

COUNTRYMUSIC

02308

ANNE MURRAY
A New Kind Of Feeling

JIM REEVES
How The Legend Lives

JOHNNY RODRIGUEZ

PLUS:
How The Opry Works

MARTY ROBBINS

Makeup Ladies At Work

RONNIE McDOWELL

Stereos & Stars

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Records & Tapes

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*A separate admission is charged for performances of "Country Comin' Up."

Opryland '79!

Your kind of music! Your kind of fun!

For information write: Opryland U.S.A., 2802 Opryland Drive, Room 130, Nashville, TN 37214 (615) 889-6611. Opryland '79 is open daily from May 27- Sept. 3. Weekends only Sept. 8-Oct. 28



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COUNTRY MUSIC

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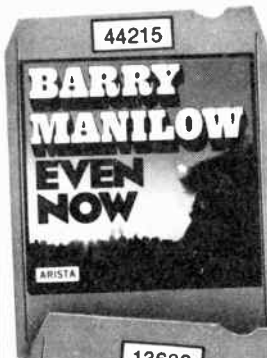
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Publisher:
John Killion

Executive Editor:
Russell D. Barnard

Associate Publisher &
Advertising Director:
Jim Chapman

Art Director &
Production Manager:
Cheh Nam Low

Nashville Editor:
Bob Allen

Assistant Editor:
Rochelle Friedman

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

Director: Special Projects:
Gloria Thomas

Circulation Director:
Michael R. McConnell

Director: Direct Marketing:
Anthony Bunting

Financial Manager
Robert Turrentine

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

Advertising

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

West Coast

The Leonard Company
6355 Topanga Canyon Blvd., #307
Woodland Hills, California 91364
Len Mendelson
Director of West Coast Advertising
(213) 340-1270

Midwest

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

South/Southwest

Newt Collinson
Collinson & Company
4419 Cowan Road
Tucker, Georgia 30084
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(800) 241-9461

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Fender Acoustic Strings put more doggone teeth in your music. The reason is a six-sided Swedish steel core with edges that hold the 80-20 bronze wrap like a vise. And when the winding's tighter, the sound is brighter. So get a grip on a pack of Fender Acoustics for your guitar or banjo. On the other hand, if you're looking for something so soft and mellow it'll make old Oscar himself roll over and play puppy, use Fender Acoustic Silk 'N' Steels. Either way, when you're pursuing musical excellence, Fender Acoustic Strings can close the gap.

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fact:
 the PRO MASTER™ sound
 system is not an evolution...
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REVOLUTION!



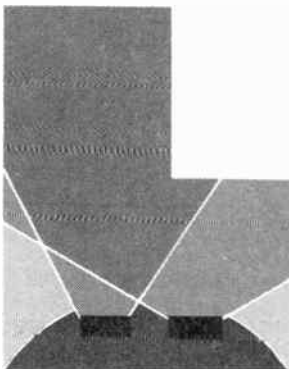
The PRO MASTER modular sound system ushers in a new generation of sound system versatility, reliability, and quality for today's entertainers, musicians, and speakers — for use in settings as diverse as intimate clubs, lounges, large auditoriums, churches, and schools. Its multitude of performance-proven features is the result of sophisticated computer design techniques, advanced materials, and countless hours of personal consultation with performers and sound technicians.



Revolutionary New Console

Finally! The best of *both* worlds. A console so easy to use that it won't overwhelm the beginning group, yet with the advanced features and capabilities required by experienced professional performers — such as pre-fader monitor mixing, effects and/or built-in reverb, with their own tone controls, LED clipping indicators with attenuators on each input, and full patching facilities for every system component. Super power: *twin 200-watt solid-state power amplifiers!* Doubles as a stereo recording console for groups that want to "lay down a few tracks" without paying for studio time, or can be used as an ultra-sophisticated keyboard mixer with power. Unitized ARMO-DUR™ structural foam combination case and chassis makes it more durable than steel. Ultra-light: only 47 pounds.

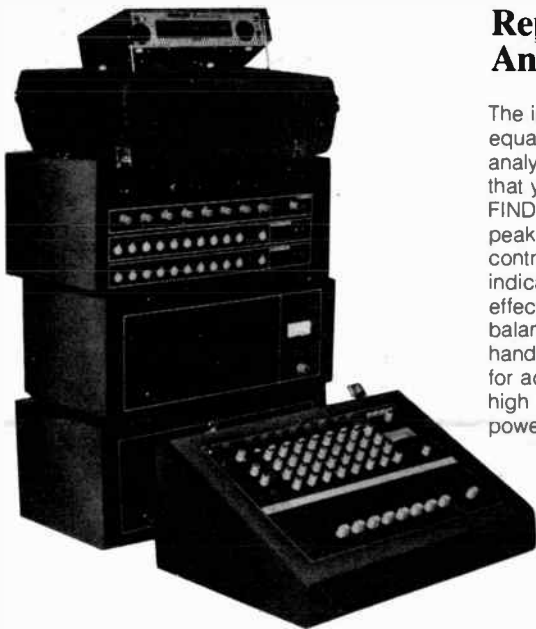
Revolutionary: Variable Dispersion Sound System



Advanced new variable dispersion high-frequency horn system projects your sound — everywhere in the house, giving you a choice of 60° long-throw, or 120° wide-angle dispersion with the twist of a knob. Tailors the sound to the room — even L-shaped rooms.

Revolutionary New Loudspeaker

Every extra ounce — every unnecessary cubic inch — has been computer designed OUT of the PRO MASTER loudspeaker. Modern materials and molding techniques accommodate a high-performance 15-inch woofer and a high-frequency horn and compression driver in a startlingly small, efficient enclosure. Less than 28 inches high, 23 inches wide, 16 inches deep. Weighs an easy-to-handle 58 pounds. Yet, the power handling capacity is a remarkable 150 watts, and the frequency response is 50 to 15 kHz.

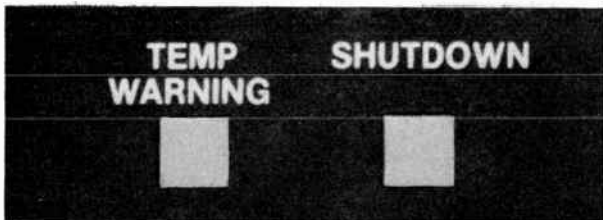


Replaces All This Equipment... And Does More!

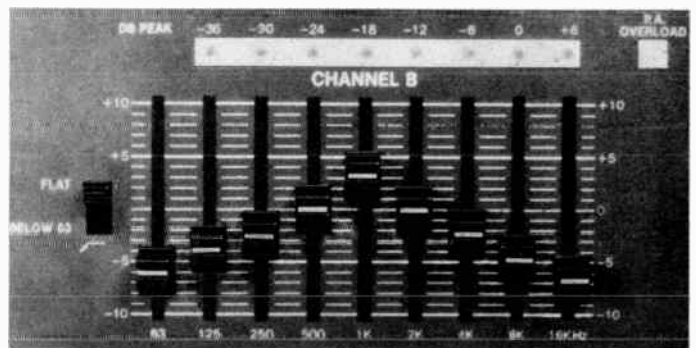
The impressive array at left includes a mixing console, two graphic equalizers, a pair of 200-watt power amps, a monitor mixer and an octave analyzer. The PRO MASTER gives you all these capabilities — plus features that you can't find in any other console, at any price: Unique FEEDBACK FINDER™ circuit, exclusive PATCH BLOCK™ patch panel, wide-range LED peak output and input clipping indicators. Plus pre-fader monitor send controls, LED power amp overload, temperature warning and shutdown indicators, 0 to 30 dB input attenuators, full stereo features, simultaneous effects and reverb on each channel. What's more, you have Hi-Z and Lo-Z balanced transformer-coupled mic inputs on all six mic channels, (can handle 12 mics simultaneously), plus two additional auxiliary input channels for adding synthesizers, tape players, tuners, sub mixers or any other high level output components. And each Lo-Z input features built-in simplex powering for condenser microphones.

Revolutionary: LED Status Indicators

Alerts you to developing trouble *before* it gets serious! You have time to correct the problem before it interrupts the performance. Temperature warning LED warns you if amplifier is overheating. Shutdown LED indicates power amplifier and speaker protection system activation. Only the power amplifiers are shut down until the internal cooling fan lowers the temperature.



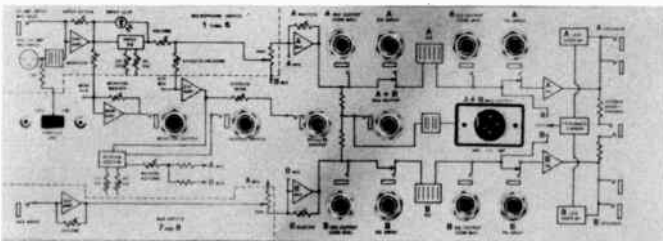
LED peak indicators virtually obsolete VU meters. They respond to short transients that wouldn't budge a needle, and cover 42 dB without range switching. PA overload LEDs light at full power and also warn you of distortion-causing problems such as bad speaker cables or too many speakers.



Revolutionary: FEEDBACK FINDER™ Equalizer

Controls feedback — the number one enemy of a successful performance. FEEDBACK FINDER visually indicates the troublesome frequencies for precise adjustment of the twin 10-band equalizers. Enables you to equalize for maximum gain on the house and/or monitor system. Nothing else like it!

Revolutionary: PATCH BLOCK™ Patch Panel



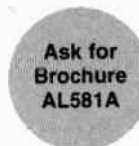
The back panel is a unique combination block diagram and patch panel with 12 patching jacks located at appropriate points on the block diagram. For the beginner who is taking his act on the road for the first time, the PRO MASTER works "as is," with no special connections. But with the PATCH BLOCK, the professional can create a wide variety of setups and add auxiliary equipment without makeshift connections. And you can change setups at a moment's notice without confusion. Simplicity and versatility, the PRO MASTER has them both!

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LETTERS

A Big Thank You

I would like to say thank you very much for the fine article on Tammy Wynette in the March issue. Tammy is no doubt, one of the First Ladies of Country Music and I am a proud member of her fan club. Also I

would like to say thank you for the great article on George Jones in the Jan/Feb 79 issue. I am a big fan of George's also and I do hope he can find the happiness he deserves. I also enjoyed your articles on Johnny Cash and Charly McClain in your April 79 issue. I feel Charly McClain

should have been named the Top New Female Artist by the Academy of Country Music. I am sure a lot of other Country Music fans would agree with me. I thank you very much for a great Country Music Magazine.

KIM SINCLAIR
BRANTFORD, ONTARIO
CANADA

Tanya Tucker

I was very pleased to see the excellent article on Tanya Tucker in your May issue. It's about time that her side was more truthfully shown in her current cross-over 'controversy.'

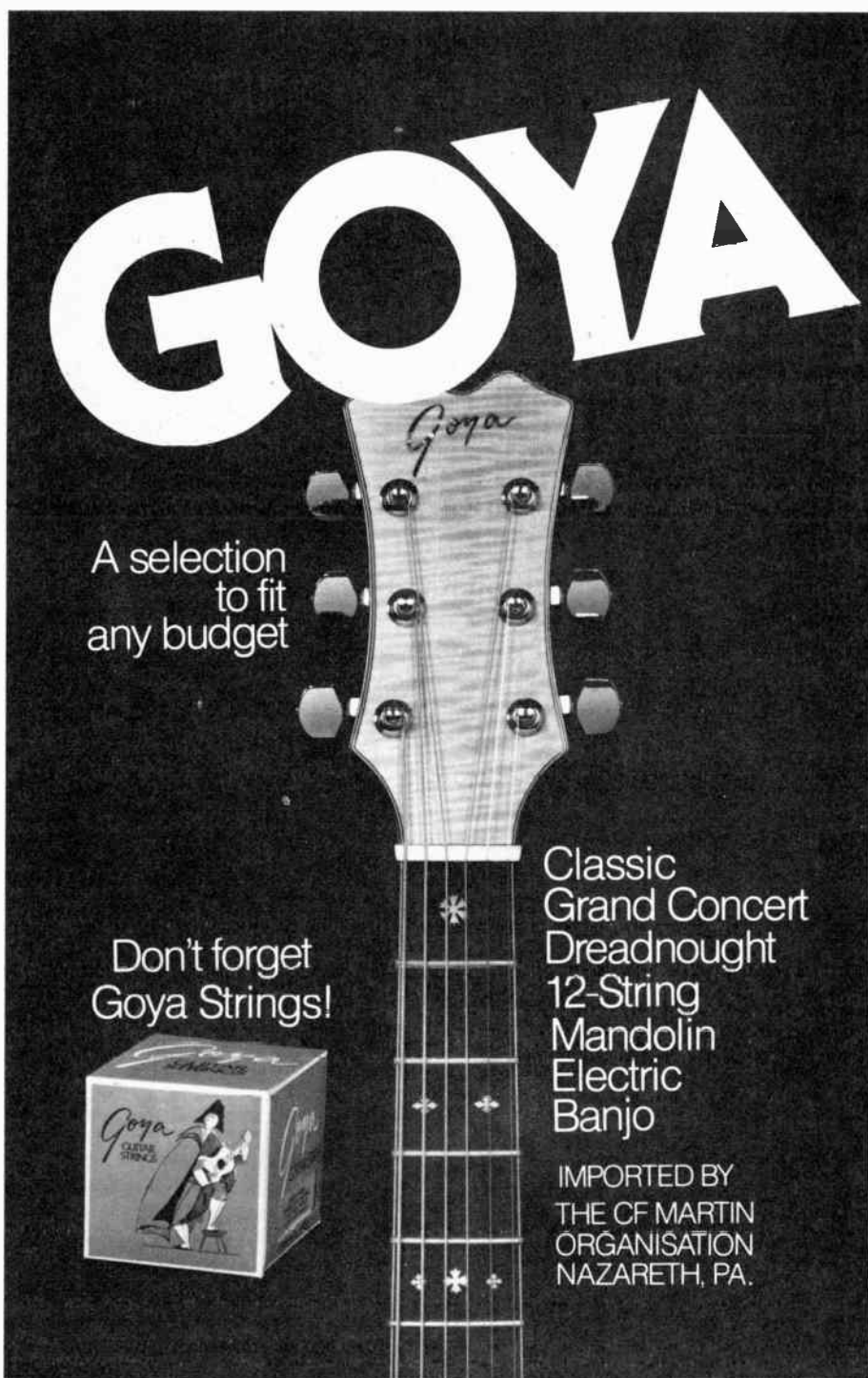
It's not for me to say whether or not she should stay country or go rock. But whatever she has the talent to do, then more power to her to try and expand her career. As for the so-called fans who condemn her new image, I remember seeing a Grand Ole Opry performance by Tanya in 1975 when she received a rousing ovation after finishing *Burning Love* in her skin-tight leather outfit from the same fans who criticize her now. At least Tanya has the guts to put on record, both music and photo, the style that has made her stage presence what it has been since 1975 when I first saw her. If this honesty is worthy of criticism, then it's as absurd as the fact that even though Tanya was the best-selling country singles artist, male or female, in 1975 she wasn't even nominated for one award (check back at the records, it's true).

I feel Tanya can only get better, and if she happens to see this letter, there's at least one SRO crowd of 850 people who want to see her back at The Old Waldorf in San Francisco again real soon.

B. BOWMER
CARMICHAEL, CALIF.

Besides being an ardent Tanya Tucker fan, I am a loyal subscriber of Country Music Magazine. At the moment I am somewhat perturbed by the Daddy's Little Girl Grows Up article about Tanya in your May issue, by Dolly Carlisle.

This article tears the artist down . . . Tanya Tucker is one of the warmest persons and shyest I have ever met with the hard driving determination to succeed. . . . This is so rare in most artists today . . . all most want is an easy way to the bank . . . and believe me, she will, if people let her. I had the pleasure of meeting Tanya and her lovely parents at the D.J. convention in Nashville in '78 and I praise her father for taking an interest in his little girl. If I had a



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12-String
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Electric
Banjo

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THE CF MARTIN
ORGANISATION
NAZARETH, PA.

A few million miles went into the making of this music.

Willie and Leon, they've been there, on the road. **One mile at a time.** *peering out of smoke-filled rooms, hitched-rides on*

The road, that wound down, through hot, no-shade tree streets, past morning coffee-cooking cafes. Then on through the cold canyons of cities with people clattering about like bright tin cans on a string.

The road, with often remembered friends. And stranger's faces

dusty pickup trucks, warm beer and ladies that smelled of old roses. "One for the Road," the new double album from Willie Nelson and Leon Russell. Listen to it, and if by chance there comes a tear, it's just a speck of dust in your eye...from the road.



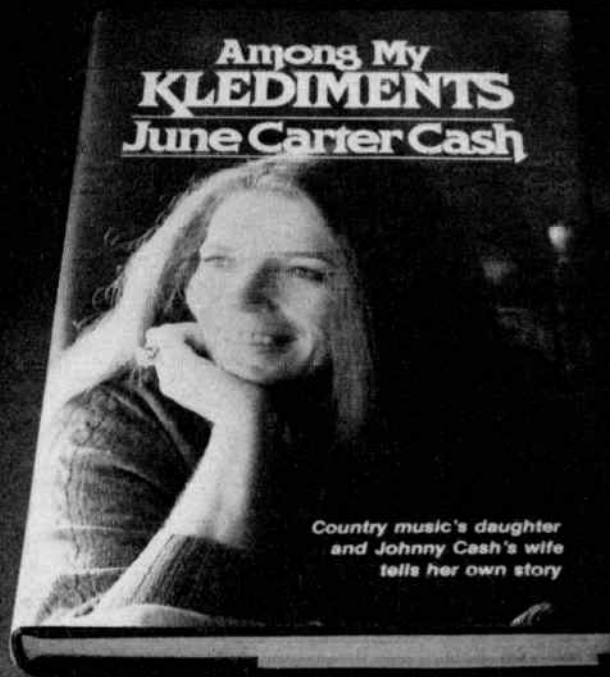
"Among my klediments are loved ones and loved things, hard times and good times..."

"A klediment is mountain talk for treasured persons and things," begins June Carter Cash. And she has many of them to share — from her earliest childhood memories with the famed Carter Family to life with husband Johnny Cash and their seven children.

Warm, witty, intensely honest, June Carter Cash is just about everything you'd look for in a good friend. Now, in her autobiography, she sits back and talks freely, openly, almost as if from across the kitchen table.

Sharing personal stories and lessons, treasured photographs, and a generous helping of original poetry, the author not only takes you behind the scenes, but into her thoughts and prayers.

Get to know the woman behind the name. *Among My Klediments* by June Carter Cash. Now at bookstores in Cloth, \$6.95.



JUNE CARTER CASH/ZONDERVAN

ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE ZONDERVAN CORPORATION GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49506

sister or daughter as talented and as pretty as Tanya Tucker I would not let the vultures in the business take advantage of her either . . . this has happened to too many stars. Every artist sometime in his or her life is misunderstood. Jerry Lee Lewis is country rock, and now, Entertainer of the Year, Kenny Rogers is more crossover than ever, so why pick on Tanya? She has been picked on since she made *Would You Lay With Me In A Field of Stone*.

To Tanya Tucker, I say, tell your critics to go lay in the field of stone. You have got more talent in your little finger than they have in their head. To your parents, congratulations on rearing America's Female Elvis. To her dedicated fans like myself, lets back her more in her time of trout. To Country Music Magazine, live and let live. Tanya, my dear public is confused in a world of commercialism and phonies, let's help her retain her genuine talent.

RUSS "FAZ" FAZZIO
KCIL FM
HOUMA, LA.

Marty Robbins

In regard to Bill Oakey's review of Marty Robbins' album, *The Performer*, Mr. Oakey is obviously ignorant. *The Performer* is a super album with a nice variety of songs, sang by a super artist.

The title song, written by Marty, would touch anybody's heart. Also it reflects the warmth and compassionate personality of Marty Robbins.

Touch Me With Magic, which was not written by Marty, is a real cute song with a good beat, a nice song to add variety to the album. Anyone would have to like that song because Marty makes it sound so good. It is not any of the things Mr. Oakey tried to imply.

Confused and Lonely has made Marty fans out of people who don't even like country music.

Please Don't Play a Love Song did real well on the charts. I could go on with *Jenny*, *Look What You've Done* and the others but I think I've made my point. *The Performer* contains songs for all kinds of people young and old.

DEVOTED TO MARTY
BARBARA HAMILTON
BENTON, ILL.

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

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ON MCA RECORDS

Country Scene

Robert Gordon's Rockabilly Revival



Robert Gordon is a visual performer in the tradition of Elvis, Jerry Lee, and all the other image-creating Sun Records' veterans. His high-rise hair-do and pegged pants are enhanced by the familiar black satin cummerbund—a direct descendent of the '50s. His glowering stance is a direct reproach of the middle class morality of the Cold War era.

At 32, Gordon has brought back the feelings of teenage rebellion and outlawry that go well beyond Nashville's dollar-induced program that created many renegades. He stalks the stage like a cat after its prey and evokes memories of Elvis. Yet Gordon avoids the nostalgia

of *American Graffiti* and the parodies of Sha-na-na on his RCA album, **Rock Billy Boogie**.

But the fact remains that twenty years have passed since rockabilly created such a stir and while Gordon has remained one of its purest disciples, he has been forced to become one of its pioneers. He is turning a whole new generation on to this type of music and in accepting the inherent responsibilities that come with innovation, he has found his own credibility being questioned.

"I've been compared to Presley and accused of being on a nostalgia trip. The former was flattering to a point and then

it got out of hand," he says. "The latter is just not true."

"I don't consider my rockabilly to be an old music because we do it in a very contemporary way for a new audience. The instrumentation I use is very basic but it's taken a long time (17 years) to find a trio that can pull it off. That trio is us."

With Chris Spedding on guitar, drummer Bobby Chouanard and Tony Garnier on stand-up bass, "We've been able to create music that is both simple and vocally oriented."

Gordon chose to record and release Conway Twitty's *It's Only Make Believe* as his first RCA single, and there seems to be a certain similarity in their musical philosophies. Though Gordon is still an avid, longtime involved, rockabilly fan, he is looking to the country market and its music as an area to pursue. Twitty was more radical in the treatment of his career—unlike Gordon, he chose to leave the musical style he helped to create. After many successful years of performing and recording rockabilly, Twitty put down his rock and roll guitar while appearing at a show in New Jersey, headed South and never looked back. He has since devoted his talents solely to singing and writing straight-line country music. It was an unusual decision for an artist to make.

"I know it's a switch for a pop singer to want to cross over into country but I've always loved Conway Twitty, Hank Williams, Wanda Jackson and Tammy Wynette as well as Presley, Gene Vincent, Eddie Cochran, Jack Scott and Billy Riley," Gordon comments. "Country music is such a large part of rockabilly it would be impossible for me to ignore it even if I wanted to, and I really appreciate the long term loyalty of its fans. That's why we performed at the Lone Star Cafe in New York, and did a tie-in with the C&W radio station there—WHN. This tour has been great. After so many years of trying to make it, it's rewarding to be so well received but I'm always thinking ahead.

"And country music," he says, "is something I'm always thinking about."

GAIL BUCHALTER

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PATSY CLINE'S GREATEST HITS

MCA-12 ALBUM \$2.98
Walking After Midnight; Sweet Dreams; Crazy; I Fall To Pieces; So Wrong; Strange; Back In Baby's Arms; She's Got You; Faded Love; Why Can't He Be You; You're Stronger Than Me; Leavin' On Your Mind.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-12 \$4.98

JERRY CLOWER - MCA-486 ALBUM \$2.98

Live In Picayune; Physical Examination; The Plumber; Bird Huntin' At Uncle Versie's; Marcel's Snuff; The Trazan Movie; Rattlesnake Roundup; Aunt Penny Douglas; A Box For Clovis; Marcel Ledbetter Moving Company; The Coon Huntin' Monkey; Marcel's Old Goose; Uncle Versie's Horse; The Chain; Marcel's Hair Growing Secret; Hot Apple Pie; Soppin' Molasses; Newgene's 4-H Trip; What's His Number; Conterfelters; You're Fixin' To Mess Up.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-486 \$4.98

JIMMY DAVIS - MCA-150 ALBUM \$2.98

Supper Time; My God Is Real; I'd Rather Have Jesus; Long Long Journey; Oh, Why Not Tonight; Where He Leads Me I Will Follow; When The Master Speaks; Battle Hymn Of The Republic; There Is A Fountain; When I Move To The Sky; Someday There'll Be No Tomorrow; What A Friend.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-150 \$4.98

JIMMY DAVIS' GREATEST HITS

MCA-269 ALBUM \$2.98
I Wouldn't Take Nothin' For My Journey Now; How Great Thou Art; One More Valley; Someone To Care; Wasted Years; Supper Time; When God Dips His Love In My Heart; Taller Than Trees; Who Am I; Near The Cross; His Marvelous Grace.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-269 \$4.98

RED FOLEY - BEYOND THE SUNSET

MCA-147 ALBUM \$2.98
Beyond The Sunset; Should You Go First; Peace In The Valley; Steal Away; Just A Closer Walk With Thee; Our Lady Of Fatima; The Place Where I Worship; Someone To Care; The Rosary; Will The Circle Be Unbroken; Old Pappy's New Banjo; I Hear A Choir; When God Dips His Love In My Heart.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-147 \$4.98

RED FOLEY - MCA-86 ALBUM \$2.98

I'll Fly Away; The Last Mile Of The Way; No Tears In Heaven; Were You There?; This World Is Not My Home; My Soul Walked Through The Darkness; I Just Can't Keep From Cryin'; Lord I'm Coming Home; Only One Step More; Stand By Me; Farther Along; Life's Railway To Heaven.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-86 \$4.98

LIONEL HAMPTON'S FAVORITES

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

WOODY HERMAN'S GOLDEN FAVORITES

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

LORETTA LYNN - MCA-113 ALBUM \$2.98

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

LORETTA LYNN - HYMNS

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

LORETTA LYNN - MCA-6 ALBUM \$2.98

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

LORETTA LYNN AND CONWAY TWITTY

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

LORETTA LYNN - MCA-7 ALBUM \$2.98

Who Says God Is Dead; I Believe; Standing Room Only; The Old Rugged Cross; Harp With Golden Strings; If You Miss Heaven; I'm A 'Gettin' Ready To Go; In The Garden; Ten Thousand Angels; He's Got The Whole World In His Hands; Mama, Why.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-7 \$4.98

SAMMY KAYE - MCA-191 ALBUM \$2.98

Harbor Lights; Walkin' To Missouri; Penny Serenade; Atlanta, G.A.; Roses; Laughing On The Outside (Crying On The Inside); It Isn't Fair; Chickery Chick; I'm A Big Girl Now; Blueberry Hill; Room Full Of Roses; The Old Lamp-Lighter.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-191 \$4.98

WAYNE KING - MCA-94 ALBUM \$2.98

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

TED LEWIS - MCA-258 ALBUM \$2.98

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

GUY LOMBARDO - MCA-103 ALBUM \$2.98

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

JIMMY MARTIN - MCA-96 ALBUM \$2.98

Prayer Bells Of Heaven; Goodbye; Give Me Roses Now; What Would You Give In Exchange; Voice Of My Savior; Shut In's Prayer; This World Is Not My Home; Pray The Clouds Away; Lord I'm Coming Home; Give Me Your Hand; Little White Church; God Guide Our Leaders Hand.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-96 \$4.98

JIMMY MARTIN - MCA-137 ALBUM \$2.98

Singing All Day And Dinner On The Ground; Lift Your Eyes To Jesus; My Lord Keeps A Record; God Is Always The Same; When The Savior Reached Down For Me; Shake Hands With Mother Again; Help Thy Brother; A Beautiful Life; Stormy Waters; Hold To God's Unchanging Hand; Little Angels In Heaven.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-137 \$4.98

WEBB PIERCE - MCA-120 ALBUM \$2.98

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

MILLS BROTHERS - MCA-188 ALBUM \$2.98

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

BILL MONROE - I'LL MEET YOU IN

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

BILL MONROE - MCA-131 ALBUM \$2.98

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

RUSS MORGAN - MCA-92 ALBUM \$2.98

Does Your Heart Beat For Me; The Object Of My Affection; Do You Ever Think Of Me; Cruising Down The River; Linger Awhile; Stumblings; The Wang Wang Blues; So Tired; Josephine; You're Nobody Till Somebody Loves You; Wabash Blues; Johnson Rag; Dogface Soldier.
8 TRACK TAPE - MCAT-92 \$4.98

OSBORNE BROTHERS - HYMNS

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

ERNEST TUBB - MCA-16 ALBUM \$2.98

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

ERNEST TUBB - MCA-84 ALBUM \$2.98

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

KITTY WELLS - DUST ON THE BIBLE

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

KITTY WELLS - MCA-121 ALBUM \$2.98

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

KITTY WELLS AND RED FOLEY

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

Burgers & Fries & Charley Pride

Where else but in America can you combine an ex-baseball player who became one of the most famous singers of country music, a song about hamburgers, french fries and cherry pie, and come up with a contest that promises forty winners?

Where else but in Southern California can you get the cooperation of McDonald's, Sears, radio station KLAC and RCA Records to promote such a venture?

And, of course, who else could be the star of such an event but Charley Pride?

To qualify for the "Burgers & Fries & Charley Pride" contest, all you had to do was fill out an entry blank with your name and address. The 20 winners were chosen at random and the prize was dinner for two at McDonald's and two tickets to Pride's April 27 concert at the Anaheim Convention Center which was a near sell-out.

Though the ambience of McDonald's differs greatly from the nostalgic remembrances of Pride's most recent hit, *Burgers & Fries & Cherry Pie*, the restaurant did make an effort to get away from the fast-food-franchise-feel it was so instrumental in creating. The sit down dinner for 40 was held at a McDonald's near the Convention Center prior to the show. The restaurant chain that had sold 25 billion hamburgers since 1955, gave away at least 40 quarter pounders, orders of fries, and dessert consisting of, you guessed it, cherry pies.

It was impossible for Pride's entrance to go unnoticed. The chauffeur-driven, Cadillac limousine seemed a quarter of a mile long as it tooted around the parking lot, where it finally deposited Pride and his entourage at one of the doorways. As



Representatives from RCA Records, Sears, McDonald's, radio station KLAC, Pickwick, and Charley Pride gather at the drawing for album winners.

he walked in, all the contestants and the usual Friday night fast food addicts stopped eating though many mouths remained open in surprise.

Pride, looking a little fatigued from his day of promotional stops, quickly slipped into the corner of a booth and did not look up again until he had downed an order of fries and several containers of orange juice. Briefly refreshed, he turned his attention to his fans.

Each one had a different story. One man had a life size poster of Pride that he had had for over ten years which he wanted autographed. Another had a copy of his first album *Amazing Love*, encased in clear plastic which he took out long enough for Pride to put his signature on

it. One hopeful was answered with an abrupt "No" when he asked the balladeer if he would be interested in looking at his song lyrics. And then there was the young girl wearing a red halter top, who admitted that she had to ask her boyfriend "who is Charley Pride?", when they passed the Sear's display.

The timing was amazing. Pride had just finished saying, "I like to get out and greet my fans but I feel bad knowing I'm only getting to talk to a handful of them", when someone reminded him it was getting near show time. Without a backward glance, he turned on his heel and walked out the door as promotion people and photographers formed a circle around him. GAIL BUCHALTER

Record Rip-Off Update

In our April issue exposing a seamy side of Nashville commonly called "Nashville's Embarrassing Record Rip-offs," we mentioned a scam wherein a performer paid several hundred dollars for publicity to Stephen M. Post, who immediately obtained them a booking on the TV show *Eddie Sky's Music Row*, the catch being that the show is never shown anywhere, just taped and re-taped.

Not long ago Edward "Ted" Revell (who is president of Chartwheel Records), the man who portrays "Eddie Sky," pleaded guilty to fraud charges,

and last week (May 18) Stephen M. Post also pleaded guilty to what were described as "massive" fraud charges. "Are you offering to plead guilty to this charge because you *are* guilty?" asked Judge Tom Wiseman. "Yes sir," was Post's reply.

Post charged \$525 for his promotional services, claiming in addition to the assured booking on *Eddie Sky's Music Row* that he could obtain publicity for his client in that he handled advertising for some fifteen music magazines, and ran the Nashville offices for some fifteen others; he made similar exaggerated claims for contacts in radio, television, and newspapers.

In related developments, Bill Killian of

Allied Artists Productions and Ralph Wright of Dominion Records have also plead guilty on similar charges (sentences will be handed down later), and the government is continuing its investigation into numerous other cases.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

The Pickin' Post, a Lebanon, Tennessee studio described in the "Rip-off" article that appeared as "a demo studio" is in fact a fully equipped 16 track master studio. No aspersions or intimations of wrongdoing or incompetence on the part of the *Pickin' Post* were intended or implied by the author, Douglas B. Green, or *Country Music Magazine*.—Ed.

Country Scene

Watch This Face: Bobby Braddock



In many ways, a successful country songwriter has one of the best jobs in the world: I mean, look at it this way: The only tools he really needs are a guitar, a tape recorder, and a legal pad. And he can do his work practically anywhere, or anytime: at home, at the kitchen table or on the front porch, or even in a local barroom, or out in a boat on the lake. After all ... inspiration can hit anywhere.

And if you're one of Nashville's top writers, like Bobby Braddock is, it can mean some generous royalty checks. A top-five country song can usually mean anywhere from \$10-20,000 for its writer; and if you've been averaging four or five of them a year like Bobby has, well, you're talking about some real nice pocket money.

So why then, does he, like so many ultra-successful writers, want to trade it all in for the vicissitudes and uncertainties of a recording career?

"Just being a writer, that's not what I want anymore." 38-year-old Braddock explains. "For years, it's not been what I wanted. I want to do it, as an artist, with my own material.

"And, another thing too," he laughs. "To be quite frank, I need a hit really bad! I have a lot of old debts and I need money. I have an ex-wife who bled me to death for years, and I owe the I.R.S. \$25,000."

The result of this desire to sing his own hits, in Bobby Braddock's case, is his long-awaited debut LP, *Between The Lines*, on Elektra Records, which was produced by Don Gant (who is also vice president of Tree International, the publishing company to which Bobby's been signed for the last 13 years.) The songs on *Between The Lines* were all written or co-written by Braddock, and they range across all sorts of different musical styles—everything from hard country, to bluesy sounding numbers, even to ... God Forbid! ... a protest! song: *Blow Us Away*, the best anti-nuclear bomb song I've heard. Over a long, ominous bass cadence, you can hear Braddock singing off a list of countries with nuclear capabilities, until it leads right up to the chorus. "They're all gonna blow us away ... they're all gonna blow us away ..." At the end, the song dissolves into an eerie, mournful cacophony, then echoes off into a dull roar, and then ... silence.

"I got the idea for that from *The Book Of Lists*," Bobby smiles. "It's a good book to take into the john with you. It has a whole list of countries that have full nuclear capability, that could blow the world up today. Then they have other long lists of countries that would have that capacity in two years, or in five years. They are pretty long lists. So I just sat at the piano, put the book in front of



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Country Scene

me, and started writing. I just changed the order of the countries around a little bit so it would meter right. It was really the easiest song I ever wrote. I hope it does some good."

What you will *not* find on **Between the Lines** is Bobby's versions of the hits that other people have had with his songs. These include, among others: *Golden Ring* (co-written with Rafe Van Hoy and recorded by Tammy Wynette and George Jones), *Her Name Is* . . . (recorded by George Jones), *Thinkin' Of A Rendezvous* (co-written with Sonny Throckmorton and recorded by Johnny Duncan), *Peanuts And Diamonds* (recorded by Bill Anderson), and *D-I-V-O-R-C-E* (co-written with Curley Putnam) and *Womanhood* (both recorded by Tammy Wynette).

"For some reason, which I can't explain. I wanted to do songs that people hadn't heard before," he says. "I guess, for one reason. when other artists do my songs, it sounds so different from the way I do them, and the public is already used to hearing them a certain way. I wouldn't want to compete with a George Jones or a Tammy Wynette, because they sound so great.

"Most of the songs on the LP are things that I wrote or co-wrote as we went along, during the months we spent working on the album," he adds. "It just turned out that there were a variety of songs, but I always write a lot of different kinds of songs anyway.

"Every time I've recorded before," he adds, "the problem has been that, as a writer, my best songs always went to other artists. This is the first time I've been able to cut them myself."

Braddock actually began his career as an artist of sorts, back in the very early sixties when he sang and played piano on the Florida club circuit in a band called Big John's Untouchables. When he made the move to Nashville in 1966 though, he primarily had his sights set on writing. He arrived in town, knowing almost no one, and having absolutely no connections in the music business, so he ended up playing piano in the seedy bars along East Nashville's wild and woolly Dickerson Road. "I also played on some sessions," he adds. "They were mostly 'kick-back' sessions. You'd work on these master sessions for a producer, then go down to the union and get your money, and then you'd have to take at least half of it and give it back to the producer who was running the session. There was quite a bit (of that) going on when I first came to town. I hated to do

it, but it was just another way of stayin' alive."

Soon, though, Bobby landed a job playing piano in Marty Robbins' road band. Marty recorded several of his songs and ended up having some healthy chart records with them. Shortly after,

Bobby began working with Tree Publishing Company, with which he's been affiliated ever since. "They started getting my songs recorded left and right, almost right off. A lot of 'em were pretty shitty songs too, now that I look back on it," he grimaces. "And Buddy Killen (Tree's co-



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owner) was saying, 'This is the next Roger Miller.' But I never made it as an artist, you know, so they sort of forgot that."

Braddock's early recording efforts with various labels—MGM, Mercury and Columbia—never really got off the ground. Instead, he gradually emerged as one of the town's leading songwriters. His real break-through came with *D-I-V-O-R-C-E*, which was one of the biggest hits of 1968, and one of Tammy Wynette's biggest records ever. (In 1975, it became a hit all over again in Britain where it went to number one in the pop charts.)

Then, in the late sixties, he recalls grimly, "things started slacking. In 1971, I had *Did You Ever*, which was a big pop hit in Britain, and then I didn't have anything in the charts again 'till '73. It was scary. . . . Well, mostly it was just depressing and discouraging, really. I even considered going back to Florida and playing in clubs again. Then, in 1976, well, to be honest. . . . I met somebody

and fell in love with her, and there was some purpose to what I was doing, and I started writing one hit after another again."

Some of Braddock's better songs, he explains, come directly from personal experience—in fact, some of them are almost like diaries. Like the George Jones hit, *Her Name Is* . . . "That was a true story about a girl I was having an affair with," he smiles. "It was word-for-word truth! She was married then, but we're living together now. . . . So, it had a happy ending."

BOB ALLEN

Three Strikes, You're Out

It will all be glorious history by the time you read this, but as your intrepid reporter puts his fingers to the keys, the *Country Music Magazine* squad is preparing grimly for the Fan Fair softball tournament, with twice-a-day practices at Tootsie's Orchid Lounge honing the team to a razor's edge of greatness.

Co-captained by *Country Music's* intrepid advertising director Jim Chapman (who deftly plays the hot corner) and Riders In The Sky's yodeler deluxe (and occasional *Country Music* contributor) Doug Green at first base, the team (which after three years still has no nickname, though the "Hacks" has often been suggested) features such celebrities as Mercury artist Dickey Lee, Con Brio artist Don King, songwriter Mark Germino, and Riders in the Sky's bassist Fred "Too Slim" LaBour, and local weatherman Brian Christie.

Rounding out the squad are several who, like Chapman, LaBour, and Green, play with the team through regulation city league play, including banjo player Dean Crum, a wizard at shortstop: Junior "Sensation" Nation; southpaw Dale Smith (all three employed by the Country Music Hall of Fame) and writer Don Cusic. Pitching for the squad will be none other than Capitol's Don "The Gambler" Schlitz. He knows how to hold, 'em how to fold 'em, how to walk away, and how to strike 'em out.

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Eddie Dean: A Pioneer

On May 2 the Academy of Country Music presented its Pioneer Award to a tall, still-handsome singing cowboy named Eddie Dean, who richly deserved it. A recording artist for Decca, Majestic, Mercury, and Capitol among many other labels in the 1940s and 1950s, a popular actor on radio and in dozens of films (twenty in starring roles), he is also a songwriter of considerable repute, with two bona fide country classics to his credit: *One Has My Name*, *The Other Has My Heart*, and *I Dreamed of a Hillbilly Heaven*.

Born Edgar Dean Glosup in Posey, Texas, on July 9, 1907, he was the seventh son of a seventh son. After an early career in gospel music he and his brother Jimmie joined the National Barn Dance in the 1930s, and Eddie later starred in the Chicago-based soap opera *Modern Cinderella*. He headed for Hollywood in 1937, where he found work on radio (with Judy Canova) and in film, culminating with his twenty starring features for PRC from 1946-1948.

Eddie remains active in the southern California nightclub scene and at western film festivals to this day. The possessor of a magnificent booming voice in his prime, it is doubly surprising to see him now in his early 70s, still fit and hand-



some, and with his voice still rich and powerful.

Eddie Dean was indeed a country music pioneer, particularly on the west coast, and the ACM award is fitting indeed. It couldn't have happened to a nicer or more deserving guy.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

by RICH KIENZLE

Jim Reeves

The Undying Legacy

Fifteen years ago, Jim Reeves died in a plane crash near Brentwood, Tennessee. At that time he was at the peak of his popularity, selling millions of records worldwide. In some ways Reeves pioneered the "cross-over" hit concept, for though two of his recordings *Four Walls*, and *He'll Have To Go* became country standards, they also enjoyed great success with pop fans as well. More importantly he became a super-star in Europe and South Africa, where his records sold as well as they did in America.

Yet like Hank Williams, Reeves has become a legend in death. His records still sell millions world-wide. He is currently the number one country artist in South Africa, Norway, Sweden, India, Kenya, and Nigeria. In England, where a Jim Reeves Appreciation Society flourishes he's become a cult figure.

CM contributor Rich Kienzle has spent several months investigating Reeves' life and music to create a portrait of the man, his success and his personality, revolving around four major events in his life. It began before he began to sing, when he had hopes of playing major league baseball—hopes that were about to evaporate.

SCENE 1: A HENDERSON, TEXAS BALLFIELD: JULY, 1947

Reeves winds up for the pitch. He throws. The batter gets a hit and heads for first base. Reeves makes a catch and turns to throw the runner out. His foot slips; he falls hard on his left leg. The pain is excruciating. After six years in the minor leagues of the Deep South, a pulled sciatic nerve ends Jim Reeves' baseball career in just seconds.

"I think the injury was a relief in one sense of the word," said his widow Mary Reeves. "Because he wanted to be a major league player if he was going to play at all. There wasn't any chance [for that] because he was older . . . and his pitching arm was thrown away. I don't think he cared that much," she added. "I think that really all along he wanted to be a singer and just didn't want to recognize it."



Panola County, Texas sits on the Texas-Louisiana border not far from Shreveport. Courthouse records in the county seat of Carthage show James Travis Reeves was born in the hamlet of Galloway on August 20, 1923, but his family insists the year was 1924. In any case his father died ten months later, leaving Beulah Reeves with six children to raise including Jim, the youngest. As a child he helped work the family farm, but also became fascinated with Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers recordings. He acquired a guitar, and at the age of ten earned \$15 singing on a Shreveport radio station.

Yet his adolescent obsession was baseball, which he pursued throughout high school. After graduation in 1942 he accepted a baseball scholarship from the University of Texas at Austin, but quit after six weeks to work in Houston's shipyards, busy with wartime production. He played semipro ball there for a year and was picked up by a St. Louis Cardinals

farm club for a year. He moved on to Louisiana's Evangelin League for two seasons, then to the East Texas League near his home. During one trip to Panola County he met Mary White, a Carthage high school student preparing for college. They dated and corresponded while he played ball, and during the time he tried to recover from that leg injury. Finally, on September 3, 1947, they were married in Carthage, just after Mary quit her dime store job.

Soon after it was clear he wouldn't return to baseball he was hired as a disc jockey by KGRI Radio in Henderson, south of Carthage. As he spun records by Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams and Hank Snow, his musical interests were rekindled. "He finally determined for himself that he could sing better, or just as well as any of those artists," Mary Reeves recalled. He began singing on the station, in local clubs and on two 1949 recordings for the Macy's label in Houston which got little notice.

By 1952 he was KGRI program director, but he was now as obsessed with performing as he once was with baseball, and quit the station to try a singing career. After a brief, abortive move to Dallas, he and Mary went to Longview, Texas where he became bandleader at the legendary Reo Palm Isle club. To make ends meet he also worked at a nearby radio station. A trip to Jim Beck's Dallas recording studio produced a demo tape he pitched to Abbott Records owner Fabor Robison, who promptly signed him. His first release, *Wagon Load Of Love*, fizzled.

But others now noticed him, including Horace Logan of Shreveport's KWKH Louisiana Hayride, who hired him as a deejay/announcer that year. Along with his weeknight radio show Reeves, wearing a plain business suit, stood on the Hayride stage each Saturday night introducing Hank Williams, Red Sovine, Webb Pierce and other Hayride artists. In early 1953 he recorded *Mexican Joe* with the Hayride staff band. Within weeks after its release, it was Jim Reeves' first Number One recording nationwide.



Jim Reeves, very early in his career on Abbot Records.

SCENE II: THE LOUISIANA HAYRIDE STAGE: APRIL, 1953

It had to be galling. Jim may have had the #1 country recording in America, but the Hayride, afraid of losing him as an announcer, wouldn't let him sing onstage. Instead he had to stand at the mike and introduce Billy Walker singing his version of "Mexican Joe." Then came a sudden emergency. Someone didn't show up, so Jim was asked to sing long enough to fill the hole in the schedule. He picked up a guitar and stepped onstage. As he began singing "Mexican Joe," the audience recognized his voice. That night he took six encores.

"Hank Williams had a record of six encores at the Hayride," Mary Reeves recalled. "Jim had gotten six. The audience wanted him back but Horace Logan said 'Now that's it. Nobody's gonna beat Hank Williams' record.'"

Not that it mattered. After promoters and bookers began to call he took six months off to do his first tour, expecting to return to the Hayride as an announcer. He returned a Hayride artist, just in time to see *Bimbo*, his fifth Abbott release, top the charts. In early 1955 he bought back his Abbott contract to sign with RCA Victor, where he matched his early successes with *Yonder Comes A Sucker* and *According To My Heart*. He left the Hayride in the

fall of 1955 to join the Grand Ole Opry, where he continued to sing his down-home country songs. Then in 1956, Elvis broke. The market for hardcore country music shriveled. Nashville producers panicked, then began looking for an answer—and an alternative.

The dropoff might have been a relief for Reeves, who had to strain his resonant announcer's voice to conform to the harsh, nasal singing of that period. In fact he'd gradually been lowering his voice on his RCA recordings. At some unknown point he began experimenting with singing softer, lower and closer to the microphone and discovered the lighter, smoother style that became his trademark. It was a voice that would give him mass appeal, especially with women. "Even though it was softer," Mary Reeves explained, "it was still macho."

SCENE III: RCA STUDIOS, NASHVILLE: FEBRUARY 7, 1957

Jim stood facing the microphone. His lips nearly grazed its perforated metal surface. The engineer's voice boomed over the intercom from the control room. He wanted Jim back from the mike. Jim refused, and soon they were arguing. The engineer insisted Jim move back, and Jim continued to refuse. In the end Chet Atkins, the session's producer, let him be.

He recorded "Four Walls" that day.

RCA reluctantly released *Four Walls*. Atkins had tried to dissuade him from recording it, insisting it was written for a woman. Without fiddles and steel, it was a radical departure from other Reeves discs. They issued it in March, while Reeves was overseas on tour and to everyone's surprise it soared to the top of both the country and pop charts. On his return, he found himself appearing on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, the *Tonight Show* (with Steve Allen) and even *American Bandstand*. For a brief period in 1957 he even had his own ABC radio show.

After the 1958 success of *Blue Boy*, he decided to alter his stage show, changing the name of his touring band, the Wagonmasters, to the Blue Boys and dropping fiddle and steel guitar from the lineup.

Throughout 1959, Reeves watched the progress of a song he heard on his car radio. *He'll Have To Go*, recorded by Billy Brown for Columbia was sure to be a hit, he thought. When it wasn't he recorded it himself that fall as the B-side of a single. RCA released it in November, but *He'll Have To Go*, promptly eclipsed the A-side, and became his most popular recording of all. Not only did millions of country and pop fans buy it, it showed up on the Rhythm and Blues charts as well. In April of 1960 he received a gold record for the song on the Opry stage. He was no longer wearing sequined suits by then, but sports coats and dinner jackets.

Yet despite his uptown leanings Reeves seemed immune to the criticism other singers got from some fans for softening their music. There were two reasons: first, his material remained so basic that even Ernest Tubb successfully cut several Reeves hits in his own style. Second, as Mary Reeves explained, "Some artists didn't retain that macho when (their music) was done softer."

Not only did Reeves retain the macho, but behind that Gentleman Jim persona was a tough, uncompromising perfectionist who was as demanding of others as he was of himself. Just as it had surfaced during the *Four Walls* session, it showed onstage, too. On one tour without the Blue Boys, he sang alone with his guitar rather than use the lousy backup band provided. During an Irish tour, he cancelled two shows when the pianos provided for the Blue Boys proved to be unplayable. "He was that way," Mary Reeves commented. "He felt . . . people wanted to hear *him* sing, not the drums clanging or the bass too loud."

Chet Atkins and Floyd Cramer accompanied him on a 1962 tour of South Africa that made his name a household word there. After he became one of the country's top artists, he was offered the starring role in *Kimberly Jim*, a movie set in South Africa's diamond fields. He filmed it in 1962, and released in 1963, it became an international favorite.

He'd left the Opry by that time, dissatisfied with the obligation to appear so many times per year. "If he was home on the weekend, he wanted to be *home*" Mary Reeves said. He had other obligations including Shannon Records, his publishing companies and half interest in KGRI Radio. His manager Dean Manuel, also the Blue Boys' pianist helped him run them. In his leisure time, he golfed, hunted, fished and learned to fly.

He went to Europe in April of 1964 with Chet, Bobby Bare and Anita Kerr, and it was South Africa all over again as he drew huge crowds throughout Germany and Scandinavia. In Germany, his perfectionism drew him into the only controversy of his career when, playing an American enlisted men's club in Friedberg he became so fed up with the noisy, rowdy audience that he stormed offstage after only two songs. He'd done it before in a London club when the audience was noisy, but after a GI newspaper quoted him as saying "I don't play for animals," GIs circulated petitions demanding his records be banned from Army PX's. Mary Reeves remembers the incident well. "He did not intend to try and entertain a bunch of drunks who were that wild," she commented.

That episode blew over, and by the time he returned to Nashville, in that year of the Beatles, he nearly knocked them from the # one spot in Britain with his recording of the classic *I Love You Because*. That summer other projects were being planned. In South Africa, the sequel to *Kimberly Jim* was being written. "(Jim) was going to go to (acting) school and learn to be a good, if not great actor," said Mary Reeves. His RCA contract was renewed, and he recorded plenty of new material. "He had already cut down on the dates he was working," Mary added. "He wanted to relax a bit more."

More shows were planned for early August, after his recording of *I Guess I'm Crazy*, a tune he'd known since his Louisiana Hayride days, took off. In late July he and Dean Manuel got a tip about some land for sale near Batesville, Arkansas. Thinking of the investment value, they piled into a rented, single-engine Beechcraft and took off from Nashville's Berry Field on the morning of Thursday, July 30 to inspect the land. Though they didn't buy it, they remained there overnight and planned to return next day.

SCENE IV: NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE, JULY 31, 1964: 5:00 P.M. (CST)

Dark grey storm clouds hung low over the green wooded hills of the Cumberland Valley. Out at Berry Field, control tower personnel routinely traced an incoming plane on its final approach from the south. The pilot radioed that he was running into heavy rain. Seconds later, the plane disappeared from the tower's radar screen.

MARY REEVES TALKS ABOUT THE LEGEND

Jim Reeves still gets fan mail. Songwriters send him new material. A *Hee-Haw* producer reportedly tried to hook him and some of the RCA promotion men have tried, in vain, to locate him.

None of this surprises Mary Reeves, who presides over Jim Reeves Enterprises in Madison, Tennessee. Such occurrences are a mere byproduct of her successful efforts to keep the Jim Reeves recorded legacy—and legend—alive. With all-time sales of well over 50 million worldwide and domestic sales of around 200,000 a year, fifteen years after he died, it's no wonder many still think he's alive.

A friendly, open woman with an infectious laugh, Mary took a hard look at how record companies rush-released everything a recently-deceased artist ever recorded. "As soon as that big gush was over, they were dead artists," she says. "And I knew that was going to happen to Jim if I didn't do something about it." She convinced RCA to issue his records as carefully as if he were still alive. LPs seldom, if ever, mention his death.

When some of the original instrumental backgrounds became dated, she and RCA dubbed new accompaniment onto master tapes, a move that's outraged



some purists. "I appreciate how they feel," she says. "But in order to have a record played on the radio you have to have a current product." She's also updated some LP covers (including a bizarre one that, through photographic sleight-of-hand, showed Jim dressed in a 1970s leisure suit).

There's more unissued material in the form of live shows that Mary plans to use "at the right time." As for her reasons for all this, she says "I didn't want to have to go back to the dime store." Turning serious, she adds. "I didn't know if one person would want a Jim Reeves record after he died. We tried it and it worked. He's not here physically, but his artistry is still very much here."

At that moment, in the hilly, exclusive suburb of Brentwood several miles south of town, Marty Robbins, standing outside his home, was startled by a loud sustained buzz. It stopped; seconds later he heard a crash.

Within hours a massive search was underway, aided by members of the Civil Air Patrol and personnel from both the Davidson and Williamson County Civil Defense agencies. Private planes and helicopters also joined. At Berry Field, flight plans were checked; the plane and its two passengers were identified.

Mary Reeves kept a vigil at home, and as the news spread throughout the music community, many joined in the search. Brentwood resident Eddy Arnold scoured the hills in a jeep; Carl Smith brought riding horses from his ranch. Chet Atkins, Ernest Tubb and others also assisted. Nothing, however, was found Friday evening or all day Saturday. The search was further hindered by spectators who clogged the area.

Civil Defense personnel conducted a door-to-door canvass of Brentwood on Saturday, and a statement was taken from Marty Robbins, who hadn't connected the noise he'd heard with a plane crash. It was found that others in the area had heard similar noises. On Sunday, the accounts

were compiled, and checked against a map of the Brentwood area. When CD official Bob Newton discovered the noise was heard from a wooded area less than 100 yards from a private home, he headed for the site alone.

There was the Beechcraft, shattered and crumpled against a tree and in the cabin lay Dean Manuel. Reeves' body lay about 30 feet away, thrown by the impact. Shortly afterward, a grimfaced Eddy Arnold identified him and shortly after 1 P.M. Sunday afternoon, wire services relayed the news. Later, an investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration blamed the crash on pilot error.

After a combined service for Reeves and Manuel in Nashville on August 4, Reeves' body was returned to Carthage, where after a second service he was interred. In 1965 Mary Reeves constructed a memorial park and monument on the site. And his records, like *Is It Really Over* and *I'd Fight The World* continue to hit the charts. He was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1967.

"He would have been one of the giants still today," Mary Reeves speculated. But apparently Jim Reeves never perceived himself that way in life. "He didn't discredit himself," she added, "but I think he didn't realize how big he actually was."

Lipstick & Mascara

Making The Stars Look Their Best

by **DOLLY CARLISLE**

The circular clock on the wall said it was two hours before the Country Music TV Special was to begin. Milling around like worker bees in a hive, the workmen were busily moving props, adjusting the overhanging lights and checking sound equipment.

Few noticed the nervous-looking young starlet that passed silently through a side-door. She glanced around and, grateful that she had attracted so little attention, hastened down the hallway toward the makeup room. She was always nervous about live network shows, but tonight she was particularly uptight. A recent car accident had left a large stitched gash that stretched across her forehead. Her makeup lady was good, but the young woman wondered if there was any way her ugly mark could be effectively hidden.

The transformation did not take long. An hour later, the starlet appeared. Her jauntiness had returned and she again repaid admiring gazes with her famous impish smile. Like a beautiful butterfly emerging from its cocoon, the starlet's confidence had been restored. Her rum-

pled shirt and worn blue-jeans had been replaced with a glittering pant outfit, her ragged hair had been transformed into a shimmering array of curls. But most important of all, her unsightly scar had been gracefully camouflaged.

"It was one of the tougher jobs I've had to do," recalls makeup artist Norma Gerson. "The scar had to be covered because the director had planned tight facial shots. Especially because of her youthful age, she needed to look fresh and not at all made-up. I feel like I accomplished both."

Network shows and album covers require the skills and talents of an array of technicians and artists. But perhaps no one is more important than the makeup artists. "It's important for all of us to feel good about how we look," continued Norma, "but for an artist who is about to perform, it's a necessity."

A makeup artist's job involves more than just the application of makeup. "The makeup artist is working with the artist at a crucial time, immediately before he or she is about to perform," commented Bill Turner, vice president of Show Biz, Inc.

and veteran director of country music TV shows. "She not only has to make the artist look good, but feel good. That may require talking over problems, or just quietly listening about the trials of a hectic day. But whatever is needed, the director and the rest of the crew depend heavily on the makeup artist to get the artist ready."

Scanning the credits on major country music TV specials, regular weekly shows and album covers, three names begin to pop up most frequently—Norma Gerson, Jo Coulter and Elizabeth Linneman. Together, they have applied makeup to every major and minor country music artist in the business and worked on the set of every major TV studio.

It is under their hands that the country music artists are revamped into their shimmering, illusive star personalities. "There's my ordinary self and then there's the self that's on the stage," admits Loretta Lynn.

It can be said that without these gifted ladies, our country music stars would not look the same. It may also be true that they would not be the same.

JO COULTER

Jo Coulter has been called the "Dean of Country Music's Makeup Artists". She has certainly been in the business longer than any of her counterparts (20 years) and most of the others learned from her.

She is now semi-retired, working on the Johnny Cash shows and making up only the hosts of the country music shows. Jo has stopped traveling with the stars and settled down to a routine lifestyle with her third husband, Henry.

The makeup industry has been good to Jo. It has enabled her to travel the country, meet every major star in the country music business and beyond, and it has supported her and her daughter. But the work has also had its demands; she confesses the pace has been a burden on her homelife. (It is not unusual for a makeup artist to work 16-hour days.) But as she settled back

against her couch one recent afternoon, she reminisced mostly about the good times. She is a tall, matronly blonde-

haired woman who still has magnificent blue eyes that tease. She speaks in a low, mellow, soothing voice that is comforting.



"I began as a model and eventually found myself in Nashville opening a modeling school," she said. "Television was just beginning so I was one of the first to model on TV. As time passed, I was asked more and more about how others should walk and apply makeup for television. If I didn't know the answer, I'd go home and experiment on myself until I got one. Eventually, I became the makeup lady."

"My really big break came when I had the opportunity to work on the *Jimmy Dean Show*," she continued. "At the time, he was the only country artists who had a regular network show. He normally taped in New York, but moved the show temporarily to the Grand Ole Opry stage and asked me to apply the makeup."

"Actually, I happened to be in the right place at the right time. My career grew as the popularity of country music grew. I remember back when everybody was getting their start. My first husband's and my place became a resting spot for a number of the country artists who had nowhere else to go. I was nicknamed Momma Jo. There was many a weekend that Kris Kristofferson joined us for my brown beans and cornbread. Another time, my husband asked if Sammi Smith could spend Labor Day weekend with us. I said sure. But her stay continued on for six months. I was always helping the down-and-out pickers."

After Jimmy Dean, Jo went on to be the makeup consultant and director for almost every major country music show that existed—*The Del Reeves Show*, *The Jim Ed Brown Show*, *The Wilburn Brothers Show*, *The Porter Wagoner Show* and *That Good Ole Nashville Music*. In addition, she was the first makeup artist for *Hee Haw*, but eventually began concentrating on the Johnny Cash clan.

"I traveled with John, June and family for over a year and a half. I'll never forget the time they performed at the White House before President Richard Nixon." It is with the Cash family that Jo had some of her most memorable moments. "There was the time I was applying Mama Maybelle's eyelashes. She had her eyes closed and when she tried to open them she couldn't. I had actually glued together the top and bottom lashes of one of her eyes. Mama Maybelle got a big chuckle out of that and never let me forget it."

It was also while traveling with the Cash clan that Jo herself attracted the most notoriety. "It was not unusual for the fans to come up and ask for a kleenex that had been used while applying makeup to John."

"In the early days of television, almost no one wore makeup for TV," Jo continued. "It was more important then, while everything was shot in black and white, than it is now. It took me awhile to convince the men that they needed makeup too. At first, John didn't want to wear it. But he's a real professional and eventually could see that it was needed."

Jo views the application of makeup similar to painting on a canvas. "Only when I finish, the artist doesn't want to look painted," she added.

"The first thing I do is look at the bone structure. And I must admit that most of the artists, especially the women, have really excellent facial features—high cheekbones, large eyes and a good jawline. But if something is amiss, then I begin highlighting and shadowing.

Beyond that point it depends on the personality of the star. Dolly Parton, for instance is very effervescent, bubbly and open. She can wear a lot of high color like plums, golds and strawberries. But Crystal

Gayle and Anne Murray are much quieter performers and lean toward quieter, more subdued colors."

Jo will be the first to admit that she has learned new makeup tricks along the way. "We used to apply false eyelashes to Ann Murray for TV appearances, but discovered that her eyes actually looked larger on TV if she left them off. So we did. It's sure easier to slap on mascara."

"I always try to let the personality of the star come through, though. I'd never try to cover all of the lines in Johnny Cash's face. The lines are a part of him. So making someone up is not always making them look younger."

ELIZABETH LINNEMAN

Elizabeth Linneman started piddling with makeup when she was six years old. "I'd experiment on my aunts," she admitted.

But her professional interests weren't sparked until she went to modeling and makeup school shortly after the birth of her son. "Initially, I went for self-



improvement, but it became obvious that I had a knack for it," she continued.

Her "knack" lead her to the studios of WLAC where she became the makeup artist for *Hee Haw*. "When the director of the show offered me the job, I was frightened to death," she remembered. "But I was also very honored."

That was ten years ago. Today, Elizabeth is still the makeup artist for *Hee Haw* ("I now have an assistant," she added.), has opened her own hairdresser and makeup shop and gives personal makeup consultations. "Jeannie Shephard was in here just the other day," she mentioned.

Married for 14 years to a bass player, Billy, Elizabeth finds her work complementary to her home life. "Of course, my husband is in the business, so he understands my working hours," she explained. "And I waited until my child was older before I started working. My son grew up understanding our work, so he knows that I'm gonna be gone sometime."

"I'd be bored to death with a nine-to-five job," she added. "My husband would be too. It ticks me off for people to think that those in the music business have no home life. When my husband and I are together, we appreciate being together. We'd get on each other's nerves together all the time."

Hee Haw is taped twice a year—during June and October—for two intensive four-to-six week periods. During that period, Elizabeth is responsible for turning some 42 cast members into their individual character roles.

"Makeup call is for 7:00 in the morning," said Elizabeth. "Camera call is for 10 a.m. That's a lot of people to get made up, hair set and dressed. We apply makeup very similar to a production line. I'll apply the makeup base to one, then while that's setting I'll put eyelashes on another and then maybe go back to the first to put on the eyeshadow. It takes about fifteen minutes to put makeup on the girls and of course less than that for the men.

"We put a makeup base on everybody, even on the musicians who may only stand on the sidelines and remain in the background. But it's important to have a

uniform look. After the base, everybody's makeup is different. Lisa, for instance, does not use less makeup than Mary Ann, she just needs a more dramatic look for her eyes since she plays a sexier role. Kathy Baker has even softer makeup than Mary Ann, but she still wears the same amount."

"My assistant and I are nicknamed body and fender people," she continued. "That's because we act like psychiatrists at times. I mean who feels good at seven o'clock in the morning? We not only have to make the cast look good, we try to help them feel good. That's not easy that early."

"I think the most gratifying part of my job is when I've worked with a struggling entertainer and then see him make it. I view *Hee Haw* like the television version of the Grand Ole Opry. *Hee Haw* gives an unknown a chance. And it's nice to know that I'm a part of that.

Even after all of the makeup has been applied, Elizabeth stays on for the entire taping. "Sometimes we have to make adjustments in the makeup after the cast is on the set. We may have put on an eyeshadow that clashes with the color of a set or the color of their costume."

At times, Elizabeth has been asked to makeup characters other than the cast members. "*Hee Haw*'s scare crow was my creation," she explained. "The director told me to create a scare crow and everyone knows somewhat how it should look. But I had fun working out the details. It's like an artist creating a painting."

"I guess in all my years of applying makeup, my most unusual job was when I put the makeup on the characters of the Wax Museum. First of all, I had to create a makeup that would be permanent, but still look life-like. I can tell you though, it was a scary experience standing in a closed room all day with all of those dummies staring at me. Some were stretched out on tables, others were propped up. There I was, all by myself, surrounded by those characters."

NORMA GERSON

"I think my greatest compliment came from George Ballanchine of the New York City Ballet when he told me I make people beautiful, exclaimed Norma Gerson with a roll of her large hazel eyes. "For him to have said that was marvelous."

Norma Gerson sat during a break of the taping of the *Good Ole Nashville Music* in the lounge of the Grand Ole Opry House TV studios. She was dressed casually—blue jeans and blouse with a vest jacket and tennis shoes. But even with the informal attire, this slender, auburn-haired

woman had retained a sense of style and poise about her appearance. Single, with a grown daughter who now hopes to follow her mom into the TV business, Norma's life revolves around her work.

Her pace is hectic. Gone away from home, traveling with location shows (*Nashville On The Road*) for several weeks at a time, she returns only to repeat the gait at home. "Actually I enjoy the pressure," she remarks in her typically enthusiastic manner. "I like working around the clock. I enjoy having to be at my best constantly."

"The pressure is one of the reasons I'm in the business," she continued. "I was



trained as an illustrator at Ohio State University and worked as a model in my spare time as a fun thing. But I'm a very high-energy person and sitting eight hours at a canvas became very mundane for me. I decided to change mediums and draw from my modeling experience.

"My first job was applying makeup to a bank spokesman. I was told to make him look honest. Apparently, I did because the bank campaign was a huge success. Shortly afterward, the same advertising firm approached me to accomplish the same thing for a political candidate who was also their client. Well, he won," Norma added with a huge smile.

"All my life, people have asked me 'Can

you do this?' I'll say sure and then worry about how to do it later."

As a makeup artist, Norma considers herself a technician, no more and less important than the lighting man, video man or dozen or so other technicians that work behind the scenes on a TV show. "Each of us doing our best will result in something desirable," explained Norma. "Each of us can also ruin the other's work."

Norma is a firm believer in pre-planning, sometime spending as much time planning out the work as she does on the job. "But I'm always ready for the unexpected," she added. "For example, I was working on a commercial that starred the guy on the TV series *Moving On*. During the taping of the series he had a moustache, but had recently shaved it off. The advertisers decided they wanted him to have a moustache. Well, here we are in the middle of an open field on a Sunday afternoon and I have to create a moustache. I started working with some strands of hair in my makeup bag while his wife, sitting to his side, gave me guidance. I knew I had done well, when after I was finished, she gazed at her husband a long time and then said "I'd forgotten how good you look with that moustache."

"I'm very happy about the growing sophistication of the country music stars and I feel like I've been a part of that transition," remarked Norma. "I've instigated many of those changes. I've never pushed anything, but if I feel someone is using the wrong shade of lipstick, I'll just pull out what I think is a better shade and give it to her, mentioning that she might try it for a change. Nobody's going to change unless they think it's for the better. With any artist, their mental attitude is the paramount thing and it's important for them to feel good about themselves.

"Before, I think the country music artists were trapped in the way they dressed and looked," continued Norma. "There was an artificiality imposed on them. They were trying to live by old definitions of what they should look like and sound like. When they performed, they would have to get into their costume. Women would generally wear a farm girl dress and the men would look like a cowboy and wear the rhinestone suits with high-heeled boots and hat. But in reality, these are sophisticated men and women. The country music artists are now free to wear blue jeans if they want, and the women have become more fashion-conscious.

"I think with the changes, country music artists look fresher, more like real people than they used to. Generally, they wear less of a makeup base with more blusher. False eyelashes aren't as prevalent. Eyelashes are now painted on instead of glued on and eyes have more of a deep-set blurry soft look. I think the key to a good job is not for someone to tell an artist, oh what a great makeup job, but for someone to tell them that they look terrific." ■

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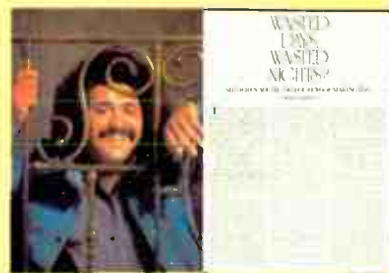
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World Radio History

Last year, after four years of semi-retirement, Anne Murray made what must be the show business comeback-of-the-decade with her first platinum album, *Let's Keep It That Way*. And then her superhit single, *You Needed Me*, topped both country and pop charts, won a pop Grammy and a country Song of the Year Award. This year she managed to continue the trend with her *New Kind of Feeling* album, still finding time to give birth to a new baby.

ANNE MURRAY

A New Kind Of Feeling

by **BOB ALLEN**

It's a cold and rainy March afternoon in Toronto. Along Yonge Street, a busy thoroughfare, the traffic is moving slowly and pedestrians hurry by underneath their umbrellas. But up on the 17th floor of one of the many modern office buildings along the avenue, Anne Murray sits comfortably on a sofa in her company's spacious suite of offices. She is, as the classicists were wont to say, *great with child*.

"My God! Is he ever active!" she exclaims, referring to her yet-to-be-born, who, as we sit and talk, is due any day. "It feels like there's a couple of guys down there in a wrestling match! It rocks my whole body. It wakes me up at night.

"Last time I was pregnant (with her first son, William Stewart Longstroth Jr., who was born in August, 1976), it was in the summer, and I was in great shape. I was in the pool all the time, and I was doing forty lengths a day, right up until the day before he was born. But I'm in horrible shape this time."

Despite her protestations of ill health and the touch of bronchitis from which she is suffering, Anne Murray actually looks just fine. Despite her weariness, her eyes are sharp and intelligent and her voice is soft, yet strong and resonant. Her ruddy complexion might lead you to believe that she just got off the ski trail. She appears extremely relaxed, and she's dressed casually in corduroy slacks and a plaid blouse. In fact, the only thing that doesn't fit in this picture is the cigarette in her hand. As she takes a long, leisurely puff and french inhales it, one of the workers in her office walks by the door.

"Are you smoking!"

"Don't worry," she smiles, "it's the first one I've had today."

Perhaps part of this can be attributed to her overwhelming sense of confidence; at age 33, after a decade's worth of not-so-even years in the music business (during which she's recorded more than 13 LP's), she has made something of a come-back. She's just come out of her best year ever; in 1978, after a four-year absence from the charts, she saw her eleventh Capitol LP, *Let's Keep It That Way*, reach platinum status. Later in the year, *You Needed Me*, written by Nashville writer, Randy Goodrum, became her second American gold single and her biggest record ever; it reached the number one spot in every market in the U.S., including country, pop and easy-listening.

So far, by all indications, 1979 is stacking up even better. Her *New Kind of Feeling* LP was released in January and shipped gold (over 500,000 copies), and is approaching platinum status. She also started off 1979 by getting a nomination by the Academy of Country Music as "Female Vocalist of The Year" (*You Needed Me* won for "Song of the Year.") and by winning her second Grammy Award for "Best Pop Vocalist Performance, Female," for *You Needed Me*. (She won her first Grammy in 1974 for the year's Best Country Vocal Performance for her album *Love Song*.) "This one was the important one, because of the competition," Anne says with modest pride.

"Streisand, Olivia Newton-John, Carly Simon and Donna Summer. . . . It's a whole different ballgame. I think it's a wonderful thing, because it just goes to show you that . . . (she grins gleefully) one year I'm a country singer . . . the next year I'm a pop singer."

The period of time since her reemergence in 1978 has also been a time of great personal triumph as well. Despite the doubts she may have once had, she's found that having a thriving recording career does not necessarily preclude having stable, enduring family ties. She has learned how to successfully balance these two seemingly opposing forces without turning her life into a tight-wire act.

"I really feel like I've got my finger on the pulse of what's going on in my career," she says. "Not that there's a helluva lot going on right now, except that the record (*You Needed Me*) is there and everyone thinks that I'm hotter'n a two-bit pistol—which I am. But I'm relaxed, y'know, and I'm mellow about the whole thing. In January, I had to cancel a tour because I was real sick. I had a touch of bronchitis or something which I caught back in the fall when I was in Jamaica, filming a Canadian TV special. I went to the doctor and he said, 'You know you're going to have a baby soon. You better just put your feet up and rest, I'll be off now until around the end of August. I've been taking it so easy lately,'" she smiles. "Just staying home in Toronto and doing albums. I've got two of them in the can. . . . It's been real nice."

As Anne explains, she's got a whole new outlook on life, and she's rearranged her



(left) Anne arrives in Jamaica for the filming of a Canadian TV special; (top, right) in Las Vegas at the Aladdin Hotel with Fred Lawrence, Nancy Engler, Larry Gatlin and Capitol's president Don Zimmerman, where she received her first platinum album for "Let's Keep It That Way"; (below right) signing autographs for the No. 1 Sumo wrestler in Japan.

priorities considerably. "Someone can call me now and tell me there's a million-dollar deal in Vegas and I'll say, well, what does that mean? Does that mean I have to work for six weeks? Does it mean I'll have to live in a hotel for six weeks? Because if it does, I'm not gonna do it.

"People wring their hands and tear out their hair at my attitude," she adds with just the sort of insistence that it has taken her to get her own way in this business, "but *dammit*, I just want it to be right, y'know. I want it to be comfortable for me and my family, because they're the most important people. Nothing else is important anymore."

Anne has no difficulty recalling all the senseless years in her career when, "I didn't even know what was going on." For about six years in a row, she was spending up to ten months of the year on the road and often had gross annual earnings of well over a million dollars. But, as she points out, "You can make *two* million dollars and end up with a dollar, ninety-eight yourself." She grimaces: "I carried ten people on the road for ten months. I'd come back from a sixteen-week tour, after being in a different place every night, beating my head against the wall, and I wouldn't have made a cent. I'd be in debt. That's called 'overhead.' I mean, you see figures, but they don't mean anything unless a lot of it goes to the artist.

"I was reading an article the other day," she continues, "about the road and drugs and booze, and what everyone goes through, and how there are so many crazies in this business. It's *inhumane*, the whole thing. It's not . . . *normal*. I've always thought of myself as fairly well-

adjusted, and I'll tell you, there were times on the road when I was as *crazy* as anybody else. So I don't know. I'd never go through it again. That's why I ask questions now and find out exactly *why* someone thinks I should go somewhere. Give me the right reasons, and I'll go, because I love to work. But I'll be damned if I'm going to end up somewhere, Hutchinson, Kansas, and sing in front of two people. . . . I remember doing a tour of the South once where I played in New Orleans to about 300 people in a 3,000-seater. I mean, what's the point of that!? That's wrong! It's a waste of time.

"There were times when I just couldn't go on," she adds. "It happened to me twice. The year after *Snowbird* (1971), I didn't know what I was doing. It was a matter of stopping and saying, 'Look, I don't *have* to do anything.' Then again in '75, I just said, 'Look, I just don't see any point to any of this.'"

1975 turned out to be a year of major transition for Anne. It was when she decided to, "slow down and get my life in some kind of perspective." In June, '75, she married Bill Langstroth, the man who, along with Brian Ahern (who is now married to, and produces Emmylou Harris) first started Anne in show business a dozen or so years ago when he was still the host of a musical TV show, *Sing Along Jubilee*, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. (Ahern was the show's musical director), and Anne was still a college kid whose older brother had talked her into auditioning.

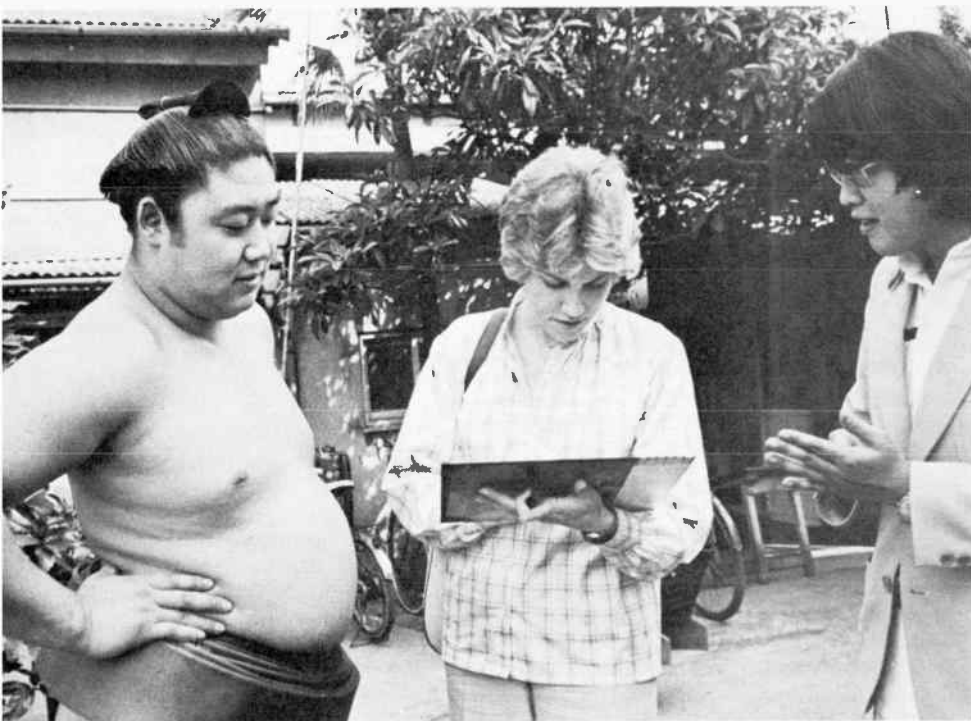
Though Anne refers to her years spent away from the rigors of continuous touring and TV appearances as a "semi-retirement," it was, more accurately, a time of

regeneration. One of the first things she did was drop her West Coast management affiliations and regroup her management in her home city of Toronto with people that she knew. "You just can't have a whole lot of people, a whole lot of middlemen, using your name and making decisions for you when you don't know what's going on. It just doesn't work."

Around this time, Anne also had an amicable parting of ways with Brian Ahern who had produced all of her albums up to that point, including the very first one she ever recorded, in 1968, for an obscure Canadian label, Arc Records. For awhile she cast around, looking for the right sound. She recorded with West Coast producer, Tom Catalano (who produced eleven Neil Diamond LP's and Helen Reddy's first two LP's). "We did two albums, and it didn't really work," she recalls. "They sort of went by the boards. Nobody heard them, really. When I was recording in Hollywood, I felt like an outsider looking in. The songs were very arranged and ended up sounding like someone else."

Musically, things didn't really begin to click again until Anne hooked up with producer Jim Ed Norman. This time, instead of recording in L.A., as she had with Catalano, the two of them began trying out the studios in Toronto again. It worked to everyone's advantage, since by this time, (1976), Anne's son, William Stewart Langstroth Jr., had been born and she was not anxious to leave home for any great length of time.

By the time she and Jim Ed Norman went into the studio, Anne was facing the added disadvantage of not having had a hit record for quite some time. In fact, by the



time they began putting together her *Let's Keep It That Way* LP, in late 1977, she had not been on the singles charts since 1974, with *You Won't See Me*. "You just don't get the cream of the crop (of songs) when you're that cold," says Anne, "and I was cold. Successful writers tend to send their songs to very successful artists, and they get the cream of the crop, whereas I had nothing happening."

Nonetheless, Jim Ed Norman and Anne set to work, screening material and recording in Toronto. "We'd just block book the studio for three weeks or whatever, and go in in the morning and finish up at six at night. Very civilized hours. That way, I could get home in time to bathe the baby and put him to bed. When I worked with Brian Ahern, oh dear, dear me . . . we just worked such weird hours. I'd be on the road a lot and I'd come in and try to do an album. . . . Oh dear," she sighs wistfully, as if even the memory of it still makes her weary. "When I think of it . . . we would

be in the studio all night long. That's just not necessary, but I guess you have to learn somehow."

These days, Anne wouldn't think of recording hardly any place else but Toronto. "We use just about all Toronto musicians and it works fine. If there are certain things we don't feel can be covered by musicians in this town, we just fly them in. Like with this last album, (*New Kind Of Feeling*), we brought in Charlie McCoy and put some harmonica on a couple of things. Then we flew to New York and did a couple of things with Michael Brecker the sax player. But for the most part, we have fine musicians here. And it's really comfortable for me."

In early 1978, Anne emerged on the charts once again with *Walk Right Back*, a song that had been a hit for the Everly Brothers many moons ago. And with the release of her *Let's Keep It That Way* LP, she returned to a heavy schedule of concert and television appearances. She played

Vegas once again, and she toured Japan, only this time, her young son William went with her. Then later in 1978, *You Needed Me* was released and Anne Murray was once again, hotter'n a two-bit pistol. "You can often tell when you sing a song, how it's going to affect other people, and that song really choked me up to sing it, because of what it says.

"That record really made things nice," she adds, "because when things are happening, record-wise, like they are for me now, you can do pretty much what you want. You can call your own shots. And *this* time out," she emphasizes, "we knew what we were doing for a change, and it was so much better organized than it was before. Now there's a point to *everything*. I really believe that with the kind of attitude that I had, say, in approaching 1978, there was no way I could lose. There was just no way. It's kind of like the attitude that you see with people like Dolly Parton. It's that single-mindedness. Dolly Parton left Nashville because she had to. And a lot of people were upset because she turned her back. But that was all garbage as far as I'm concerned. She had to do what she had to do. It's a certain attitude: you go after it. You know you've got the goods, and that's that. If you know you've got the goods, nothing can stop you."

These are strong words indeed, from the girl who almost never got into the music business in the first place because she was too scared to come back and do a second audition for the *Sing Along Jubilee*, which had already turned her down once. Anne had grown up in the mining town of Springhill, Nova Scotia, the daughter of a physician. It was during her second year of college at the University of New Brunswick that she auditioned for the TV show and met her future husband Langstroth and her future producer, Ahern. Before these two were finally able to convince her to pursue music as a full-time career, she had already graduated from the University and spent a year teaching high school physical education on Prince Edward Island.

"I remember when I was still teaching. Brian Ahern sent me special delivery letters telling me to come on up to Toronto where he was learning to be a record producer. I thought he was *crazy!* In fact, when I did finally get there, I remember going down to the hock shop to get two of his guitars out of hock. That's how badly off he was. That was in the Fall of '68. We did an album for Arc Records. Nothing sort of happened. I went back and worked on some more television. Then I came back and we went around to all the major record labels. But they all gave us the same line; that they would give us \$2,000 to do an album, and no creative freedom. The last place we went was Capitol. And they just said, 'Oh sure, anything!' And Brian and I didn't dare look at each other. We walked out of there and went, 'What just



After singing the National Anthem at the opening game for the Toronto Blue Jays, Anne chats with one of her fans.

happened!?" . . . We ended up spending \$18,000 on that album. That was just unheard of at the time. We went into the studio and put down *Snowbird* and a whole bunch of other things. We just went crazy! . . . Oh dear, dear," she murmurs and laughs softly. . . . "When I think back . . . we just thought we had the world by the tail. . . . By God! We did! Before we knew it, *Snowbird* was gold, and," she laughs incredulously, "none of us knew what the hell was going on! Every one of us had our lives turned upside-down. It was really trying for a while."

Within a matter of months, Anne's girl-next-door image and her smooth, mellow vocal style had made her an across-the-board hit with all sorts of listeners in the U.S. Frequent appearances on the *Glen Campbell Show* and a duet album recorded with Campbell in 1971, seemed to permanently endear her to country fans. Since then, she's had more than twenty singles in the country charts.

"When you look at Glen on a TV show, he looks like the boy next door, and I look like the girl next door," Anne smiles, "so maybe that was it."

"Sometimes you feel like you'd like to say sh-t, you know, or just tell somebody to f--k off," she grins mischievously, "or something like that, just to shock them, because that's part of my life, but I don't think that's part of the stage. So I guess I am the girl next door when it comes to that. I don't feel compelled to use that kind

of language in my everyday life, so why should I do it onstage? People in the early stages of my career used to say, 'Dammit, if you'd just show a bit of tit and do this and do this,' " she snaps her fingers and waves her arms like some sort of Vegas burlesque dancer. "And I'd tell them that's just not me. So I guess that image is the way I am. There are some actresses that I've felt like are that way. Like Doris Day. I'd just love for her to come out and say something real shocking!" she laughs. "And I know that people feel that way about me. But it's not part of my nature to do that. I don't feel right. I guess I'm kind of reserved, musically and personally. They don't realize how difficult it would be for me to do that."

Not to make it sound as if Anne Murray spends a lot of undue time fretting about her image these days; she doesn't. But one thing that she does fret about and that is on her mind a lot, is children. Not just her own children (Her two-year-old son, William had just had his tonsils out a couple of days before. "People Magazine wanted to come out to the house and take a bunch of pictures of everyone this week," she tells me, "but with little William sick as a dog and me, pregnant as a pussy cat—no way!"), but about 15 million others around the world as well. Presently, she is the 1979 Chairperson of the Canada Save The Children Fund. "This is the Year of the Child, as you know, and these organizations are putting on a big push,

trying to find people to adopt children in these countries. Somebody called me last year and asked me if I was interested in getting involved, and I did. The excuse that everybody uses (for not getting involved) is you don't know where your money's going and who's getting it, and all that kind of crap," her voice rises in mild anger. "For God's sake, get up off your asses and do something, you know! All it is is 144 dollars a year. It's nothing. For people who smoke cigarettes, that's half their cigarette budget for the year. I mean, give us a break! I was making the same excuses until somebody finally called me. So I became chairperson and adopted three kids, and now I'm just doing whatever I can to get people interested and let them know what the hell is going on. There're fifteen million kids a year, under the age of five, dying of malnutrition every year."

Another personal project that Anne completed during her several-year-long hiatus in Toronto was a children's album called, *There's A Hippo In My Tub* (released by Capitol in Canada and Sesame Street Records in the U.S.). "We just did it on our own," she explains. "We just had so much fun doing it, because these were all songs that, as a kid, I just thought were the greatest. It was a labor of love. But then we just had a terrible time convincing the labels to take it. But now it's doing so well. It's going great guns. Capitol (in Canada) at first, didn't want it, but when they finally took it, it became the only album I've ever had in Canada that shipped gold!" She laughs heartily at the irony of this. "That was pretty funny!"

It's obvious from the way she talks that Anne gets enduring satisfaction out of these personal projects that she's only recently had the freedom and the time to become involved in. And similarly, there's no doubt in her mind that this richness in her personal life, the ingredient that was missing for so many years, is exactly what is making her musical career blossom forth as well.

"Getting things in perspective has been so important to me," she explains. "I always thought that it probably wasn't possible to become a major artist without making my career my life. I thought you had to sacrifice all. I could cite several instances of people who have made that degree of sacrifice, but I know now that it isn't necessary, that you don't have to sacrifice those other things. You make certain compromises, you make certain adjustments, but you can do it all if you want to. And that's the way I have to do it. I either go at it that way or not at all. Because I couldn't sacrifice my family. That's more important to me than anything." ■

As this issue went to press we learned that Anne gave birth to an 8 pound girl. Anne and husband William named the baby Dawn Joann.

CLASSIC CRADDOCK!

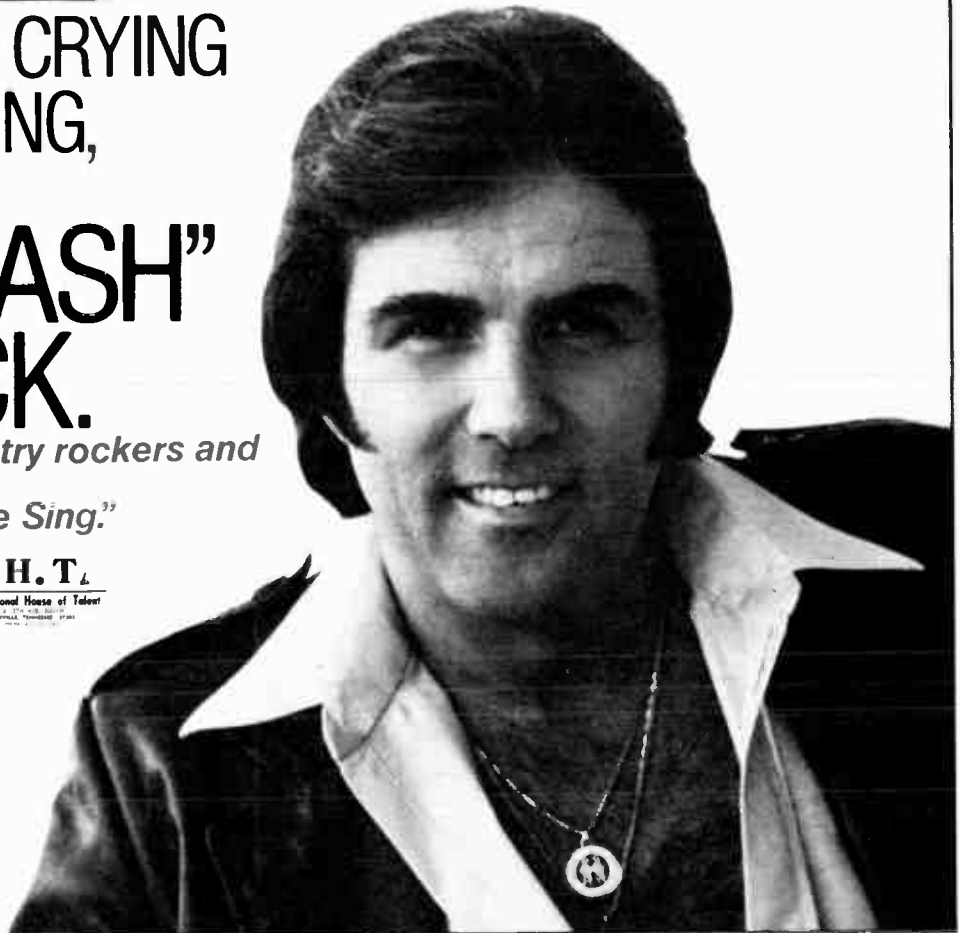
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LESTER FLATT

A RETROSPECTIVE

by DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Compared to the fertile hyperactivity of the 1930s, the war years were musically aimless and uneventful ones in country music. The sole exception was the emergence of bluegrass, then and now one of country music's most intense and dynamic musical substyles. It was, for most intents and purposes, the creation of three men: Bill Monroe, who conceived it and forged it out of his fertile musical mind; Earl Scruggs, who added the spectacular facet of his new and exciting three finger banjo style; and Lester Flatt, whose subtle guitar playing and inspired songwriting set standards which are emulated today.

On May 11, Lester Flatt, bluegrass legend, awoke with severe chest pains. He entered the cardiac care unit at Baptist Hospital in Nashville at 5:30 AM, and grew progressively weaker as the day progressed, dying of heart failure at 1:20 in the afternoon, succumbing at last to a string of illnesses with which he had struggled with valor for several years.

Lester Raymond Flatt was born one of nine children of an Overton County, Tennessee, fiddler and sharecropper, and grew up in the foothills near Sparta, Tennessee. Though he tried his hand at both the fiddle and banjo as a youth, it was the guitar which fascinated him most, though it seemed destined to remain just a hobby for a young man married and working by the age of 17.

Lester and his new wife Gladys settled in Covington, Virginia, where the young millhand found time to join a country band called the Harmonizers, who became popular in the region that they were able to obtain their own radio show over WDJB in Roanoke; he later played with another outfit called the Happy Go Lucky Boys. Still, it was as a weaver in a Burlington Mills rayon plant that Lester worked for his weekly wage.

One can only wonder, now, whether Lester Flatt looked for an escape from the life of a millhand through music, or whether happenstance thrust a musical career upon him. Regardless, when Charlie Monroe called and offered him a job, Lester left the mill behind.

Brothers, Charlie and Bill Monroe, one the most popular duets of the 1930s, had split in 1939, each forming his own band. Charlie's Kentucky Pardners was an ebullient group, but always featured a mandolin, for Charlie felt this was an in-

tegral part of the Monroe "sound" he had helped create. Thus Lester Flatt, though he claimed not to have touched the instrument since, became a mandolinist and tenor singer, a sound preserved on County Records' *Charlie Monroe on the Noon-Day Jamboree* (County 538), a recording of two 1944 radio shows.

Charlie Monroe was a hard working entertainer, and Flatt wearied of the grind. In the spring of 1944 he left Kentucky Pardners with the ambition of going into the timber business near Sparta, Tennessee. He began playing again after a cou-

**June 19, 1914 -
May 11, 1979**

ple of months, however, and when Bill Monroe called him later in the year Lester was ready to go.

At that time Bill Monroe was a star of the Opry, rivaling Roy Acuff in popularity, his highly-charged music, brilliant singing, electrifying mandolin playing, and rafter-reaching yodels excited audiences, and his *Blue Moon of Kentucky* and *Kentucky Waltz*, as well as his reworking of *Muleskinner Blues*, were the talk of the Opry. Lester Flatt, at the age of 30, joined one of the top bands in the business, but he brought a great deal with him as well: he was a fine songwriter, had a pleasant, smooth voice, was a solid rhythm guitarist, whose playing was punctuated by thoughtful runs (in fact the characteristic ascending guitar run ubiquitous in bluegrass is named the "Flatt run" in honor of its

creator); moreover, he had learned from Charlie Monroe how to be a relaxed and gracious emcee (a task the taciturn Bill Monroe disliked), and had an easy-going country charm as a talker as well as a singer.

A skinny, scared 19-year-old banjo player with an astonishing new style joined Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys the following year. Flatt recently told writer Don Rhodes "I had never heard of Earl Scruggs before I met him at Ryman Auditorium in 1945. As much as I love drop-thumb banjo playing, I was glad when Stringbean left Monroe's group. I felt that type of banjo playing did not fit in with what we were doing, and Stringbean had dragged us to death. He had been gone a few weeks, and I was enjoying not having a banjo around, when Bill told me onstage that there was a banjo player backstage wanting to try out for the group. I told Bill as far as I was concerned, this Scruggs fellow could leave his banjo in his case. It was later a surprise to everyone, and certainly to me, to hear a banjo played the way Scruggs did it. . . . I believe that was the first time Bill Monroe had also heard a banjo played like that, and he hired Earl right quick."

With the addition to the band of bluesy Florida fiddler Chubby Wise, what is probably the most exciting bluegrass band of all times was assembled.

Monroe's and Scrugg's, and to a sensitive ear, Wise's contributions are obvious to the style now called bluegrass, after that band. Flatt's contributions were a bit more subtle, but no less important. His genial emcee work was a major portion of the live show presented by Bill Monroe and his Blue Grass Boys; and his singing was smooth, and lilting, and true, harmonizing surprisingly but well with Monroe's powerful tenor.

Then, too, his guitar playing was masterful; not so much in technique as in thought. Based on the bass string-oriented work of Charlie Monroe—but with a better sense of time—Lester Flatt worked out runs and support that complimented the lead work—whether instrumental or vocal—without dominating it. Most bluegrass guitarists today can emulate the runs Flatt played, but they do not capture the feel.

Flatt also came into his own as a songwriter during this period, and a good many bluegrass classics were written by

him during this era, including *Little Cabin Home On The Hill*, *Will You Be Loving Another Man*, and *Sweetheart You Done Me Wrong*.

It was a great era, but like all great eras it came to an end; weary of Monroe's constant touring, Earl Scruggs turned in his notice. Lester told Augusta *Herald* reporter Don Rhodes "When his two weeks notice was up, I turned in mine. Bill later always thought that we framed him to leave him and start a group on our own, but we hadn't. We both just got tired of being on the road. Sometimes we would go three days without taking our shoes off. Earl and I had done most of the driving for Monroe's group, and we were just tired of traveling. Before my notice was up, though, Cedric Rainwater [bass player for the Blue Grass Boys] turned in his notice with Monroe and proposed that Scruggs and I start our own group. He told me "Why don't you and Earl form a band and let me work with you?" We went to Danville, Virginia, and stayed there a few days to get organized. We went from there to Hickory, North Carolina, where we knew a fiddle player named Jimmy Shumate. While we were in Hickory, Mac Wiseman joined us, and we all went to Bristol, Virginia, to work on radio station WCYB playing on *Farm and Fun Time*. We struck it right when we went to WCYB. It was one of the hottest listening audiences I have ever seen."

Flatt and Scruggs chose for their band name, the Foggy Mountain Boys, from their song, the Carter Family classic *Foggy Mountain Top*, and they had lost none of their momentum from their days with Monroe. Scruggs had only been 19 when he joined the Blue Grass Boys; when the Foggy Mountain Boys began, he had developed and refined and matured his banjo style; at 23 he was at his peak.

Flatt, too, had matured and grown as a musician. His guitar playing remained supple and solid, his voice was never better, and his songwriting continued in a creative surge rarely matched. The classic bluegrass songs he composed between 1948 and 1953 amount to an honor roll of many of the greatest works in the style! *If I Should Wander Back Tonight*, *Little Girl of Mine in Tennessee*, *I'll Never Shed Another Tear*, *Cabin On The Hill*, *Blue Ridge Mountain Home*, and *Cabin in Caroline* among many others.

In 1952 a salesman for Martha White Mills saw the group and raved about them to the company president, Cohen Williams. Williams was as enthused, and in 1953 Flatt and Scruggs signed a sponsorship agreement, and moved to Nashville, where they started an early morning radio show for the firm, which Flatt continued with until last year. This, combined with their recordings for Mercury and Columbia, gradually brought them into the forefront of country music, and they joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1955.

The rock era was a rough one for most country entertainers but not for Flatt and Scruggs: they continued to play to sell-out crowds; to record, and to play on radio and eventually television under the aegis of Martha White, a product they made nationally famous. They had a base audience of hard-working rural people to support their music that many more ephemeral country entertainers did not have, and this sustained them well during general hard times. In addition, they were asked to write and record a theme song for *The Beverly Hillbillies* TV show, and their recording of *The Ballad of Jed Clampett* became the first bluegrass tune to go to #1 on the national charts.

The era of rock and roll was also the era of folk music, and Flatt and Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys found a whole new audience enthralled by Scruggs' dynamic banjo playing and the band's warm, friendly, old-timey sound. It ultimately proved a mixed blessing, but at the time (the early 1960s) it broadened their audience enormously, as they played



Carnegie Hall and the Newport Festivals, appeared on *Hootenanny* and other national TV shows, and were the subject of an article in *Esquire*.

However, playing to this newer, more affluent audience began to affect their music, as their singles and albums became increasingly more folk-oriented, draining them of the drive and intensity which had once been their hallmark.

It was then that a serious rift began to form among the partners. Scruggs, still only in his early 40s, was interested in pursuing this new musical course, with the assistance of his musically talented—and musically progressive—sons. Flatt, on the other hand, was extremely uncomfortable with the new material; he began to sound, look, and act bored. The fire had gone from the bandleaders and the band, and

early in 1969 the seemingly unthinkable happened: Flatt and Scruggs split their phenomenally successful partnership.

Scruggs and his sons formed the Earl Scruggs Review, which has continued at the forefront of bluegrass-rock to this day. As for Lester Flatt, he kept most of the Foggy Mountain Boys (changing his band name to The Nashville Grass), and returned to a comfortable soft country—bluegrass sound which did not have the intensity of his youth, but which fitted his genial personality and his age. He and the Nashville Grass kept the radio ties with Martha White, became staples of the growing bluegrass festival scene (another rift between Flatt and Scruggs before the breakup), and recorded several albums for RCA as well as one for Hilltop, and most recently, for CMH. "I thought breaking up couldn't happen to us. We had achieved everything we had worked for," Flatt said not long ago. "I guess we didn't know anything else. Our success was just too good for us. . . . I think we still draw more off the old Flatt and Scruggs albums than either Earl sells or I sell separately."

Flatt's new band was fine; if Flatt was missing some of the spark of old, he still had the charm and the grace, and made another decade's worth of fine music. He didn't lack for work or popularity or fine musicians; ultimately, his biggest battle over the years since the split was his health, which deteriorated despite his great will and determination.

He had suffered with heart problems as early as the mid-1960s, and his heart was in such poor shape by the mid-1970s that he underwent five hours of open heart surgery in July of 1975. He recovered extremely well—he was sixty-one at the time—though he was never really the same. Still, he went back on the road with the Nashville Grass after a period of recuperation, and though obviously a weaker man, still gave good performances.

It all caught up with him in 1978, when pneumonia and flu hospitalized him for three weeks early in the year. He made the festival circuit that summer—often seated on a stool on stage because of his weakened condition—before suffering a cerebral hemorrhage late in the year. He appeared on the slow road to recovery, but the cardiac seizure he suffered in the early morning hours of May 11 was more than he weakened body could stand, and it was really the sum total of these disabilities which caused his death that afternoon. After a service in Hendersonville, Tennessee, on May 13 for the music community, he was laid to rest in the Tennessee hills near his home in Sparta, on Monday, May 14.

It marked the passing of a profoundly influential performer in bluegrass, country, and indeed American music. And, in a sense, it marked the beginning of the end of a remarkable era in American musical history.

Marty Robbins

The Performer

Whether he's singing country music or racing cars, as Marty says, if you do it in front of people, it's a performance.

by **AL CUNIFF**

Marty Robbins is in the studio cutting an album for Columbia Records, and the scene is almost a cross between a recording session, a concert, and a Mel Brooks movie.

As a recording session, it's one of the smoothest you'll find in Nashville. Produced by Billy Sherrill, it features top studio pickers, along with Robbins' band members.

The taping is like a mini-concert, because Robbins records each song "live," with almost 20 musicians singing or playing simultaneously.

And the whole scene is at times something from a Mel Brooks film, with Marty doing one-liners in different dialects to keep the players loose, and the control room chipping in occasionally with the studio equivalent of a practical joke.

Marty is seated at the piano, brightly attired in a checkered sports jacket, rust-patterned pants and vest, and aviator glasses. He stands out amid the small army of bluejeaned superpickers. Behind his joking, Marty commands attention in the studio. Throughout the session he alternates all-in-fun lines with semi-serious commands that get his point across.

"Alright gentlemen, listen up now. I'm a'gonna sit here at the piano and play the song, an' I want everybody to take notes," he says crisply, to the amusement of the nearby session men. When Marty spies two musicians entering the studio with cups of coffee, he lets loose a mock howl of outrage and shouts, "Now I see why they only get one song done a session—they spend all their time runnin' out the door!"

It's all in fun, but Marty has also gotten his point across: he's here, and he's ready to work. Marty sings the first song he will record, *Buenos Dias Argentina*, and accompanies himself on piano. He begins alone, and while he sings, various instruments join in, first some quiet drums, then bass and a rhythm guitar, with a few trumpet frills here and there. By the time Marty finishes his first run-through, he is accompanied by 17 players and singers in a hasty arrangement that already sounds good.

These musicians don't need to stop and learn a song; they absorb it.

After two run-throughs, *Buenos Dias Argentina* is clear in everybody's mind, with its south-of-the-border horns and sad, lilting melody. Marty asks for a few changes in the horn phrasings and backup vocals, then claps out the precise beat he wants the song to follow. The backup singers, who *think* in three-part harmony, adjust their parts accordingly.

Because of Marty's stature and experience, producer Billy Sherrill allows him more production leeway than he would many other Columbia or Epic artists. Sherrill slips out from the studio for a minute to get some papers before taping begins. He ambles his way back through the jungle of wires, instruments, and bodies, muttering, "Shoot—you gotta go through south Nashville to get to my office!"

Back in the control room, Billy asks for a "take," but this time he wants Marty to be a bit clearer when he sings the title. "What the hell are you singing—'Buenos Dias, Ike and Tina?'" Billy booms over a studio loudspeaker. Marty shoots back that he never trusted this song, as it came from a German living in South America.

The first take sounds great, very close to a final version. "I'll play that back, and you can see if someone ought to sit out from time to time," Billy suggests. "It's soundin' busy in places."

The studio mood breaks as musicians gather in the center of the room to listen to the playback. Marty hustles into the control room to discuss a few changes with Sherrill. The pickers, having agreed on which licks they like or intend to scrap, quietly chat about guitars, jogging, a recent session they played, and a half-dozen other topics that lend themselves to the one-minute doses of conversation these guys trade during breaks.

Marty explodes from the control room, clapping his hands, shouting, "Okay, let's have one more take." Back behind his mike, he gives off a constant stream of chatter, in shifting accents: Mexican, German, black jive. It's part of the Mel

Brooks touch, but it also serves a purpose—to keep the energy up, and the studio mood going.

It works. The musicians begin what is only the fourth take, and everyone knows it's sounding fine. Marty puts everything into his vocal. He sways, dips, and closes his eyes as he "works" for each note. He gestures and leans, moving his voice from a full, deep tone in one line to a whisper in the next.

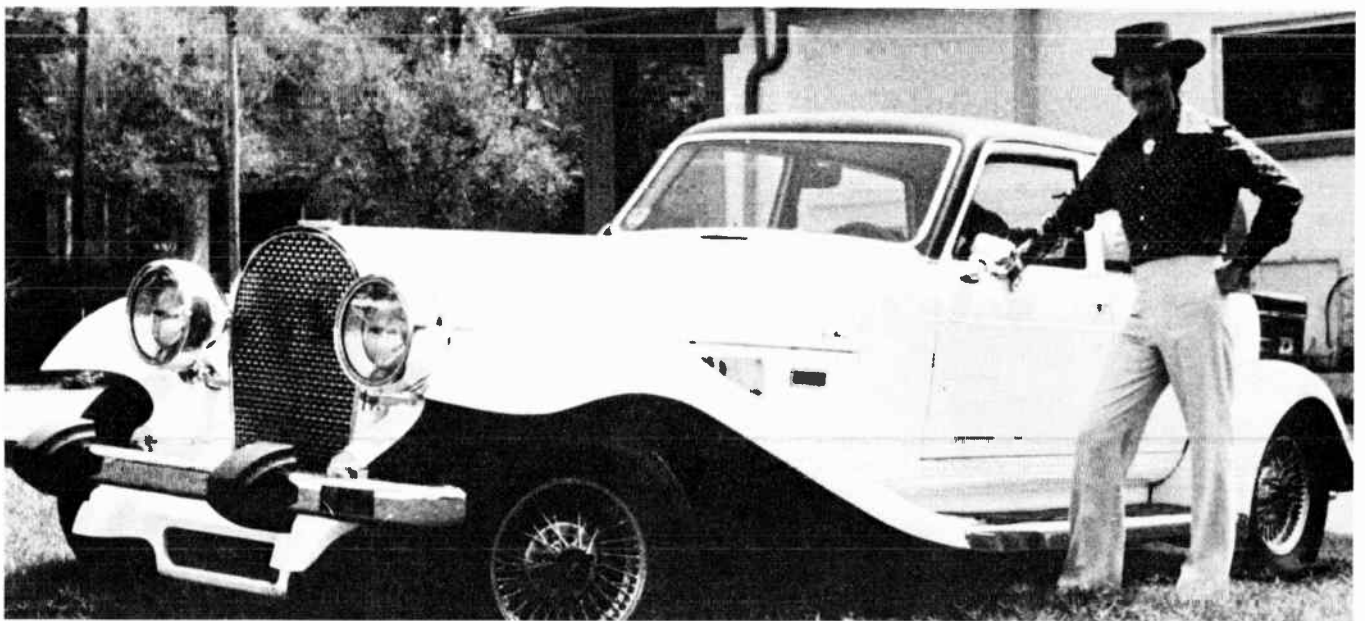
The take completed, the tape still running, everyone is silent. After a few seconds Marty whispers, "I love it." Within an hour of its introduction to the studio, *Buenos Dias Argentina* is on tape, ready to mix. It sounds great.

Two weeks prior to the recording session, Marty agreed to an interview at his Nashville business office on 18th Avenue in the Music Row area. On home ground and in a relaxed mood, Marty is an open talker. There are certain topics Marty probably hears in almost every interview he gives, and which he has "stock" answers for. But he doesn't mind if you probe a bit. Here are Marty's thoughts on a few important themes in his life:

CARS AND RACING. "I love racing. For me, it's comparable to a good stage performance—it's a thrill. It's still show biz, there's people in the stands watching you. When I'm not racing, I think about it every night. I wish I didn't, but I do. Music comes natural to me, and I sing every night, so I don't have to think a lot about that.

"I can't beat people like A. J. Foyt and Richard Petty with sixty horsepower less than they have. But knowing I can't beat them just makes me try harder. In a 500-mile race there's always some people I can beat, and I'll find out who they are. That's what I enjoy, beating drivers who are in it for a living."

THE CHARTS. "When I make a record, if it can't make number one, I don't care if it's 101. A top five record is alright, but it doesn't thrill me. I hope I'm sayin' that right. What I mean is, it's the opposite of racing for me. In a race I'm



"That car was built just for me," says Marty. "It's the only white one in the U.S."

just there to do my best, knowing I can't win. On the chart I can win, so I shoot for the top. Pro racers don't like to settle for third or fourth—they're driving to win. It's like that for me with records.

"My songs are good enough to be played on the very best stations, but I'm not getting any crossover play, because of disc jockeys who came from the rock field into the country field, and program directors who did the same. Anything I do is considered country to them. I don't mind, I'm still selling records.

"I feel that when I have the right record, it will happen. You can experiment all you want, but unless it's in that song, it's no good. Evidentially, I have not had the record that will do it. But when it comes, that will be it, and I'll be on the pop charts."

(Marty rightly points out that he had pop crossover hits before almost anybody currently recording. In the late 1950s, he says, "It was Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Fats Domino, and Marty Robbins.")

HEALTH. Marty had a major heart attack in late 1969, and artery-bypass surgery in early 1970. "The operation added many years to my life: I'm very glad I had it," he says. "I stay in good shape. I have to, the way I race. They check me a lot closer than they check the other drivers.

"The operation did change my outlook on life. I'm happy, I'm at peace. I'm making a living doing what I love do. I never have a bad day, if you can believe that.

"I weigh 145 now. I used to weigh 185. I have a room at home where I exercise every day. It has weights in it, plus a piano and some other equipment. I don't strain; it's not my goal to be a muscleman. I lift a few weights, sing a bit, do a few chinups, play a little piano . . . I just do what I feel like doing.

Marty skirts talk of his age, saying he "hates to see people concentrate on a singer's age, like it's the most important thing about him." Then he coyly gives

some hints, tosses out a few ages he's been guessed to be. "I'm not even gonna tell you how old my son (Ronny, also a singer) is, 'cause then you can add up and figure how old I am," Marty warns with a grin.

Then he offhandedly lets his age slip out, saying "you could always look it up if you wanted to, anyway." Let's just say Marty looks a lean and healthy, oh, 46—but he's a bit older than that.

* * *

Marty admits he caught the music and racing bugs at an early age. He was born in desert country near Glendale, Arizona, and was a young admirer of Gene Autry—"but I also got hooked on the speed races at Phoenix Fairgrounds. I'd sneak in free and watch the action. I think the fastest cars could go then was about 100 mph."

Music quickly got the upper hand in Marty's career, though, and by 1947 he was singing professionally in his home state. Little Jimmy Dickens helped Marty get a recording contract in 1951, and by 1956 Marty's *Singing the Blues* was a hit. His first album, released in 1957, contained *White Sport Coat*, an across-the-boards smash that he wrote.

Since then Marty has had 18 number one hits (12 of which he wrote), and has placed a record in the top ten every year since 1959. His hits include *El Paso*, *Devil Woman*, *You Gave Me a Mountain*, *Big Iron*, *My Woman, My Woman, My Wife*, and others. His 1979 successes thus far include *Touch Me With Magic* and *Please Don't Play a Love Song*.

"I started racing with the pros in the early 1960s," Marty recalled. "I don't consider myself a pro driver—I'm just a fairly good amateur. There's almost nothing else that matches the thrill of driving a fast car. Once a car reaches 100 mph, it's pretty well out of control; all you can do is aim it around the turns. You get up to 180 mph, or 190 mph, and it's like a damn bullet. You just turn left all the time. You're not

likely to dodge something and stay on the track."

Marty has been in country music for over 25 years. In that time, he has released over 65 albums, including various "collection" LPs. He plays about 110 concerts a year, and his half-hour TV show, *Marty Robbins' Spotlight*, is syndicated to about 100 U.S. stations by Show Biz, Inc.

But when Marty discusses his music career, a strange thing happens: he begins to mix it with his racing career, as if both passions were related.

"Ninety-five percent of show biz is show biz—a front. You've got to do something to get their attention," Marty says, nodding toward a picture of himself with his favorite car, an all-white Panther DeVille he had custom-made in England.

"You don't get attention by just sellin' records. Some guys do it by smoking grass, getting busted, or whatever. With me, it's cars.

"You wouldn't believe the attention you get with a car like this," Marty says, a satisfied grin spreading across his face. "I was driving it in Franklin (Tennessee) the other day, and a boy nearly drove up on the curb looking at it. If I never wanted to buy another car as long as I live, I'd never have to. That car will always be in style.

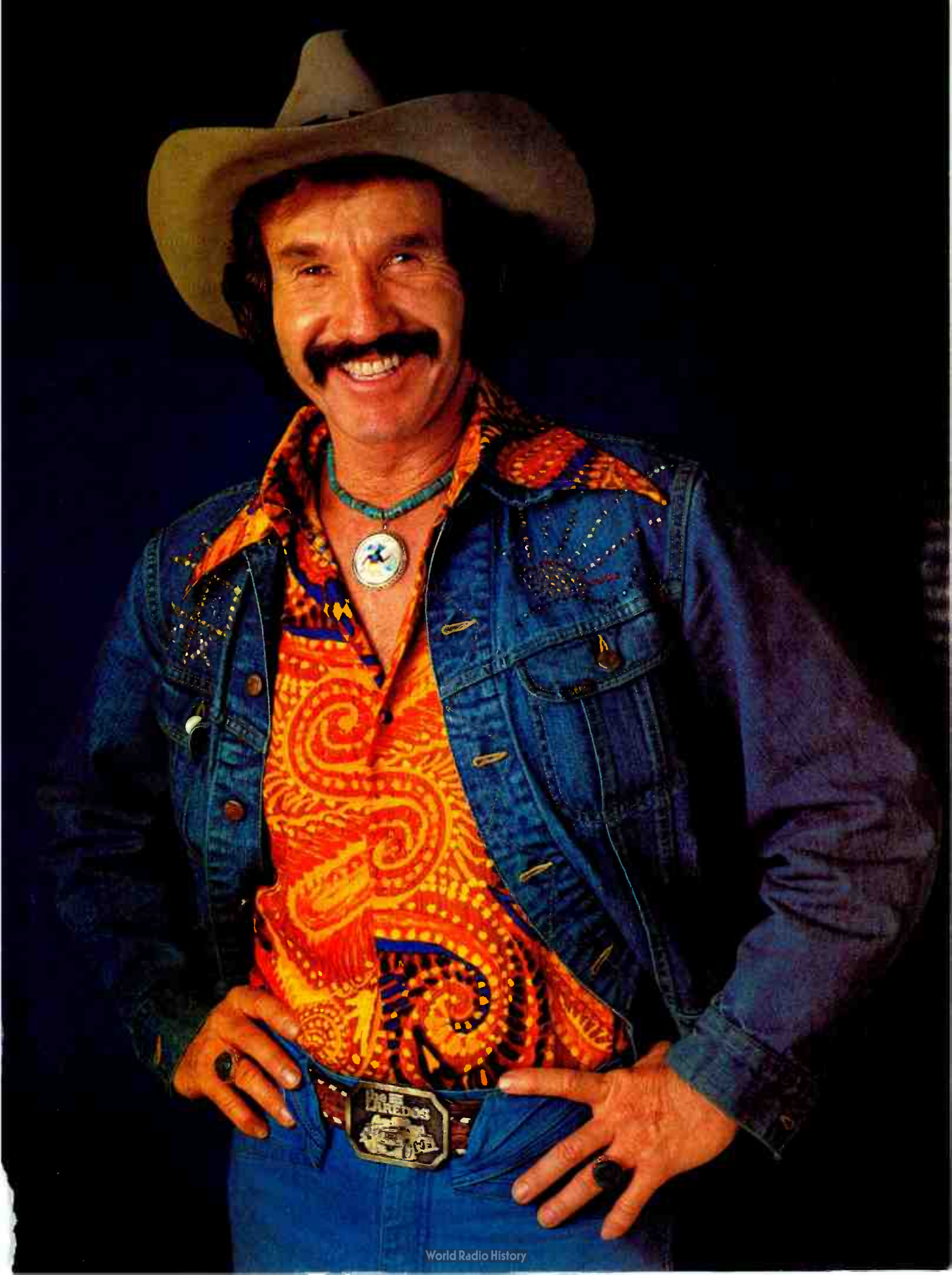
"That car was built just for me: it's the only white one in the U.S. When they were making it I had to give them my weight, height, length of reach, and so on. They molded the seat to fit me."

As Marty discusses show business and racing, cars and records, charts and auto competition, in a curious way it all falls into place, and it's easy for a minute to see Marty's point: if you do it in front of people, it's a performance.

* * *

Back in the studio, Marty says this will be a "gunfighter" album, which means it will contain everything from *Buenos Dias Argentina* to Sons of the Pioneers' tunes.

(Continued on page 80)



COUNTRY MUSIC

MAGAZINE

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Opry Old Timers: Rag Time Annie/Roll On Buddy/Hung Down My Head And Cried/Wiii The Circle Be Unbroken, more!
LP No. SLP-182
8TK No. SLPT-1182

Cowboy Copas

16 Greatest Hits: Flat Top Guitar/Alabama Signed, Sealed Delivered/I Dreamed Of A Hillbilly Heaven/Beyond The Sunset, more!
LP No. SD-3012
8TK No. SDT-13012

C. Copas & H. Hawkin

In Memory: Lonesome 7-7203/Sunny Side Of The Mountain/If I Ever Get Rich Mom/Slow Poke After All, more!
LP No. KLP-835
8TK No. KLPT-1835

Billy Crash Craddock:

16 Favorite Hits: Your Love Is/Learning To Live Without You/I Love You More Everyday/2 Arms Full Of Lonely, more!
LP No. SD-3005
8TK No. SDT-13005

J.D. Crowe

J.D. Crowe And The New South: You Can Have Her/Devil In Olguisse/God's Own Singer/Ten Degrees And Getting Colder, more!
LP No. SLP-489
8TK No. SLPT-1489

S. Posey & S. Davis

The Best Of: Born A Woman/Single Girl/I Take It Back/My Last Date With You/He Says The Same Things To Me, more!
LP No. GT-0005
8TK No. GT8-0005

Skeeter Davis

Best Of The Best: The End Of The World/I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know/I'm A Lover (Not A Fighter), more!
LP No. GT-0014
8TK No. GT8-0014

The Delmore Brothers

Delmore Bros.-Best Of: Blues Stay Away From Me/Barnyard Boogie/I'll Be There/Hillbilly Boogie, more!
LP No. SLP-962
8TK No. SLPT-1962

Little Jimmy Dempsey

Music To Park By: Let It Be/Blue Hawaii/Let For The Good Times/We've Only Just Begun, many more!
LP No. PO-253
8TK No. PO-1253

Little Jimmy Dickens

The Best Of The Best Of: Take An Old Cold Tater And Wait/I'm Little But I'm Loud/Hillbilly Fever/Country Boy, more!
LP No. GT-0041
8TK No. GT8-0041

Ronnie Dove

Ronnie Dove-Greatest Hits: Right Or Wrong/Let's Start All Over Again/Happy Summer Days/One Kiss For Old Time Sake, more!
LP No. PO-286
8TK No. PO-1286

Narvel Felts

Narvel Felts-Live: The End Of My World Is Near/Maybelling/Me & Bobby McGee/Swinging Doors, and 6 more hits!
LP No. PO-237
8TK No. PO-1-1027

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Freddy Fender-Inside Louisiana State Prison: Our Pledge Of Love/Hello Loneliness/The Village Queen/Carmelia, more! Power Pak LP No. PO-280 8TK No. PO-1280

Lester Flatt
Rollin': Drink That Mash & Talk That Trash/Daddy Sang Bass/Yonder Stands Little Maggie/Show Me Around, more! LP No. PO-293 8TK No. PO-1293

Flatt & Scruggs
Flatt & Scruggs-Golden Hits Of: Foggy Mountain Breakdown/Salty Dog Blues/Roll In My Sweet Baby's Arms, and 7 more! LP No. PO-297 8TK No. PO-1297

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

RATED X COMEDY
Buyers Discretion Advised - These Four Albums Are For Mature Audiences ONLY!!!

Redd Foxx
Matinee Idol: The St Bernard Dog/Throw Up In A Cab/Dirty Words, and more! LP No. KLP-1135 8TK No. KLPT-1135

Bare Facts: Recorded Live At The Redd Foxx Club-Hollywood California.
LP No. KLP-1072 8TK No. KLPT-1072

Pass The Apple: Recorded Live At The Redd Foxx Club, Hollywood, Cal.
LP No. KLP-1073 8TK No. KLPT-1073

In A Nutshell: Recorded Live At The Redd Foxx Club, Hollywood, Cal.
LP No. KLP-1074 8TK No. KLPT-1074

B. Gallion & P. Powell
Greatest Hits: Wall To Wall Love/One Way Street/You Take The Table, I'll Take The Chair/Sweet Money Lies/Yearning, more! LP No. SD-996 8TK No. SDT-1996

Smitty Gatlin Trio
Sings The Best Of Albert Brumley: Camping In Cannan Land/I'll Fly Away/Jesus Hold My Hand/He Set Me Free, much more! LP No. SD-986 8TK No. SDT-1986

The Grass Roots
14 Greats: Sooner Or Later/Heaven Knows/Walking Through The Country/The River Is Wide/Let's Live Together, many more! LP No. GT-0044 8TK No. GT8-0044

Hawshaw Hawkins
16 Greatest Hits: I'm Slowly Dying Of A Broken Heart/I Love You A 1000 Ways/Slow Poke/Lonesome 7-7-203, more! LP No. SD-3013 8TK No. SDT-13013

Bobby Helms
Bobby Helms-Greatest Hits: Fraulein/Work Things Out With Anne/The Midnight Of My Mind/You Are My Special Angel, more! LP No. PO-283 8TK No. PO-1283

David Houston
The Best Of: It Started All Over Again/So Many Ways/It's All Over/She's All Woman/Where Could I Go (But To Her), more! LP No. GT-0012 8TK No. GT8-0012

Ferlin Husky
Greatest Hits Of: Just For You/Fallen Star/Waikin' & Hummin'/Money Greases Wheels/The Wings Of A Dove/Timber, more! LP No. SD-3018 8TK No. SD-13018

George Jones
George Jones-Crown Prince Of Country Music: 1 Is A Lonely Number/One Woman Man/Heart Broken Me, 9 more! Power Pak LP No. PO-271 8TK No. PO-1271

George Jones
George Jones-Golden Hits: Why, Baby, Why/Color Of The Blues/I Gotta Talk To Your Heart/Just One More, 7 more! Starday LP No. SLP-440 8TK No. SLPT-1440

George Jones
16 Sacred Gospel Songs: Come & Dine/Dark As A Dungeon/The Arm Of God/You Must Be Born Again, and many more! LP No. KLP-822 8TK No. KLPT-1822

George Jones
16 Greatest Hits: One Is A Lonely Number/Just One More/Uh Uh, No/If I Don't Love You/Color Of The Blues, more! King LP No. SD-3021 8TK No. SDT-13021

George Jones
Good Old Bible: Will The Circle Be Unbroken/We'll Understand It/Jesus Wants Me/Boat Of Life/The Title Song, more! LP No. GT-0043 8TK No. GT8-0043

Inducted Into The Country Music Hall Of Fame - 1978
Grandpa Jones
16 Greatest Hits: I'm My Own Grandpa/Uncle Eff's Got The Coon, much more! LP No. SD-3008 8TK No. SDT-13008

Grandpa Jones
15 Cents Is All I've Got: Title Song/Here Rattler Here/That Memphis Train, more! LP No. PO-301 8TK No. PO-1301

Grandpa Jones
16 Sacred Songs: The Arm Of God/Come & Dine/144,000 Were There, much more! LP No. KLP-822 8TK No. KLPT-1822

Grandpa Jones
George Jones-Greatest Hits: It's Okay/Boat Of Life/Still Hurting/Taggin' Along/Ragged But Right/Hold Everything, more! Starday LP No. SLP-150 8TK No. SLPT-1150

Grandpa Jones
Grandpa Jones-24 Big Country Hits: Darby's Ram/I'm Tying The Leaves/My Little Naging Wife/Going Down Town, more! Starday LP No. KLP-967 8TK No. KLPT-1967

Grandpa Jones
Grandpa Jones-Othe Side Of: My Darling's Not My Darling/Any more/You'll Miss Me When I'm Gone/Trouble, more! Starday LP No. KLP-888 8TK No. KLPT-1888

1978 Grammy Award The Kendalls
Featuring: Leaving On A Jet Plane/We'll Be Gone/Love/Love/Love/Bobby, much more! LP No. GT-0001 8TK No. GT8-0001

P.W. King & R. Stewart
The Best Of: Bonapartes Retreat/You Belong To Me/I Got A Wife/Tenn. Waltz/7 Lonely Days/Deck Of Cards, more! LP No. SD-965 8TK No. SDT-1965

W. Lee & S. Cooper
Wilma Lee & Stony Cooper-Walking My Lord Up Calvary Hill: Title Song/Tramp On The Street/Great Speckled Bird, more! LP No. PO-242 8TK No. PO-1242

Carter Family Tribute W. Lee & S. Cooper
Featuring: Picture On The Wall/Worried Man Blues/Little Darling Pal Of Mine, more! LP No. SD-980 8TK No. SDT-1980

Jerry Lee Lewis
Monsters: Don't Be Cruel/Your Cheating Heart/Save The Last Dance For Me/Be Bop A Lula/Pink Pedal Pushers, more! LP No. S-124 8TK No. ST-124

Jerry Lee Lewis
From The Vaults Of Sun: Hound Dog/The Wild Side Of Life/Rock & Roll Ruby/Feel So Good/Sick & Tired, much more! LP No. PO-247 8TK No. PO-1247

Jerry Lee Lewis
Jerry Lee Lewis-Golden Hits Vol. 1: Great Balls Of Fire/It'll Be Me/Breathless/Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On, 6 more! Sun LP No. S-102 8TK No. ST-102

Jerry Lee Lewis
Jerry Lee Lewis-Golden Hits Vol. 2: Save The Last Dance For Me/Fools Like Me/I'll Sail My Ship Alone/Money, 7 more! Sun LP No. S-103 8TK No. ST-103

Jerry Lee Lewis
Original Golden Hits, Vol. 3: One Minute Past Eternity/Lovin' Up A Storm/Sweet Little Sixteen/Love On Broadway, more! LP No. S-128 8TK No. ST-128

Lonesome Pine Fidlrs.
Play 14 Mountain Songs: Eatin' Out Of Your Hand/Lonesome Pine/Kentucky Hill Special/Two Timin' Baby, more! Starday LP No. SLP-155 8TK No. SLPT-1155

Lulu Belle & Scotty
Lulu Belle & Scotty-Sweethearts Of Country Music: Homecoming Time In Happy Valley/Mountain Dew Time, more! Starday LP No. SLP-206 8TK No. SLPT-1206

Lulu Belle & Scotty
Lulu Belle & Scotty-Sweethearts Still: I'll Be All Smiles Tonight/Between You & Me/I Told Them All About You, more! Starday LP No. SLP-351 8TK No. SLPT-1351

Warner Mack
The Best Of The Best Of: Is It Wrong/Sittin' On A Rock/The Bridge Washed Out/Drifting Apart/Talkin' To The Wall, more! LP No. GT-0042 8TK No. GT8-0042

Mainer's Mountaineers
Mainer's Mountaineers-Good Ole' Mountain Music: The Lonely Train/The Forks Of The Road/Run Mountain/John Henry, more! LP No. KLP-666 8TK No. KLPT-1666

Benny Martin
Benny Martin-Greatest Hits: Me & My Fiddle/Crackin' County Corn/Sinful Cinderella/If I Could Stay Away Long Enough, many more! LP No. PO-223 8TK No. PO-1103

Jimmy Martin
Great Bluegrass Hits: Widow Maker/White Dove/Uncle Pen/Big Country/Taylor Made Sally Good/Goodbye Old Pal, more! LP No. GT-0003 8TK No. GT8-0003

Curtis McPeake
Dueling Banjos: Title Song/Home Sweet Home/Brassy Bluegrass/Old Joe Clark/Doodlin' Banjos/Red Dress, much more! LP No. PO-236 8TK No. PO-11026

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

Charlie Monroe
Charlie Monroe-Tally Ho: Lazy Day/Penitentiary Blues/Hard To Believe/Willow Garden/Time Clock/I'm Going Away, more! LP No. SLP-484 8TK No. SLPT-1484

C. Moore & B. Napier
The Best Of: I'm Just Your Stepping Stone/Chain Gang/No One As Sweet As You/I've Got Over You/Dawn South, more! LP No. SLP-963 8TK No. SLPT-1963

C. Moore & B. Napier
Lonesome Truck Drivers: Long White Line/This Truck And Me/Long Old Road/Pinball Blues/Coming Home To You, more! LP No. KLP-936 8TK No. KLPT-1936

Moore & Napier
Gospel And Sacred Songs: Don't Wait To Long/The Stranger In The Tavern/Shout & Sing/Will The Circle Be Unbroken, more! LP No. KLP-1017 8TK No. KLPT-1107

George Morgan
George Morgan-Best Of: You're The Only Good Thing/Room Full Of Roses/I'll Sail My Ship Alone/Candy Kisses, more! Starday LP No. SLP-957 8TK No. SLPT-1957

George Morgan
George Morgan-Steal Away: Beautiful Isle Of Somewhere/Softly & Tenderly/Precious Memories, more! LP No. SLP-413 8TK No. SLPT-1413

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

Nashville Harmonica
Nashville Harmonica: I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry/Satin Sheets/Orange Blossom Special/Me And Bobby McGee, more! LP No. PO-219 8TK No. PO-11009

Nashville Harmonica
Plays Today's Hits: Riss An Angel Good Morning/Bad Bad Lady Brown/Why Me Lord/Delta Dawn/Alabama Bound, more! LP No. PO-257 8TK No. PO-1257

Nashville Harmonica
Plays The Hits Of 1975: Before The Next Teardrop Falls/Thirst Rate Romance/Rhinestone Cowboy/Sundown, more! LP No. PO-289 8TK No. PO-1289

carl perkins

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8TK No. PO-1314

New Grass Revival

New Grass Revival-To Day's Bluegrass: Cold Sailor/Pennies in My Pocket/Great Ball Of Fire/Lonesome Fiddle Blues, much more!
LP No. SLP-482
8TK No. SLPT-1482

The Oak Ridge Boys

Featuring: I Am A Pilgrim/Shine Shine Down On Me/Golden Hills Ahead/There's A Light Guiding Me/Angel Band, more!
LP No. SLP-356
8TK No. SLPT-1356

The Oak Ridge Boys

Featuring: I Wouldn't Take Nothing/Hide Thou Me/The Christ-Lord/One Of These Mornings, more!
LP No. PG-716
8TK No. PG-1716

Oak Ridge Quartet

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

Roy Orbison

Roy Orbison-Original Sound: You're Gonna Cry/Ooby, Dooby/It's Too Late/I Never Knew/Rock House/Devil Doll, more! Sun LP No. S-113
8TK No. ST-113

Brother Oswald

Bashful Brother Oswald: Southern Moon/Wear Weary Blues/I Like Mountain Music/Columbus Stockade Blues, more! Starday LP No. SLP-192
8TK No. SLPT-1192

Johnny Paycheck

Johnny Paycheck-At His Best: Who Needs Your Love/Forever Ended Yesterday/Julie I'm Remembering, much more! Power Pak LP No. PO-284
8TK No. PO-1284

Carl Perkins

Carl Perkins-Blue Suede Shoes: All Mama's Children/Movie Mogg/Glad All Over/Gone, Gone, Gone/Forever Yours, more! Sun LP No. S-112
8TK No. ST-112

Carl Perkins

Carl Perkins-Golden Hits: Matchbox/Blue Suede Shoes/Dixie Fried/Right String But The Wrong Yo Yo/Only You, more! Sun LP No. S-111
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Don Reno-Fastest Five String Alive: Remint-on Ride/Double Banjo Blues/Interstate 81/Banjo Riff/Old Kentucky Home, more!
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8TK No. KLPT-11065

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Country Singing And Instrumentals: Wall Around Your Heart/Follow The Leader/I Wouldn't Change You If I Could, more!
LP No. KLP-776
8TK No. KLPT-1776

D. Reno & R. Smiley

Last Time Together: Are You Waiting Just For Me/Row My Boat/Yes Sir, That's My Baby/Family Bible/Holiday Religion, and! LP No. SLP-485
8TK No. SLPT-1485

D. Reno & R. Smiley

The Best Of: I'm The Talk Of Town/8 More Miles To Louisville/I Wouldn't Change You If I Could/Money, Marbles, Chak, more!
LP No. SLP-961
8TK No. SLPT-1961

D. Reno & R. Smiley

D. Reno & R. Smiley-World's Best 5 String Banjo: My Old Kentucky Home/Green Mountain Hop/Bill Bailey, more!
LP No. KLP-861
8TK No. KLPT-1861

D. Reno & R. Smiley

Country Songs: Blue And Lonesome/Dark As A Dungeon/Don't Let Your Sweet Love Die, more! Starday LP No. KLP-701
8TK No. KLPT-1701

Reno & Smiley

16 Greatest Hits: I'm The Talk Of The Town/I Know You're Married/All I Have Is Just A Memory/Trail Of Sorrow, more!
LP No. SD-3001
8TK No. SDT-13001

Reno & Smiley

Hymns, Sacred Gospel Songs: In The Garden/He Will Set Your Fields On Fire/The Arm Of God/Mother's Only Sleeping, more!
LP No. KLP-693
8TK No. KLPT-1693

Reno & Smiley

The World's Greatest Hymns: I Need The Prayers/Old Rugged Cross/Amazing Grace/Rock Of Ages/Sweet Bye & Bye, more!
LP No. KLP-853
8TK No. KLPT-853

Reno & Smiley

16 Greatest Gospel Hits: He Will Set Your Fields On Fire/The New Jerusalem/Jesus Is Waiting/Tree Of Life, many more!
LP No. GT-0015
8TK No. GT-0015

Charlie Rich

Sun's Golden Treasures: Apple Blossom Time/Everything I Do (Is Wrong)/Gonna Be Waiting/Time And Again, much more!
LP No. S-134
8TK No. ST-134

Charlie Rich

Lonely Weekends: The Title Song/That's How Much I Love You/I Need Your Love/C.C. Rider/Big Man, more! Sun LP No. S-110
8TK No. ST-110

Charlie Rich

Sun's Best Of: Another Place I (Can't Go)/Baby, I Need You/Goodbye Mary Ann/Stop, Thief/Sittin' & Thinkin', more!
LP No. S-135
8TK No. ST-135

Charlie Rich

Charlie Rich-The Early Years: Easy Money/Big Man/Philadelphia Baby/My Heart Cries/I've Lost My Heart, more! Sun LP No. S-132
8TK No. ST-132

Charlie Rich

The Memphis Sound: C.C. Rider/Finally Found Out/I Need Your Love/It's Too Late/Little Bit Sweet/Stay, more! Sun LP No. S-133
8TK No. ST-133

Charlie Rich

A Time For Tears: Gentle As A Lamb/The Wedding's Over/You're Gonna Be Waiting/My Baby Done Left Me, more!
LP No. S-123
8TK No. ST-123

Charlie Rich

Arkansas Traveler: Unchained Melody/Time And Again/Ballad Of Billy Joe/Who Will The Next Fool Be/Stop/Rebound, more!
LP No. PO-245
8TK No. PO-1245

Jeannie C. Riley

Jeannie C. Riley-Greatest Hits: Duty Desire/The Girl Most Likely/The Rib/The Man/Harper Valley/Back Side Of Dallas, more! Sun LP No. PLP-13
8TK No. PLT-13

Jeannie C. Riley

Country Gold: Games People Play/Help Me Make It Through The Night/Oakie From Muskogee/That's A No No, more!
LP No. PO-250
8TK No. PO-1250

Jeannie C. Riley

Jeannie C. Riley-Harper Valley P.T.A.: The Little Town Square/Harper Valley/Widow Jones/Run Jeannie Run, much more! Sun LP No. PLP-1
8TK No. PLT-1

Kenny Roberts

Kenny Roberts-Indian Cry Call: Maybe I'll Cry Over You/Listen To The Mockingbird/Tavern Town/Chime Bells, more! Starday LP No. SLP-336
8TK No. SLPT-1336

T. Scott & C. Moody

We've Played Every Olace More Than Once: Curly Headed Baby/Come On Gimme Some/Sugar Time/Free Again, more!
LP No. SD-999
8TK No. SDT-1999

Jean Shepard

Jean Shepard-Best Of: Many Happy Hangovers To You/Haul Off And Love Me/Satisfied Minc/2 Little Boys, 6 more! Power Pak LP No. PO-278
8TK No. PO-1278

Jimmie Skinner

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

Jimmy Skinner

Original Greatest Hits: I Found My Girl In The Good Old USA/Jimmy's Ramblin' Blues/Wrong Side Of The Tracks, more!
LP No. PO-259
8TK No. PO-1259

Arthur Smith

Mister Guitar: Guitar Boogie/Blue Boogie/Fingers On Fire/Rubber Doll Rag/Pickin' & Playin'/Napoleon's Retreat, much more!
LP No. SLP-173
8TK No. SLPT-1173

Red Sovine

16 New Gospel Songs: Cheyenne/I'm Singing Hallelujah/Except The Lord/Lay Your Hands On Me, many more!
LP No. GT-0013
8TK No. GT8-0013

Red Sovine

Christmas With: Blue Christmas/A Bed For Baby Jesus/Santa Is A Texas Cowboy/Faith In Santa/Rudolph The Reindeer, more!
LP No. SD-1040
8TK No. SDT-1-1040

Red Sovine

Red Sovine-Woodrow Wilson Sovine You Left Your Door Wide Open/Daddy's Girl/It'll Come Back/Little Joe, more! Starday LP No. SD-970 X
8TK No. SDT-1970 X

Red Sovine

Sunday With Sovine: Brighten The Corner/If Jesus Came To Your House/Just A Closer Walk With Thee, much more!
LP No. SLP-427
8TK No. SLPT-1427

Red Sovine

Red Sovine- Best Of: Giddy Up Go/I Know You're Married/One Is A Lonely Number/I Didn't Jump The Fence, more! Starday LP No. SLP-952
8TK No. SLPT-1952

Red Sovine

Red Sovine-Phantom 309: In Your Heart/That's Me/Bummin' Around/Same Old Situation/Phantom 309, more! Power Pak LP No. PO-270
8TK No. PO-1270

Red Sovine

16 All Time Favorites: Satisfied Mind/6 White Horses/I'm Only 17/The Gearjammer & The Hobo/I'm Gonna Move, more!
LP No. SD-3010
8TK No. SDT-13010

Red Sovine

16 Greatest Hits: In Your Heart/Class Of '49/Little Rosa/Teddy Bear/Giddyup Go/It'll Come Back/Daddy, more! Starday LP No. SD-991 X
8TK No. SDT-1991 X

Red Sovine

Classic Narrations: A Dear John Letter/I Think I Can Sleep Tonight/Giddyup Go/Viet Nam Deck Of Cards/21, more!
LP No. SLP-436
8TK No. SLPT-1436

Ralph Stanley

Hills Of Home: Title Song/Darling Brown Eyes/The Kitten And The Cat/I Only Exist/Medicine Springs/California, more!
LP No. KLP-1069
8TK No. KLPT-11069

The Stanley Brothers

Folk Song Festival: Still Trying To Get To Little Rock/The Drunken Driver/Davebreak In Dixie/There Is A Trap, more!
LP No. SLP-791
8TK No. SLPT-1791

The Stanley Brothers

Good Old Camp Meeting Songs: Who Will Sing For Me/We Are Drinking From The Fountain/I'll Fly Away/Leaning, more!
LP No. KLP-805
8TK No. KLPT-1805

The Stanley Brothers

Folk Concert: Lips That Lie/Just Because/My Brother's Bride/He Went To Sleep/No Letter Today/Hills Of Roan County, more!
LP No. KLP-834
8TK No. KLPT-1834

The Stanley Brothers

16 Greatest Hits: I'm A Man Of Constant Sorrow/Train 45/Old Love Letters/There Is A Tramp, much more!
LP No. SD-3003
8TK No. SDT-13003



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The Stanley Brothers
Banjo In The Hills: 5
String Drag/Train 45/
Rang Tang/Red River
Valley/Snow Deer/
Lonesome Traveler/
Stoney Creek, more!
LP No. KLP-872
8 TK No. KLPT-1872

Carl Story
Get Religion: I Feel
Like Traveling On/We
Shall Meet Someday/
Give Me The Roses/
Unclothed Day/Just
One Way, more!
LP No. PO-272
8 TK No. PO-1272

Trucker Special
Radar Blues: Title
Song/Truck Driver's
Queen/Interstate 81 -
Hawshaw Hawkins;
Grandpa Jones; Red
Sovine, much more!
LP No. KLP-1050
8 TK No. KLPT-11050

Various Artists
Various Artists-Cups,
Hawkins, Cline/Gone
But Not Forgotten: I
Suppose/Love Sick Bi-
lue/Deck Of Cards,
much more! Starday
LP No. SLP-346
8 TK No. SLPT-1346

SECTION TWO
More Great
POP And
ROCK 'N'
ROLL

SECTION THREE
More Great
Country
GOSPEL
Favorites

The Stanley Brothers
Featuring: Seemed So
Near/How Mountain
Girls Can Love/She's
More To Be Pitied/
Your Selfish Heart/
Train 45, more!
LP No. KLP-615
8 TK No. KLPT-1615

Carl Story
Carl Story-16 Great-
est Hits: Daddy Sang
Bass/Family Reunion/
Mighty Close To Hea-
ven/Sweeter Than The
Flowers, much more!
LP No. SD-3004
8 TK No. SOT-13004

Trucker Special
16 Greatest Truck
Driver Hits: Convoy/
How Fast Them
Trucks Can Go-Red
Sovine/Benny Martin/
Pete Drake, more!
LP No. SD-3024
8 TK No. SOT-13024

Various Artists
Various Artists-Fam-
ous Duets: Sovine &
Shepard/Lulu Belle &
Scotty/Jones & Hicks/
Tillis & York/Carl &
Pearl Butler, more!
LP No. PO-307
8 TK No. PO-1307

Ray Charles
14 Original Greatest
Hits: Ain't That Fine/
Honey, Honey/Let's
Have A Ball/Sitting
On Top Of The World,
and much more!
LP No. K-5011X
8 TK No. K-15011X

Blue Ridge Quartet
Blue Ridge Quartet: I
Want To Tell The
World (About His
Love)/A Soul Such As
I/Why Not Start To-
day, many more!
LP No. PG-702
8 TK No. PG-1702

The Stanley Brothers
Stanley Bros.-Best Of:
Rank Strangers/How
Far To Little Rock/
The Master's Bouq-
uet/A Few More Sea-
sons, more! Starday
LP No. SLP-953
8 TK No. SLPT-1953

Carl Story
Carl Story-Songs Of
Life: Glory Hallelu-
jah/Now I'm Satisf-
ied/The Old Country
Preacher/Dear Willow,
more! Starday
LP No. SLP-315
8 TK No. SLPT-1315

Trucker Special
Truck Driver Songs:
6 Days On The Road/
Truck Drivin' Man/
Passin' Zone-Moore
& Napier; Bob New-
man, and more!
LP No. KLP-866
8 TK No. KLPT-1866

Various Artists
The Bluegrass Hall Of
Fame: R. Allen/Flatt
& Scruggs/Stringbean/
J.E. Mainers Mount-
aineers/Carl Story/G.
Jones, more! Starday
LP No. SLP-181
8 TK No. SLPT-1181

The Coasters
Greatest Hits: Little
Egypt/Love Potion
Number 9/Searchin'/
Charlie Brown/Poison
Ivy/Yakety Yak/One
Foot Draggin', more!
LP No. PO-310
8 TK No. PO-1310

Blue Ridge Quartet
Autograph Album: My
Last Move/Bits Of
Hits/Stand By Me/By
His Hand/I've Had A
Feeling/Sinner Come
Home, much more!
LP No. PG-722
8 TK No. PG-1722

The Stanley Brothers
Stanley Bros.-In Per-
son: Let Me Love
You One More Time/
Swanee River Hoe
Down/Let Me Rest/
Sweet Thing, more!
LP No. PO-273
8 TK No. PO-1273

Carl Story
Carl Story-Gospel Re-
vival: Light At The
River/Be Kind To
Mother/Ship That's
Sailing Down/Family
Reunion, more!
LP No. SLP-127
8 TK No. SLPT-1127

Trucker Special
Overloaded Diesel: I'm
Movin' On/18 Wheels
A Humming, Home
Set Home/Truck Dr-
iver's Blues, more ...
Various Artists, more!
LP No. PO-222
8 TK No. PO-1012

Billy Walker
The Best Of The Best
Of: Cross The Brazos
At Waco/She Goes
Walking Through My
Mind/Smoky Places/
El Paso, much more!
LP No. GT-040
8 TK No. GT8-040

Bill Doggett
16 Bandstand Favor-
ites: Slow Walk/The
Song Is Ended/After
Hours/Monky Tonk/
Early Dawn/And The
Angels Sing, more!
LP No. SD-3023
8 TK No. SDT-13023

Blackwood Bros.
Blackwood Brothers -
16 Greatest Hits: I'm
Feeling Fine/Old Time
Religion/Fill My Cup/
When The Saints Go
Marching In, more!
LP No. SD-3009
8 TK No. SDT-13009

The Stanley Brothers
Sing The Songs They
Like Best: Wild Side
Of Life/The Window
Up Above/The Story
Of The Lawson Fam-
ily/Jenny Lynn, more!
LP No. KLP-772
8 TK No. KLPT-1772

Stringbean
Stringbean-Salute To
Uncle Dave Macon:
Tennessee Farmer/I'm
The Man Who Rode
Around The World, 10
more! Starday
LP No. SLP-215
8 TK No. SLPT-1215

Trucker Special
Heavy Haulers: Red
Sovine; Johnny Bond;
Willis Bros... Giddy-
up - Go/Long Lone-
some Road/The Last
Mile/Gears, more!
LP No. PO-290
8 TK No. PO-1290

Dottie West
Dottie West-Country
Singing Sensation: Big
John/Walking In The
Dark/I Should Start
Running/Crazy, many
more! Power Pak
LP No. PO-274
8 TK No. PO-1274

D. Gray & M. Wells
Greatest Hits: The In
Crowd/Loving Arms/
Drift Away/2 Lovers/
The One Who Really
Loves You/My Guy,
and more!
LP No. PO-313
8 TK No. PO-1313

The Blackwoods
Family Singing Time:
Echoes Of The Past/
At The Altar/I'll Be
Ready/Well Done, My
Child/I Need The
Prayers, more!
LP No. PG-713
8 TK No. PG-1713

Stanley Brothers
Hymns Of The Cross:
John, Three Sixteen/
I Just Dropped By/A
Crown He Wore/He's
Passing This Way/Oh,
Death, many more!
LP No. KLP-918
8 TK No. KLPT-1918

Joe Tex
Another Woman's
Man: Title Song/She's
Mine/Come In This
House/Get Way Back/
Right Back To My
Arms, more!
LP No. PO-305
8 TK No. PO-1305

Trucker Special
16 Greatest Truck
Driver Hits: Red Sov-
ine; Stanley Bros.; Del
Reeves... Girl On The
Billboard/Big Footed
Dan/Convoy, more!
LP No. SD-3024
8 TK No. SDT-13024

Roy Wiggins
Memory Time: Bou-
quet Of Roses/One
Kiss To Many/Molly
Darling/It's A Sin/I
Walk Alone, many
more! Power Pak
LP No. PO-226
8 TK No. PO-1016

Freddy King
Sings: You've Got To
Love Her With Feel-
ing/Lonesome Whistle
Blues/Have You Ever
Loved A Woman/I'm
Tore Down, more!
LP No. KLP-762
8 TK No. KLPT-1762

The Blackwoods
God Bless America:
Fill My Cup/Feeling
Fine/Old Time Reli-
gion/Joy In The Camp/
He's Everything To
Me, many more!
LP No. PG-709
8 TK No. PG-1709

Stanley Brothers
For The Good People:
Four Books In The
Bible/I'll Not Be A
Stranger/Pass Me Not/
Jacob's Vision/Jordan,
many more!
LP No. KLP-698
8 TK No. KLPT-1698

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

Trucker Special
Diesel Smoke, Dan-
gerous Curves: 6 Days
On The Road/Pinball
Machine-Willis Bros.;
Red Sovine; Lonnie
Irving, much more!
LP No. SLP-250
8 TK No. SLPT-250

Harlow Wilcox
Groovy Gubworm:
Title Song/Wipe Out
Wheels/The Gold Ea-
gle/Honky Tonk/Sad
Is The Lonely/Moose
Trot, more! Sun
LP No. PLP-7
8 TK No. PLT-7

G. Lewis & Playboys
Greatest Hits! Every-
body Loves A Clown/
This Diamond Ring/
Count Me In/Green
Grass/She's Just My
Style, more!
LP No. PO-311
8 TK No. PO-1311

Blackwood Singers
Last Letters Home:
Title Song/O, What A
Saviour/Just A Closer
Walk/This Man Of
Galilee/How Great
Thou Art, more!
LP No. SD-983
8 TK No. SDT-1983

Stanley Brothers
16 Greatest Gospel
Hits: White Dove/I'll
Fly Away/Who Will
Sing For Me/Rank
Strangers/Over In The
Glory Land, more!
LP No. GT-0016
8 TK No. GT8-0016

Mel Tillis
Mel Tillis & Friend:
Stateside/Mr. Drop-
out/Wine/Honey Hun-
gry/Faded Love/I'm
Gonna Move, much
more! Power Pak
LP No. PO-295
8 TK No. PO-1295

Top Trucker Artists
Man Behind The
Wheel: G. Morgan/R.
Sovine/M. Pearl/Willis
Bros...Phantom 309/
Title Song/The Hi-
Jacker, much more!
LP No. SLP-404
8 TK No. SLPT-1404

Don Williams
Don Williams-Poco
Seco Singers: Ruby
Tuesday/Tears/Story-
book Children/On
Her Way To Be A
Woman, more!
LP No. PO-285
8 TK No. PO-1285

Polka Special
All-Stars Of Polka and
USA: Frankie Yank-
ovic; Bob Kames; Joe
Patzner-Red Hand-
kerchief Polka/Just
Because, much more!
LP No. KLP-833
8 TK No. KLPT-1833

Martha Carson
Greatest Gospel Hits:
Old Blind Barnabus/
Two White Wings/On
Top Of The Mount-
ain/Valley Of Prayer/
Faith/Satisfied, more!
LP No. SD-997
8 TK No. SDT-1997

Carl Story
Sacred Songs & The
Hereafter: The Old
Country Preacher/
White Dove/Church
In The Valley, plus
many more!
LP No. SLP-315
8 TK No. SLPT-1315

Carl Tipton
The Carl Tipton Show:
Banks Of The Ohio/
It Won't Be Very
Long/Hills Of Tennes-
see/Death Is Only A
Dream, much more!
LP No. SD-987
8 TK No. SDT-1987

Leroy Van Dyke
Leroy Van Dyke-The
World's Famous Auc-
tioneer: Black Cloud/
Be A Good Girl/Dim
Dark Corner/Walk On
By, more! Sun
LP No. S-131
8 TK No. ST-131

The Willis Bros.
Willis Bros.-Best Of: 6
Foot 2 By 4/Give Me
40 Acres/Buying Pop-
corn/Blues Stay Away
From Me/Private Lee,
more! Starday
LP No. SLP-960
8 TK No. SLPT-1960

Sam & Dave
Sweet & Funky Gold:
Hold On, I'm Comin'/
You Don't Know Me
Like I Know/I Thank
You/Soul Man/You
Got Me, more!
LP No. GT-045
8 TK No. GT8-045

Little Jimmy Dampsey
Gospel Guitars: Peace
In The Valley/Family
Bible/Will The Circle
(Be Unbroken)/It Is
No Secret/He's Touch-
ed Me, much more!
LP No. PG-708
8 TK No. PG-1708



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- Smitty Gatlin Trio**
Smitty Gatlin Trio: I Must Tell Jesus/He's Living In My Heart/Less Of Me/Remind Me, Dear Lord/Searing, much more!
LP No. PG-711
8 TK No. PG-1711
- Great Gospel**
Old Camp Meeting Time: W. Lee & S. Cooper/R. Wiggins/V. Jordan/Sunshine Boys ...I've Got A Mansion/Why Me Lord, more!
LP No. PG-730
8 TK No. PG-1730
- Gospel Special**
Old Time Religion: Cash; Rich; Lewis; Riley ... Big Man/I Was There When It Happened/The Back Of His Hand, more!
LP No. PO-254
8 TK No. PO-1254
- The Harvesters**
Festival Of Song: He Whispers Sweet Peace To Me/How Beautiful Heaven Must Be/The Farmer & The Lord, many more!
LP No. SD-981
8 TK No. SDT-1981
- The Harvesters**
The Golden Gospel Best: One More River To Cross/When The Morning Comes/Just For Me/Crossing The Bridge, more!
LP No. SLP-450
8 TK No. SLPT-1450
- The Le Fevres**
Gospel Inspirations: I Can Tell You The Time/Lord, I've Tried (To Be True)/Beyond The Sunset/Because I Know, more!
LP No. PG-701
8 TK No. PG-1701
- The Le Fevres**
16 All Time Favorites: In The Garden/Pass Me Not/When I Stand With God/Room At The Cross/How Great Thou Art, and more!
LP No. SD-3006
8 TK No. SDT-13006
- The Le Fevres**
The Le Fevres: I Like To Feel Like I Feel/When I Stand With God/Oh Blessed Rock/In The Garden/Pass Me Not/Keep Walking, more!
LP No. PG-721
8 TK No. PG-1721
- The Masters Family**
Gloryland March: A Vision Of Jesus/Almost Home/Hand Me Down My Silver Trumpet/The Devil Was My Shadow/Papa, more!
LP No. SLP-246
8 TK No. SLPT-1246
- The Rangers**
I Believe: I Never Knew I'll Now/Dear Jesus, Abide With Me/Love Is Why/What A Homecoming Day/Closer To Thee, much more!
LP No. PG-729
8 TK No. PG-1729
- The Speer Family**
All Night Singing: In The Bye And Bye/I Know I Am Safe In Jesus/He'll Go With Me/I'm Happy In Him Today, many more!
LP No. SD-982
8 TK No. SDT-1982
- The Stamps Quartet**
The Old Rugged Cross: Interview With Rev. Bennard/Pass Me Not/Near The Cross/Kneel At The Cross/Amazing Grace, much more!
LP No. PG-707
8 TK No. PG-1707
- The Stamps**
16 Greats: Just A Closer Walk With Thee/Rock Of Ages/Until Then/The Old Rugged Cross/Lord I'm Coming Home, more!
LP No. SD-3007
8 TK No. SDT-13007
- The Stamps Quartet**
Teach Me How To Pray: What A Savior/I'm Gonna See Heaven/His Love Can Satisfy/I'll See You Over There, much more!
LP No. SD-985
8 TK No. SDT-1985
- The Stamps**
Old Time Religion: I Am Glad To Tell Jesus/I'm As Poor As A Begger/I'll Be All Right Someday/I'll Be Ready To Go, more!
LP No. PG-705
8 TK No. PG-1705
- The Stamps**
What A Day That Will Be: Walk, Talk, And Sing/Ten Thousand Angels/Guide Me With Thy Love/Just Trust In God, more!
LP No. PG-706
8 TK No. PG-1706
- J.D. Sumner & Stamps Gospel's Best:** What A Precious Friend (Is He)/Who Am I/Rolling Along/I Can Tell You The Time/Blessed Assurance, more!
LP No. PG-715
8 TK No. PG-1715
- J.D. Sumner & Stamps**
The Stamps: Just A Closer Walk (With Thee)/He's Only A Prayer Away/I'll Be There/The One That Leads The Way, more!
LP No. PG-714
8 TK No. PG-1714
- Sunshine Boys**
Sunshine Boys: Cowboy Camp Meeting/The Last Roundup/When We All Get Together/The Love Of God, much more!
LP No. PG-728
8 TK No. PG-1728
- The Statesman**
Sunday Meeting Time: I've Got News/All Alone/The Old Land Mark/I Saw A Man/Church Twice On Sunday, much more!
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SURF & DRAG: Jan & Dean: Surf City; Little Old Lady From Pasadena/Beach Boys: Surfin' Safari; Surfin' Girl; Surfin' U.S.A./Surfaris: Wipe Out/Hondells: Little Honda/Ronnie And The Daytonas: Little GTO/Chantays: Pipeline/Rip Chords: Hey Little Cobra; 3 Window Coupe/Lonnie Mack: Memphis/Jan & Dean: Ride The Wild Surf/Ventures: Walk Don't Run, 20 great hits in all!
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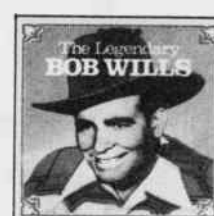
ELVIS PRESLEY DOUBLE DYNAMITE—2-Record Set: Burning Love/I'll Be There/Fools Fall In Love/Old Shep/Yellow Rose Of Texas/Follow That Dream/You'll Never Walk Alone/Flaming Star/Mama/Rubberneckin'/U.S. Male/Frankie And Johnny/Easy Come, Easy Go/If You Think I Need You/Separate Ways/Peace In The Valley/Big Boss Man/It's A Matter Of Time, and more!
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GEORGE & TAMMY—20 Classics On One Album: George Jones: Once You've Had The Best; Grand Tour; Her Name Is; I'm All She's Got; What My Woman Can't Do; The Door/Tammy Wynette: Bedtime Story; Beach Out Your Hand; D-I-V-O-R-C-E; Stand By Your Man; Woman To Woman/George & Tammy: We Loved It Away; The Ceremony; We're Not The Jet Set; Golden Ring, and much more!
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LP No. R0002
8TK No. T0002
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BEST OF BOB WILLIS 2-Record Set: Spanish Two Step/White Heat/Mexicali Rose/Corrinna, Corrinna/My Confession/Steel Guitar Rag/Stay A Little Longer/That's What I Like About The South/Texas Playboy Rag/Let's Ride With Bob/Faded Love/Time Changes Everything/Big Beaver/Take Me To Tulsa/New San Antonio Rose/I Knew The Moment I Lost You/Silver Bells/Roly Poly, and much more!
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8TK No. T3973
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CHARLY PRIDE FAVORITES—2-Record Set: Kiss An Angel Good Morning/A Shoulder To Cry On/Let The Chips Fall/Crystal Chandeliers/Tennessee Girl/The Easy Part's Over/I'd Rather Love You/I'm So Afraid Of Losing You Again/Just Between You And Me/She's Too Good To Be True/Lovesick Blues/Green, Green Grass Of Home/The Snakes Crawl At Night, much more!
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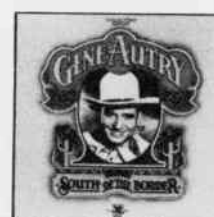
RONNIE MILSAP—2-Record Set: Never Had It So Good/Denver/Mr. Mailman/I Can't Tell A Lie/Need To Belong/If You Go Away/Maybe/1000 Miles From Nowhere/I Just Don't Maybe/Kentucky Woman/What's Your Game/Traces/Love Will Never Pass Us By/House Of The Rising Sun, plus many, many more hits!
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J. REEVES—2-Record Set: Blue Side Of Lonesome/The Talking Walls/Little Ole Dime/A Letter To My Heart/If You Were Mine/Most Of The Time/What Would I Do/I Can't Fly/Overnight/Bottle Take Effect/I Won't Forget You/I've Lived A Lot In My Time/A Railroad Bum/Walkin' For A Train, and more great hits!
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LP No. R1009
8TK No. T1009
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THIRTY FIDDLER'S GREATEST HITS - 2-Record Set: Bob Willis: Beaumont Rag/Benny Martin: Sparta Waltz; Big Tiger Special/Joe Red Hayes: Sweet Nellie; Texas Quickstep/Curly Fox: Black Mountain Rag; Whistlewood/Chubby Wise: Opry Fiddler's Blues; Peacock Rag/Arthur Smith: Tulsa Hop; Louise/Lonesome Pine Fiddlers; Kentucky Fiddler, and more!
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8TK No. T0104
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TOM JONES COLLECTION-2-Record Set: It's Not Unusual/Detroit City/Delliah/I Believe/What's New Pussycat/Love Me Tonight/Green Grass Of Home/Sittin' On The Dock Of The Bay/I'll Never Fall In Love Again/Funny How Time Slips Away/Can't Stop Loving You/Help Yourself/Shake/Don't Fight It/Without Love (There Is Nothing)/10 Guitars/I'm Coming Home/Hold On I'm Coming, more!
LP No. R1033
8TK No. T1033
LP-\$7.98/8TK-\$8.98



BUCK OWENS, HIS 20 GREATEST HITS-2-Record Set: Act Naturally/My Heart Skips A Beat/I Don't Care/Big In Vegas/Buckaroo/Think Of Me/Where Does The Good Times Go/Great Expectations/Who's Gonna Mow Your Grass/Tall Dark Stranger/Love's Gonna Live Here/Together Again/I've Got A Tiger By The Tail/Cryin' Time/Johnny B. Goode/Made In Japan/Open Your Heart, and more!
LP No. R8095
8TK No. T8095
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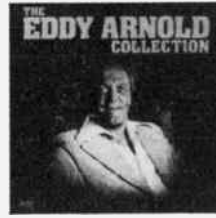
ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK-2-Record Set: Release Me/A Man Without Love/I'm A Better Man/A Place In The Sun/Spanish Eyes/A Time For Us/Those Were The Days/Funny Familiar Forgotten Feelings/There Goes My Everything/The Last Waltz/Am I That Easy To Forget/The Way It Used To Be/What A Wonderful World/Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You/Quando, Quando, Quando/Cafe, more!
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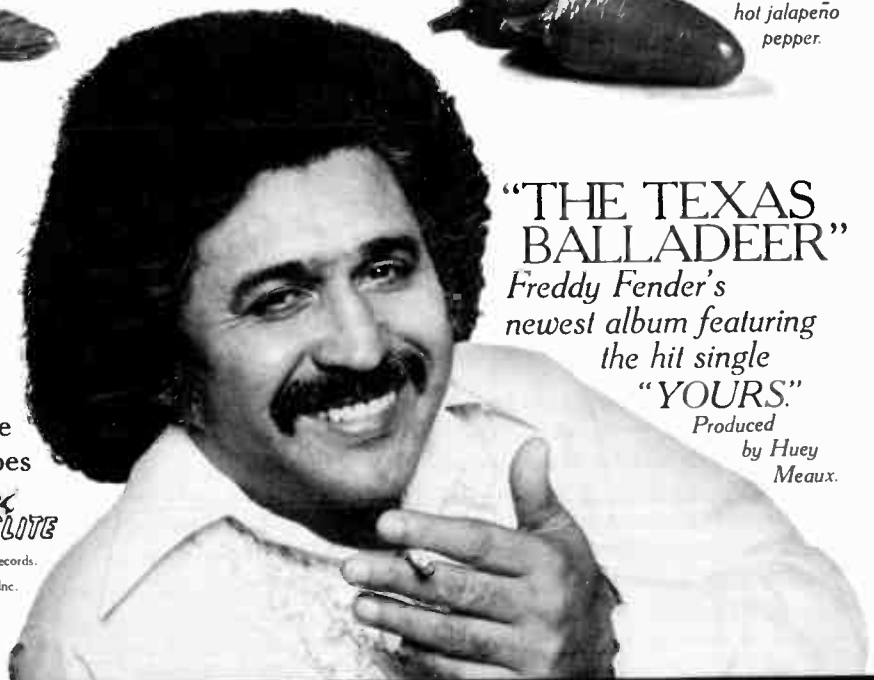
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STEREO EQUIPMENT REVIEW

by KELLY DELANEY

Stereos & Stars

Over the past 10 years the quality of recorded music has improved immeasurably. This distinction is most apparently reflected in the overall improvement of the average home audio system. Purchase of turntables, AM/FM receivers, amplifiers, speakers, cassette decks, and even reel-to-reel tape recorders have steadily increased. A recent *Country Music Magazine* survey reveals that its readers invest an average of \$903 in hi-fi equipment. It has become an auditory fact of life—if you want to hear better music at home—you need a quality system. Today's listeners of music are much more sound-conscious than they were previously.

Records sound better today basically because such immense recording technology is available. Originally, recording was performed in a "live" situation—musicians and singers doing their parts simultaneously on one track. There was little margin for error and mistakes often went uncorrected. Now, with some of the sophisticated equipment available, a producer may have as many as 48 tracks at his disposal, each of which can be recorded separately or in various combinations together.

With improvement, of course, comes cost increase. While it once cost \$15,000-\$20,000 to record an album on a country music artist, those figures have in most instances doubled or tripled, and in some cases soared upwards of \$100,000. The cost is passed on to the consumer who now pays more for a presumably better quality product.

According to the survey, readers of *Country Music Magazine* purchase over \$200 million worth of records and tapes annually. The survey indicates that to enhance listening pleasure and to protect large, valuable libraries of music, country music fans are rapidly becoming more sophisticated in their selection of audio equipment and accessories.

Assembling a quality home system, aside from being a wise investment, is also somewhat of a hobby for many. As people have more leisure time (and less gasoline) home entertainment becomes more important. It is now possible with all the audio component parts available, to build a home unit comparable to what music professionals use. In most cases, the music pros—artists, producers, songwriters, publishers, and promotion people—use the same type of equipment for playback purposes as is available to the public from manufacturers. There is a wide variance of prices and equipment brands, thus an individual can choose parts within a budget and still have a good-sounding system.

Quality systems are vital in the music business although equipment preferences vary and are tailored to suit different needs. Without stereo equipment, people like Freddy Weller, Bill Anderson, Frank Mull, Ronnie Gant, Vern Gosdin, R. C. Bannon, and Louise Mandrell might all be out of work. They all use audio equipment daily, so it must not only meet high standards of excellence, but also, it must be rugged.

FREDDY WELLER

"Music can be soothing over a long drive, or it can help pick up the tempo if you're in a hurry."

Freddy Weller puts a lot of miles on his Lincoln. Once a member of Paul Revere and the Raiders, Weller now lives in Atlanta, Georgia. He makes frequent journeys from there to Nashville, or to personal appearances if they are within driving distance.

Since Weller spends so much time in his car, like any "true blue died-in-the-wool travelin' man", he wanted an in-car stereo cassette system which was compact and provided a high fidelity of sound. Music can be soothing over a long drive or it can help pick up the tempo if you're in a hurry. To

help ease the miles, Weller decided on **Sparkomatic's** SR 3300 AM/FM Stereo Cassette player and a pair of the same company's SK-69221 speakers.

The unit features separate bass, treble, balance and fader controls, auto reverse for continuous play, and a 45-watt power amp. The speakers, designed for rear deck installation, are a three-way system with woofers, tweeters, and midrange speakers in each cabinet. The unit's 45-watt power amp distinctly picks up high and low frequencies.

Weller's qualifications for a car system are to the point. "It has to sound good," he says.

"That's so simple an answer, but it's the truth. I enjoy listening to things at a higher volume than the average person on the street. So I like to be able to crank it up and have it sound like a studio playback. If it'll do that for me and sound good, then that's all I ask of it. The Sparkomatic does this—you can crank it full blast and still get the quality."

Weller says his system also has quality at lower volumes. "On the other side of the coin," he adds, "with some systems you have to run it wide open to get the quality. Sometimes you want good quality at a low level also. I don't drive around with

it wide open all the time, sometimes you want to hear what something will sound like on a smaller system."

As a "Raider", Weller was a member of one of this country's most popular rock groups. However he views his own career as a "reverse of the crossover process". While numerous artists attempt to cross from country into the pop market, Weller actually *did* make the transition from rock into country. He feels much more comfortable as a country artist. "Despite my background, I'm too country to really do any other kind of music," he says.

FREDDY WELLER

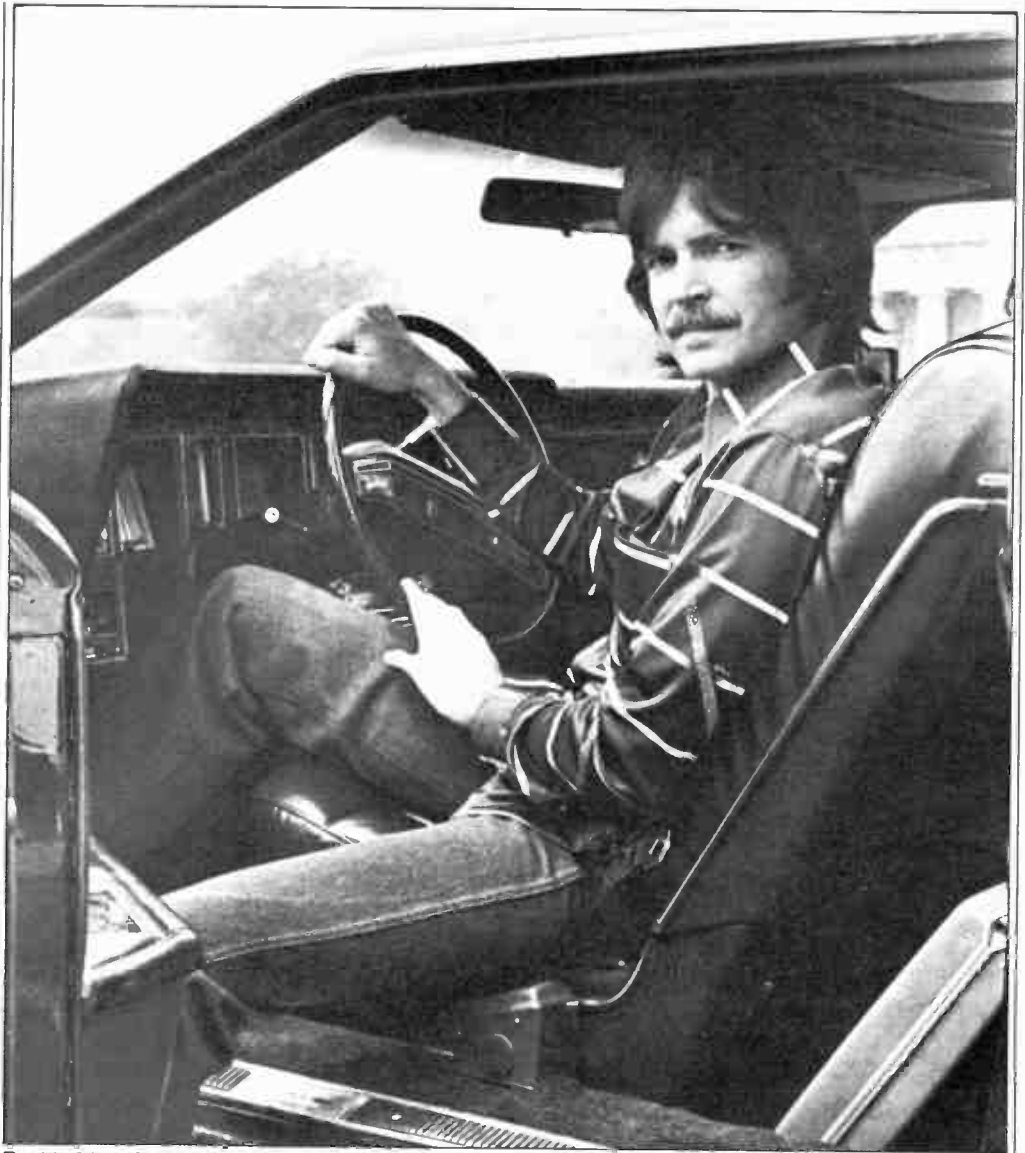
Since 1969 when Weller turned to country music, every one of his single releases has made the charts.

His career as a country artist took off in 1969 when his version of *Games People Play* raced to the top of the country charts. Since then every one of his single releases has charted, including *Down In The Boondocks*, *The Perfect Stranger*, *Sexy Lady*, and *Bar Wars*, among others.

Weller's personal taste in music is pretty much the same as the kind he makes for a living—country. "I guess it would be more interesting if I said I listened to classical or something totally out of the realm of country music," he explains, "but in all honesty I'd say that at least seventy-five percent of the time I do listen to country. I like to listen to people who are doing something that is related to what I'm doing. The other twenty-five percent of the time I listen to different things—anything from Neil Diamond. I really admire his writing. I like Barbra Streisand a lot too. I buy cassettes of different artists, or make up my own combinations at home on blank cassettes."

The new Sparkomatic system offers another advantage which suits Weller's in-transit needs. His time between destinations now is more productive. "This system is good for listening to demos of my own songs or material submitted by other songwriters," he says. That's something I've never been able to do before I got this system—tape what you want to hear and play it back while you're driving along.

"For years, eight-track tape players were about all you could get for cars. I like the cassette players because you can rewind the tape. If there's something you want to find on a tape, you don't have to wait for the whole thing to play



Freddy Weller's car is his office, so he needed a top quality stereo system.

through."

Although he admits to not being a recording engineer, Weller says he enjoys making his own home demos. "I don't know all the technical stuff," he adds, "like which piece of equipment has so many watts per channel. I am into it in the sense that I have a Tascam

eight-track thing at home with a board and all kinds of things to go with it. You have to be an engineer really to figure it all out. But I enjoy working with it and I'll put down guitar and vocal on two channels and come back over that. As far as the wattage goes, I couldn't care less, but I am into it in the

sense that I like to do home recording."

As befits a "travelin' man", Weller doesn't get to spend as much time at home as he'd like. His new Sparkomatic system won't shorten the distance between Atlanta and Nashville, but he believes it will make the miles more bearable. ■

BILL ANDERSON

Space is tight on a bus. Anderson says, "The girls want to take the speakers out and put in a microwave oven."

Bill Anderson's shiny Silver Eagle touring bus, with his name stenciled neatly on its sides, may roar noisily down the highway, but inside there is an audio system capable of drowning out the diesel drone of a whole convoy of semi trucks. Since space is such a valuable and limited commodity on an artist's bus, the installation of equipment must be compact. Anderson selected what could be considered an almost perfect studio system for a bus. All the components fit tightly in about a 10-foot space above a table in the bus relaxation area.

The components consist of a **Technics SA-5560** AM/FM receiver, a **Technics 630** stereo cassette deck, a **Panasonic** solid state eight-track tape deck, a **Teac A-2300S** reel-to-reel tape recorder, and a pair of **JBL 4311** speakers.

Anderson is one of the most popular country artists touring today. His show is complete with a solid cast of musicians, female background singers, and a slide projection presentation, all designed to provide a more encompassing form of entertainment.

Although Anderson's illustrious career is founded on consistency, he has always maintained an ability to adapt to the times. His recording of *I Can't Wait Any Longer* was a trend-setter in what has since been dubbed "country-disco". It was still unmistakably "Whisperin' Bill", only with a new twist to his style. Anderson's presence is still one of the most emphatic and guiding forces in the industry. From the beginning of his career in 1958 when he wrote *City Lights* to the present, Anderson, who is one of the most prolific writers

in the history of country music, has remained a master of both quality and quantity.

Anderson is always busy writing, recording, or performing. Since he spends so much time on the road traveling to dates, he needed a system which would enable him to work away from home and the office. He feels the system he has installed in his bus provides that opportunity in a quality fashion.

"Everybody records piecemeal today," Anderson notes. "You cut your basic tracks in the studio and then you go back in and add things. The main thing we use this equipment for, is that we bring those tracks on the road and work with them. With the Teac reel-to-reel machine we can listen to what we're doing in the studio while we're on the road. We'll sit up

here and come up with ideas and thoughts. Plus, with the cassette and eight-track decks, I can also listen to songs submitted to me by other writers."

There is also another very important advantage with his system: instant review of the night's performance. "We record our show and listen to it on the play-back system," Anderson says. "We critique it and work on it."

Anderson is particularly fond of the JBL speakers. "I like them better than anything else for their size," he explains. "We only had a certain amount of space to work with. I did insist on JBL speakers, they just seem to be the right thing. I've always had real good luck with Teac equipment too. The girls want to take the speakers out and put in a microwave oven!"

Anderson's personal taste for listening pleasure range the full musical spectrum. "I listen to all different kinds of music," he says. "both on the bus or in my car. You can go out to my car and you'll find no consistent pattern as to where my buttons are set. I enjoy all different kinds of music and I feel like being in the business, especially the creative end of it, and the more I know about the total picture, the better off I am." His successful track record would seem to prove his theory valid.

As proof of his musical theory and the quality of his audio system, Anderson places a tape on his Teac machine. It is a rhythm and blues version of his classic *Still* recorded by James Brown, the soul king himself. ■



The system on Anderson's bus enables him to work away from home or office.

RONNIE GANT

As a producer and publisher, the key word in Gant's job is—listen. "It's all basically good equipment."

Ronnie Gant, the Director of Professional Services for Acuff-Rose publishing company in Nashville, practically lives with his audio equipment. In addition to reviewing material submitted for publication by songwriters, Gant also produces three artists for Hickory Records—Mickey Newbury, Lori Morgan, and Don Gibson.

Gant has been with the company for 15 years, which was formed in 1943 by Roy Acuff and the late Fred Rose. Among the songs in the company's catalogue are: *Blue Eyes Cryin' In the Rain, I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry, I Can't Stop Loving You, When Will I Be Loved, and Your Cheatin' Heart*, to name but a few.

When Gant is not in the studio handling his production chores, he is usually in his office reviewing material on his audio system. His equipment includes a **Pioneer SX-780** stereo receiver, a **Sony 1130** amplifier, a **Sony 353** reel-to-reel tape deck, a **Sony PS-T2** direct drive turntable, a **Sony TC-K4** stereo cassette deck, and a pair of **JBL 4311** speakers. He also has ordered an **Ampex 440** reel-to-reel machine which is worth about \$2,000.

"Probably over half the stuff we get in here is on cassette," Gant explains. "I had this Sony cassette machine put in here because we had bought a gang of portable things, but in an office like this there are a lot of people walking around, and a lot of little tape players leave with them. I couldn't seem to keep one in here, so I just got one nobody could haul off. I even stick it under the amplifier to make sure. The cassette player is awfully good.

"The reel-to-reel is set up for

half track, because that's what we use in the studio and all the professional tapes we get in are also recorded on half track. Occasionally I get quarter track stereo which will not play on this Sony reel-to-reel. That's why I ordered the Ampex machine—it will play them because of its head configuration."

As a producer and publisher, the key word in Gant's job is—"listen". "It's all basically good equipment," he notes, "and this is a good-sounding room. In fact this room is the best place to listen in the whole building. Those JBL speakers are real good. They're worth about \$300 each. Actually, I can tell more about what I've produced in the studio in this room than I can down in the studio. This is the best check I have, because I'm used to this room."

Since Gant's office is such a suitable place for listening, his

equipment frequently is used by other company personnel. "There are all kinds of controls on that amplifier," he says, "but I try not to monkey with them. I come in here a lot of times after people have been using this playback system and they've messed with the controls because they didn't hear enough high or low frequencies. But I leave them set pretty flat because I know where I'm at then. If I jack it up, I'm only fooling myself, regarding any tapes I've cut in the studio. Of course if I'm just reviewing a tape by a writer, then it doesn't matter. I do whatever I can to hear it best."

Gant firmly believes that improved records have abetted the cause of quality stereo systems. "The studios where the records are cut, have really come along in the last few years," he explains. "Los Angeles studios have been ahead of us for a

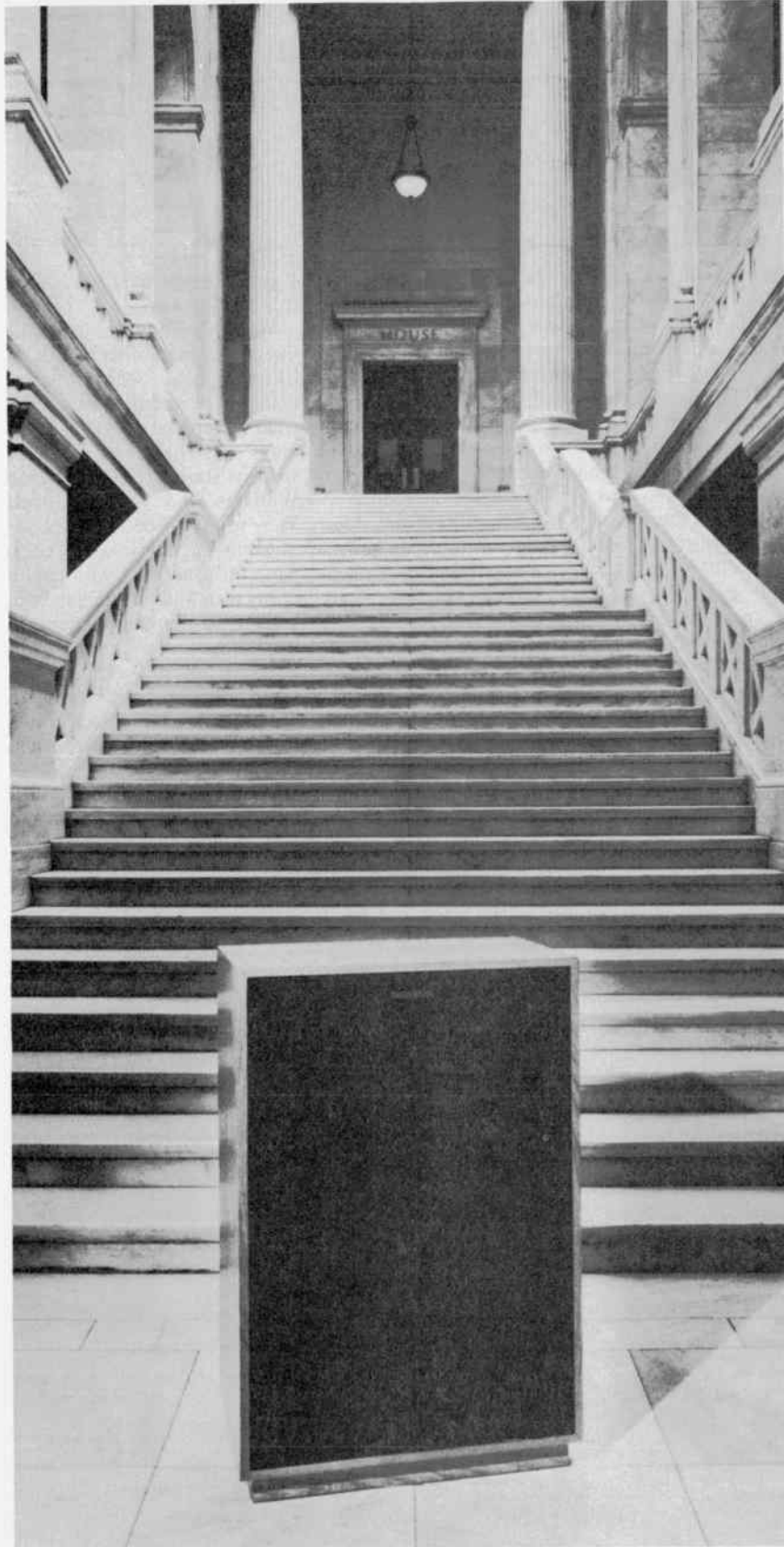
while, but I think Nashville is catching up now. There are several studios in this town that sound awfully good, relative to the L.A. studios. I think that is what is really improving the product.

"People are really paying a lot more attention to sound. The sound is getting to be more a part of a hit record. I'm not saying you would lose one because of the sound, but I think it's a plus that you need anytime you put out a record. Of course, if you've got the right song at the right time, you can cut a hit in a basement somewhere, but the point is you don't want to go to bat with two strikes against you. Records have to have sound as good as they can." As an experienced producer, Gant has his finger on the pulse of the music industry. His equipment helps him keep it there, feeling every beat. ■



Ronnie Gant says he can evaluate his productions in his office better than in the studio.

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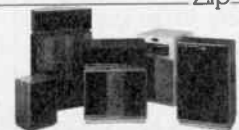
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VERN GOSDIN

"The quality of recording and listening all has to do with the equipment, and it's gonna get better."

For Vern Gosdin, "sudden success" was a long time coming. Although he has established himself as a substantial country artist in the past two years, he originally began recording in the mid-sixties. He actually quit the music business completely in 1970 to run a glass and mirror business in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1976, at the urging of friends, like producer Gary S. Paxton, Gosdin resumed recording, and his first single, *Yesterday's Gone* climbed swiftly up the charts. Since then, he's had a string of successful records including, *Hangin' On, Till The End, Mother Country Music, and You've Got Somebody*.

Gosdin enjoys working at home, and his audio equipment enables him to do so. His system includes a McIntosh AM/FM receiver and amplifier, a Sony 850 reel-to-reel tape deck and a pair of Bose 901 speakers.

"I think the quality of recording and listening all has to do with the equipment," Gosdin offers. "Ten years ago, the biggest tape machine they had in the studio was an eight-track, so you were limited as to what you could do in a studio. At that time, a country record consisted of drums, bass, lead and rhythm guitars and that was about it. But today, they've got 24-track machines and there's no limit to what you can do. Machinery is the key, and it's gonna get better."

Gosdin proved to himself the hard way just how important a quality system can be. "On my first album, I had a system—I don't even remember what it was now—but there were things happening on that album music-wise, that I didn't even know were happening," he

says. "If you have the right set, it will pick up all the highs and lows and in-betweens. You can hear everything. About six months went by and I just happened to be at a friend's house in Atlanta. We were playing my album and I got to hearing things I didn't even know were on it. There are sets that will pick it all up and there are ones that won't. This system will—this one will get it. Like these Bose speakers—they've got nine speakers per cabinet and this Sony tape deck is the best one you can get in a portable four-track machine."

Gosdin's Sony machine is just about invaluable to him. "If I'm recording, I bring new material home on reel-to-reel tapes and listen to it," he says. He also uses the machine to rehearse with the basic tracks before putting down his master

vocal. "Before I go in the studio to put down my vocal track, I'll bring the tape home and sing along with it on this Sony machine," he adds. He also has a small, inexpensive Sony cassette machine he takes with him on the road. "I can rehearse with it on the bus while we're going down the road."

Oddly enough, Gosdin does not have a turntable at home. "I stay so busy I don't get much of a chance to listen to records," he explains. "I did have an eight-track player but somebody needed it worse than I did, so I gave it to them." Also, he rarely listens to his own recordings. "After I hear it and I'm satisfied with it, and it's on disc, it's over," he adds. "I try to reach out for new stuff and new ideas. I do go back and listen if I'm going to do a song off an album in my show. Then

I get with my band and learn it."

When Gosdin does listen, he likes to listen to other artists. "I like to hear what they're doing," he adds, "especially what's selling. Waylon Jennings has been my favorite since he started. I also like Don Williams and George Jones. They're my three favorites."

Although his record company furnishes him with copies of his own albums, he has been known to purchase them in stores as well. "I've bought tapes of all my albums," he says. "If somebody wants to listen to my albums, I'll just stop off at a record store and get one."

Gosdin's home equipment meets specific purposes and ever since he listened to his own record at a friend's house, he appreciates quality equipment. ■



Vern Gosdin, who has no turntable at home for playing records, relies heavily on his Sony tape deck.

R.C. BANNON & LOUISE MANDRELL

When R.C. & Louise got Barbara Mandrell's new album they sat down, listened to it and "wore it out."

RC. Bannon and Louise Mandrell are newlyweds, and judging by the looks in their eyes, the music of love still rings clearly in their heads. They met last year at Fan Fair while rehearsing for their record company's (CBS's) show. Bannon is also an accomplished songwriter and Louise, a vocalist in her own right, is the younger sister of Barbara Mandrell.

While they record individually, recently they have also recorded duets together. Their first duet release is entitled *Reunited*. Bannon also wrote Louise's latest single, *I've Never Loved Anyone Like I Love You*.

"We honestly don't listen to music all the time," Bannon says. "We do if we want to learn a song off an album, but when we're at home, listening to music is usually the farthest thing from our minds."

Thus, they do spend time during the day in their business office. The listening room is equipped with two Teac reel-to-reel recorders, a 3300S and an A-3300SX, a Garrard 95-B turntable, a Pioneer SX-850 stereo receiver, a Sanyo RD-5300 cassette deck, and a pair of Realistic Optimus-8 speakers.

Since they have recently started writing songs together, they use the room and machines for making song demos and for duplicating tape copies.

When they do listen to music on the Garrard turntable, it is usually a variety of different styles. "We both really like rhythm and blues," Bannon says. "I love the feel of black music. It's got an earthy feel just like country music has." "The only thing I'm into more than him is disco," adds



Louise and R.C. use two reel-to-reel recorders for reviewing their studio tapes.

Louise. "He wrote my new song, which is country disco."

Louise is a versatile musician in addition to being a singer. She plays bass, fiddle and banjo. "I mostly feature myself as a vocalist on my shows," she says. "But I worked as a musician for so many years behind my sister Barbara. And I worked with Haggard for a while, so it's really hard to just put down the instruments."

As is typical with many recording artists, Bannon and Mandrell do not listen much to

their own music once it is pressed on record. "Now, Barbara's new album—we sat down and listened to it and wore it out!", exclaims Louise. "When I finished my album," Bannon adds, "I listened to it one time—both sides—to see what it sounded like, quality-wise and everything else. Then I put it back in the jacket. It's time to move on, to look at what's ahead."

"Once it's over, it's old news," says Louise. "When we are working on something new,

we'll come right over here from the studio and listen to it on the Teac machines." "We also make cassettes for the band so they can learn it," Bannon adds. "We also do that with songs off different albums."

Louise offers some solid advice about shopping for audio equipment. "It has a lot to do with where you're going to use it and what you're going to use it for. People should buy wisely and put the money in the right places." Now that's some sound advice. ■

FRANK MULL

While there is nothing fancy about Mull's equipment it gets the job done and is very durable.

As an independent record promotion man, Frank Mull has one of the toughest jobs in the business—convincing country radio station program directors to play his clients' records. Since the inception of his own company three and a-half years ago, Mull-Ti-Hits, he has developed a reputation as being one of the best at his profession.

Mull spends countless hours listening to the recorded music of the various artists he represents so that he is familiar with practically every note, enabling him to develop a positive game plan to get the record played on the air.

Mull's list of clients is impressive. He consistently works records by Merle Haggard, Jerry Reed, Freddie Hart, Glen Campbell, and Gail Davies among many others. "On a weekly basis, I work ten records," Mull explains. "You figure two or three of them are brand-new records, two or three of them are about to peak, and then you've got two or three more that are somewhere in the middle. So there are different levels of push. The first time you're pushing the program director to listen to the record, the second step is to get him to give it a shot. Of those ten records I work there's not much competition internally, because they are scattered in various stages of success or failure." Basically, Mull contacts 100 radio stations weekly and logs the progress of the records he's been hired to promote.

Mull's Music Row office is a virtual den of records, tapes, cassettes and stereo equipment. Behind his desk are a Sony STR-6036-A AM/FM receiver and amplifier, a Technics SL-



Mull listens to music while operating his apple II computer.

1950 turntable, a Sony TC-280 reel-to-reel tape recorder, a Sharp RT-1155 stereo cassette deck, and on the opposite wall hang two Klipsch Heresy H-700 speakers.

"My secretary just asked me the other night why I have a reel-to-reel machine, a cassette deck, and a turntable," Mull begins. "Well, a lot of times a producer will bring a tape of something to me as soon as he's finished with it in the studio. He may bring a reel-to-reel copy or he may run me off a cassette. Also, Ray Price called me from Texas recently and asked me to listen to a song off his latest album to see if I would vote for or against it as a single. Sometimes artists want a little reassurance even though they might have already decided."

While there is nothing fancy about Mull's equipment, it gets the job done and apparently must be very durable given the amount it is used. "The Sony receiver and amp is not really a heavy-duty, power-house piece of equipment, but then with the Klipsch speakers, the manufacturer doesn't recommend an amplifier with an excess of 100 watts per channel," he explains. "The speakers each have a woofer, squaker, and

tweeter in them. The Technics turntable is a direct-drive automatic unit."

Mull is also the first country promotion man to use an in-house computer system as a means to increase efficiency and accuracy by storing and organizing the information he gathers. According to Mull, the Apple II computer system he now has operating in his office, "eliminates mechanical obstacles to allow more time to be more creative and effective." Included in the system is a Centronics 3703 printout machine which does weekly reports at the rate of 180 characters per second, and a Sony television which serves as a monitor.

"My main use at this point is for storage and quick recall of information about how my clients' records are doing," he says. "The information discs have listings of the stations we're tracking, the status of the record on each playlist, and space on the display screen for comments. It's cross-referenced too, so I can punch in a radio station's call letters and the display will show how each of my records in doing on that station.

The Apple II unit is allegedly ideal as a small home business system, and it is essentially the

filing system of the future. It can also be used by the hobbyist for personal home use.

The Apple II has precipitated the beginning of a second business for Mull. The new service, called "Central Tracking" involves the tracking of entire playlists of country radio stations. "I can now call a radio station and ask them to give me a comparable list of all the records they're playing," he adds. The service is available on a subscription basis and is intended to reduce telephone bills and hours devoted to tracking. With his computer operation in full swing, Mull can now accomplish in one hour what used to take him 10.

"Calling 100 radio stations is like doing the 100-yard dash," Mull suggests. "But you've not done the report until you've done another 30 yards. The computer makes that last thirty yards easier." It also provides Mull with more time to listen to music, not only for business purposes, but for his own enjoyment as well.

* * *

So there you have it—the opinions on audio equipment by music professional. While Sony, Teac, Technics, and JBL were the most common brands examined here, the choices and combinations are virtually limitless. To build an audio system, a quality turntable, amplifier, and stereo receiver are a must, along with a pair of high fidelity speakers. From this point, components can be purchased to meet specific needs. A quality audio system represents an investment which provides years of musical enjoyment. Compared to the costs of other forms of entertainment, hi-fi equipment is well worth the initial price. ■

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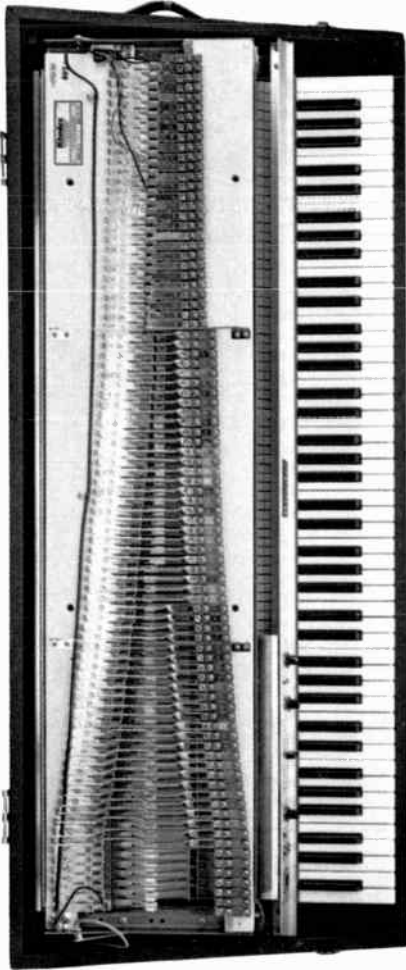
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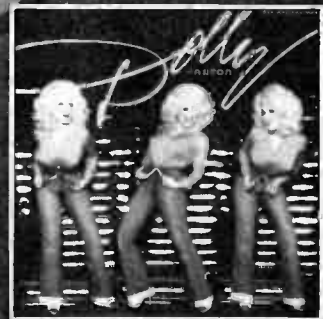
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Records

Emmylou Harris Blue Kentucky Girl

Warner Brothers BSK-3318

Right or wrong, Emmylou Harris has taken some flak in these pages and elsewhere for the unevenness of her previous albums, *Luxury Liner* and *Quarter Moon In A Ten Cent Town*. No one's questioned either her musical direction or Brian Aherne's consistently fine production, but her choice of material. I defy anyone to do that here.

Blue Kentucky Girl is her finest effort since her debut album over four years ago. The cover shows her gussied up like Kitty Wells circa 1956 (or more appropriately Loretta Lynn circa 1963), right down to the embroidered boots and Gibson J-200. It fits the music inside perfectly.

Few of the tunes here are unfamiliar. All have distinguished pedigrees, and the backup compliments them well. Every note has a reason for being there, typical of the Hot Band's no-nonsense style. She tackles, and conquers, Willie's *Sister's Coming Home/Down At The Corner Beer Joint*, aided by Tanya Tucker, Dallas Frazier's *Beneath Still Waters*, Gram



Parsons' *Hickory Wind*. (an emotional tribute to her late friend and benefactor), the rock oldie *Save The Last Dance For Me*, Jean Ritchie's folk classic *Sorrow In The Wind*, Leon Payne's *They'll Never Take His (Her) Love From Me* and Loretta Lynn's 1964 hit *Blue*

Kentucky Girl and *Rough And Rocky*. Rodney Crowell, a Hot Band alumnus, has given her *Even Cowgirls Get The Blues*, in some ways a perfect song to compliment the other material here, which she sings with Dolly and Linda Ronstadt (what ever happened to that LP they were

supposed to cut??).

There's nothing left to say, except that *Blue Kentucky Girl* is beyond criticism. It may be Emmylou's definitive work, not to mention a tough act to follow.

RICH KIENZLE

Conway Twitty Cross Winds

MCA 3086

I somehow believe there will always be another Conway Twitty album, even if the plant that manufactures them gets hit with a flood. If that happened, the discs would simply multiply on their own, like the brooms in the *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. They would then wrap themselves and sit huddled together in boxes until somebody came to pick them up.

One way or another, *Cross Winds* got shipped on schedule, sporting a brand new look. On

the cover, we find fancy art work instead of the usual straight-on photo. Scrawled in splashy strokes is a title that bears no relation to Conway's latest jukebox hit.

The record comes with a new sound also, but its net effect is a bit more subtle. What it amounts to is a compromise, which Conway has undoubtedly approached with great care. (For the first time, he lists himself as co-producer). The differences lie not in his vocal style, but rather in the vocal backup and instrumentation.

Fiddles and steel guitars are virtually eliminated, with



strings and electric keyboards taking their place. *Did We Have to Come This Far (To Say Goodbye)* by Dallas Frazier has all the ingredients of a Twitty standard, but the

final mix is full of bare spots. Little twitchings on an electric guitar just can't match a weeping steel!

In general, the album is well paced and should satisfy the majority of Conway's fans. Fortunately, the string arrangements and background vocals are tastefully restrained. The brightest spot is *Grand Ole Blues*, which may be the best mixture of the Nashville and Memphis sounds ever captured on record. In all fairness, part of the credit for that must go to one of its writers . . . uh, Billy Sherrill!

BILL OAKEY

Delbert McClinton Keeper Of The Flame

Capricorn CPN-0223

There ought to be a law. Delbert McClinton keeps knocking out these fantastic albums, he appears on *Austin City Limits* and *Saturday Night Live*, exposure lesser talents would kill for, and do you think he's selling records? Hell, no. Worse yet, Delbert has the sort of appeal that

crosses musical boundaries. His original tunes are imbued with just the right sense of honky-tonk madness, a fact Emmylou Harris, who successfully recorded his *Two More Bottles Of Wine*, can attest to. And his R & B roots are strong enough to snare fans of Otis Redding [or the Blues Brothers]. But he still hasn't hit the top.

Back when he was recording for ABC, he recorded *Genuine Cowhide*, a compendium of

rock and R & B oldies, along with a couple originals. *Keeper Of The Flame* runs along the same lines. Producer Johnny Sandlin (who played bass on Delbert's *Saturday Night* appearance) has done a fine job and the band, in the best tradition of the Mar-Keys and other Southern soul bands, is tight and well-focused.

He tears through Randall Bramblett's *Plain Ol' Makin' Love*, Tim Henson's *Shot From The Saddle* [one of the more violent love songs around today] and does justice to his old partner Glen Clark's *I Don't Want To Hear It Any-more*. But he really breaks

loose on the oldies: Chuck Berry's *I'm Talking About You*, *A Mess Of Blues*, Elvis's 1960 hit along with *Seesaw* and *Have Mercy*, midsixties Memphis R & B hits written by Don Covay himself an underrated performer. He falters only once, ironically, with his overblown, five minute version of *Two More Bottles* which tries—and fails—to surpass his original.

Still, it's a shame more people aren't hearing Delbert. He needs (and deserves) an audience of more than critics. But as long as he keeps cutting albums like this, I'll keep listening. RICK KIENZLE



Lee Clayton Naked Child

Capitol ST 11942

Lee Clayton's first album, produced in 1973 by Chip Young, generally was considered to be ahead of its time, offering an early definition of what later was dubbed "progressive country." Whether or not there ever was such a thing is still uncertain. Nevertheless, Clayton, an ex-jet pilot, did write *Ladies Love Outlaws*, which as much as anything else, helped to create a new image for country music.

Following the release of his album, Clayton disappeared from the Nashville scene, resurfacing from the desert some years later with a wolf-dog named Elvis Firewolf. Last year Clayton recorded his second album, which was produced by Neil Wilburn, featuring a little more volume on the electric guitars and some more outstanding songs and lyrics.

Clayton is a masterful lyricist, and his third album, *Naked Child* is no less a creative effort than his past work. Like Van Gogh, Clayton paints vivid images in the mind, pouring his emotions out in verse. Whether it be in the starkly desolate *I Ride Alone*, the prophetic *10,000 Years/Sexual Moon*, or the self-anthem *If I Can Do It (So Can You)*, Clayton leaves no emotional doubts.

This album is even more rock-oriented than the last, with side one exclusively featuring the searing guitar work of Phillip Donnelly... perhaps a little too extensively. Also, Clayton's vocals occasionally are a bit too far down in the mix to do total justice to his lyrics. *A Little Cocaine* is the most country-sounding cut on the album, but I doubt seriously it will get any country airplay. In fact, Capitol, his record company, did not service the album to country radio stations. That's understandable, given the state of country radio and the overall content of this album.

Still, I think Clayton does touch the inner spirit of country music, even though he has come quite a musical distance since his first album. Country music may not need any more Lee Claytons, but it damned sure needs one. KELLY DELANEY



Jeannie C. Riley Wings To Fly

Gross Country R-3529

For Jeannie C. Riley, it's been a long road out of Harper Valley, and the trip hasn't been easy. But after some casting about, she seems

all positive. But it is a pleasure to hear this album. Jeannie feels for the material and delivers it with simplicity and skill. There is no attempt to hide the nasal twang in her voice, and none of the pretentiousness that you find in much of Nashville's output these days. Jeannie is country, and proud of it. More power to her.

A high point of the album is a very good rendition of Earl Montgomery's *One of These Days*. Another is *Reach Out*, one of four in this collection which Jeannie wrote herself.

One small flaw: a slight tendency toward overproduction. The accompaniments often are chopped up with too many pauses. Jeannie's voice is at its best when melody and background flow together smoothly without gimmicks and fanciness. Still, this album remains a fine example of honest music honestly delivered with a lot of feeling.

ART MAHER



to have settled comfortably on gospel and inspiration songs.

Having cut my eye teeth on Hank Williams' songs of torment and unrequited love, I often find it hard to relate to songs in which the message is

The Original Texas Playboys Original Texas Playboys Capitol ST-11917

I didn't think I'd ever be writing this review, for CMA award aside, I've had doubts about the Original Texas Playboys since their first album. First, the name isn't really accurate (only five of the eight musicians actually played with Bob Wills). Second, their musicianship has often been as predictable as the old Playboys was adventurous, especially on the chaotic *Live 'N Kickin'* LP of last year. Third, Leon McAuliffe's leadership has given them a sound closer to his old band, the Cimarron Boys. All of these points have been argued over in Texas and Oklahoma for the past couple years.

But like I said, I'm surprising myself, for **Original Texas Playboys** is a 180 degree turnaround. They sound more comfortable in the studio, and their music is far more cohesive than before. New producers Dave Cavanaugh and Vince Cosgrave seem to have given them a spark they lacked before, as well as a new sense of direction.



It's most obvious in the material itself. This time, there are only three Wills standards: *Blue Bonnet Rag*, a McAuliffe steel showcase that equals the 1940 original, the hot *Big Beaver* and *Silver Bells*. The rest are brilliant adaptations of contemporary material like Billy Joe Shaver's *Played The*

Game Too Long, *Walkin' On New Grass* (Kenny Price's 1966 hit), *That's My Home* and *Blues So Bad*, by Levon Helm and a spine-chilling version of Charlie Daniels' *It's My Life*, which features the finest Leon Rausch vocal performance ever recorded. Adapting new songs to Western swing was something Wills himself excelled at, and I think he'd be proud of these.

The Wills spirit mightn't have been around before, but it's back now; that's why **Original Texas Playboys** has made a believer out of me.

RICH KIENZLE

Dottsy Tryin' To Satisfy You

RCA AHL1 3380

Dottsy is a pleasant, agreeable young lady with a

pleasant, agreeable voice with hints of a warmth and depth to come as she matures. For these reasons **Tryin' To Satisfy You** is a pleasant, agreeable album, but unfortunately it is no more

than that.

At this stage in her young career, Dottsy's voice is a bit bland; to compensate, either the production or the material must be very special in some arresting way. Here the production neither helps nor hinders; it is simply there, while the material is, sad to say, pretty forgettable. The highlights of the lp come on the two best songs, *Tryin' To Satisfy You* and *(After Sweet Memories) Play Born To Lose Again*, two pieces of material so strong it would have taken sincere effort to botch them up. Here they are presented nicely.

One suspects Dottsy has the ability to put out a really marvelous, exciting album. I hope it happens. Maybe next

time.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Razy Bailey If Love Had a Face

RCA AHL1-3391

A newcomer on the contemporary country scene, Razy Bailey from Alabama is seeking to put a face on his hit singles, all of which have scored high on the charts. Like many first albums, this one attempts to showcase the singles (in this case back to back), and then further assert the artist's competence with a batch of unrelated material. Two of these are self-penned compositions: *Natural Love*, and *Is It Over*.

While in his mellow vein, Bailey delivers a style that is made to order for today's soft country radio markets. He's in the right place at the right time with smooth numbers like *Tonight She's Gonna Love Me* and *What Time Do You Have to Be Back to Heaven*. But when three songs of that type—all with similar arrangements—are thrown together, the result is an overdose of blandness.



The rest of the album can't be faulted for lack of variety. Moods and tempos shift quite a bit, especially on side two. Yet, somehow there is a distance between artist and listener, caused in part by the hypnotic repetition of one percussion lick on several tracks. Only on *Love Coming Down* was I convinced that he is capable of wringing every ounce of feeling from the lyrics of a ballad. Another place where he breaks out of the mold and takes control is on *Your Old Love Letters*, a jumpy tune with an interesting beat. If he'll put across a few more like those, the name Razy Bailey may begin to stick.

BILL OAKLEY



David Allan Coe Spectrum VII

Columbia KC 35789

Apparently David Allan Coe is no longer the "Mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy." Judging by the album cover of his latest effort, *Spectrum VII*, he has now become the "Revealing Earringed Pirate," replete with all the garb of a modern day Blackbeard.



Whether he's a cowboy, biker, ex-con, or pirate, David Allan is definitely one talented singer. This album verifies two of Coe's admirable side characteristics—his senses of theatre and humor. He misses sometimes, but for certain, David Allan is out there everyday getting his uniform dirty, trying some pretty outrageous stuff.

Produced by Billy Sherrill, the album features the David Allan Coe Band. Although the musicianship is not as polished as the stereotyped Nashville sound, the band does have a feel for the songs which aids in making this a credible recording. Side one, the "Land Side"—is basic Coe. He tells what's happened to him since the last time he checked into the studio. Since then, he tells us, he's been *Rolling With The Punches* and *On My Feet Again*. The first song is dedicated to Bob Dylan (David Allan is big on dedications, and any man who can write and record a song called *Waylon, Willie And Me* can easily dedicate a song to Bob). The second song is dedicated to Dr. Martin Scheid who allegedly saved Coe's life when his appendix burst in Houston. Whether he's being egotistical

or humble, Coe has never let ego stand in the way of self-expression.

Side two, the "Ocean Side"—represents the transition to the sea. The highlight of this side is *Seven Mile Bridge*, a beautifully crafted song of regeneration. This is one of his best offerings to date. *Fairytale Morning* is a delicate, enchanting ballad of love near the sea. Probably no one else but Coe (unless it's Jimmy Buffet) could entitle a song, *Love Is Just A Porpoise (Playing In The Tropical Sun)* and pull it off. The strangeness of this image become crystal clear in the deep waters of the song.

Some critics have tagged their opinions of Coe by saying—if he could only learn to channel his creative energies. After listening to this album, I say, thank goodness, he

doesn't. David Allan needs to sail free, letting his own creative winds fill his sails, carrying him wherever it may lead.

KELLY DELANEY

Ray Stevens The Feeling's Not Right Again

Warner Brothers BSK 3332

Throughout the Sixties, Ray Stevens forged a career in musical comedy, sometimes going for the cheap gag (*Ahab the Arab, Gitarzan*) and other times making sly social commentary (*Mr. Businessman*). But when *Everything is Beautiful*, with tongue to be found nowhere near the cheek, went to Number One in 1970, Stevens realized that country and MOR audiences prefer sen-

timent to sarcasm and went legit. Not strictly, of course. He is, thankfully, not above seizing upon a fad to poke musical fun at (*The Streak* became his second Number One hit in 1974). So just when we thought that disco had swallowed up what was left of the popular novelty song, Ray Stevens comes up with *I Need Your Help Barry Manilow*, a subtly hilarious indictment of Manilow's middle-aged legions. One can just picture Manilow's droopy eyes as Stevens croons "No one knows how to suffer quite like you" and a priceless climax is reached as the strings swell up to the refrain "I wish I didn't have to feel . . . (drum roll) . . . so yucky!"

Unfortunately, the rest of *The Feeling's Not Right Again* emulates, rather than ridicules, Manilow's sticky sentimental-

BURIED TREASURES

by RICH KIENZLE

Back in the early fifties, when country singers almost always recorded with an electric band, Jimmy Murphy recorded with his own guitar and a couple other acoustic instruments. Not surprisingly, this primitive approach didn't help his record sales much, and he fell quickly into obscurity. After some years as a brick mason, he's back with *Electricity* (Sugar Hill 3072), one of the most exciting acoustic, non-bluegrass LPs in years. Backed by his own 12-string guitar, Murphy, along with top pickers like Ricky Skaggs and Jerry Douglas recreates early recordings like the gospel *Electricity* and the semi-satirical *Mother, Where Is Your Daughter Tonight* along with ten more country, gospel and blues numbers.

Floyd and Lloyd, the Armstrong Twins, were one of the more obscure mandolin-guitar vocal duets of the forties. Much of their work was done on those highpowered Mexican border radio stations. *Hillbilly Mandolin* (Old Timey 118), taken from their late forties discs, shows them a more interesting

and eclectic duo than even the venerable Louvin Brothers. They reworked the Delmore Brothers' hit *Hillbilly Boogie* into their own *Mandolin Boogie* and borrowed material from other performers like Bob Wills and Clyde Moody, giving the songs lively, spirited performances. Though little is known about the duo, Old Timey proprietor Chris Strachwitz hears they're still alive and performing, and is planning to track them down.

West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd has gained renown for his fiddling and his debut LP *Mountain Fiddler* (County 769) shows he handles the bow quite well on *Will The Circle Be Unbroken* (which he recently sang on the Opry) along with 10 fiddle standards.

Another great LP for fans of the Western swing-fiddle style is *Hot Swing Fiddle Classics* (Folklyric 9025). Though this isn't a Western album, the wild jazz fiddle of the great Stuff Smith, Texan Emilio Caceres and Denmark's Svend Asmussen, all recorded from 1936 to 1943, show many of the roots

of people like Johnny Gimble and Buddy Spicher.

Speaking of Western swing, if you've felt some of the Bob Wills tribute LPs have missed the mark musically, Johnnie Lee Wills' *Reunion* (Flying Fish 069) is the answer. Bob's younger brother leads Gimble, Eldon Shamblin, Joe Holley and other ex-Playboys well-known and obscure along with veterans of his own group on Playboy favorites like *South* and *Rosetta* as well as Johnnie Lee classics *Milk Cow Blues* and *Rag Mop*. The feel is as adventurous and exciting as the thirties and forties (some of these guys play better than back then). It's the best new swing LP since Merle Haggard's 1970 Wills tribute, and Jim Halsey deserves special credit for making it happen.

Back in 1970, one LP set the stage for today's progressive bluegrass music. It featured ex-Bill Monroe sidemen Richard Greene, banjoist Bill Keith and vocalist Pete Rowan along with the late guitar legend Clarence White and mandolinist Dave Grisman playing some original

ty and leaves Stevens guilty of calling the kettle black. If the theme of *Barry Manilow* is carried over to the rest of the album, it is only in so far as Stevens ends up the champion of the very folks he mocks in the song. Against a backdrop of pop schmaltz so lightweight it practically floats, Stevens speaks to the balding, beer-bellied, hair-curlered silent majority; he is the musical voice of the middle aged.

Not that there isn't a little something here for everyone. Stevens' melodies may be a little on the bland side, but you'd think each one was a gem by the care he takes in arranging and producing them (which he does in his own Nashville studios). In the plaintive title song, understated horns and strings bear witness to a man who, left unsatisfied by one-



night stands, complains that "making love don't make a lover into a friend." Similarly, *Get Crazy With Me* describes a Walter Mitty character who is tired of "waiting for lightning to strike," and *Daydream Romance* depicts a gent who finds that escape is as near as his own imagination. In the hands of a more commanding singer, the latter song could make a perfectly wistful, lazy summer single.

Stevens has always had a knack for spotting trends, so it is not surprising to find a cut entitled *Be Your Own Best Friend*, named after the popular self-help book. As cloying as the idea of such amateur psychologizing may be, Stevens manages not to embarrass himself. Both *Best Friend* and the irresistible *Feel the Music* are so sincere in their advice,

which is that we should all be masters of our own destinies, that it is difficult not to take them to heart. More easily dismissed are *Comeback*, a mildly funky song with analogies that would make a High School English teacher cringe, and *Om*, spiritual mumbo-jumbo that no amount of sincerity could save. I think Ray missed the boat on *that* craze.

Stevens has never been given the credit he deserves for being a fine tunesmith and pop craftsman, but that is to be expected when your name has been associated with such delightful trash as *Harry the Hairy Ape* and *Bridget the Midget*. Unfortunately, Stevens seems unwilling to accept the role of musical comedian and satirist; he'd rather switch places with Barry Manilow any day. Too bad.

GARY KENTON

and Monroe classics in a way that paid respect to tradition, but looked ahead as well. Long out of print, that album, *Muleskinner* (Ridge Runner 0016) has been reissued, under license from Warner Brothers, by Slim Richey's bluegrass label.

Vernon Oxford, America's country singer, may no longer record for RCA, but Rounder Records has compiled a number of his RCA singles issued overseas to create *If I Had My Wife To Love Over* (Rounder 0091), honky-tonk at its purest.

Domestic Hank Williams, Sr. reissues have been dismal of late, spoiled by an abomination known as "reprocessed stereo" that ruins the original mono sound. That makes *40 Greatest Hits* (British MGM 2683 071), with fine notes and pure mono, all the more attractive.

The swing fiddle LP and Hank Williams LP are available, for \$5.99 and \$13.50 respectively, plus \$2.00 postage, from the Down Home Music Co., 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, California 94530.

Merle Haggard "Serving 190 Proof"

MCA MCA 3089

As a recording artist, Merle Haggard can pretty much do what he wants. Only someone with such immense talent as Haggard's could successfully record an entire album of train songs, as well as albums dedicated to the music of Elvis Presley and Jimmie Rodgers. Haggard has few peers as either a singer or writer. There are a few who are as good, but there's

nobody better.

His new release, *Serving 190 Proof* demonstrates that Haggard still records what he wants in his own inimitable style. He is still singing about the same subjects he's chosen in the past—lost love, drifting, drinking too much, and working too hard. Yet, his treatment of the same topics is always refreshing. As the old joke goes—"Merle Haggard could sing the yellow pages and have a hit on it." Fortunately, he doesn't resort to such hyperbole on this

album.

"Hag" wrote nine of the songs on this LP, including *Roses In The Winter* which is destined to become a Haggard classic. It is as moving as anything he has ever recorded. For the most part, this is a solid album with other outstanding new Haggard-penned tunes, including, *Footlights*, a well-worn theme dressed in new imagery; *Driftwood*, simplistic, acoustic, with unassuming, self-scrutinizing lyrics; *I Can't Get Away*, bluesy, marked with the urgency of Haggard's vocal; and *Sing A Family Song*, a relative to *Daddy Frank* which still manages to hold its own. By comparison, the hit single off the album, *Red Bandana* is not the strongest cut. Of the two songs Hag didn't write, Red Lane's *I Must Have Done Something Bad*, could be another hit, due to Haggard's superb interpretation.

The musicianship and production of this album is



reserved yet tasty, mixed with Haggard's resonant voice. His voice is indeed an instrument, and it is to somebody's credit, presumably his longtime friend and producer, Fuzzy Owen, that it is recorded as such. Assisting on production chores for this album was Jimmy Bowen.

While most lps usually contain 10 songs, this one includes 11, which should be a welcome bonus to the Haggard fan. While the album does have its less spectacular moments, it still contains enough of Haggard at his best to live up to its title—Merle Haggard is still serving *190 proof* music.

KELLY DELANEY

Records

Tom T. Hall Saturday Morning Songs RCA AHL1-3362

Plenty of good writers have contemplated writing stories or songs for children. It takes a special knack to supplant adult themes with the world of wonder and fantasy encountered by little kids. Whatever it takes, Tom T.'s got it. This is his second set of such material, the first being *Songs of Fox Hollow*.

Saturday Morning Songs, the title cut, is a reminder of the time when school was the



biggest thing to worry about during the week. And every child who has thought about being an animal that can swim or fly should listen to *That's Why You Have to Be You*. *Pisty* is the story of a dog that gets bumped out of the song near the end, so that a real pet's name can be put in her place.

The second side is a happy, whimsical look at the seasonal holidays—Easter, Halloween,

Thanksgiving, Christmas—and a birthday song. Clever sound effects and skip-along tunes help bring these fun days to life. But it's Tom T.'s warmth and wit that will make the kids want to adopt him as their own Storyteller.

According to the cover, this album is for children of all ages. I don't see why that couldn't include Moms and Dads too. If, on some lazy Saturday morning, you should want to avoid a real barking dog and the rattling of toys, try sending the kids to the other end of the house with this record and free coloring book. It might just do the trick.

BILL OAKLEY

Johnny Rodriguez Rodriguez

Epic KE 36014

Johnny Rodriguez appears to be entering the third stage of his musical career. The development phase involved his discovery (by Tom T. Hall and Bobby Bare), the crucial decision to stick with his Chicano name, and his signing to Mercury Records. The fame and fortune phase spanned seven years and the recording of twelve albums for Mercury, from which were culled an astounding eleven consecutive Number One country hits. With his first album for Epic, simply entitled *Rodriguez*, he now enters phase three. Combining his own considerable ex-

perience with the homogeneous, glossy production of Billy Sherrill, Rodriguez now resembles a veteran baseball player: he is likely to get just as many hits but will make fewer errors in the process.

There is little question that the Sherrill/Rodriguez pairing will be a prosperous one. The country music audience is nothing if not loyal, sometimes to a fault, and



Sherrill has wasted no time in pinpointing Rodriguez' appeal, *Down on the Rio Grande*, Rodriguez' first single for Epic, addressed itself adroitly to the various sources of that appeal, making a quick path to the top of the country charts. There are any number of likely followup tracks on *Rodriguez* that could do likewise.

No fewer than half of the album's ten songs are concerned with lost love, not surprising in view of the fact that many of them were written as Rodriguez was extricating himself from a failed marriage. Ex-

cluding *Down on the Rio Grande*, all four cuts on side one are on the melancholy side, with Rodriguez making little attempt to conceal their autobiographical nature. The best of these is *Don't Be Afraid to Say Goodbye*, where a Duane Eddy-type guitar twangs deeply in the background as Rodriguez tries to accept the inevitable: "If things don't work out/Don't worry/Don't be afraid to say goodbye." But on *When the Honeymoon Ends* and *Fools for Each Other*, both ballads, realization sets in, leaving him full of recrimination and self-doubt. The side closes on a slightly less sentimental note, as he is able to take a more philosophic outlook on *Driftin' Away*.

Side two begins just as side one does, with mariachi horns intoning *Mexico Holiday*. This could make a follow-up to *Rio Grande* were it not so calculatedly similar (it was written by Bill Boling, who also co-wrote *Rio Gande*). *Paid Vacation* allows Rodriguez to vent considerable bitterness at the alimony which has put his wife on 'paid vacation.' But he diversifies with the rocking, semi-autobiographical *Street Walker* and the gospel-tinged *Hand on My Shoulder*, the latter of which seems to end far too quickly. As the album closes with *Give My Life a Second Look*, Rodriguez is finally resigned to life alone, accepting responsibility for his fate.

If the emotional impact of *Rodriguez* is in any way diminished, it is by the as-yet-uneasy collaboration between artist and producer. Sherrill is too much the pro to let any seams show, of course, but his lush strings and other sweeteners are sometimes too much for Rodriguez' understated vocals. Some of the excess embroidery tends to detract from the direct communication of emotion, rather than enhance it. But *Rodriguez* is the work of a confident artist and there is every indication that the third phase of Johnny Rodriguez' career could be his most fruitful.

GARY KENTON

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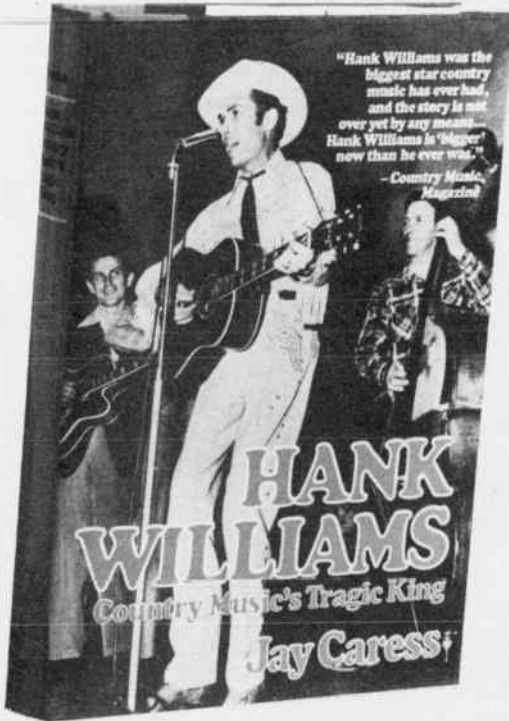
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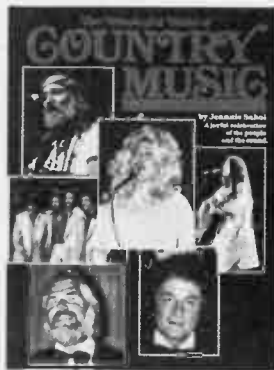
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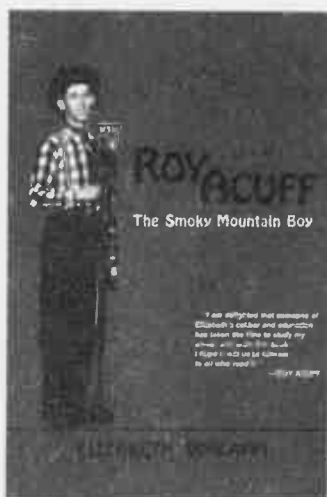
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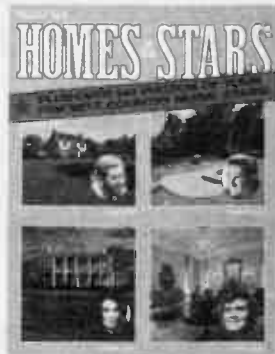
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Now that he's got his career back on the tracks, with a new record label, new management company and new album, Johnny Rodriguez is in control of his life again.

by **BOB ALLEN**

Rodriguez Rides Again

The party has already started for most of the folks on the Jumbo jet that is taking me from the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport to Las Vegas. The plane is full of what appear to be young executives and their wives—golf-tan salesmen and businessmen who have shed their three-piece suits for sports clothes and tennis shoes and a wild weekend in Vegas. They are playing cards, gulping their Bloody Mary's, yelling at each other, scrambling up and down the wide aisles, and cattle-calling for the Stewardesses to keep the drinks coming just as fast as they can, thank you.

For country artists, Las Vegas is, (as Johnny R. himself would probably put it) "a good job." The pay is great and the work is easy: you are usually required to play no more than two 45-minute sets a night to very undemanding audiences; you usually work and sleep in the same hotel, since, as part of the deal, you are generally provided with one of the best suites in the house; the weather, for much of the year, is swimming-pool warm, and you have lots of free time for that, or any of the other more worldly enticements that this desert city has to offer.

It's not surprising then, that as the taxi takes me down Vegas's main drag, past Caesar's Palace and the other huge gambling houses that I notice that Rodriguez's name is only one of at least a half a dozen top country artists on the huge, gaudy hotel-front marquees.

It's late in the evening, between shows on this, the last night of his two-and-a-half week engagement at the Silverbird Casino/Hotel, before Johnny and I finally cross paths. He and his band have commandeered one of the hotel's most elegant suites, and from the looks of things, they are winding down from what has been a two-and-a-half-week movable feast. There are several cases of Coors cooling in the refrigerator, and remnants of room-service meals, empty beer cans and Perrier bottles are everywhere. Standing in one corner is Johnny's own souvenir poster from the engagement. And of course, there are girls . . . a fair number of them. Rather than

any sort of vision of jet-set decadence though, the scene looks more like a bunch of college guys who've been out on the town for a week-end, having a *real* good time.

But beneath the revelry, there still exists a certain sort of precision. Somebody is always keeping an eye on the clock; and Johnny and the band know exactly when to change clothes, head across the courtyard, past the pool, through the casino, down a long corridor to the ballroom's backstage dressing room, to tune their instruments and prepare for the next show.

It is under the dim, yet unrelenting lights of the dressing room that their restlessness from nearly three weeks in this gilded cage begins to show, though. They sip beers and pace restlessly, and any attempts at serious conversation quickly degenerate.

Opening the show for Johnny are Jody Miller and George ("Goober") Lindsey. Lindsey, as always, is in rare form. (The rapport between Johnny and him over these couple weeks has become so warm and spontaneously humorous that Johnny can't even *look* at Goober anymore without disintegrating into fits of laughter. Since it is the last night, he and the band have secretly conspired to steal the huge ceramic fishhook that adorns the casino's pool, and use it to "hook" Goober off the stage at the end of his set; but at the last minute, they have second thoughts about the scheme.) His humor is quick, and often x-rated. ("I know an 'ole boy, he's so slow . . . he thinks Preparation-H is a *mind*-expanding drug!") And no matter how many dozens of times he's run through his routine, it still sounds fresh and side-splitting. At the end of this part of the show, the lights go down, the band cranks out some nostalgic-type music, and he launches into what appears to be a sincere, heart-felt reminiscence about his long, rewarding years of playing "Goober" on the Andy Griffith TV series. ". . . And you know what I liked about it the most," he tells his audience as his eyes appear to fill with mist . . . "It made ole Goober A RICH MAN!! . . . Thank you, ladies and

gentlemen. . . . Now here's JOHNNY RODRIGUEZ!"

With the audience properly limbered up, Johnny bounds on stage for his second 45-minute set of the evening. The audience here, mind you, are not the most excitable bunch you're likely to find. They're mainly here to gamble, drink and get crazy, and many of them have merely stumbled into the show as an afterthought, and as a brief respite from the clatter and tension of the gaming tables. Still, Johnny and his band run energetically through their set, just as they have twice a night, for about the last 20 nights. They run through a medley of his early hits with the same sort of subdued enthusiasm as they do Jackson Browne's *Take It Easy*. Like other younger artists—Gary Stewart and Con Hunley are two others that come to mind—Johnny seems to have been brought up on as much rock as he was country. (Two of his currently favorite albums are Bob Seeger's *Darkness On The Edge of Town* and Johnny Gimble's LP tribute to Bob Wills.) He fills his show out with standards like *Release Me* and *You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'*, as well as a healthy collection of his own hit records, including his first Columbia single, *Down On The Rio Grande*, which Johnny himself co-wrote. He also fills in now and then with some rather capable lead guitar work.

Onstage, Johnny seems to be rather intently involved in his music. He is not, particularly, an entertainer. Though he does generate a good deal of excitement, particularly among the women in the audience, it is obviously not something he strives for. While artists of considerably less musical talent—I could name names here, but I won't—openly compensate by playing for this kind of crowd reaction with mediocre Elvis Presley stage moves, coy tosses of their blow-dried hair, and theatrical make-out sessions with girls in the front row, Johnny sticks right to his music, moves only sparingly around the stage and says little. Whatever sexual excitement he does generate among his female admirers—and evidently, there's



quite a lot of it—is seemingly done on an instinctual level.

Onstage, he looks as he does in person. His body is slender, yet muscular and compact. (He's got a black belt in karate, and works out at it regularly.) His face is creased with dark, handsome features. Under the stage lights, his eyes glint and his feral movements give him a sort of youthful street-wise intensity. He is, quite possibly, the closest thing that country music has to Mick Jagger. "I'm sort of shy," he tells me later. "But on stage is a different thing. That's when I feel safest. I guess that's probably my favorite place, really. Everywhere else, I just kinda stay clear and don't get too involved." When

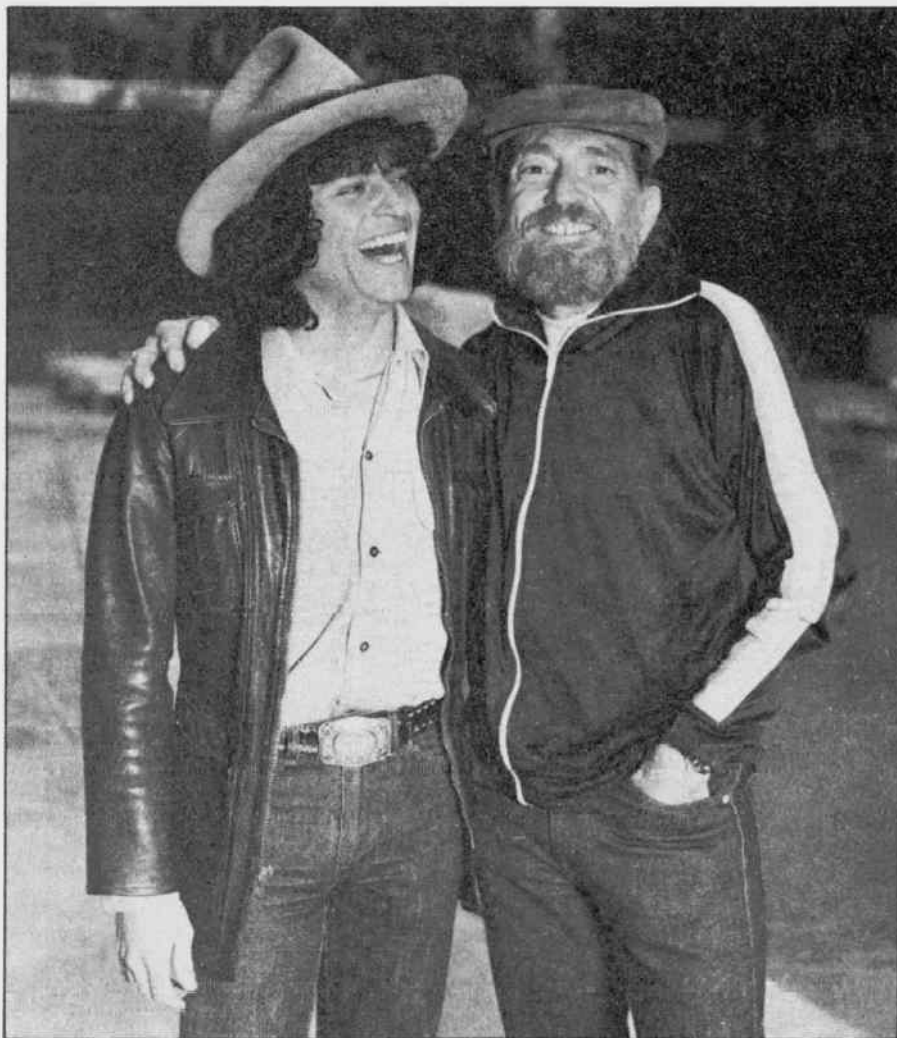
asked about the sex symbol thing, he laughs wearily and sighs. "That's as funny as hell, man, I mean I don't think of myself that way at all. I think it's funny. I mean, girls still come up to the stage and do all that crazy stuff. . . ." He shakes his head with consternation and laughs again. "It must be the songs! That's it! . . . It must be the material! . . ."

After the last show, the Casino throws a party for Johnny in one of the large rooms in the labyrinth of the backstage area; it is complete with gallons of champagne and a huge cake. Johnny and I talk briefly, and trade a few jokes, but attempts at serious conversation are futile. We're still in different time zones. It's about 1:00 a.m.;

I've been up since 5:00, the previous morning, and Johnny's only been up since about 6:00 p.m. and he's facing a long bus ride back to Nashville in a few hours.

So instead, we meet a couple of weeks later, back in Tennessee at his large suite of offices in Brentwood, an exclusive Nashville suburb. The offices are situated just across the street from Waylon Jennings' house and the large house where Johnny used to live, which his wife now owns as part of their recent divorce settlement. Home for Johnny is now a farm which he owns, somewhat further out in the country.

Johnny R. arrives with his ex-wife Linda and by appearances, he seems to still be on



a Las Vegas time schedule. It's late afternoon, but he hasn't been up for long. He apologizes for the hurriedness of our last meeting in Vegas. "I didn't get any sleep at all, the last two nights I was out there," he explains with a sheepish grin. "I was runnin' around, doin' everything. You don't wanta go to sleep. You're afraid you'll miss something, you know."

John leans back in an easy chair near the large office windows and he begins talking with the somewhat guarded tone of one who is not particularly fond of being interviewed. But as he loosens up some, he proves to be friendly, open, and unaffected. He also has a healthy, winning sense of humor that allows him to keep everything in perspective; he laughs at everything from time to time—even himself. Before long, anyone who's around him, has to laugh too.

The Johnny Rodriguez of late, it seems, has turned over a new leaf. After a several-year-long "lost" period, during which his career sagged, his music suffered, he changed booking agents numerous times, and was beset by personal problems, including a troublesome divorce, he seems to have his life back on the tracks again. Now he's got a new record label—CBS, a new management company—the Jim Halsey

Company, a new album—Rodriguez, on which he wrote or co-wrote most of the songs, and a new outlook on life.

"Between Bill Boling (his roommate at the farm and his co-writer) and me, we wrote the whole album," he explains. Billy (Sherrill, the producer) was just kind of tryin' to figure out where my head was at and get a feel for what I do. He doesn't hardly ever come out in the studio. He just stays in the control room the whole time. It's great that way, man, because everything just kind of falls together. And the musicians complemented it very well . . . the best I've ever heard. That's what I wanted, because all I wanted was just the music as it was, instead of changin' the chords or doin' anything else . . . because I don't know very many chords anyway!" he laughs loudly.

In addition to his enthusiasm for his new album, Johnny's peace of mind has undoubtedly also been influenced by the fact that he's reached an amicable accord with his ex-wife Linda. Though their differences had been a source of bitterness in the past, they are now, in many ways, actually getting along better than they were when they were married. "We're still friends. . . . She's with me right now, in fact," he laughs shyly. "We're great friends.

"I may get married again sometime," he adds, but not anytime when I'm so busy. Because one of the reasons that we broke up when we did was I didn't think it fair, I'd be out there runnin' around and gone all the time. I just didn't feel right. But now, we hang out together, do things together, and it feels better, because you don't *have* to do nothin'. You don't have to. And that means a lot to me, and to her, I know it does. That way, you don't have to hold each other back. That way, hell, if she wants to stay, she'll stay, (laughs softly), and if not, then she won't. And the same with me. It works pretty well both ways.

"We were married for two and a half years," he adds. "It was rough for awhile when we first realized it wasn't going to work. But the rough part was when I was gone and I missed her, and then going through the divorce. But then after it was over, and we were away from each other awhile, and she was back with her family, we'd get to talking on the phone and we finally started . . . *communicating* again. And after a while, it finally worked back out. And now, I don't think we'd have it any other way."

* * *

The pressures of success descended upon the shoulders of John Raoul Davis Rodriguez at a very early age. He admits that he's made a few mistakes in the course of his eight-year-long career, and that his recent divorce was only one of the rough spots in his life that he's had to contend with. Still, at age 27, he can actually afford to make a few more. And when you consider the young, tender and impressionable age at which he first entered Nashville's music industry and experienced virtual overnight success (It's a cliched term, but in Johnny R's case, it's entirely accurate)—20 years old—it's actually surprising that fame didn't leave even deeper tread-marks on his soul. After all, he's in a business in which a lot of older men have practically been eaten alive.

And for sure, there must have been a degree of culture shock involved as well. Rodriguez was born in December, 1951, in Sabinal, Texas (pop. 1,800), which is about 90 miles from the Mexican border. The son of a welder and one of nine children, he grew up in something more than poverty, but something less than affluence. Street violence and crime were facts of life in his home neighborhood, but when he entered the Anglo-middle class world of the public school system, he seemed to make the cultural transition with relative ease. Though he'd been in jail for minor skirmishes with the law four times before his eighteenth birthday, he was also earning A's and B's in school and was captain of the football team.

One memorable event from Johnny's early adolescence was when his older brothers decided it was time for their 13-

(Continued on page 81)

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When Dick Clark wanted Ronnie to record the soundtrack of *Elvis*,
Ronnie went into hiding.

Ronnie McDowell: Not Just Another Elvis Imitator?

by KIP KIRBY

"Did you hear what Johnny Carson said the other night on TV?" says Ronnie McDowell, with a soft appreciative chuckle. "He said he was thinkin' of leaving the *Tonight Show* so he can become an Elvis imitator 'cause there just aren't enough of them around!"

McDowell's humor about a sensitive subject is a relief valve that he has only recently begun to feel comfortable using, now that he is securely moving away from the Elvis stigma that plagued him during the first year and a half of his career. He makes a real effort to remain relaxed when he discusses that period in his life, but there is a genuine touch of helpless anger that comes through when he talks about what he calls "the Elvis thing."

McDowell's recording career was inextricably caught up in the label "Elvis imitator" since he first burst onto the music scene in August 1977 with *The King Is Gone*. Even being tagged the *best* of the Elvis imitators did nothing to make the situation any easier for Ronnie: every time he set foot on stage, every time he walked into a recording studio, he was constantly being told by those around him to sound "more like Elvis."

"I was losing my own identity," he recalls slowly. "I wanted to sound like myself, like Ronnie McDowell, but everyone else wanted to hear another Elvis. I felt like I was beatin' a dead horse. I knew I had to get away from it or it would destroy my career."

Sounding like Elvis was the farthest thing from Ronnie's mind when his career began. He grew up in a small town about 30 miles outside Nashville. One of his favorite childhood pastimes was standing in front of a record player, listening to records and singing along with the artists. Like almost everyone else growing up in the late '50s, McDowell idolized Elvis. Unlike everyone else, however, he seemed to have an instinctive and uncanny ability to sound exactly like Elvis when he sang.

McDowell joined the navy in 1968 for a tour of duty that sent him halfway across the globe from Alaska to Viet Nam. His very first public performance ever, he says,



was in front of 3,000 sailors aboard the U.S.S. Hancock and "I was scared to death!" He included a few of his vocal impressions, and not surprisingly, when he launched into his Presley medley, he brought the house down. From then on, for the fun of it, Ronnie would make a point to do a few of his "sound-alikes" in his shows, but it was his Elvis renditions that always got the strongest crowd reaction.

When his navy career ended, McDowell headed south again to Nashville where he patiently peddled his songs along Music Row, gradually accumulating a string of cuts by artists such as Roy Drusky, Jeanie Shephard and Billy Walker. Eventually he managed to land a job as clean-up boy and general go-fer at Scorpion Records.

Finally, Slim Williamson, a small-scale producer and record executive who owned

Scorpion and Chart Records, began to take notice of McDowell's talents and in 1976, signed him to a long-term writer's and artist's contract.

The following May, Ronnie got his first chance at recording with a remake of Roy Orbison's classic *Only The Lonely*. The song didn't exactly set fire to the charts; but no one noticed, because three months later, by a strange twist of fate, Elvis Presley was dead and Ronnie McDowell was about to step into the spotlight.

The King Is Gone was originally intended by writers McDowell and Lee Morgan to be a simple, heartfelt tribute in song to Elvis, a testament to the shared grief of millions who had loved "the King" and his music. That the record would first launch his own recording career and then later turn into an albatross around his

neck, never occurred to Ronnie when he went into the studio the day after Presley's death to cut the song.

"It was just something I felt I had to do, even though I couldn't get anyone to help us out financially. I even called Mr. (Slim) Williamson in Florida to ask him if he could lend me some money to cut the record, but he told me was plannin' on getting out of the music business soon and didn't want to put anything into no Elvis tribute."

McDowell went ahead with the session anyway, paying the fees and costs (which amounted to \$2,860) himself with his entire bank balance at the time—\$42. He had five acetates of *The King Is Gone* made up and took them around to the local radio stations, refusing to think about the money he now owed or what he would do if the record was a bomb.

He needn't have worried. Within hours, every radio in Nashville was spinning McDowell's record. Phone lines were lighting up all over town with requests for copies of the song. Other stations around the country were calling in asking for the record. News of the record's phenomenal success traveled to Slim Williamson in Florida, who quickly revised his plans of getting out of the music business and rushed back to Nashville the next day to start mass-volume pressings of *The King Is Gone*.

Suddenly, Ronnie McDowell was an overnight star. Within weeks, he was headlining on *The Midnight Special* and *American Bandstand* and at the famed Palomino Club in L.A. His concerts were drawing crowds of 2,000 people a night and bookings were pouring in. But he was also getting his first taste of the intense loyalty Elvis's bereft fans were preparing to bequeath to him.

"It was frightening," he admits, shaking his head. "People were coming to my concerts in droves, but they were really comin' to see Elvis. They'd scream, holler, reach out an' try to touch me. Sometimes I couldn't hear a note I was singin'."

What had started out as a dream come true was beginning to sour for the shy young singer. His two follow-up singles, *I Love You, I Love You*, and *Here Comes The Reason I Live*, were both top country records, and he was more in demand than ever. But McDowell saw the handwriting on the wall through the excitement and confusion of his overnight success. He was slowly but surely being boxed in by the Elvis spectre, and he realized he would have to break totally free if he were to make it as an artist on his own.

Predictably, Slim Williamson didn't see things the same way: the Presley formula was working, bringing money and credibility to his label. He had already released two albums on Ronnie, and in the works were two more "tribute to Elvis" LP projects involving McDowell. He adamantly refused to let Ronnie out of his contract.

For the next several months, McDowell continued to tour with his band while he carefully determined the direction he wanted to go with his singing career. It was, he says now, one of the most difficult periods of his life.

"I didn't know how on earth I was ever going to get away from Scorpion. I knew it was going to cost a lot of money to buy my release. But I knew I needed to be on a major label, with a producer who understood my music . . . someone who would help me get out of the Elvis thing and guide my career in another direction."

Through friends in the business, Ronnie scheduled a series of meetings with top country producers from several major labels who had expressed an interest in working with him. The first appointment was with Billy Killen, one of Nashville's most highly-respected producers, and president of the monumentally successful Tree Publishing, Inc.

"I'd told myself firmly that I wasn't gonna sign up with the first person I talked to," laughs Ronnie, looking back on the sequence of events. "But Buddy and I talked for a couple of hours, and the more he told me how he thought I should be produced, the more I knew he was exactly the one I was looking for. He's an honest man that I can trust completely, and he's become a real friend to me."

With Killen's help, Ronnie secured his release from Scorpion and negotiated a recording deal with Epic Records. "When Buddy got my deal with Epic in January," he reports, his face lighting up, "I felt like ten million pounds of pressure had just been taken off my shoulders. I feel like, for the first time in my whole career, everything is starting to come together for me."

His first single on his new label was a class number that Ronnie wrote for his wife, Karan, titled *World's Most Perfect Woman*. It alerted anyone who hadn't been paying attention, that Ronnie McDowell was on his own and making some definite changes. He was relying for the first time on the merits of his superlative singing voice (which has been called one of the finest voices in recording today), and on his own individual style to put him across.

Onstage, the unassumingly shy offstage personality transforms itself into a dynamic entertainer who blends energy, emotion and sensuousness with a boyish vulnerability that audiences find irresistible. Enthusiastic fans nearly caused a riot trying to get close to Ronnie during last year's Fan Fair celebration in Nashville—a reaction that is not uncommon wherever he plays.

His debut album for Epic is scheduled for early summer release, and will contain six of the singer's original compositions, including his personal favorite, *I've Never Seen A Mountain So High*.

His touring calendar is filled with enough bookings to keep him and his four-

piece band constantly burning up the miles. They travel in Ronnie's luxuriously decorated private bus with its custom red velvet and gold interior, which he bought with the money from *The King Is Gone*.

He has even learned to view "the Elvis thing" in a less painful perspective, which is why he was able to agree to sing the soundtrack score recently in Dick Clark's made-for-TV movie about Elvis Presley, *Elvis*.

"At first, I didn't want to do it," says Ronnie. "When I heard Dick was looking for me to sing in the film, I actually went into hidin' so no one would find me and ask me about it! I was petrified it would hurt my career even more and get me in deeper, so I kept sayin' no. But then they explained to me how they were planning to do it and who would be working on the show. Finally I said okay."

Ronnie went into the studio in Nashville at 10 a.m. one morning and sang around the clock until 2 a.m. the next morning, cutting a total of 36 sides for the movie. Also in the studio with him were people who had worked closely with Presley, including Sam Phillips, Felton Jarvis, Elvis' longtime producer, and the Jordanaires. After the session was over, Jarvis turned to Ronnie and said, "Lord, son, I only wish Elvis had been able to sing that good."

McDowell refuses the compliment gracefully. "Elvis had an edge in his voice that I'll never have, and I never try to compare myself to him. He was unique."

The show aired to widespread critical acclaim, and Ronnie McDowell's astoundingly accurate vocal performance was singled out for special praise. Because of public response, Dick Clark bought the film back from ABC for release in regular movie houses later this year. A complete album with Ronnie's soundtrack performance is also slated for release at the same time.

And coming up in July, McDowell will stage the first annual Ronnie McDowell Music Festival in his hometown of Portland, Tennessee, with 2,500 fans expected to attend the two-day event. At the same time, he'll unveil his newest pet project, a country music walkway of stars similar to the handprint gallery of celebrities immortalized in front of Graumann's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles.

"It's all coming together at last," Ronnie reflects quietly, as he prepares to board his bus for the long drive from Meridian, Mississippi, where he has just finished a tour with Conway Twitty, to Wilmington, North Carolina. "And this time, I know it's going to be right."

He pauses, then grins. "Buddy called me the other day and asked if I had any suggestions for what to call my new album. Well, yeah, Buddy, I do, I told him. Let's call it *Ronnie McDowell—The Right Time*. 'Cause that's exactly what it is!" ■

Randy Goodrum: Songwriter, Session Man, Recording Artist Has All The Bases Covered

by BOB ALLEN

Inspiration for a songwriter can sometimes hit at the oddest times. Randy Goodrum recalls that he wrote the hit song, *Bluer Than Blue* while sitting in his car in the parking lot of a Big-K, waiting for his wife and kids. He recalls writing the number-one hit, *You Needed Me* under even more ironic circumstances:

"I wrote it to my wife. I wrote just the melody of the song and had put it down on a little piece of manuscript paper, and I had it in a pile of other unfinished ideas I had on paper. Later, I was cleaning out the downstairs music room, and she and I were down there and I found this written-out piano thing and I said, 'Well maybe I could put words to this. . . .' So I started putting words to it and called her down and said, 'Listen to this . . . I cried a tear . . . you wiped it dry . . .' She just said, 'Yeh . . . that's alright.' And that really got to me because I thought it was a good song. So I tore it up and I threw it in a pile with a bunch of other stuff. Later she said, 'Look, I just wasn't in the mood to hear songs. It's a great song.' So we went over and got it and put the pieces all back together and I finished writing it."

A lot of people besides Randy are glad that he did go back and finish writing the discarded verses of *You Needed Me*. One of them is Anne Murray. Though four years actually elapsed between the time he wrote the song and the time she recorded it (in the meantime, the song had been turned down by dozens of other artists and producers before it even got to her. "It was sent up to her (Toronto) office through the mail," he recalls. "It was up there for about a year, just sitting around before she finally recorded it."), it turned out to be well worth the wait; soon after it was released, it became Anne Murray's biggest selling record ever and did much to reestablish her wayward career. It became an across-the-board number one record in the pop, country and easy-listening fields and earned a gold record. Murray's rendition of the song also won her a Grammy Award for Best Pop Vocal Performance, Female. Back in Nashville, *You Needed Me* won the 1978 "Song of the Year" Award from the Nashville Songwriters

Association and song of the year from the Academy of Country Music.

While *You Needed Me* is probably Goodrum's most popular song to date, there are any number of others that he's written that have become familiar to the ears of radio listeners across the country: *Sad To Belong* was recorded by John Ford Coley and England Dan; *Before My Heart Finds Out* was a big hit for Gene Cotton and *Bluer Than Blue* did well for Michael Johnson.

But there's also a whole other side to Goodrum's career: he's also one of Nashville's most respected young session piano players. He can be heard on the records of Tanya Tucker, Perry Como, David Loggins, Jerry Reed, and on Chet Atkins' and Les Pauls' Grammy Award-winning LP, *Chester and Lester*.

"He (Randy) is one of the most talented people I've ever been around in my many years in the business," says Chet Atkins, who recently recorded *nine* of Randy's songs on a session he produced on Perry Como. "I'm talking about on record sessions and as a writer. His songs are all written in good taste and they quietly bridge the gap between pop and country. . . . He's going to have a lot to do with what goes on in this town in the future."

For Goodrum, the bridge between session playing and songwriting is a natural one: for him, these two very different creative processes complement each other. "I've written songs between takes at a session," he recalls. "Not because of the song I was playing on the session, but just because it keeps you right on edge. It keeps your mind sharp, and occasionally, I'll just be doodling around on the piano and come up with something."

"Session work is a very spontaneous form of expression," he adds. "They just come in and say, 'I need an intro.' and you have to come up with something that nobody else has ever played. It can be a great deal of pressure sometimes, but I think it's good to have a little bit of the 'willies.' It keeps your edge. But to me, the thing that I feel most is the anticipation that there's going to be a new sound or a new chord or a new lick or something."

That also helps keep the edge on your writing.

"One thing that's important to emphasize though," Goodrum adds quietly, "is that I am a *pop* songwriter, not a country writer. It's just that the way I choose to express myself is pop. But I do have a lot in common (with country writers) as far as structuring my songs. Theoretically, I shouldn't be able to exist here in Nashville. It just goes to show you that it doesn't matter where you live. You can live in Mongolia and be a writer if you know who to get your songs to."

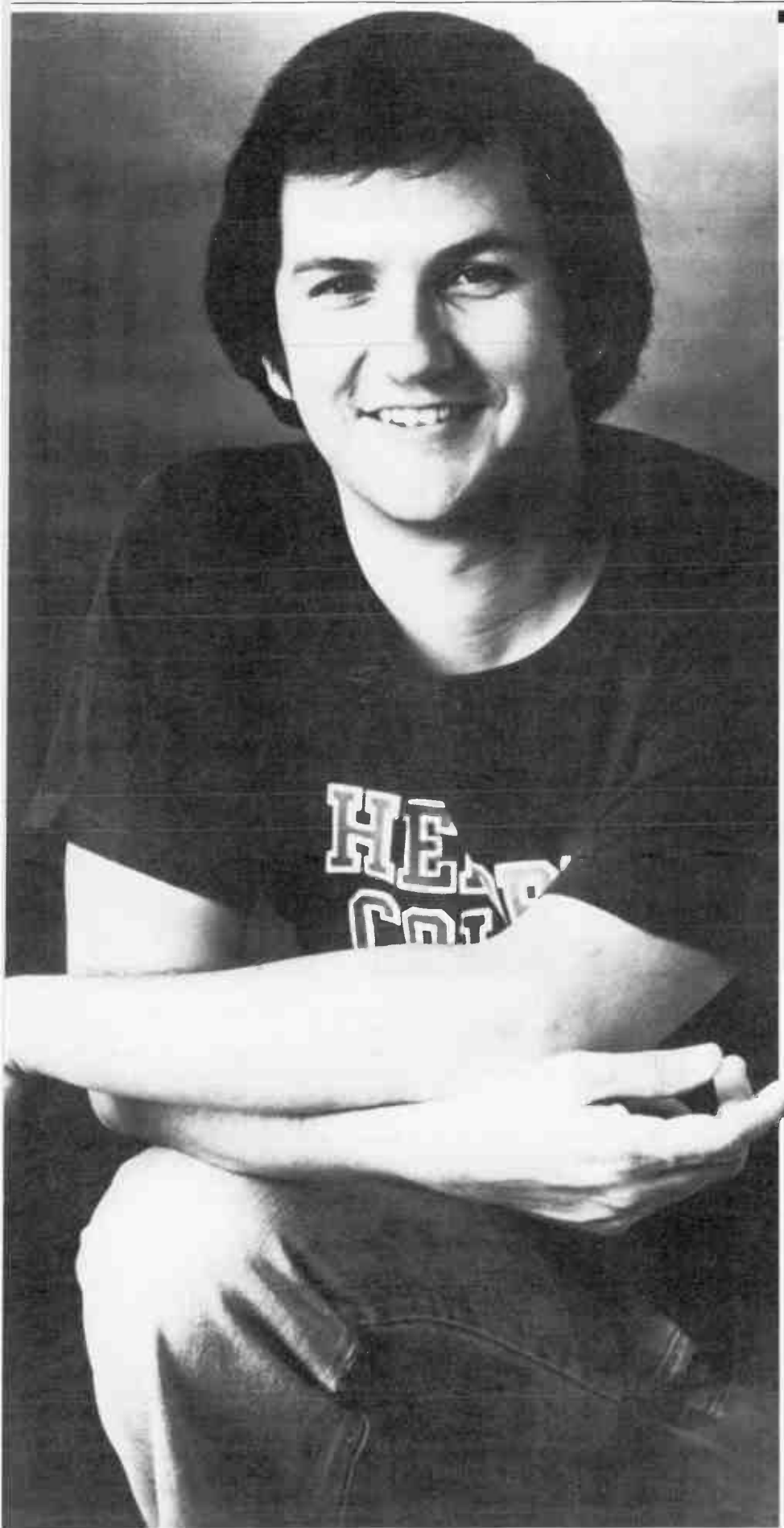
Before he moved to Nashville, Goodrum had for a time, considered moving to Los Angeles; he even went out there to scout out the local music scene, "because I thought that's where all the pop writers go. But it just didn't sit well with me. I'm used to the South. . . . I just love it very much. And also, I think I'm the kind of person, if I get around people who are doin' the same thing I'm doin', it may rub off on me. I think most people are that way. If you get two painters and keep them together for a year, you're going to see each one's style show up a little bit in the other's work. . . . I'm very aware of the God-given talent that I have, and I want to do it my way. That's why I'm better off here."

Goodrum, 31, grew up in Hot Springs, Arkansas and had formal training on the piano. "I started off playing improvisational jazz in Arkansas. As far as I know, there were no other jazz pianists in Arkansas. But it didn't matter. I first started writing when I was in college in Boston and in Berkeley. I participated in a couple of musicals and wrote some music for them. I kind of got into songwriting after that. At first they were bad. I never really wrote them thinking they were good enough to be recorded."

"I've always been a plodder," he adds. "It took me years to learn to write and years to play the piano. But for me, it was fun along the way. It took me eight years to get my first (song) cut, but I never thought about the years."

After college and a stint in the army, Goodrum returned to Little Rock, Arkansas and began mailing tunes out to publishers in hopes of getting some of them recorded. He was in the process of choosing between Nashville and Los Angeles as a future home when a friend in Nashville who ran a jingle company became interested in his tunes. "So in 1973, I came to Nashville as a writer. I began playing on jingle sessions and right away, I loved it. I felt I could contribute something to the scene here."

Shortly after he arrived, he began doing road work with Roy Orbison and Jerry Reed. "I don't think I've ever met anyone who's more talented than Jerry is," says Randy. "He really inspired me. He doesn't know it. He's just so unique and un-



affected. He's underrated. He's one of the greatest guitar players."

Recently, Goodrum's musical career has taken on a third dimension: he signed a recording contract of his own with Clive Davis's New York-based Arista Records. "I recorded in Canada," he recalls. "I was assigned a producer and more or less had to go to Canada. But I insisted that I at least take Nashville musicians that I'm comfortable with . . . Larrie Londin (drums) . . . Reggie Young (guitar). . . . It wasn't an allegiance to Nashville. It was just that I happen to think that they're the best."

Goodrum insists, however, that his writing will continue to take preeminence in his career priorities. ("I came here to write. I just happen to know how to play piano too.") As a writer, he has no fixed approach to his craft; sometimes he waits for inspiration to hit him while he's driving the car or watching television, while other times he just sits down cold at the piano and searches for a new chord or a new sound that will force him to come up with something.

"I have an office to write in if things get too busy at home, but I can write at home with both TV's on and the phone ringing and both the kids running around. I do a lot of writing in the car. Once I get the melody in my head, I don't need to be at the piano. A lot of times I'm driving and I don't have a pencil. I'll have an idea and I'll just sort of chant it to myself until I can pull into a gas station and borrow the guy's pen and write it down. There's a lot of places you can count on to find a pencil," he smiles. "A doughnut shop, a drugstore . . . any place that takes credit cards. . . . A policeman. . . . He's going to have a nice big shiny silver pen. . . . I've never actually stopped one, but they would love it. They really would."

"I usually carry a little Sony cassette recorder and that helps a lot. The only problem is, I end up with about fifty cassettes full of ideas. I'll maybe have the beginnings to fifty different songs on each cassette."

Despite all the industry accolades that he's recently received for his work, Goodrum's passion for songwriting actually has little to do with Grammy Awards or gold records. "It's fun," he smiles, "as long as your motives are in the right place. The fun of writing *You Needed Me* was when I finished it. I said to myself, 'Fifteen minutes ago, that song wasn't here. Now here it is . . . and I did it!'" he smiles. "If you're just in it for the money, you won't be a songwriter very long, I don't think. If you're in it for the love of writing songs, then you'll be a songwriter all your life. And you'll be kicking and shaking your fist at the grim reaper because you could have written a couple more songs if you'd lived another year." ■

by DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Backstage At The Opry



Back in the halycon days of the 1960s, when the national media suddenly "discovered" country music, one of the things they focused on was the seeming chaos on, beside and backstage at the Grand Ole Opry.

The sight of a stage teeming with musicians, stagehands and stars which somehow all came together to form a coherent radio show (with a studio audience of more than 4,000 souls), proved irresistible, although they invariably made the obvious point that there was indeed method to this seeming madness.

There is method indeed; actually the running of the Grand Ole Opry—the longest continuous live show on radio—involves a large, highly organized staff, a staff remarkable in its loyalty to the Grand Ole Opry as a concept and to the legion of performers on the show.

The method begins not in the Opry House but in the converted mobile home trailers which serve as the Opry ticket office near the entrance to Opryland. There

Wilma Briggs, manager of the Grand Ole Opry Ticket Office, processes the 100,000 requests for tickets and information she receives annually. Wilma Briggs has been with the Opry since 1951 when she organized and handled ticket requests all by herself; today she heads a staff of 12 (which swells to 20 in the summer months) who spend busy days scheduling reserved seat tickets (they have reservations as far ahead as 1983) and selling the general admission tickets which go on sale every Tuesday at 9 a.m.

"Most of our requests are pretty straightforward," Wilma said, "but every now and then there are some that stand out in your mind—like the woman who insisted she had to have three seats *together but all on the aisle!* We tried to explain to her that this was impossible—and she ended up getting mad at us! A much more common thing is for someone to write in saying 'I want two tickets to the Opry.' We have to write back and ask them when."

Wilma schedules the seating—3,019

reserved and 1,405 general admission—for every show which (in the winter-time) includes the Friday night Opry and the two Saturday night performances. In summer, additional performances are scheduled to handle the overflow of requests, including matinee performances on Friday, Saturday and Sunday (not broadcast via WSM radio) bringing the total to as many as seven shows per weekend in peak summer months.

The next step is scheduling the acts themselves, an arduous task assigned to Debbie Logue, Hal Durham's assistant. Durham, who is the Opry manager, explained their weekly routine: "On Wednesday Debbie calls the talent agencies or the acts themselves to find out their availability for the week. With this information in hand, I work the schedule for the show with the available acts on Thursday morning, and on Thursday afternoon she calls all these acts and agencies once again to confirm."

Reprinted courtesy Nashville Magazine.

"The schedules are then printed up on Friday morning and are delivered by the printers at 4 or 4:30 on Friday afternoon."

There are a good many constants in scheduling, with certain acts always appearing at the same time or for the same sponsor. Still, it can be a hectic and frustrating business: "We do have a lot of changes every week, regardless, because of one thing or another, and we always end up reshuffling and changing schedules at the last minute," laughed Durham.

He must frantically adjust for each band, but as with his counterparts in staging and lighting, knowing the acts is of paramount importance. "The key is knowing the Opry. You have to know the bands. We have to know what they play, how loud they play and what kind of mix they like in their monitors."

"The biggest problem we encounter is with bands just coming off the road. If they've been playing in big houses where the amps are miked, then it's no problem. But if they've been playing in situations where their amp is the sole source of volume, then they generally play a lot louder than usual. They'll really surprise you with the volume sometimes!"

Tim Thompson's crew is the next to show up: he's head of the Opry ushers.



(above) Lighting Director, Susan Ray, (below) Bill Carlisle, James Smith & Rosa Mae Hodge enjoy a backstage coffee-break.



Part of the Opry for years, J.D. Bell chats with Ernest Tubb while keeping an eye for gate crashers.

commanding a crew of some 50 men and women per show. His crew is strictly part-time, "mainly students, housewives and people who want second jobs; of course it means giving up every Friday and Saturday night and every summer weekend!" They arrive at the Grand Ole Opry House about 4:30 p.m. on a typical Saturday.

The doors open at 5:30 for the 6:30 show, although sometimes so many performers are available for Opry spots that the show starts at six, in which case the doors open at 5:15. Their biggest challenge is emptying the house and refilling it in the scant half-hour break between the two Saturday night shows, but Thompson's crew has it down to an exact science: "On Saturday night when the shows change we have it emptied in 10 minutes, all 4,400 seats, and then can refill them in just 10 minutes as well."

Besides seating, the ushers—currently 48 women and seven men—constantly answer questions: "They are always being asked where to stay, where to eat and where to go after the Opry," says Thompson, "and we leave it up to our ushers to provide the answers. Then, too, they're there to help with accidents and emergencies, although they are relatively rare. And, of course, somebody *always* has to ask some of the girls out," he adds.



Opry announcer Hairl Hensley & Dorothy Ritter, Opry's Goodwill Ambassador.

Onstage the Opry announcers—the ageless Grant Turner, Hairl Hensley and Tony Lyons—have schedules which inform them of the shows they are to work and the announcements and commercials they are to read. They are also informed, sometimes at the last minute, of changes in the schedule which might come about when an act suddenly can't make the show, or if one just as suddenly can. Hal Durham firmly asserts that every Opry cast member is assured a spot on the show if he or she desires it, and at times during the worst of the winter, when shows on the road are few, as many as 40 acts will show up, requesting an appearance, and invariably they obtain it.

The entertainers and staff musicians also begin showing up late in the afternoon, getting in tune, warming up and preparing for the evening show. Assisting them backstage are two uniformed gentlemen, Norman Van Dame and J. D. Bell, who like any of the Opry staff, are institutions themselves. They watch the artist's and musician's entrance, admitting family and friends and the occasional guest artists, while keeping an alert eye for gate crashers.

Another pre-air time task that takes place during the week is the scheduling of commercials which is handled at WSM itself at its Knob Road location in West Nashville. There Cindy Wood and the

A frequent visitor to Roy Acuff's dressing room is Allen Funt.



WSM Traffic Department organize and apportion time to the numerous Opry sponsors: "Each commercial done on the Opry, whether live or on tape must be scheduled beforehand," says Cindy.

As show time approaches an entirely different set of backstage professionals go to work, among them Susan Ray (daughter of Vanderbilt football great Baby Ray), who is lighting director for the Opry and assistant lighting director for Opryland Productions.

"Friday is really our big day for setting up," says Susan. "If we have been filming or taping at the Opry House during the week, that means a complete relighting for the Opry, and this is often the case. We may get there as early as 8 a.m. because we have to reset the whole thing before the audio crew shows up at 4 p.m., and it takes considerable time. Our call is at four if we don't have to relight and reprogram the computer. Regardless, we don't get off until after midnight.

"Saturdays we get on around four, mainly to check everything over once and make sure it's all working . . . and then it's on to the end. I'll tell you, it's a very long weekend when those matinees start!"

It may be a long weekend, but it hasn't dampened Susan's enthusiasm. She is easily the most enthusiastic of an extremely enthusiastic staff and cares greatly about the performers with whom she works, particularly the "old timers." "The Opry never had lighting for 52 years until we started doing it in March 1978. We wanted to really do it right, to do it with taste so as not to upset or shock anyone, especially the older acts who have *made* the Opry. As it turned out, everybody's been very enthusiastic about the results. We have such a fantastic technical capability out here, and it's great that the Opry should get the benefit of it."

The audio crew is headed by Conrad Jones, a deep-voiced silver-haired sound expert who is senior audio engineer. He has been with WSM for 16 years—one of many Opry employees with loyalty and long tenure—and came to work on the Opry in 1972 with the move from the Ryman Auditorium to Opryland. His job may be the most harried—he is in charge of the three entirely separate mixes of music which emanate from the Opry stage.

One mix is played right back on stage; it is the monitor system by which the musicians and singers can hear themselves clearly. A second mix goes out into the crowded Opry house for the audience to hear, and the third, of course, is the radio feed, sent to WSM for broadcast. Jones oversees a crew of five who control these mixes, two for broadcast, one each for house and stage, and one to rotate, giving relief to each sound man one at a time.

Working the Opry is like working no other show in the world, according to Conrad Jones. Instead of setting up once, as in a concert situation, and then carefully fine-tuning the controls, the Opry sound

crew has to deal with numerous and extremely rapid changes of bands: "Where else," he asks with a laugh, "will you change bands four times in 12 minutes?"

Backstage (or actually just in the wings) Debbie Logue goes back to work for it is she who must keep track of every musician who plays or sings on every tune, a payroll record required by WSM and by the musician's union. It is one of many demanding tasks she performs with good humor and grace.

With the highly organized seeming chaos underway, the show runs smoothly with the aid of all these Opry employees. The Opry runs until 11 p.m. on Friday night (followed by another hour of Grand Ole Gospel Time which is handled by the same crew), and until midnight or later on Saturday, depending on whether Marty Robbins is there and how much longer he takes the show with his energetic performances. The Saturday night show is followed by the Ernest Tubb Record Shop Midnight Jamboree which involves none of the Opry staff except one of Conrad Jones' sound men who leaves the Opry early to run the sound from the Ernest Tubb Record Store location on Demonbreun.

Back at the Opry House the concessionaires have closed their stands, Tim Thompson's ushers have escorted the 4,400 viewers out, the musicians are packing up their instruments and heading for home, the light and sound crews and stagehands are packing up their gear; the work is seemingly done for the night.

But not so. At 12:30 or one in the morning, in comes the third shift maintenance crew who must clean up the refuse. E.G. Wilson, a cheerful little man who is dearly loved by the Opry cast—he's inordinately proud that Dolly Parton sent him flowers during a recent hospital stay—is a member of that third shift, and though like all the rest of the Opry staff he is exceptionally loyal and proud of it, still he sees it from a different perspective.

"I don't know how else to say it, but it looks like a city dump—coffee cups, soft drink cans, popcorn boxes. It's just like a movie theater after the movie lets out. I'll tell you, the third shift has a hard job—it's a full eight-hour job for 10 men.

"It's funny, but different areas are better. The stage stays clean and the front lobby stays clean, although people still stomp their cigarette butts out here. The balcony isn't too bad because people don't always want to walk downstairs for their concessions, but the main floor is the worst!"

Still by 8 or 9 a.m. the next morning the third shift proves to have done its job well—the modern, plush interior of the Grand Ole Opry House looks new and smells fresh, ready for yet another show, be it matinee or yet another performance of that ageless radio show, the Grand Ole Opry. ■

MARTY

(Continued from page 38)

Some CBS people would like to see Marty take a consistent country-pop direction, but Marty likes to change trends when he senses it's right for himself.

The second song, *All Around Cowboy*, is also cut smoothly. It is punctuated by a control room prank between practice takes: on one playback, the music is faithfully reproduced, but the engineer has rigged a tape so Marty's voice seems to warble in and out of pitch alongside. The musicians break up laughing.

Fifteen minutes later, the song is cut.

The final song to be worked on in this session is *When Payday Rolls Around*, an uptempo Sons of the Pioneers tune. Session pianist Hargus "Pig" Robbins listens to Marty's first run-through, then the engineer's voice is heard over the studio loudspeaker: "Okay, Pig, let's hear a little campfire piano."

The song has a quick beat, and close, tricky harmony, but it's ready to be taped after only a short practice. The volley of good-natured sarcasm between Robbins and Sherrill continues. ("Billy and I get along real fine, and I respect his opinion. We cut each other down in a good way, and then we find out what each other is thinking.")

Marty asks for Billy's opinion of the lead vocal's sound in a certain part of the song. In the control room, Billy flips the switch that lets him talk to the studio and tells Marty—a conscientious nonsmoker—"You better smoke a cigarette and dissolve that oyster in your throat."

Robbins dashes into the control room and, standing next to Sherrill, says, "Billy didn't publish the song, so he doesn't want any part of it." Just as Marty had said, each man has a subtle message behind the barrage of humor. Marty's is, "Okay, Billy, I know you're not crazy about cowboy songs, but what do you think of this cut?" Billy's unstated message is, "You know I'm not crazy about cowboy songs, but these cuts are fine."

Payday is now taped, and Marty's ready to relax. He has taped three songs in as many hours, a good day's work. He moves again to the control room, where Billy says he's not happy with the sound of the acoustic guitar Marty's band member used. Sherrill thinks the strings sounded dead.

Marty pretends he's hurt by the comment. "That's *my* guitar, with *my* new strings. A fellow played it on a big TV show last week, and he couldn't believe what I paid for it. He said it was the finest frettin' guitar he ever played."

Sherrill exhales a puff of cigarette smoke and looks at Marty. "You sure he said *frettin'*?" he asks.

A little Mel Brooks music, please. . . ■

RODRIGUEZ

(Continued from page 72)

year-old sibling to experience the rites of manhood. They hauled him off to a house of ill repute in nearby Nogales. "There used to be this ole gal there, and they fixed me up with her and had her get it on with me. And whew!! Boy, she did!" he laughs. "It changed my life! I was scared to death, but it was funny! When it was over, I felt like King Kong. I had a grin on my face for a week!"

It was Johnny's oldest brother (he had six of them, including one who died at birth), Andy (who was killed in an auto accident several years after Johnny came to Nashville) who first taught him to sing. "My dad, who's dead now, sang some too, but none of my other brothers except Andy did. Andy would just sing around the house and around town, and when we'd get drunk. And all the time I was growin' up, my friends wanted me to do good too, and they kept after me to do somethin' with my music. Now they're out of college and workin' and they'll come see me at my shows, and I can tell they're happy for me, and that they're as glad to see me as much as I am them."

It was actually a series of coincidences that led Johnny to finally come to Nashville; it was nothing planned or premeditated, by any means. A stroke of fate manifested itself in a story that is long and complicated. It involves a stolen goat, and it's been told so many times that it annoys Johnny R. to recount it again. But anyway, what it amounts to is this: Johnny ended up in jail, and he was singing songs in his cell to pass the time when Texas Ranger Joaquin Jackson heard him and took him to Alamo Village, an amusement park in nearby Brackettville, Texas where he got a job and also met his manager-to-be, Happy Shahan. Two other people who happened to come by and hear Johnny sing at Alamo Village were Bobby Bare and Tom T. Hall. Tom T. left him with a standing offer to come see him in Nashville.

Johnny arrived in Nashville a few months later with eight dollars in his pocket and settled into the fleabag Andrew Jackson Hotel. "I had this old guitar wrapped in a cellophane bag," he recalls. "I must have looked like a weirdo in downtown Nashville! I figured everybody saw me walking around and figured, 'Boy there's another squirrel!' I was too, boy. I was right in the middle of it all."

But Johnny put in a call to Tom T. who quickly arrived in a black Cadillac and swept him off to the safety of his rural estate, Fox Hollow. He soon gave him a job, playing lead guitar, fronting for his road band and signed him to Hallnote Music, his publishing company. He also helped him land a contract with Mercury, which was Tom T.'s label at the time. Johnny's first single on Mercury was *Pass Me By*.

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which was written by Tom T.'s younger brother, Hillman Hall. It rose right up the charts to the number two spot. Rodriguez then followed with eleven consecutive number one singles. His early hits were perfect marriages of his great, husky voice with some fine songs by new writers: His own *Ridin' My Thumb To Mexico*, Billy Joe Shaver's *I Couldn't Be Me Without You, You Always Come Back Hurting Me*, (which he wrote with Tom T.) and Linda Hargrove's *Just Get Up And Close The Door*.

He also had some solid hits with other songs, like the beautiful Lefty Frizzell/Sanger Shafer classic, *That's The Way Love Goes*, but then gradually as the years passed, his enthusiasm and vitality seemed to fade, and his music began to degenerate into pretty, but empty-sounding ooze. When Johnny R. started concentrating on MOR numbers like *Ramblin' Rose*, *Eres Tu*, and *Love Me With All Your Heart*, it was downright depressing and you could almost hear the champagne glasses clinking in the background. It seemed like a genuine squandering of young talent and potential.

And beneath all the number one records and sold-out shows, Johnny himself was feeling some frustration and disillusionment: He wasn't all that happy with the material he was recording and he wanted

to be writing more of it himself. "I don't feel I've written my best songs yet," he said in 1975. "I haven't written half of what I'm capable of."

"Yeh," he adds today, "there was a lot (of frustration), as a matter of fact, for the whole time, I think for about the past four or five years, because I never heard it (my music) the way I wanted to hear it."

Overall, there seemed to be this creeping feeling that got stronger every year, a feeling that his career was starting to roll off in a direction that he didn't like, but still, didn't know quite how to change. And there were a lot of other pitfalls as well. For one thing, as Johnny found more and more success coming his way, that "there were lots of people tryin' to get in my pocket, because I didn't know that much about the business. But I did know the street pretty well, y'know, and most of the time I knew when somebody was tryin' to con me.

"And everybody was my cousin!" he laughs. "I didn't know I had so many damned cousins until I got in the music business!"

Johnny eventually parted ways with his manager, Happy Shahan, who had guided him through the early years of his career. (I'm not going to lower myself to talk about him." Johnny says in a soft, hesitant voice, "but, I don't know . . . Shahan sells

fleas to a dog. . . . Maybe that's why I got him for a manager in the first place. OK?") The next stage of his career was what he now refers to merely as "a rough period." He seemed uncertain about his musical future, his marriage was floundering and he had decided to part ways with his record label.

"I went through a bunch of shit, boy! I changed (booking and management) agencies about three or four times. And my personal life, of course. . . . I got a divorce. . . . I just had all these things I had to nail down and get straightened out. So for about nine months, I really worked at it. I had to finish up my obligations with Mercury. So late last year, I recorded about three albums worth of material in a matter of a month and a half. And that was during the same time I was trying to tie all this other stuff together and working (the road) at the same time. It was just a crazy thing. And the time I usually take off in December to go back down to Texas, is when I had to write the songs for this new (Columbia) album. To do that, I just had to separate myself from everything for a while. I drove myself crazy for a while, stayin' up all hours and days and stuff. I really dug a hole and got a lot of stuff done." He breathes a sigh of relief when he recalls that it's all behind him now. "Now that I've done it, it's still work, but it's

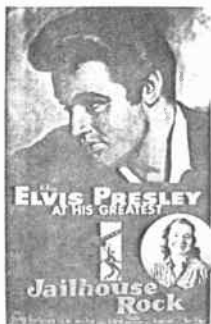
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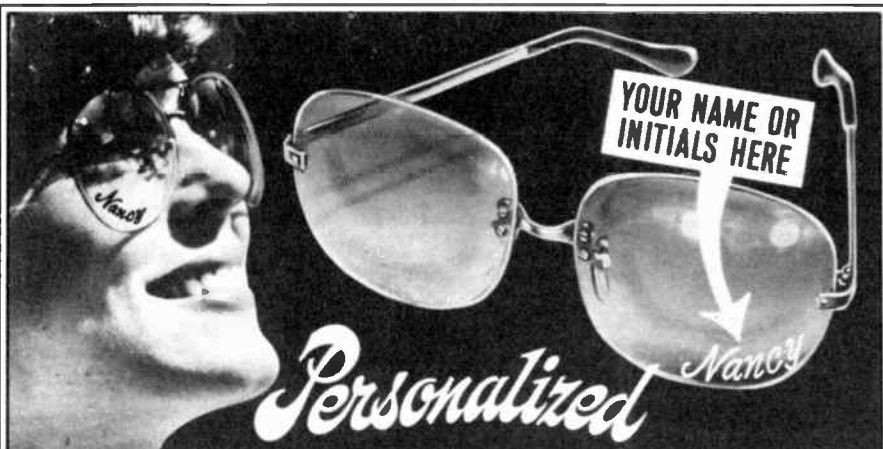
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almost like *rest* now, compared to all the turmoil I went through last year."

Now that he's got his career back on the tracks, Johnny plans to keep control of it. He's got a lot of plans for the coming years, and he's very enthusiastic about the future. "My band is great," he begins, with enthusiasm. "They can play everything from Jackson Browne to Bob Wills. What I want to do now is stay on the road a whole bunch, as much as I can, so we can get tight enough to do a live album. Also, I want to begin working soon on an all-Spanish album that I'd like to write. I've been wanting to do that for a long time. It would really be a new market. I think Spanish is spoken more than any other language in the world."

"Would you like to tour Mexico or the Latin countries?" I ask.

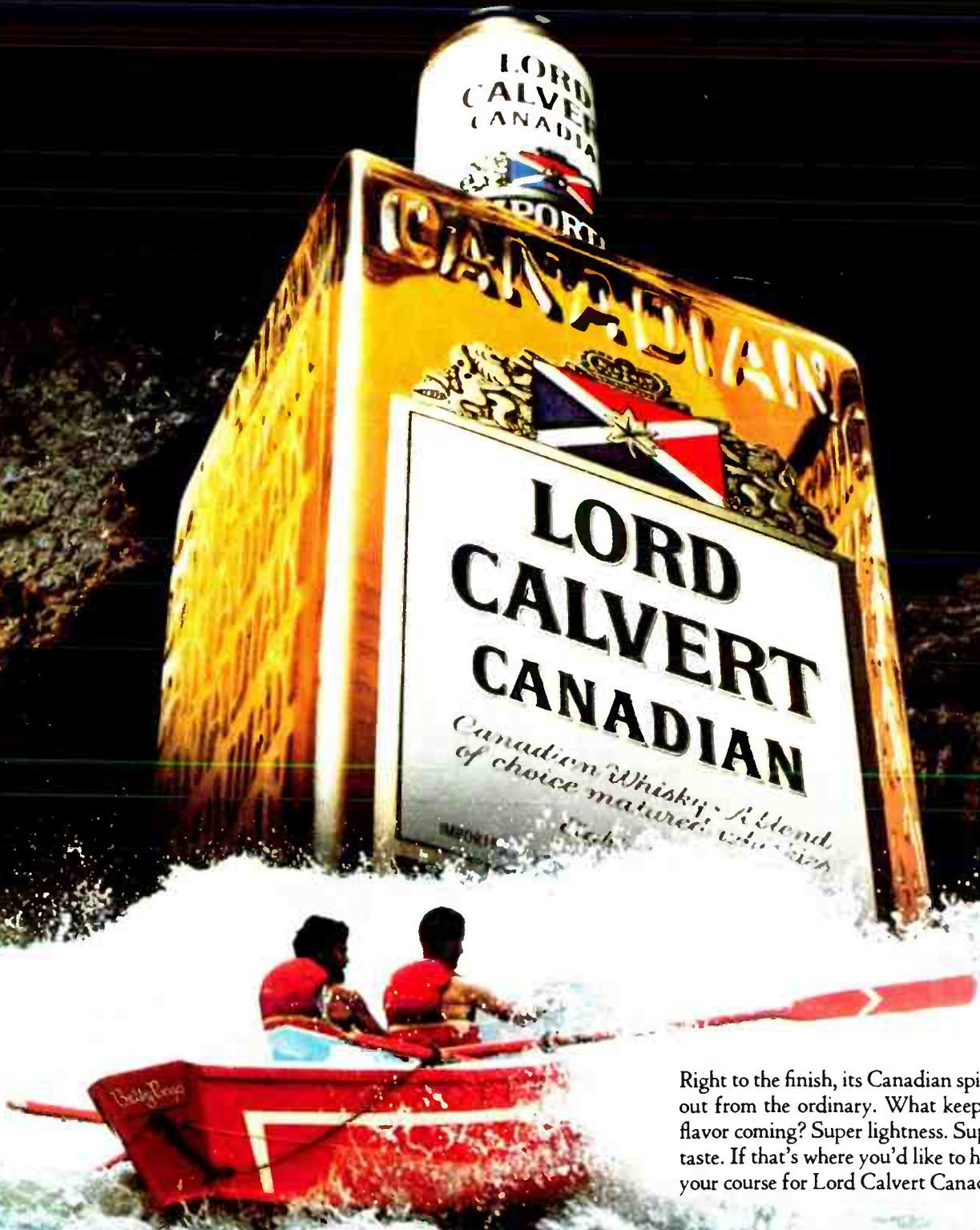
"Oh no!" he laughs uproariously. "No, I'm not interested in leavin' the United States, really! I hate goin' anywhere else. I just like it here!"

"How about your music," I ask. "Any plans to venture seriously out into any new styles ... like rock?"

"The music, I think, will just more or less graduate itself," he replies. "You know, I'll write another song or somethin' else will come up, and the music—the songs, the lyrics, will just grow as I grow."

The way Johnny answers questions like these leads you to believe that he's spent a fair amount of time thinking out the future. In fact, he tells me that the farm on which he now lives near Ashland City, Tennessee, is a great place for just that: for clearing his head, thinking things through, and just generally recuperating from the exhaustion and loose ends of touring. "The farm's mainly like a resort to me. It's just a place that's away from everything, a place to get away. If somebody wants to see me out there, they're gonna have a helluva time just findin' the damned place. I can go out and raise hell and party and stay awake for two or three days, and then I can come home and work it off. It's real quiet, you know, it's a good place to meditate, and sit around and think about things and get my head together. *Shit!* I can go out there and my ears can be ringin' and I can just *hear* the silence. I've got an old log cabin out there, and there ain't nothin' around or anything."

The Johnny Rodriguez of today seems as good an example as any, of a young prodigal singing star who is beginning to mature into an artist and songwriter of genuine stature. Success for him, these days, seems to have much less gaudy implications than it does for many. As he told another interviewer a couple of months ago: "Someone asked me the other day what I thought success was. Well, I just paid off my farm. That's success. I'm in a position to help my family. That's success. And I've reached the place where I have creative control of my music, and that's the best success of all."



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