The Grandest Lady of Them All*, the Opry tribute he and Bob Morrison wrote that became a



hit for Conway Twitty. But the song that would appear to best exemplify McDaniel is *Every Square Has An Angle*, in which he proudly declares his old-fashioned ways and lack of contemporary vices, all for the love of a woman. In more ways than one, Mel McDaniel walks the line, and walks it well.

JOHN MORTHLAND

Sammi Smith

New Winds/All Quadrants
Elektra 66-137

Folks, it's true what the ecologists say: we have to preserve our precious natural resources before they're all gone. For instance, if country music tastes swing all the way to the bright, pretty soprano sound of Dolly Parton and Linda Ronstadt, the husky, whiskey-voiced, sultry alto may become an endangered species. That's why it's such a shame to see one of the very finest examples of that breed, Ms. Sammi Smith, recording albums as bad as this one. She's got everything but sympathetic produc-

tion and good material.

In fact, one song here, Johnny Cunningham's *Norma Jean*, may be the worst song recorded by a country performer on a major label so far this year. As for the rest of them,



the good ones like *Lookin' For Lovin'* and the Casinos' classic *Then You Can Tell Me Good-bye* are marred by overproduction. But most of the material here is decidedly sub-standard, and between lousy songs and bad production, Sammi doesn't have a chance.

It would sure be nice for somebody in Nashville to take up Sammi's cause, get her a better producer, and maybe get some of Nashville's Grade A songwriters to dash off some masterpieces for her. I mean, while we're all busy saving the whales, we shouldn't forget the thrushes.

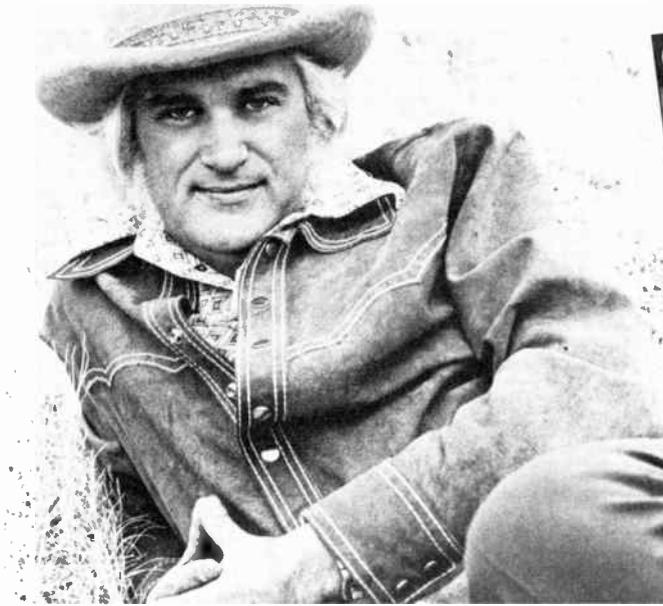
EDWARD

Charlie Rich

I Still Believe In Love
United Artists UA-LA876-H

Like Eddy Arnold and Ray Price before him, Charlie Rich seems hellbent on squandering his immense talents on vapid musical slush of the Perry Como/Johnny Mathis variety. In fact, after *Behind Closed Doors* rescued him from obscurity in 1973, the quality of most of his records began to slide downhill. It was partly the fault of Billy Sherrill's insensitive, formulaic production, but Rich was also to blame, for he accepted whatever was thrown at him. His move to UA could have helped him find himself again, but it didn't. *I Still Believe In Love* shows he's slipping deeper into the swamps of mediocrity.

New producer Larry Butler was content to leave the choral and symphonic excesses in place. But it doesn't really matter, for the songs, despite



composers like Tony Joe White, Ben Peters and Curly Putman, are so uniformly dull that the melodies seem almost interchangeable. All are love songs, yet not one is on the level of *Behind Closed Doors*

or *Life's Little Ups And Downs*. Lyrics like "Our love is not a glass of wine/It's the lovin' kind" sound like they were written for a computer dating ad, and hardly measure up to Margaret Ann Rich's ex-

quisite work. Rich himself seems bored to tears with *The Saddest Love Song*, *Let The Little Bird Fly* and *I Still Believe In Love* (he even delivers the last one in a Walter Brennan dialect). *Wishful Thinking* aims at the rollicking feel of his *Mohair Sam* period of the mid-60's, but is a pale shadow.

If this is the best Rich can do these days (and I find that hard to accept) he's in danger of a fate worse than obscurity: that of becoming irrelevant. I wonder if he cares at all.

RICH KIENZLE

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Records

Dottie West

Dottie

United Artists UA-LA860-G

Kitty Wells notwithstanding, the 1960's was really the decade which saw the first full flowering of women singers in country music, emotional singers with big, throbbing voices barely choking back tears. Loretta Lynn was one, Jeannie Seeley another, and there was Dottie West, who seemed to have control, taste, and feeling equal or superior to anyone.

Beginning with *Here Comes My Baby* way back in 1964 (one of the greatest expressions of the whipped dog syndrome in country womens' songs), she wrought palpable anguish with her highly charged voice. Somebody figured she had crossover potential, and layer after layer of Nashville Sound goop began to bury her affective voice, obscuring its brilliance and blunting its effect.

With a recent switch to United Artists Records and the



magic touch of producer Larry Butler, as well as the general resurgence of her career—notably due to her duets with Kenny Rogers—there were hopes for better things; but no such luck on Dottie. Most of the songs are unexceptional to the point of instant forgetability—the only standout is the lovely duet *Love Is Right*—and the production is as predictable as 500 miles of expressway. This is the most banal version of the Nashville Sound. For all the strength of her voice, Dottie West is not one of those artists who can overpower this kind of production, and at times she sinks from sight wearing concrete shoes labeled Nashville Sound.

Dottie West is one of country music's finest singers: some would say *the* finest. This shameless, thoughtless squandering of her talent is more than disappointing; it borders on insult.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN



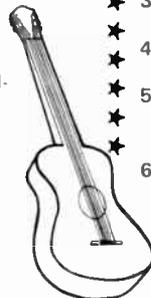
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Records

Johnny Burnette Rock 'n Roll Trio

Take It Up
Solid Smoke 8001

The Johnny Burnette Trio was far from being the most commercially successful of rockabilly acts, yet their Coral sides from the mid-50's are generally regarded by rockabilly fanatics as classics. Based in Memphis and inspired by the fusion of country and blues evolving there at Sun, the Trio featured brothers Johnny and Dorsey Burnette. They released a batch of singles and one album (mostly culled from Nashville sessions produced by Owen Bradley) before Coral dropped them in 1958 due to their meager impact on the charts.

The Burnette brothers then migrated to Hollywood, where they co-wrote some of Ricky Nelson's grittier songs (including *Believe What You Say*) and embarked on solo careers. Johnny had considerable pop sales with his light, country-

flavored stylings of such tunes as *Dreamin'* and *You're Sixteen*. Dorsey, while not as successful, managed such hits as *Tall Oak Tree*. A fishing accident claimed Johnny's life in 1964; Dorsey has since charted a steady (if unspectacular) course as a country singer.



Meanwhile, the Coral sides were becoming increasingly rare. But now we have this attractively packaged re-issue set of 17 performances—with abundant liner notes, photographs, and remembrances.

Because the tracks were recorded directly from the monaural masters, the sound quality is excellent.

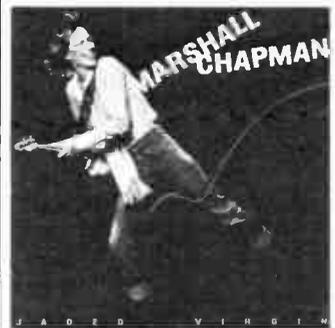
What's in the grooves? Well, this is the kind of frantic stuff that caused members of the White Citizens Council to ruminate over the future of America's youth. The fare is about equally divided between covers of rhythm and blues numbers (such as Joe Turner's *Honey Hush* and Sticks McGhee's *Drinkin' Wine, Spo-Dee-O-Dee*) and Trio compositions (*Tear It Up*, *Rockabilly Boogie*). All the essential rockabilly ingredients are present: frenzied vocals by Johnny, slapping upright bass by Dorsey, and guitarist Paul Burlison's stinging electric lead runs. Only Johnny's occasionally-mannered shouts over the instrumental breaks mar the proceedings. (Available only by mail order from Solid Smoke, P.O. Box 22372, San Francisco, Ca. 94122)

PETE LOESCH

Marshall Chapman

Jaded Virgin
Epic JE 35341

Chapman's debut album, *Me I'm Feelin' Free*, was a landmark for women in country. As produced by Al Kooper, however, her second endeavor is neither country nor solid rock. The sultry vocals that characterized her first LP are here buried beneath intricate but distorted instrumentals, and when her voice can be heard, it is often devoid of both passion and commitment.



The two redeeming cuts are *You Asked Me To* (though it's no match for Marshall's live rendition of the Waylon Jennings-Billy Joe Shaver classic) and her own *Other Girls*. But even the second, which most clearly follows the bold, rebellious stance she adopted in *Feelin' Free*, is marred by a curious self-indulgence that runs through this LP. I like the fact that she once craved blue suede shoes, but I don't care that she was "wined and dined" in New York City. And I especially don't care that, in *Island Song*, she finds true love through cocaine.

There's also no consistent mood to this album, which veers from folksiness to mock-frenzy. (Odd as it seems, there are occasional flashes of the Jefferson Airplane.) Her dirge-like rendition of *I Walk The Line* can hardly compete with the Johnny Cash original.

Chapman, clearly, needs direction. But in the end, perhaps the only way she can find it is by taking control herself—and returning to the more universal themes and intrinsic energy that initially made her so special.

SUSAN TOEPFER

Kenny Rogers and Dottie West

Every Time Two Fools Collide
United Artists UA-LA864-H

Probably about half the girls out there wouldn't mind meeting Kenny Rogers in a bar; similarly, just as many of the guys would probably give

their right arms to have the last dance with Dottie West. And from the sexy cover photos on down to the ten saccharin-soaked songs included inside, that's exactly the premise upon which this LP is built.

Yes, this is definitely an al-

bum for all the star-struck and mooney-eyed romantics out there; there's enough syrup here to serve a shift at the Pancake House. I mean, with song titles like, *Why Don't We Go Somewhere And Love* and *(I Feel Sorry For) Anyone Who Isn't Me Tonight*, how can you possibly miss the point?

Fortunately, beneath the over-wrought piano intros and the melodramatic string arrangements, there is some good music on *Every Time Two Fools Collide*. Dottie's sultry, mature voice fits perfectly over Kenny's falsetto whining and tenory vibratos. Fine songs like the title tune and *What's Wrong With Us Today?* tend to make up for some of the more hackneyed material included.

If you happen to be in one of the many mooney-eyed, transitory states of romantic affliction that are celebrated on *Every Time Two Fools Collide*, then you'll probably love the album. But if you're not, then it'll probably drive you right up the wall.

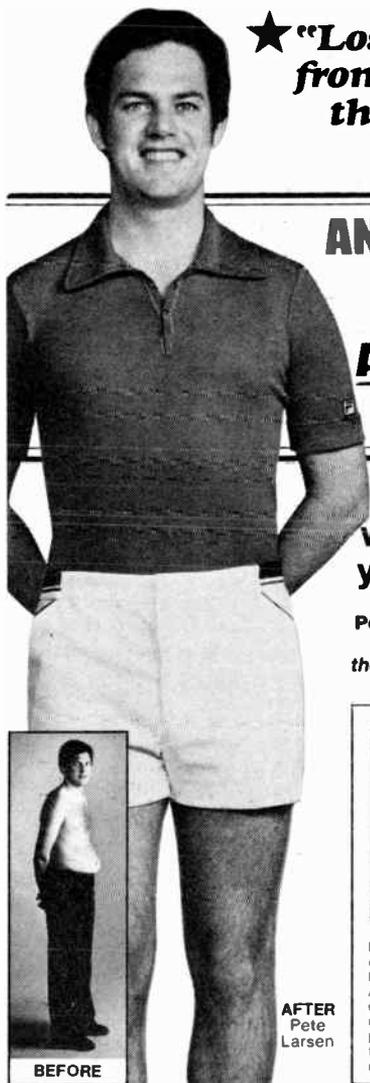
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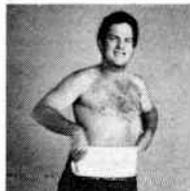
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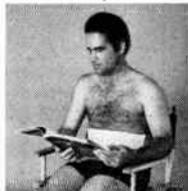
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AFTER Jeanette Ayers



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Take Your Music With You

As soon as the sap started running in the maple trees where I live, I went down to the city to check out some of the latest in portable sound gear. I could hardly wait for summer, and looking over the most recent battery-powered equipment was one way of anticipating the warm season. After all, when life moves outdoors, music moves with it—to the beaches, the mountains and the woods. Or at least to the backyard.

You may wonder what a hi-fi fan like me is doing among portables. I grant you, in the past portable sound was often a dubious pleasure. Most battery radios were nasty little screamers that turned Dolly Parton into a banshee. If you traveled more than ten blocks from the transmitter, FM stations would fade away. And if you took your tapes down to the trout stream or the tennis court, you had to cope with still more frustrations. On most portable gear, the flimsy tape drive would run an uneven speed, making the music wobble like a rowboat in a gale. Besides, the flea-powered amplifiers and tiny speakers of most portables never produced anything but a tinny whine or a hoarse rattle.

All this, fortunately, is changing. From what I could see and hear of the latest crop of quality portables, summer sound is being radically upgraded. Sure, portable gear will never equal the power and range of a full-sized home-based stereo system. But the best of today's portable radios and cassette recorders put out sound that's a pleasure to hear and needs no excuses.

Why, you'll ask, can they do it now when they couldn't before? Much of the credit is due to the use of IC's, short for Integrated Circuits. A single IC—no bigger than an aspirin pill—contains thousands of tiny electronic

elements to perform complex functions. To accomplish the same thing before the invention of ICs would have required a maze of circuitry the size of a doghouse.

This new technology is a spin-off from space communication, where radio equipment had to be minimized in size and weight to soar in satellites and other spacecraft. Now that the huge development cost of these new



Sanyo's Model M2422 recorder with built-in AM/FM radio

devices has been paid off (mostly by the government, which uses ICs in military applications), the price of these fancy gadgets has come down to the point where they are affordable in consumer goods. One of their main new areas of use is in high-quality portable radios and tape equipment, which have similar requirements as spacecraft: They, too, need to be small and light.

One thing the ICs have done is to increase the FM sensitivity of the better portables so you can roam up to nearly 50 miles from the nearest station and still get a usable FM signal (providing, of course, the signal isn't blocked by a mountain range). Also, the circuits are more stable, so the station is not likely to drift out of tune as it used to on many older FM radios.

By far the most dramatic improvement in portable sound gear has been in the quality of the built-in cassette

recorders and again, it's the IC that gets the credit. In the past, the lightweight motors used in portable recorders suffered a high degree of flutter and wow, which caused the wobbly pitch and the thin, trembly feeling of the sound. Now there are IC-based control circuits which sense the speed of the tape drive, instantly correcting it if it's either too fast or too slow. This control action is so quick that the ear does not perceive it. Instead, you hear a steady pitch.

If you're planning to use your portable mostly outdoors and on the go, you can save yourself a bundle of cash by picking a mono model rather than stereo since out in the open you wouldn't hear much of the stereo effect.

I can't possibly cover all the current crop of the better portables, but I'd like to single out a few models I found particularly well designed. If you want "radio only" (that is without tape), one of the best dollar values is **Panasonic's RF-1108**. With its 6½-inch dual cone speaker and separate treble and bass controls, it is one of the best-sounding sets in its price range (\$80). If you want a cassette recorder as part of your portable gear, **Panasonic's RQ-548S** (\$130) and **JVC's RC-414** (\$120) are fine-sounding, feature-packed AM/FM radio/cassette combos whose uncommonly large speakers put out more full-bodied sound than is normally heard from portables. All these models also let you record broadcasts directly off the air and feature built-in microphones, along with AC plug-in facilities, in addition to battery operation. The fanciest model in this group is **JVC's RC-525JW**, which sports a telescoping detachable zoom microphone for better recording, plus a two-way speaker system with separate woofer and tweeter, all for \$180.

Once you get into stereo, all the gear gets both heavier and costlier. With the added weight and size, you sacrifice some portability, but there's no question that even with the sonic limitations of one-piece stereo (insufficient speaker separation) you experience a more solid sense of the sound thanks to two separate channels. Among the standouts in this field are **Sony's CF-570** (\$290), **JVC's RC-828** and **Panasonic's RS-466S** (\$250). ■

As Seen On This
Month's Centerfold!

DOLLY PARTON

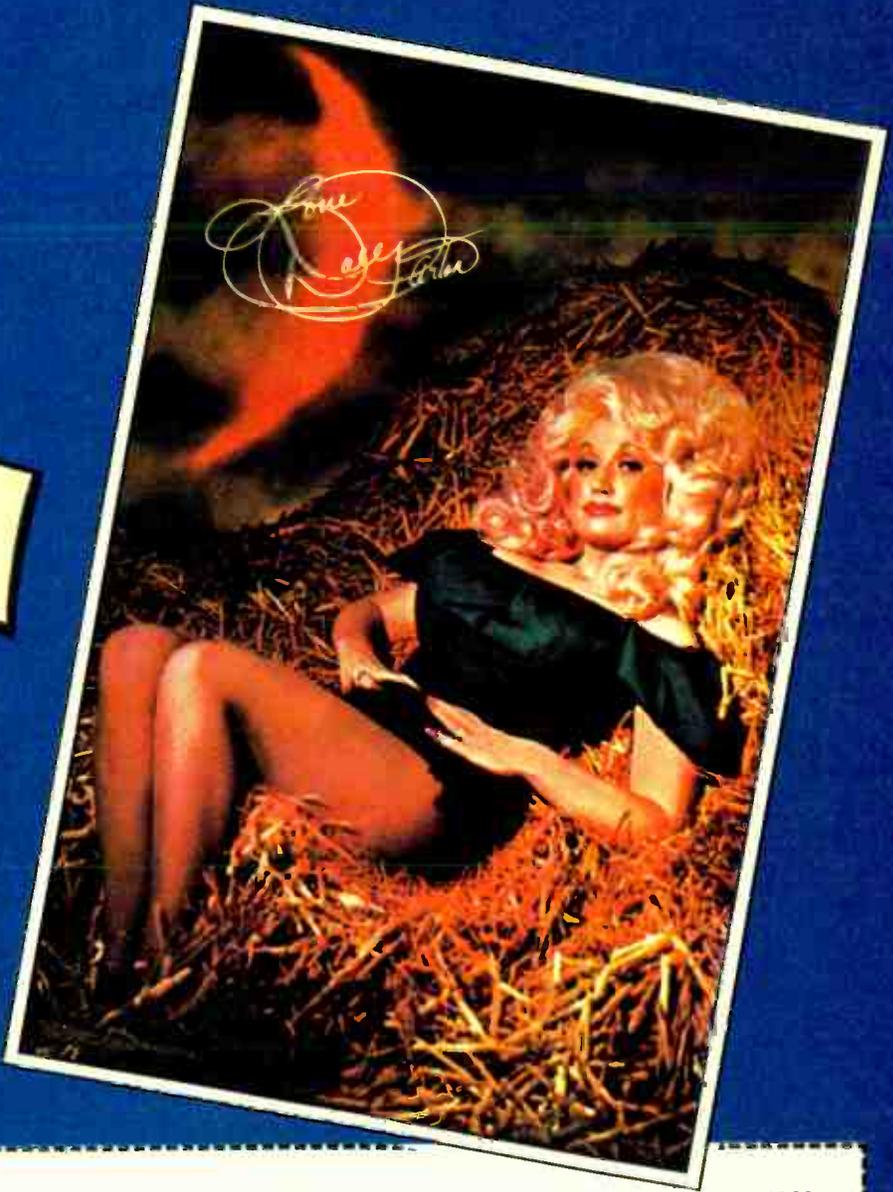
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PICKERS

Confessions Of An Undisciplined Musician

by **PETER STAMPFEL**

I've been an undisciplined professional musician for about eighteen years. I've been partially responsible for five of the sloppiest records to come out since the mid 60s.

I'm not sorry I made those records—they're a hell of a lot better than nothing. They have some spirit and a few good moments, but they won't be much to brag to the grandchildren about. Even my better records tend to be sloppy. I'm getting sick of having lack of discipline be one of my trade marks. Thirty-nine is a little old to be careless in your life's work.

Naturally, it wasn't my fault in the beginning. There I was, this ten-year-old squirt just starting to take violin lessons. Here's my teacher. Threatening to sit on you, squash you into an ink spot. Here's 15-20 kids having their third lesson. Some other grown-up just came into the lesson room. That happened about once a lesson. He loved it when someone else came into the room. That meant he got to explain.

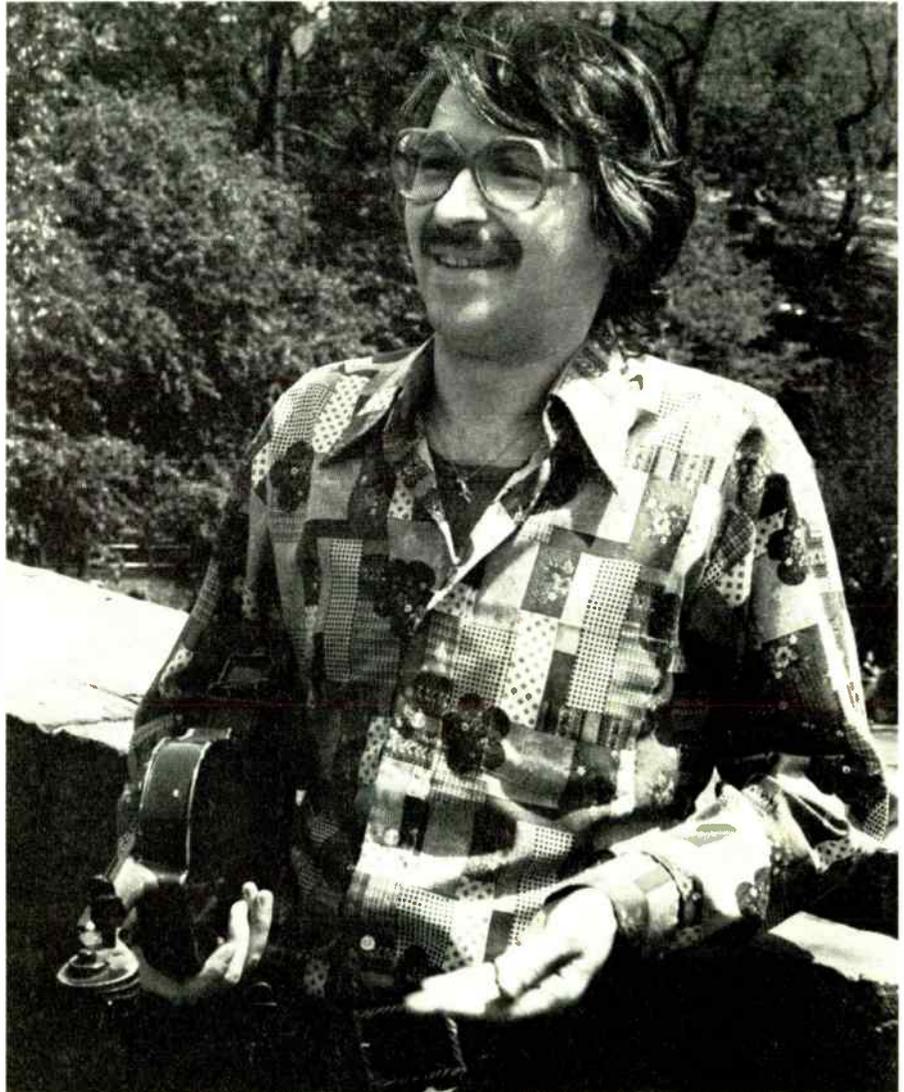
"See the back row?" he would ask the visitor, striding up and down and waving his arms expansively. "Geniuses! They will be great violinists! Great violinists! The third row..."

"...they're all right. They're pretty fair. The second row..." His hands clasped behind his back. He shook his head slowly from side to side.

"...is bad. That's the truth. Bad. There is still some hope, however. But the first row..."

"Failures! Failures! What can anyone do with such pitiful material? They are clumsy, they are stupid. They should all be squashed to ink spots!" I was in the first row.

It took six months of pleading, and tears, to finally convince my parents to



Taking guitar lessons since he was ten, Peter Stampfel, our Undisciplined Musician is now looking at his music in a different way. He says he's had it with the amateur approach and is ready to move into the ranks of the professionals.

let me drop lessons. *They* were very disappointed. *I* felt like I had been released from prison.

A couple of years later I started seventh grade, and the music teacher spent the first two classes giving a very inspiring pep talk. He convinced me. Nobody learned much.

In ninth grade I joined the junior orchestra and started taking private lessons at the Galecki School of Accordion, which had one token violin teacher and one token woodwind

teacher. This being before Elvis and up north, in Milwaukee, to boot, there were no guitar teachers. Things have changed since then—the polka station went country in the 60s.

The first thing I learned from my new teacher was that I had been doing everything wrong. I went back to the first instruction book again.

I hated practicing. My playing was very lousy.

After high school I quit playing. I had decided God didn't build me to be

“I don’t know why everyone doesn’t play guitar.”

a musician. Then I started college and heard a five-string banjo for the first time. I knew I had to play it. Right away. Still, it took me two years to start taking lessons.

It was one of the best things I ever did. I became an amateur musician and suddenly my life was bearable. It still amazes me how little playing ability you need to give yourself such great pleasure.

What do the songs of the Carter Family, Little Richard and the Sex Pistols have in common? And what do their songs have in common with the songs of Uncle Dave Macon, Bo Diddley and the Ramones?

Three chords.

You can do a lot with three chords. They’d all have to be played in the same key, but still, look at all the ground you could cover. But that’s nothing. Learn four chords, say G, F, C and D on a guitar, and you can play three chord songs in the keys of C and G. Spend a buck and quarter on a capo. Now you can play a three chord song in any key. That means, among other things, that you can find the key that fits your voice just right for any three chord song you want to sing. Learning those four chords would take most people between a week and a month. I don’t know why everyone doesn’t play guitar.

I wanted to play like the old guys did before about 1938, which happens to be the year I was born. I like the crude pre-war style, and the old guys that played it were dying out. I felt I had a personal duty to keep it alive. The way it turned out, it did just fine without me. After seeming to fade in the 50s, the old music comes back stronger every year.

When I started playing, I had two goals. To play like the non-fancy old guys, and to have fun. So I wasn’t going to practice. I was gonna play with other people, play with records, play with the radio, but no lessons ever again. To hell with proper form and playing scales.

I got to New York City late in 1959, and even then it was a hotbed of country music. There were droves

of eighteen-year-old Scruggs pickers with fourteen-year-old kid brothers who could pick as well, and sometimes better, than they could. Everybody in New York played better than me. I had just been playing for a year and half and was a slow learner.

There were hardly any fiddle players, though. Alan Block and Danny Z were the only two I met. New York didn’t need another crummy banjo picker, but it was wide open for a crummy fiddler. I spent two weeks playing along with the Harry Smith Anthology, which is a six record, 84 tune series of reissues of old 78 rpm records. I believe it was the first reissue of country and country blues 78’s in L.P. form, and was the first place I heard Uncle Dave Macon, the Carter Family, Charlie Poole, Jug Band music, Cajun music, Shape Note Hymns and country blues. Hearing this stuff changed my life as much as playing music did.

After two weeks of playing along with different cuts from those records, I was playing as well as I was after six years of lessons, only it was just pure fun. And fiddle players being so scarce, there were a lot of people that wanted to play with me.

If just about anyone puts three hours a week of playing (that’s playing—not practicing), in about two short years people will consider them to be a musician. That’s about what it takes for starters. You can take it as far as you want after that. Or just leave it where it is.

Musically speaking, I really lucked out when I started playing with Steve Weber in 1963. We sounded like a whole the first time we ever played together, and working out a song just involved playing it three times. We called ourselves the Holy Modal Rounders, and the records we recorded in ’63 and ’64 were just fine. There’d be an occasional bad note, but I liked the idea of a flaw here and there giving the music a more human touch. I’m not as hot for the idea of imperfection for the sake of humanness as I was in the 60s, but when I listen to the radio I still hunger for an

occasional honest-to-God bad note.

The early Fugs, our next group, were perhaps the most intensely amateur musical group ever to storm the stage. Me and Weber, playing fiddle and guitar respectively, backed up Ken Weaver, the drummer, Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupferberg. They knew nothing about music and didn’t waste a day learning; just sat down and wrote sixty songs, many of which are as adolescent today as they were thirteen years ago. True art passes the test of time.

After two months of raucous playing we went into the studio. I deeply cherish the supreme sloppiness of that session. It felt very good to record that way in 1965. It was like being the biggest baby in the cradle. It was really good to do it that way once. Too bad it wasn’t the last time.

I then started fooling around with another guitar player and we decided to form a new band with a higher level of musicianship. It was great playing with people who were all really first rate musicians, it was what I had always wanted. But I was so musically outclassed I felt like a third-grader in high school. I would be alternately so intimidated I could hardly play, or so carried away I would play a five minute cowbell solo. That band lasted about two weeks.

I’ve had it with the amateur approach. I’ve had it with only being able to play in six keys, barely. I’ve had it with not being good enough to play with the big kids. I’ve had it with being too lazy to work at what I was supposed to be doing with my life. The punk-rockers are carrying the banner of amateur professionalism now anyway, that’s one of their trademarks. Let them carry it. My arms are tired.

I just read a book called *Passages*, it’s about the stages of growth which occur throughout our lives. My current stage is called the Midlife Crisis. During this period people often drop what they have been doing all their lives to go in an entirely new direction. I am dropping my old life and

(Continued on page 64)

EVERYTHING MUST GO!

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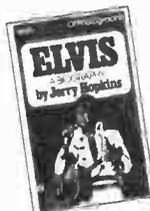


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PICKERS' New Products



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Norlin Music has come up with a new Epiphone Scroll series guitar. Made to provide the new sounds demanded in the 70's, the solid maple bodies, coupled with two powerful humbucking pickups, create a high performance instrument with endless sustain.

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CARPENTERS

(Continued from page 37)

"And it's not like we didn't do country before," explains Karen, mentioning *End of the World* on the *Now and Then* album (1973) and (*I'm Caught Between*) *Goodbye and I Love You*. Like Kenny Rogers with Lucille and Olivia Newton-John, they've crossed into country, but whether they have the intention or desire to stay is still in question.

"We were very excited when this thing started," says Karen cautiously, as if still not believing the charts.

"But if we were going to go in and snap out a country single, well, that wouldn't happen at this point," says Richard definitely. "Of course, it would be great if it happened again."

"To this day people say who did I style myself after? Who influenced me and to that I say nobody. But when I first began I sounded very country," says Karen. "You got a country streak in you," she proudly remembers electrical bass guitarist Joe Osborn saying when he recorded their demo tape in his L.A. garage back in 1963.

They have discussed going to Nashville. "For the players," says Richard, his eyes gleaming. He's an obsessive-compulsive perfectionist who once flew to Nashville to record exactly two bars of music for the *Desperado* cut on the *Horizon* album. But as much as Nashville studio musicians entice him, he's true to the sound he hears in his head. The only way they'll make a Nashville album is if the album warrants Nashville talent, and judging by the way their albums get put together, when—or if—that happens is anybody's guess.

"It's nice to be able to pick your own stuff, have total control," says Richard. "The thing is, you're responsible for it if it hits or if it flops."

His bottom line is the artistic quality. He started playing piano when he was 12, and knew that one way or another music was his world. Karen "kind of followed him around," starting to sing when she was about 16, and then getting them both kicked out of clubs because she was too young to drink. That led to an early recording career, and both claim that over the years their ears have sharpened.

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(available on page 38)

Star Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
No wonder steel players are such a clanish lot. The few who've reached the top spent years learning a difficult instrument only to find themselves still sidening, playing what and when they're told in order to survive. A few cut solo albums, but even these had their drawbacks—those that don't refresh Nashville hits are either loaded with easy listening schlock or consist of pointless jam sessions, hardly the way to bring the steel to a wider audience.

The Nashville Bar Associ-

ation, a loose alliance of Buddy Emmons, the master of modern pedal steel; John Hughey of Conway Twitty's organization and Nashville studio stalwarts Jimmy Crawford, Russ Hicks and Sonny Garrish avoided all those pitfalls to create a true pedal steel orchestra, relying on formal arrangements that reflect the daring experimental attitudes of all concerned (the overdubs alone must have taken months!) Massed steel guitars play against massed dobros; everyone plays duets with each other and weaves in and out of individual solos throughout and except for a rhythm section and occasional trumpet, the horn and string sections are mimicked by the steels. The

material is varied (though I could have done without the voices on some numbers) and spotlights the pickers nicely.

Not one of the ten songs are still. Outstanding are *Devil's Dream*, the old fiddle tune with its difficult group ensemble work. Emmons' *Horn on The Cob*, a complex rocker, the unbelievable *Ghost Riders in The Sky*, and the soaring leads of *The Big Hurt*. Even NBC's *Mystery Movie Theme* is here, sounding better than it ever did leading into *Columbo* or *McCloud*.

I've always felt that in the right hands the pedal steel could be Nashville's answer to the Moog synthesizer: this record proves my point ten times over.

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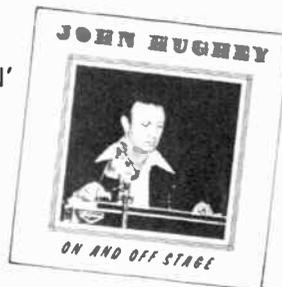


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Rich just about shudders remembering the creaking of a closing door that made it on to one of his albums.

Then followed years of hectic touring until Karen collapsed in 1975. "We realized then that we didn't need to run all over the world like maniacs," says Richard, and instead they developed a Vegas act. "If it costs, it costs," says Richard, "because it's got to be what I hear."

Since *Sweet, Sweet Smile*, there's been talk of the Grand Ole Opry. Karen is especially intrigued by the possibility of a new audience. There's the TV specials and the Vegas show that needs to be over-hauled, but she's looking for something new, even considering TV roles.

"We pride ourselves in being trend-setters for the easier listening sound." She speaks slowly, as if oppressed with the role. "When we started we were knocked for being dressed cleanly, for taking a bath. We were titled sweet and clean," and when she says, "Goody four shoes," Richard laughs and shakes his head.

Now he wants to produce other artists. Both of them, too, would like to marry and set up private lives.

"But schedules make it difficult to meet people and date," says Karen wistfully. "We always worked together," she says, looking back over eight albums, her hand resting beneath a gold charm in the shape of a record, a Christmas gift from a grateful record company. "I'm hoping—but I—neither one of us—have found anybody we'd want to get married to. We have so much to give and we've accomplished a lot on our own. It would be nice to share it with somebody at this point, we're just sharing it with each other."

The group, too, has been together for 10 years," says Richard about the guys in the band who are like an extended family.

And if they cut another surprise country hit or if they took up the invitation to the Grand Ole Opry?

"We'd have to go just the way we are," says Richard unhesitatingly. And doing things in their own sweet time, living like cactus in the desert of L.A., off their own juices, the Carpenters may be just a little more country than they think. ■

TOMPALL

(Continued from page 41)

A couple more hours roll by, but the machine at the Pickin' Parlor is still being stingy. So around 2 A.M., Tom-pall heads back uptown. Still clutching his drink, he shoots a red light or two in the process. The next stop is the Gold Rush, an after-hours bar not far from Vanderbilt University favored by students and music business people. There's also a game room in the back of the Gold Rush, devoted not only to pinballs, but to all sorts of other exotic machines as well. Electronic gun-fighter games, computerized bowling, a submarine torpedo game (my favorite) and fustball. A fresh roll of quarters is procured, and Tom-pall is soon immersed in the machines again.

* * *

According to Roger C. Sharpe, author of a recently published book, *Pinball!* (Dutton), today's pinball manufacturing is dominated by four major firms: D. Gootlieb and Company, Bally, Williams Electronics, Inc. and Chicago Coin. Needless to say, the state of the art has improved over the years. Today's machines may contain up to 3,000 movable parts, and a qualified repairman can earn as much as \$500-\$600 a week, servicing the machines.

"It's really changed in the last three to five years," says John Powers of the Tennessee Novelty Company. "Used to be you could just take a dog-gone big tool box and you could take a bunch of spare parts, or make you a part, and just fix it right on the spot. But they've just about taken all that away!"

* * *

Last Stop

At 3:30 A.M., only the most hard-core and dedicated pinball people remain. After almost eight solid hours of chasing those little steel balls, us amateurs who are along for the ride, are almost ready to fall down. We're definitely pinballed-out.

But Tom-pall carries on.

"C'mon, Tom-pall!" somebody literally begs him. "Why don't we cash in and go someplace else!"

At first, it seems like Tom-pall didn't

(Continued on page 63)

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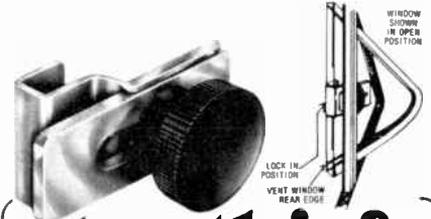
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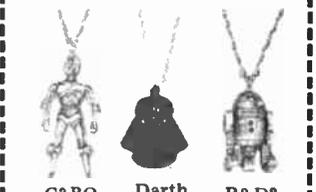
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TOMPALL

(Continued from page 59)

even hear the request. He barely glances up from the flashing board and hardly relaxes his crab-like palm grip on the front of the machine. His face merely hardens with determination, and his cigarette ash falls on the glass top, unnoticed.

"No way, son!" He grits his teeth and flips another steel ball into the playing field. "Not after I come this far!"

PHOTO CREDITS

- P. 4 Editor's Note - Mary Ellen Moore
 - P. 6 White House - Courtesy the White House
 - P. 10 Dolly Parton - Courtesy RCA
 - P. 10 Barbara Eden - Danny Ferrington
 - P. 10 Dolly Parton - Michael Borum
 - P. 12 Con Hunley - Courtesy Warner Bros.
 - P. 12 Johnny Duncan - Alan Whitman
 - P. 14 Johnny Cash & guests - Bill Dibble
 - P. 16 Johnny Paycheck - Courtesy CBS
 - P. 17 Eddie Rabbitt - Courtesy Richie Allen
 - P. 17 Ronnie Prophet - Courtesy Tenn. Tourist Development
 - P. 17 Jim Stafford/Bobbie Gentry - Courtesy Jane Covner
 - P. 18/19 Willie & Waylon - Courtesy RCA/CBS
 - P. 22 Dottie West - Leonard Kamsler
 - P. 24/26 Dottie West - Courtesy NBC
 - P. 29 Mel McDaniel - Andrea J. Bernstein
 - P. 32 Dolly Parton - Michael Childers/Syigma
 - P. 34/35 T.G. Sheppard - Leonard Kamsler
 - P. 36 Carpenters - Courtesy A&M/Harry Langdon
 - P. 38/41 Pinball - Craig Angle
 - P. 46 Johnny Cash - Courtesy CBS
 - P. 46 Rex Allen, Jr. - Courtesy Warner Bros.
 - P. 47 David Allen Coe - Courtesy CBS
 - P. 47 Mel McDaniel - Andrea J. Bernstein
 - P. 47 Sammi Smith - Courtesy Elektra
 - P. 49 Dottie West - Courtesy U.A.
 - P. 50 Kenny Rogers - Courtesy U.A.
 - P. 54 Peter Stampfel - Cheh Nam Low
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Photo credit for Austin City Limits was inadvertently omitted in July issue - the photographer was Ed Malcik. - Our Apologies.

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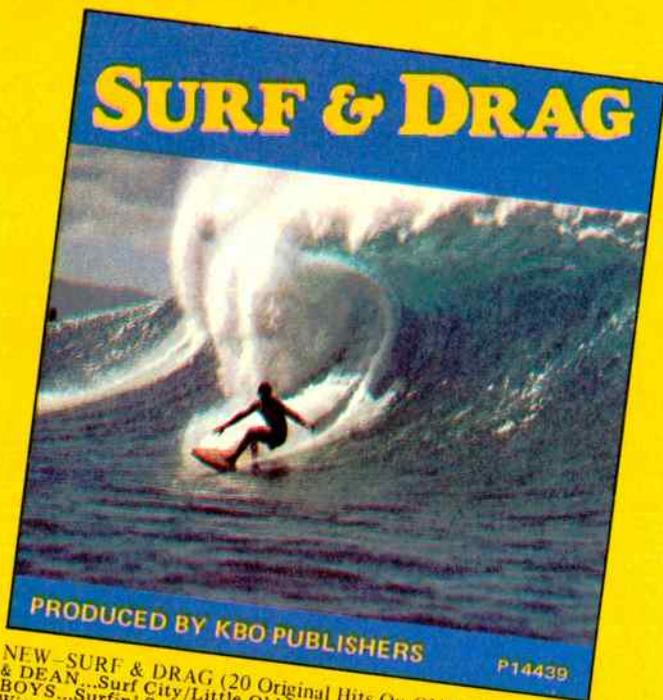
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PICKERS'

(Continued from page 55)

going in a brand new direction. I'm going to become a musician.

Five months ago I started taking violin lessons. My first teacher was a jazz cellist. He taught me a lot of basic music, but I need a real violin teacher. I asked around, and located one who's about as good as he could possibly be.

I used to hold the fiddle low, a little under my heart, like the old-timers. Took me a long time to realize how many reasons there are for holding the damn thing in the classical position. It's great to have a teacher who can explain the reasons for doing the things you've been told to do.

Besides playing classical violin, he plays country and Irish fiddle. It helps our affinity.

I'm working in an office as a coder doing market research. The work is bearable, the people are interesting, and it pays the rent. I'm determined not to go on stage again until I have my act together.

I made a master tape with my old band, the Holy Modal Rounders in late '76. The recording is currently out on the Adelphi label. The old Rounders are still playing together out in Oregon. About the time this article is out I will be putting a new band together, and we should record another album for Adelphi this fall.

It will be interesting to perform without being high or drunk after all these years. I quit drinking about a month ago, although I still smoke pot occasionally. Booze and beer were cutting into the energy I needed for work and practice. And I no longer need an excuse to act crazy. When you're straight and choose to get carried away, which I often enjoy doing, the craziness is more effective. You don't lose your perspective.

The music I want to play is sometimes wild, sometimes beautiful, sometimes tough, and often all three. It's mainly a mixture of old country, classic rock, and new jazz. Something like Bob Wills and Uncle Dave Macon meet Bruce Springsteen and Salsa, if I practice real hard.

But whatever music I want to play, it's going to take work. Real work. I'm finally looking forward to it. ■

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the Festival from all over the Southeast.

By the way, television shows are being taped at Opryland and the Opry House throughout the summer. For a complete schedule, write: Opryland Travel, Department F, P.O. Box 2138, Nashville, TN 37214. There's no charge for the shows, however seating is limited in the Opry House and tickets are available on a first-come first-served basis.

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If your family likes good ol' country music and good ol' fun, plan your trip to Opryland today. We've got all kinds of special doin's this summer and you're going to love it all!

The Opry Star Showcase Schedule July, August and September

July	7 Bill Anderson
3 To Be Announced (TBA)	8 Billy Walker
4 Connie Smith and Stu Phillips	9 Ronnie Milsap
5 Barbara Mandrell	10 Jerry Clower and Wilma Lee Cooper
6 Dottie West	14 Ray Pillow
10 Roy Acuff	15 Don Gibson and Jim and Jesse
11 Hank Snow	16 Jeanne Pruett
12 Bob Luman	17 Lonzo and Oscar and Roy Drusky
13 Jimmy C. Newman	21 George Hamilton IV
17 Lester Flatt	22 Jack Greene and Jeanne Seely
18 Larry Gatlin	23 The Four Guys
19 TBA	24 Stonewall Jackson
20 TBA	26 Skeeter Davis
24 Bill Anderson	27 Jim Ed Brown
25 Dottie West	28 Barbara Mandrell
26 Justin Tubb and Charlie Walker	29 The Osborne Brothers
27 David Houston and Del Wood	30 Bill Monroe
31 Marty Robbins	31 Ernest Tubb
August	September
1 Grandpa Jones	1 Wilburn Brothers
2 TBA	2 Connie Smith
3 Loretta Lynn	3 Del Reeves
	4 Roy Acuff

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