

SPECIAL TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

COUNTRY MUSIC™

The 10th Year

Readers

Writers

&

Pickers

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World Radiolab

LOW TAR AND NICOTINE

LOW TAR AND NICOTINE

**Everybody knows
Mickey Gilley by now.**
*The whole Urban Cowboy
movement was inspired by
Gilley's music and lifestyle.*

*And everybody who listens to
country music knows that
Gilley's on a hot streak...
recording the very finest
albums of the 80's.*

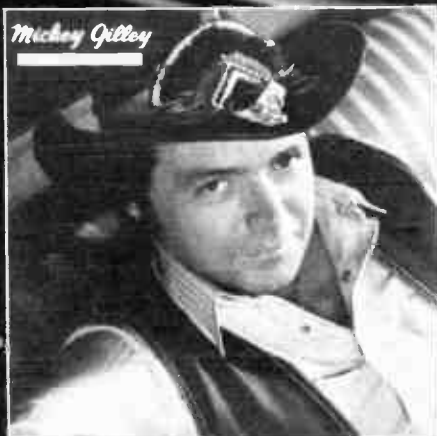
*"You Don't Know Me" is so
popular right now, it's easy
to forget that it's just
a few weeks old.*

*It's Gilley's latest
classic...just arrived.*

***Gilley's newest
calling card.***

You Don't Know Me
1987106
MICKEY GILLEY

Mickey Gilley



On **Epic** Records & Tapes

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COUNTRY MUSIC

TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

4 Readers, Writers, and Pickers

The commitment of Cash, the coming of The Outlaws, the craziness of writers, the screams about and by Sherrill, the sense of history, the support of fans. . . . Editor and co-founder Russ Barnard reflects on *Country Music's* decade in the country music briar patch. Featuring Michael The Parrot, a very odd Pow Wow, and the how and why of it.

18 To the Editors From The Pickers

On this happy occasion, the people we write about get to write about us. We invited the Pickers—singers, musicians, producers, broadcasters, record company people and all kinds of other members of the country music community—to tell us what they think of us. Featuring everybody from Jimmy Carter to David Allan Coe.

37 Ten Years Together

Country Music indulges itself. For pages and pages and pages, we offer our favorite pictures of our favorite singers, we re-publish our favorite quotes by and about those singers, and we give veteran writers their head to say whatever they please about ten years of country music in *Country Music*.

73 Ten Long Years, Five Great Albums

Given your choice among all the country albums released since *Country Music* began publishing, which five would *you* want to take with you to a desert island? This is the question we asked our panel of writers and editors, and here are their (our) conclusions.



Here we are: (Back row from left) Tony Bunting, Wes Wood, Barbara Richer, Gail Einert, Aileen Natrella, Rochelle Friedman, Russ Barnard; (Front row from left) Richard Harbert, George Mankes, Cathy Cashion, Henson Lacon, Bernice Riley, Patrick Carr. Leonard Mendelson, playing in Hollywood, missed the photograph.

Coming next month: Tom T. Hall learns of Herman Woonzel's death. Johnny Cash writes about William Shakespeare, Chet Flippo and Hank Williams. Michael Bane visits Hank Williams, Jr. Also, our Anniversary Celebration continues with more goodies from Readers, Writers, and Pickers. Let's hear from *you* too.

Congratulations On Your 10th Anniversary...

Here's to a vintage past
and a sparkling future.
May we continue
to celebrate together.

Alabama

Eddy Arnold

Chet Atkins

Razzy Bailey

R.C. Bannon

Dean Dillon

Leon Everette

Tom T. Hall

Waylon

Bill Leyerly

Louise Mandrell

Darrell McCall

Ferry McMillan

Ronnie Milsap

Dolly Parton

Randy Parton

Sue Powell

Charley Pride

Jerry Reed

Jim Reeves

Ray Stevens

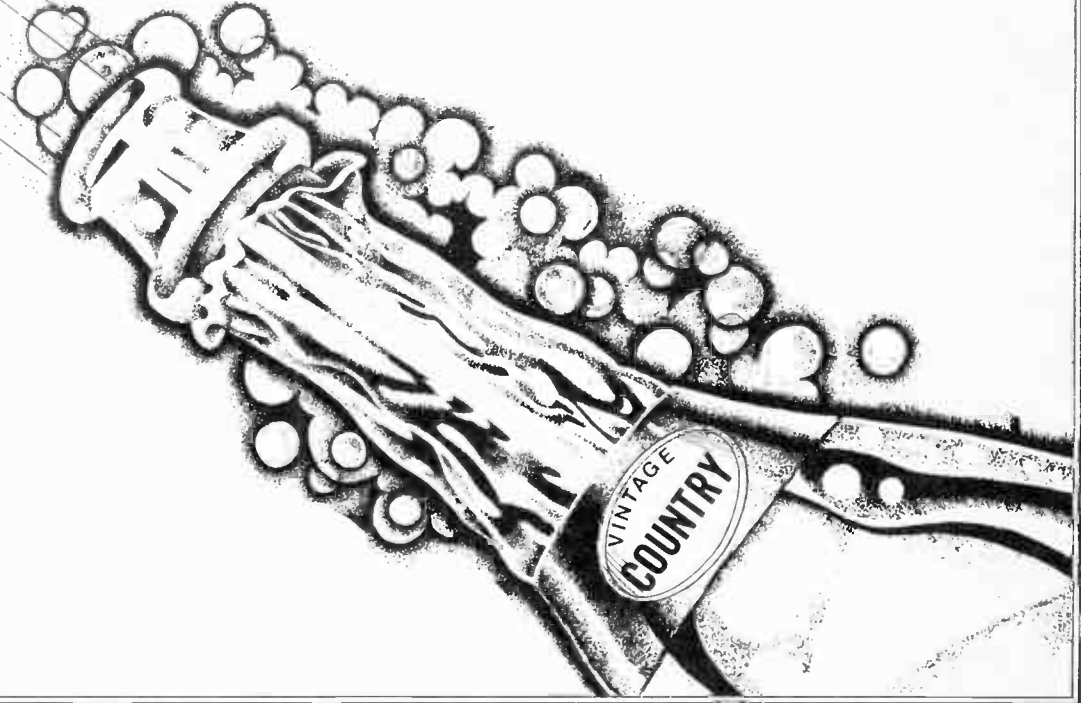
Gary Stewart

Sylvia

Tennessee Express

Valentino

Steve Warner



REGA

About this issue, the first 100 issues, and Readers, Writers and Pickers

This magazine has had five Editors. All are country music fans, and all have contributed to this, our tenth September issue. None became Editor *because* he was a country music fan, yet none could have been Editor if he hadn't been a fan. But all met the main requirement: solid experience as writers and editors. In order of appearance, they are Peter McCabe, Patrick Carr, Arthur Maher, Michael Bane and myself. Throughout its first ten years, *Country Music* has been whatever these editors believed it should be. But editors just sort of take messages and forward them, for a magazine is nothing but its writers and its readers and its subject, which in the case of *Country Music Magazine* is another group of people—the pickers. So that's what *Country Music* is: *Readers, Writers, and Pickers*. And that's what this Tenth Anniversary Special Edition is all about.

Putting this issue together has been a joyful, challenging, nostalgic, difficult,

crazy, painful, rewarding and hilarious labor of love involving a large group of writers, editors, photographers, designers and staff members—and even a group of pickers (see the Letters to the Editors section).

But this issue is just the first shot in our Tenth Anniversary Celebration. We want to involve you, the readers, and we want to pay further tribute to the writers and pickers who have been the heart and soul of *Country Music*. So, each issue throughout our tenth year will have a special Anniversary Section to carry on the celebration. And you, the readers, are invited to participate by writing to us on any and every subject. Argue with us, agree with us, propose your own "Best Albums" list, tell us who you think should be "Best Artist of the Decade" or "Worst Artist of the Decade," propose new stories for us to do, praise or complain about old ones, give us your opinions, tell us where you bought your boots.

This gets me back to the point that readers are a part of the magazine, and gives me a rare chance to say something about *Country Music Magazine's* readers.

First: *Country Music Magazine* isn't for everyone. *Country Music Magazine* is for country music nuts! *Country Music* is not for the millions who went to see *Urban Cowboy*, then went around humming *Looking for Love* for a week, but don't know George Jones from George Burns. *Country Music* is not for the millions who tuned out disco radio because of terminal boredom and tuned in country radio, thereby causing an explosion of new country music stations. *Country Music* is not for the millions who tuned in *The Barbara Mandrell Show* just because they *always* watch TV at 8 o'clock on Saturday night, and found out that Barbara and her sisters were cute and talented. *Country Music* is for the cream of the crop—the elite, knowledgeable, intensely committed nut who knew that Mickey Gilley sang *Roomful of Roses* before John Travolta left Brooklyn, who comes to instant attention at the sound of the word "George," who listened to country radio stations before Bloomingdale's sold cowboy boots, who turned on the TV to NBC a week before Barbara's first show to be sure not to miss her pickin' steel.

All this, however, doesn't mean that we're not happy about those new Urban, Bloomingdale's, NBC cowboys and cowgirls. To the contrary. We're happy. Because *some* of them will pay attention, *some* will be intrigued enough to look further and listen harder, and *they* may get committed, and *then* *Country Music* might be for them. But you already know this, because you are part of the cream of the crop—you are one of the elite, knowledgeable, intensely committed nuts who reads *Country Music*. We can talk this way about you and ourselves without fear of embarrassment or contradiction, since, obviously, no one else will read this except us nuts.

Don't think, however, that just because you are part of a minority, you are alone or unimportant—just the opposite. You are one of the over 2,000,000 people who read every issue of *Country Music*. Our current

At work in the heart of the Big Apple (yes, that's the Empire State Building in the background), Editor Russ Barnard reflects on ten years of *Country Music Magazine*.



COUNTRY MUSIC

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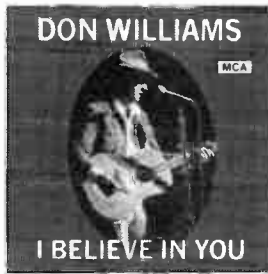
Summer parties stir with Seven & Cola



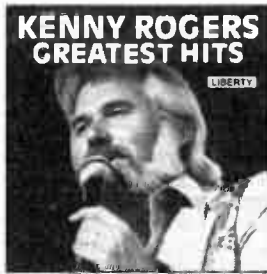
LOOK WHO'S IN



303578
No. 1 True Love Ways; the title hit; Top 10 Headache Tomorrow; many more.



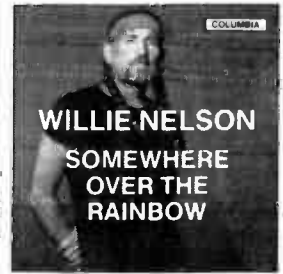
304329
"A jewel!"—Billboard. No. 1 album. No. 1 title hit; Top 10 Falling Again; more.



302562
Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town; Something's Burning; Reuben James; many more.



307827
Top 10 country album smash with the hits Mister Sandman; I Don't Have To Crawl; etc.



307868
His hit Mona Lisa, plus Who's Sorry Now? I'm Confessin'; many more.

- 309526 JOHNNY CASH THE BARRON
- 306928 THE BEST OF THE KENDALLS
- 305219 MOLLY HATCHET The Odds
- 300962 THE BEST OF THE BEAVER BROTHERS
- 300947 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK The Electric Horseman
- 306563 Barry Manilow BARRY
- 304279 STATLER BROTHERS 10TH ANNIVERSARY
- 301184 JANE OLIVOR The Best Side of Goodbye
- 301614 Gordon Lightfoot Dream Street Rose
- 302828 Pure Prairie League FURN UP
- 307876 MOE BANDY & JOE STAMLEY HE LOVES NEVADA
- 293688 EMMYLOU HARRIS Blue Kentucky Girl
- 290247 CAT STEVENS BACK TO LARTH
- 305607 TAMMY WYNETTE Only Lonely Sometimes
- 305334 THE POLICE Zenyatta Mondatta
- 305193 LARRY GATLIN & THE GATLIN BROS BAND HEAVENLY CREATIONS
- 299669 MAC DAVIS' GREATEST HITS
- 289843 POCO LEGEND
- 292151 NEIL DIAMOND YOU DON'T OWN ME
- 306605 Grove Washington Jr WINDLIGHT
- 307397 COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER
- 298869 MAUREEN McGOVERN
- 301390 Johnny Rodriguez Through My Eyes
- 300293 DON WILLIAMS PORTRAIT
- 299594 MELISSA MANGIESTRA
- 302612 DOOBIE BROTHERS STAMPEDE
- 304832 TOM BROWNE LOVE APPROACH
- 306365 FRANK SINATRA OK BLUE EYES
- 309385 LEE RITENOUR RT

- 308668 ORIGINAL CAST WOMAN ON THE LOOSE
- 307314 JOHNNY LEE LOOKIN' FOR LOVE
- 302455 AMBROSIA ONE EIGHTY
- 299748 CAPTAIN & TENNILLE MAKE YOUR MOVE
- 4063 ROBBIE DUPREE
- 306027 ELISE WHEELER & C. BANNON LIVE DON'T LET YOU GO
- 279281 Paul Simon Greatest Hits, Etc
- 279042 JOHNNY RAY MELN TAKE THE JOB
- 299222 GEORGE JONES My Very Special Guests
- 306688 MINNOUR BROTHERS, VOL. 1 Broadway Magic
- 307777 CONWAY TWITTY HEART & SOUL
- 279133 MEATLOAF BAT OUT OF HELL
- 301405 FREDDY FENDER Together We Gritted Apart
- 280882 ABBA Abba's Greatest Hits
- 291286 EMMYLOU HARRIS LUXURY LINER
- 304394 GEORGE BENSON Give Me The Night
- 303800 DIANA ROSS DIANA
- 298612 HERB ALPERT RISE
- 286914 FLEETWOOD MAC RUMOURS
- 298604 STYX CORNERSTONE
- 309912 BOBBY FARE DRUNK & CRAZY
- 305250 Laly J Dalton HARD TIMES
- 287730 TAMMY WYNETTE Greatest Hits
- 288555 JOHNNY PAYCHECK GREATEST HITS
- 299214 JOHN CONLEE FOREVER
- 302307 LUTELI WILSON OUT OF MY HEAD AND BACK IN MY BED
- 305169 ALPHEBAT AND SHOT IN THE DARK
- 306787 BLUE'S BROTHERS MADE IN AMERICA
- 308635 AC/DC DIRTY DEEDS DONE DIRTY CHEAP

- 309427 AIR SUPPLY THE ONE THAT YOU LOVE
- 303740 MICKY GILLEY ENCORE
- 300525 THE BEST OF EDDIE RABBITT
- 286916 THE EAGLES Hotel California
- 30740 LINDA RONSTADT'S GREATEST HITS
- 286600 CARLY SIMON Boys In The Trees
- 304201 DIONNE WARWICK No Night So Long
- 303590 WITH LOVE, MARTY ROBBINS
- 281300 JAMES TAYLOR'S GREATEST HITS
- 302900 ANNE MURRAY Somebody's Waiting
- 307272 GAIL DAVIS I'll Be There
- 306654 BLONDIE Autoamerican
- 288955 LARRY GATLIN'S GREATEST HITS
- 291278 The Doobie Brothers Best Of The Doobies
- 297889 VAN MORRISON INTO THE MUSIC
- 307579 STEVE FORBERT I'll Be There
- 306076 KOOL & THE GANG CELEBRATE
- 302042 LINDA RONSTADT MAD LOVE
- 301915 BILLY JOEL GLASS HOUSES
- 305282 YES DRAMA
- 301773 NICOLETTE LARSON RADIOLAND
- 309203 CHUCK MANGIONE TARANTELLA
- 305712 FLEETWOOD MAC LIVE
- 304889 The Swing Of Delight
- 295170 WILLY NELSON & LONNIE HEALEY LIVE FROM THE ROAD
- 306613 FRANK SINATRA NUMBERS INK LIVE IN CONCERT
- 306350 Bruce Springsteen THE RIVER
- 309054 BOB DYLAN AND THE BAND LIVE THROUGH AND BACK TO THE LIVE

- 308494 GINO VANNELLI NIGHTWALKER
- 306225 AEROSMITH'S CRUISE TEST HITS
- 301531 FREDDY WÜLLER Go For The Night
- 301499 ROBIN TROWER Victims Of The Fury
- 305185 KANSAS AUDIO VISIONS
- 306571 BOZ SCAGGS' GREATEST HITS
- 27558 CRYSTAL GAYLE I'll Be There
- 285981 DAN FOGELBERG & TIM ALLEN'S A POWER FOME OF THE BEST MUSICIANS
- 288332 BILLY JOEL 52ND STREET
- 304378 Allman Brothers Band Reach For The Sky
- 307843 JAMES TAYLOR Dad Loves My Work
- 270315 JAMES TAYLOR JAMES TAYLOR
- 27064 CHARLIE RICH Behind Closed Doors
- 270430 BOZ SCAGGS Down Two, Then Let
- 305201 STEVE FORBERT Little Steve Orbit
- 307835 RITA COOLIDGE GREATEST HITS
- 207421 URBAN COWBOY II
- 300681 NEIL DIAMOND NEIL DIAMOND
- 301408 BELLAMY BROTHERS YOU CAN GET CRAZY
- 305326 Melissa Manchester For The Working Girl
- 308069 THE BEST OF EMERSON LAKE & PALMER
- 307744 JOURNEY CAPTURED
- 290189 WILLIE NELSON COUNTRY AND FAMILY - LIVE
- 304782 Original Motion Picture Soundtrack HONEYMOON KEE ROSE
- 305524 SUPERTRAMP PARIS
- 302265-302266 FRANK SINATRA TRILOGY: PAST PRESENT & FUTURE
- 306597 396598 EAGLES LIVE
- 307439 NEIL DIAMOND Hot August Night

- 309476 MARSHALL TUCKER BAND "DEDICATED"
- 307280 JANNI FRICKE I'll Need Someone To Hold Me When I Cry
- 303562 JOHNNY MATHIS Different Kinds Different
- 301329 Various Artists Soundtrack How Do I Survive? BROOKLYN BELLY
- 301366 CHUCK MANGIONE FUN AND GAMES
- 305573 JOHNNY PAYCHECK NEW YORK TOWN
- 308268 CRYSTAL GAYLE TRISTE DAYS
- 300921 Sesame Street 10th Anniversary Album
- 302356 MAC DAVIS It's Hard To Be Humble
- 306704 GEORGE BURNS IN NASHVILLE
- 307751 JONAS MEKLER QUEEN FI 4TH GORDON
- 302786 CONWAY TWITTY CROSS WIND
- 299172 BOB DYLAN Slow Train Coming
- 292581 THE BEST OF BREAD Vol. II
- 291815 PROFILE BEST OF EMILY LOU HARRIS
- 305631 LEO SAYER Living In A Fantasy
- 304196 Charlie Daniels Band FULL MOON
- 301473 CHRISTOPHER CROSS
- 297705 MOE BANDY & JOE STAMLEY BEST GOOD OL' BOYS
- 301176 THE KENDALLS Heart Of The Matter
- 305151 VAN MORRISON COMMON ONE
- 307330 LORETTA LYNN LOOKIN' GOOD
- 303966 SEALS & CROFTS THE LONGEST ROAD
- 300590 ABBA GREATEST HITS
- 300707 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK THE ROSE
- 301317 CON HUNLEY I Don't Want To Lose You
- 301432 The Oak Ridge Boys TOGETHER
- 306621 VARIOUS ARTISTS BANDED TOGETHER II
- 308643 JOE STAMLEY HE LOVES NEVADA BACK TO LOVING ME AGAIN

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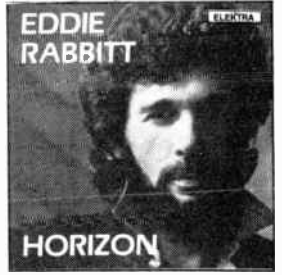
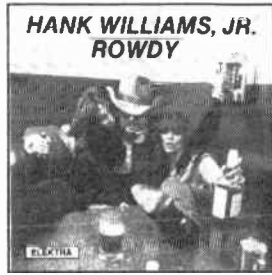
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308148

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307413

The No. 1 smash *Southern Rains*; *A Million Goodbyes*; *Louisiana Lonely*; more.

307942

A Top 10 chartbuster. His No. 1 *Texas Women*, plus *Dixie On My Mind*; more.

308692

Also hits *Sometime, Somewhere, Somehow*; *The Best Of Strangers*; *Crackers*; etc.

304253

No. 1 hits *Drivin' My Life Away* and *I Love A Rainy Night*, plus *Pretty Lady*; etc.

308627	CONWAY TWITTY LOVE TA LYNN DIAMOND DUT
306670	ABBA SUPER TROUPER
302471	Engelbert Humperdinck Love's Only Love
300095	Electric Light Orch. ELO's Greatest Hits
305243	Johnny Rodriguez GYPSY
306340	BETTE MIDLER DIVINE MADNESS
295105	The Muppet Movie ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK
288431	Johnny Paycheck Armed And Crazy
284844	LARRY GATLIN OH! BROTHER
304360	WILLIE NELSON AND RAY PRICE SAY ANYTHING YOU WANT
307819	OIANA ROSS TO LOVE AGAIN
306811	SLIM WHITMAN SONGS I LOVE TO SING
286732	LINDA RONSTADT Hasten Down The Wind
291203	The Doobie Brothers Minute By Minute
300913	VARIOUS ARTISTS Dinah! I've Got a Song
302802	MEL TILLIS AND THE STATE SOCIETY OF MESSY LIVERS
304220	HERB ALPERT BEYOND
309369	VAN HALEN FAIR WARNING

309393	CAROLE BAYER SAGER SOME TIME LATE AT NIGHT
306589	LINDA RONSTADT GREATEST HITS
298455	THE BELLAMY BROTHERS THE TWO AND ONLY
297655	CRYSTAL GAYLE Miss The Mississippi
287003	EAGLES 1971-1975 Their Greatest Hits
305623	CON HUNLEY DON'T LET ME BREAK YOUR HEART
295014	JAMES TAYLOR PLAY
274894	THE BEST OF FREDDY FENDER ALSO DON AND FRED MARTIN
298737	NICOLETTE LARSON IN THE NICK OF TIME
306662	STEVIE WONDER Hotter Than July
307710	WILDEYER SOUTHERN BOYS 27 SPECIAL
274498	CHARLIE DANIELS BAND THE JOHN DANIELS & WOLFGANG
304345	AL JARREAU THIS TIME
291823	EDDIE RABBITT VARIATIONS
295279	FRANK SINATRA Greatest Hits
301564	DEBBY BOONE Love Has No Reason
305045	AC/DC BACK IN BLACK
308619	MERLE HAGGARD THE BROTHERS

307967	PHIL COLLINS FACE VALUE
306449	REO SPEEDWAGON HI INFIDELITY
303123	PETE TOWNSHEND EMPTY GLASS
297549	LARRY GATLIN THE BEST OF LARRY GATLIN 8 STRAIGHT AHEAD
284257	PABLO CRUISE WORLDS AWAY
303909	Original Broadway Cast BARNUM
292912	THE BEST OF BARBARA MANDRELL
277491	BILLY JOEL THE STRANGER
300046	WILLIE NELSON SINGS KRISTOFFERSON
305987	Captain & Tennille Keeping Out Love We
307888	MARTY ROBBINS FEET DONCE I'VE ALWAYS WANTED
274738	LORETTA LYNN Cool Miner's Daughter
267667	THE BEST OF THE STALLER BROS.
277830	THE KENDALLS THE LEGEND OF JUST A SON A WAY
204355	STALLER BROS. THE ORIGINALS
303818	CARLY SIMON COME UPSTAIRS
306381	PATSY CLINE ALWAYS
308806	COUNT BASIE ON THE ROAD

309377	PHOEBE SNOW ROCK AWAY
306324	DIRE STRAITS MAKING MOVIES
293654	THE KENDALLS Just Like Real People
290270	Don't Cry Out Loud Melissa Manchester
301416	JANIE FRICKE FROM THE HEART
304212	QUEEN THE GAME
302131	MICHAEL FRANKS ONE BAD HABIT
278648	Captain & Tennille's Greatest Hits
304267	ALLMAN BROTHERS Enlightened Rogues
306878	THE LEGEND OF JESSE JAMES
307801	STYX Paradise Theater
305276	JOHNNY CASH Rockabilly Blues
283747	THE KENDALLS Old Fashioned Love
277934	STEELE DAN AJA
291185	LINDA RONSTADT Living In The U.S.A.
302844	BOBBY BARE DOWN & DIRTY
306284	THE DOOBIE BROTHERS ONE STEP CLOSER
307678	Kris Kristofferson TO THE BONE
278911	OAK RIDGE BOYS Y'all Come Back SALOON
283887	WILLIE NELSON STARDUST
290155	THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND GREATEST HITS
301549	BOZ SCAGGS MIDDLE MAN
306235	JOHNNY DUNCAN AND JANE FRICKE NICE 'N' EARLY
295007	ABBA VOULEZ-VOUS
295552	STEVE FORBERT JACKRABBIT SLIM
291849	SEALS & CROFTS GREATEST HITS
297531	Barbara Mandrell Just For The Record
305979	MAC DAVIS Texas In My Rear View Mirror
301372	Marshall Tucker Band TENTH
302919	AIR SUPPLY LOST IN LOVE
304842	JOE STAMPLEY AFTER HOURS
306047	BELLAMY BROTHERS SONS OF THE SUN
306720*	BOBBY VINTON ENCORE

308882	THE WHO FACE DANCES
307082	NEIL DIAMOND THE JAZZ SINGER
300111	EVERYBODY'S GOT A PARTY-N-EET SHINE
297044	EDDIE RABBITT LOVELINE
291856	THE BEST OF CARLY SIMON
304204	JACKSON BROWNE HOLD OUT
302869	EMMYLOU HARRIS Roses In The Snow
284034	Tom T. Hall Greatest Hits, Vol. III
301952	LACY J. DALTON
305037	THE CARS PANORAMA
307702	RUSH Moving Pictures
306043	GEORGE JONES I Am What I Am
283879	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN DARNERS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN
283762	THE STALLER BROS. Entertainment On And Off The Record
300079	DAN FOGELBERG PHOENIX
293670	OAK RIDGE BOYS HAVE ARRIVED
298596	EAGLES THE LONG RUN
306035	ARMY MYHRE LOVE ON MINE TOGETHER AGAIN
295139	THE BEST OF DON WILLIAMS
303594	LARRY GATLIN THE PILGRIM
288472	AL STEWART Time Passages
291021	SUPERTRAMP Breakfast In America
297671	JOHNNY MATHIS MATHIS MAGIC
304P24	POCO Under The Gun
307348	CONWAY TWITTY REST YOUR LOVE ON ME
303560	GEORGE JONES AND JOHNNY FREEDICE DOUBLE TROUBLE
294744	Charlie Daniels Band Million Mile Reflections
298620	BARRY MANILOW ONE VOICE
302281	THE VERY BEST OF LORETTA LYNN & CONWAY TWITTY
304337	JOHN CONLEE Friday Night Blues
304915	BROADWAY MAGIC Vol. 1 - 1960's Broadway
306639	DR. HOOK RISING
308015	RAY PRICE A TRIBUTE TO HIS LIFE AND MUSIC

Yes, just take a look at the superstars and super hits that the Columbia Record & Tape Club now offers. To get any 10 of these records or tapes right away, simply fill in and mail the application together with your check or money order for \$1.86 as payment (that's 1¢ for your first 10 selections, plus \$1.85 to cover shipping and handling). In exchange, you agree to buy 8 more tapes or records (at regular Club prices) in the next three years—and you may cancel your membership at any time after doing so.

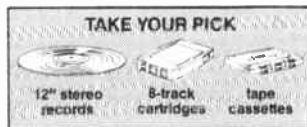
How the Club operates: every four weeks (13 times a year) you'll receive the Club's music magazine, which describes the Selection of the Month for each musical interest... plus hundreds of alternates from every field of music. In addition, up to six times a year you may receive offers of Special Selections, usually at a discount off regular Club prices, for a total of up to 19 buying opportunities.

If you wish to receive the Selection of the Month or the Special Selection, you need do nothing—it will be shipped automatically. If you prefer an alternate selection, or none at all, fill in the response card always provided and mail it by the date specified. You will always have at least 10 days to make

your decision. If you ever receive any Selection without having had at least 10 days to decide, you may return it at our expense.

The tapes and records you order during your membership will be billed at regular Club prices, which currently are \$7.98 to \$9.98—plus shipping and handling. (Multiple-unit sets and Double Selections may be somewhat higher.) And if you decide to continue as a member after completing your enrollment agreement, you'll be eligible for our money-saving bonus plan.

10-Day Free Trial: we'll send details of the Club's operation with your introductory shipment. If you are not satisfied for any reason whatsoever, just return everything within 10 days for a full refund and you will have no further obligation. So act now!



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* Available on records and cassettes only

CF Martin Koa Instruments

During the early twentieth century, circa 1917, C.F. Martin & Company handcrafted fretted instruments from Hawaii's finest koa wood. The instruments, however, were predominantly small body guitars and ukuleles.

Today, C.F. Martin offers koa instruments in several styles. In the D-25K and D-25K2 solid koa sides and back form a rich Dreadnought guitar. A solid koa top distinguishes the D-25K2 from its spruce top counterpart the D-25K. On the D-37K and D-37K2

models, distinctive curly koa sides and back create elegant flamed patterns highlighted by a clear gloss finish. Once again the distinguishing feature on these models is the top. The top of a D-37K utilizes select solid spruce with abalone rosette while the D-37K2 features solid flamed koa with abalone rosette.

Since C.F. Martin's experience includes small guitar construction, three small guitars are available in the koa instrument line. The 00-25K and 00-25K2 are designed in grand con-

cert size. Both instruments are reminiscent of early koa guitars. The third small guitar in the koa line is the 7-37K. A traditional spruce top joins flamed koa backs and sides in a Baby Dreadnought design.

Regardless of size and styling, all koa instruments command the same attention to detail that has become the Martin heritage. The Martin commitment to quality has endured for a century and a half and continues with each new handcrafted instrument.

The O-28K represents a Vintage Martin koa instrument dating back to 1928. Designed with a curly koa body, including solid flamed koa top, the O-28K featured a pyramid bridge, slotted headstock, and herringbone trim around the top.

This particular O-28K is not available in the Martin line of instruments. The O-28K was photographed courtesy of John Barnard and COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE.

The CF Martin Organisation
510 Sycamore Street
Nazareth, PA 18064



If just one-fourth of our readers buy the next Waylon album and no one else buys a single copy, it will still be a gold record.

circulation is just over 500,000, about 40% higher than last year, and this makes *Country Music America's* fastest-growing magazine, putting us in the top 110 of all magazines. *Country Music*, then, is not only the biggest publication in the country music field (more than twice as big as all the others combined), but is also the biggest *music* magazine in the world—period! And that is why you and all the other nuts are so important—because you make

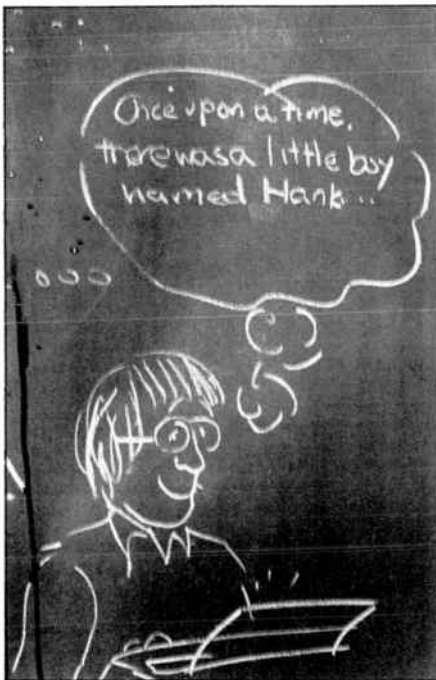
Country Music important. Half of our advertisers sell things country music nuts need: records, tapes, guitars, amplifiers, books, strings for musical instruments, pickups, microphones, recorders, stereo equipment, (some even claim to need certain liquid refreshments made, I hear, from various kinds of grain), and you are particularly important customers because, being nuts, you are going to buy more of these things earlier and faster than all of the

other tens of millions of country music fans. For example: If just one-fourth of *Country Music's* readers buy the next Waylon album and *no one else* buys a single copy, it will still be a gold record. The average *Country Music* subscriber spends \$644 a year on records and tapes, and half own more than \$1,000 worth of equipment to play music with at home, on the boat or bus, or in the truck or van (and speaking of trucks, 47% own a pickup truck). Half have visited Nashville, and the other half plan to. All of this means that you are as important to our advertisers as you are to us—which helps explain the variety of advertisers in this magazine, and why the number of interesting ads in *Country Music* is growing even faster than our circulation. It also means that you, the readers, account for all of *Country Music's* income: You buy subscriptions and copies from newsstands, and because you do, we are able to sell advertising.

So, there is glory and pride aplenty to be shared by readers, writers and pickers (by "pickers" we mean to include the whole community of songwriters, producers, music publishers, engineers, agents, and other country music professionals as well as the musicians themselves) on the occasion of this Anniversary. But such was not always the case. In fact, once upon a time, there was no *Country Music Magazine* at all . . .

As we began planning this issue, looking back through the 100 issues of *Country Music* we have already published, and thinking back to 1971 before we published any, it occurred to me that what we really needed was a reunion—a conference of writers and editors to review what we have done, a half-serious and half-crazy Tenth Anniversary Planning Pow Wow. So that's what we did. We packed up—yellow pads, tape recorders, Gary Stewart albums, a Hank Williams all-time greatest hits tape, a handful of ballpoint pens Tony Bunting had stolen from the office and had finally brought back to ease his conscience (and to clean up his desk at home—none of which ended up working), cameras and film, my American Express card, two water pistols, plus: Michael Bane, Bob Allen, Rich Kienzle, Leonard Kamsler, Patrick Carr, John Morthland, Peter Guralnick, Rochelle Friedman and myself—and headed for the Altamont Inn near Millbrook, New York, about 100 miles due north of the Lone Star Cafe in the core of the Big Apple. Bane, Allen and Kienzle flew in from Tampa, Nashville, and Pittsburgh, and Guralnick drove down from Massachusetts. (I forced Michael to leave ABBA's *Greatest Hits* behind in return for conceding to his

At our Tenth Anniversary Editorial Pow Wow, country music journalism (and country music journalists)



achieved amazingly perceptive highs, astoundingly stupid lows. We took the Keynote Cartoon (left) as our inspiration, and proceeded onward, upward, and sideways. By the time it was all over, the gracious proprietors of the gracious Altamont Inn (below) seemed relieved that we were leaving, but we didn't care. We picked up our stuff, took a picture of ourselves, and split. From the left, we were: Bob Allen, Rich Kienzle, Peter Guralnick, Leonard Kamsler, Rochelle Friedman, John Morthland, Patrick Carr (who doesn't usually look so fuzzy), Michael Bane, and Russ Barnard.



The country music tree is like a briar patch with roots and branches all entangled—wander in there and you're liable to get caught.

demand that no guitars be allowed.) What followed was three days (and late nights) of hillbilly music, noisy argument, starry-eyed reminiscence, faulty memory, fist-pounding certainty, recollections of record reviews and interviews and a lot of generally glorious irreverence and irrelevance the likes of which the Altamont Inn, very likely, never saw before and probably hopes it never will again. And, in the end, after rejecting dozens of brilliant ideas because they were either too silly or too boring, or required too much work or too much space to publish or too much time to prepare, we decided that this issue should be devoted to complete and utter self-indulgence for all us writers and editors. And so it is.

We decided that first, we would invite all the pickers to write us letters-to-the-editors, figuring we'd get lots of pats on the back—which, as you will see, we did. Alas, however, they are still ranting about unfavorable record reviews and misquotes, demanding to be put on the cover, threatening to cancel subscriptions—or really cancelling or complaining that they didn't get their magazine—all the stuff they rant and rave about all the time. You'd think . . . on our anniversary . . .

Second, we decided that each of us would write a personal essay, basically about whatever came to mind on this occasion (you are reading mine). And we would invite the other contributing editors and veteran writers to join in, too.

A seminal meeting: our first Editor Peter McCabe and co-founder/Publisher Jack Killion (in the white hat) with the lady and the outlaw (in the black hat) in New York, early 1973.



Next, we decided, we would feature special portraits, composed of pictures and words, of ten performers. We would choose the ten not because they sold the most records, not because they had the greatest influence on other musicians, not because they drew the biggest crowds on the road, not because they appeared on the most magazine covers (including ours), but because they had the most influence on us, the writers and editors. So we made the list: Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, Waylon Jennings, George Jones, Loretta Lynn, Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley, Hank Williams, and Tammy Wynette. And when we looked back over the three-day Pow Wow, we realized that these artists had dominated our conversation, much as they had dominated the magazine throughout its life. Of course, the list was far from unanimous, but it was a clear consensus. If we had picked the list based on our favorite albums, which is what we decided to do next, we'd get a different picture—and, as you'll see, we did.

Last, we decided to go through all the back issues, pick out our favorite bits and pieces, and sprinkle them around this issue to remind us all of our glorious work.

But, before plunging into our self-indulgent celebration, let's go back to the Pow Wow, so I can fill you in on the gory details of how we thrashed around our ten-year history, and about all those great ideas we came up with but decided not to use. At the beginning we went around the table with

each person telling the story of his or her first connection with *Country Music*, many of which are retold elsewhere in this issue. While these stories were being told, I had some memories of my own . . .

I remembered having lunch in the summer of 1971 with Bruce Lundvall, who was Columbia Records' Marketing Vice President. I had been at Columbia myself from 1964 through 1969, and during 1970 and part of 1971 had been a consultant to *Rolling Stone*, an experience which sparked my desire to have a magazine of my own. So I was trying to get Lundvall's advertising support to back an acquisition and merger of *Ramparts* and *Evergreen Review*. He was lukewarm, but toward the end of the lunch his eyes sparkled when he said, "Why don't you start something we really need and you really know something about?"—a magazine on country music." The rest, as they say, is history.

I remembered going to Nashville, where I already had many friends and business colleagues, for the 1971 CMA Convention, and announcing informally to selected friends that my partners (Jack Killion and Spencer Oettinger) and I were going to start a magazine in New York called *Country Music*. And I remember the polite but amazed reaction—often accompanied by apparent disbelief—with which this news was greeted. I recalled going back to Nashville with Jack and Spencer the next spring, after raising the financing, to look for writers—the first hired was Dixie (Mrs. Tom T.) Hall—and to get ideas. Many wanted to be helpful, but few wanted to be visible. Looking back, it's easy to understand the skepticism of some about these carpetbaggers from New York—never mind that they might have grown up in Texas listening to Hank and Hank and Hank. And I remembered making a big decision following that trip—to look for good writers who happened to be country music fans, rather than asking country music fans to become writers. This seems now to have been the obvious choice, but at the time it was controversial in some quarters, mainly in Nashville, because most of the writers were from Pennsylvania, New York, Texas, England, California, Massachusetts, Florida—almost anywhere *but* Nashville. In any case, the decision was not so much anti-Nashville as it was pro-writer: we set out to find the best, wherever they were. We can thank *Rolling Stone* for its earlier example in covering rock 'n' roll, and for discovering many of those in our writing corps.

The next critical decision we reached was to aim the magazine right at the middle of the traditional country music tree trunk.

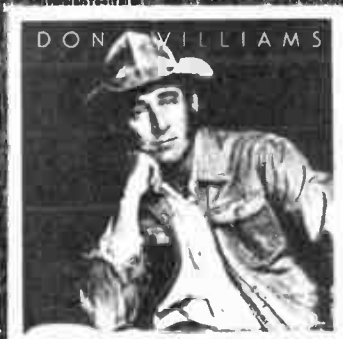
DON WILLIAMS

Especially For You



A beautiful new album from the gentle giant of country music, featuring the smash hit "Miracles"

And don't forget to pick up the hits that made the world believe in Don...



Featuring "Amanda," "We Should Be Together"



Featuring "You're My Best Friend," "Tulsa Time"



Featuring "I Believe In You," "Falling Again"

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"SOUNDS DELICIOUS!"

A lot of subscribers say, "Get the parrot back. At least when you had the parrot we had someone to talk to... how can we talk to the @#%&?\$ computer?"

while also celebrating and exploring the roots and branches. The trunk, we thought then, was represented by the likes of Loretta, Haggard, Cash, Lefty, Tammy and George Jones. (I think we may have learned since that the tree is more roots and branches than trunk, more like a briar patch with roots and branches all entangled—wander in there anywhere and you're liable to get caught.) But the idea of not hanging the magazine from one branch was the key. The temptation was strong to build the magazine out on the country-rock branch, which looked strong at the time. It was attracting hordes of new young fans to country music, and many thought that *that* was where the future action would be. But we believed that any new branch would have to take nourishment from the roots in order to survive, and that new fans would only become long-term readers of *Country Music* if they came to love the same briar patch we did. It wasn't an easy choice then, but now it seems obvious.

And I also remembered how Leonard

Mendelson (now Associate Publisher) was hired as our West Coast advertising representative. Jack Killion looked in the Los Angeles *Yellow Pages* under Advertising Representatives! He found Leonard, and that was a find. Leonard is the only one of us who has been involved with *Country Music* everyday of its life. Hang in there, Leonard!

At the Altamont Inn, we reflected on these things. We amazed ourselves when, looking back, we discovered how much evidence there was at the time that the new rock 'n' roll branch of country music wasn't too far from the trunk and roots. Johnny Cash, we recalled, had always been a champion to many members of the hippy generation because, whether he intended it or not, they identified with his songs of the oppressed and down-trodden... and yes, his wild-spirited celebrations like *Cocaine Blues*. Cash's *Live at Folsom Prison* and *San Quentin* albums had made him the biggest record seller in the country—and plenty of those records were bought by those rock-crazed hippies. By 1970 Cash

had reached out to them: He had sung *Girl from the North Country* with Bob Dylan on Dylan's breathtaking *Nashville Skyline* album, he had pulled Kristofferson out of his janitor's job at Columbia Records by recording *Sunday Morning Coming Down*, and he had written *What Is Truth?*, the most graceful statement any grown-up ever made about those long-haired, rock-and-drug-crazed, anti-war radicals. (Better put that on an album someday, Rick.) I think it was at this point in our reflections that Michael Bane said, "No pictures of you with Johnny Cash in the anniversary issue, Russ," and I think it was John Morthland who raised the point about the strange and mysterious Merle Haggard connection. *Okie from Muskogee* became the anthem for the anti-hippie crowd, and Cash refused Nixon's request to sing it at the White House, yet the hippies loved Haggard.

We praised ourselves for being so astute, always publishing the best writing on the leading edge of change in country music. Like Dave Hickey's piece in the January, 1974 issue titled *In Defense of the Telecaster Cowboy Outlaws*, which was the definitive look at Waylon and Willie and the boys (and, not so incidentally, the first printed use of the term "Outlaws" to describe them). And how about the essay Willie Nelson wrote for us on Bob Wills, or Billy Edd Wheeler's celebration of *The Joy of Pickin'*? In fact, we all agreed, the best approach to our anniversary issue would be to re-publish all these great pieces... *Country Music Magazine's Greatest Hits* we'd call it... and don't forget the stuff we did on Hank Williams... E.T... and Patrick's piece on Waylon... and Morthland's jukebox story... and... and. And that was the problem—too many greatest hits and too little agreement on what they were. Except one point: Dave Hickey. Everyone agreed about Hickey's stuff being great. For a while we gave serious consideration to putting out *Dave Hickey's Greatest Hits*. Startling and brilliant... that's about all you can say about Hickey.

We remembered Michael the Parrot who was the Assistant Circulation Manager. That wasn't a nickname; Michael actually was a parrot. Michael was fired about five years ago when Ian Phillips, our first circulation director, left. A lot of subscribers say, "Get the parrot back. At least when you had the parrot we had someone to talk to... how can we talk to the @#%&?\$ computer?" Well, there were some problems with Michael. Michael liked to sit on Ian's typewriter. After a few months the droppings got so bad that the keys got stuck and the IBM repairman had to come. He was horrified when he saw the



Michael Bane won't let me have a picture of me with Johnny Cash in this issue, so here's Cash and my family: Helen, my wife, who says that country music is the world's most egalitarian art form and who has edited the copy for our next issue so that we could all work on this one; Christopher, age 4, the world's most committed Waylon fan; John, age 6, wearing his hero's belt buckle; and Anne, the only known 10-year-old Patsy Cline fan. Now, to get even with Michael, here's a picture of me and the world's greatest singer, whom I am taking to a desert island (see page 88 for more on that)—Russ Barnard.

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*The Statler Bros. just authored
another glittering album*



*"Years Ago," featuring the hit single,
"Don't Wait On Me"*



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Slim Whitman album
just by reading this page.**

Can't Help Falling In Love With You

I Went To Your Wedding

Flowers

Destiny

Oh My Darlin' (I Love You)

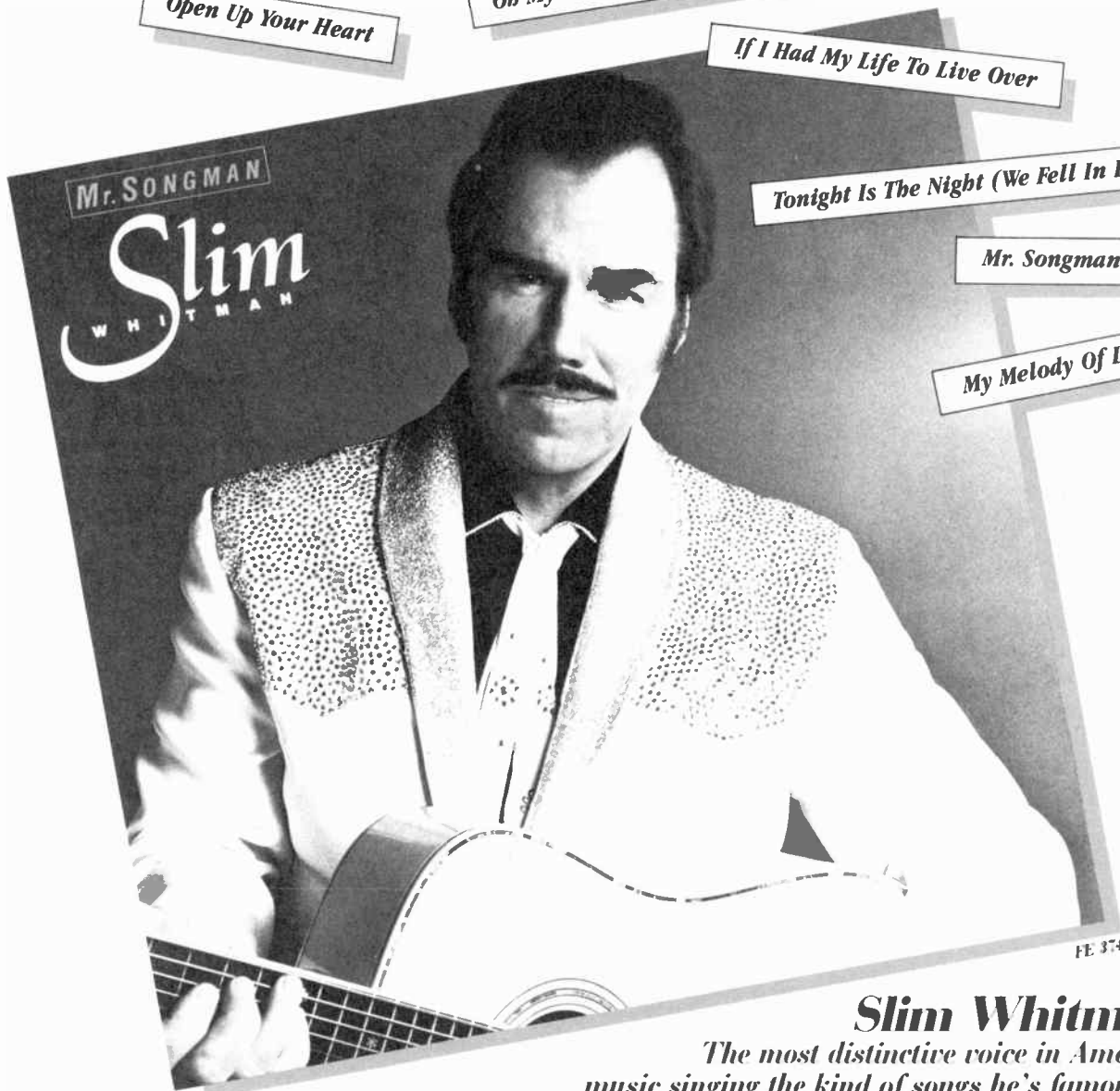
Open Up Your Heart

If I Had My Life To Live Over

Tonight Is The Night (We Fell In Love)

Mr. Songman

My Melody Of Love



FE 37403

Slim Whitman.

*The most distinctive voice in American
music singing the kind of songs he's famous for.*

"Mr. Songman."

It's just as great as you've "heard".

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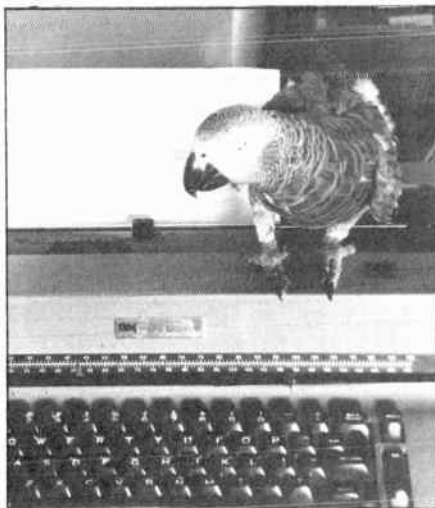
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The Cleveland International Company

machine's innards all cemented together. He cried out, "What in creation is that?" Parrot shit, Richie Erlanger told him. We had to junk the typewriter. Richie, our first and fourth art director, was the only one who liked Michael. Michael liked to walk around the floor of the art department. Whenever Richie got out of his chair, Michael would squawk, "Don't step on Michael."

The Pow Wow was a swirl of complaints, eulogies, predictions and praise for the great pickers, living and dead. "Cross-over," pop, Hollywood, these were the foci of complaint—these and *Sherrillization*. Yes, *Sherrillization*, after Billy Sherrill, that Peck's Bad Boy of the recording studio whose influence was so powerful and pervasive that we had to coin a new term just to deal with him. Billy says we once called his productions "yucky pabulum." (Billy, we searched the back issues and can't find it. Did we *really* say that?) But, in our final analysis, we all agreed that what we remember best about Sherrill is that he produced George Jones's greatest records, which no doubt is the earthly equivalent of producing Gabriel's Trumpeteers. (Better watch out or Sherrill will use them on George's next album.) But I hope Billy appreciates this: The good-natured, ten-year struggle between *Country Music* and Billy Sherrill is the highest compliment we can pay. Only the great are worthy of criticism when they fail to do their best, and so it is with *Sherrillization*. When it's great you have Tammy and Lacy J. and Jones. When it's not great, Sherrill had a bad day, or he didn't have time to find nine more great songs to make an album out of a hit single, or he tried an idea that didn't work—but this doesn't diminish the great ones. Of course, we know that even if Billy understands this, he's still gonna scream whenever we moan.

Sherrill is just an example. None of the great producers and pickers has escaped our criticism. We weren't always right, but, like Sherrill, we try every time.

This magazine, its writers and editors, has always had a clear and consistent bias: We were for tradition and rebellion, and against "crossover pop." We were solidly behind the Outlaws from the beginning, when Nashville wished they'd shave and get haircuts. We were against the Opry moving out of the Ryman Auditorium, even when any sensible person could see that it was a dilapidated fire trap. We didn't like it when Charlie Rich crooned instead of singing the blues, or when Ray Price fired the Cherokee Cowboys and started wearing tuxedos instead of sequined cowboy suits. We didn't mind that Dolly went to Hollywood, but we didn't like it when she stopped writing and started recording watered-down California pop songs (it is a testament to her raw talent that she could make hits out of those songs): Now we love it that she's writing again, and that she's a big star. We



Michael the Parrot, now retired and living in the country with his former boss Ian Phillips, was our first Assistant Circulation Director. Michael was replaced by a computer, but nothing could save the typewriter.

knew she would be—even if she had been flat-chested—because she's got Big Talent.

At the Pow Wow, Michael Bane and I began to talk about how, maybe, we were wrong about revolution. How, we asked ourselves, did we *ever* think of Waylon as a revolutionary? If anything, he is one of the most conservative of the contemporary superstars. Take away those amplifiers, give Waylon and the band acoustic instruments, and he'd sound like Riley Puckett and J.E. Mainer's Mountaineers back in the '30s. Maybe, we said, what seemed so rebellious to Nashville about Waylon and Willie and the boys was the pigtailed and the beards and the, ah, unconventional forms of, ah, recreational stimulation.

Maybe they weren't "outlaws." Maybe they were just "outcasts." And what difference does it make now that they are no longer either? It *does* make a difference, now, that they ushered in, paved the way for, a new generation of pickers close to the roots—John Anderson, Gary Stewart, Gail Davies, Gene Watson, Delbert McClinton, The Kendalls, The Bellamys, John Conlee, Lacy J. Dalton, Ricky Skaggs and many more. Sometimes this new wave, this rebirth of traditional country music, may not seem so important in the midst of the Urban Cowboy Craze, but when the craze is gone (as it will be sooner or later), we'll be left with Emmylou and Charlie Daniels and Moe Bandy and Hank, Jr. and Charley Pride and Jeanne Pruett and Joe Stampley and Bill Monroe (Bill, your new album is a monster, you ole son-of-a-gun) and Merle and Dolly and Cash and Loretta and Marty Robbins and Conway—and remember George Jones: He just had the greatest year of his career, right in the middle of the Urban Cowboy Craze.

So this isn't the end of traditional country music which we, the writers and editors, have constantly bemoaned. It's just the

continuation of the constant and understandable determination of everyone connected with the music *business* to sell more records. And the more records everyone sells, the better off we all are. The only point we hope our friends in the *business* learn from our decade is that you don't have to try to be pop to sell records. That's what the Outlaws showed us.

Back in New York, Michael Bane and Patrick Carr stayed on at the office to help get this issue together. For a while we struggled with putting together a chronology of our decade with clips from back issues to accompany the writer's essays. Too difficult, too much space needed. Then Michael wrote fifteen pages of wonderful history to show what had happened since our first issue. Too much left out, too long, not related to the magazine itself. Twice a day Patrick said, "What we need is a graceful essay (in the morning he said let Cash write it, in the afternoon he wanted Billy Edd Wheeler, by nightfall he'd do it himself) on the soul and beauty of country music—why we're all here." And I kept saying, "Wait till all the essays are in, they may cover it all." And I think they do.

And I also think that they symbolize this magazine's greatest strength—the continuity of its corps of writers and editors in the face of their own personal ups and downs and professional squabbles, and their unwavering addiction to country music (no matter how strongly they may, at times, believe that it is going to the dogs).

In each personal story something fundamental about country music is said. Michael Bane, a reporter's reporter, talks about *The Road*. Patrick writes as a battle-scarred veteran. (Patrick is even physically scarred; I won't say where, but in knowledgeable Nashville circles, he is known as "The Midnight Yodeler.") J.R. Young reports on the never-ending death-of-true-country-music-as-we-have-known-and-loved-it theme. John Morthland connects us back to those dangerous days of yesterday and brings us together for the '80s, following Merle Haggard all the way. Nick Tosches, the King of Country Gonzo, after swearing a thousand times never to write again for *Country Music*, writes us all (including himself) a calm, sweet Happy Birthday. Bob Allen shows us how a country boy ended up in Nashville, while Rochelle Friedman tells us how a girl from the South (South Brooklyn) became a country fan. John Pugh reminds us that we shouldn't take all this too seriously. Rich Kienzle, Doug Green and Art Maher remind us of the Final Truth: After you cover Jimmie Rodgers, Hank, Merle Travis, Bob Nolan and Roy Rogers, everything else is redundant. And Peter Guralnick—bless you, Peter—gets us to Patrick's longing for the graceful note when he shows us how we are all bound together because, finally, we are all fans . . . *Readers, Writers, and Pickers.* —RUSSELL D. BARNARD

To The Editors From The Pickers

In which pickers—musicians, singers, and other country music professionals—join us in celebrating ten years of our lives and theirs.

TOM T. HALL

Mark Twain said: *Wagner's music is better than it sounds.* Mr. Twain had obviously read about Wagner. And so people love to read about music. Now let's get this straight. When we are reading it's not really possible to listen to anything very closely. Why do people like to read about sound? There's no sound in reading. No sound waves, at least. So here we are sitting over a silent printed page reading about music. Makes you feel stupid, right? No.

Loretta Lynn looks like her music. Johnny Cash looks like his music. Tom T. Hall looks like his dog . . . whups, little humor there. Get the point?

So let's salute *Country Music Magazine*. A publication that looks like its readers. It's pretty.

TOM T. HALL



JIMMY CARTER

In the White House I enjoyed having the opportunity to share my love for country music and the value of country music to our nation and to the world.

In my opinion there is no other form of music that has such a heartfelt expression of the intense human yearnings and expressions of love, happiness, sorrow, disappointment, ambition and hope.

There is a special character to country music.

Its forms are ancient — some coming to America from England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and other parts of the world. Yet it is as modern as any newspaper. Based on country-church gospel songs, country music was in the mountains of the southeastern part of the United States before our country was a nation.

As true to the past as a history book, country music has been a part of the life of our nation. And I think it looks to the future with a great deal of anticipation, confidence, and enjoyment.

JIMMY CARTER

THE GLASER BROTHERS

Like most of our peers who have been making great country records for many years, you folks have been writing about the great country records and the people who make the music for the last 10 years. Bravo, and good luck in the next 10 years.

**TOMPALL, CHUCK & JIM
THE GLASER BROTHERS**

LEONA WILLIAMS

When I'm on the road (which is a lot these days), one of the few pleasures is being able to pick up a new copy of *Country Music Magazine* to find out what's going on. I enjoy the stories, and I really like the country recipes. One of these days, I'm going to try them all out on Merle. Congratulations on your 10 years.

LEONA WILLIAMS (Mrs. Merle Haggard)

JOE TALBOT

Thanks to *Country Music Magazine* for publishing a quality publication about country music, especially in the days when "Country Wasn't Cool"!

**JOE TALBOT
PRESIDENT, PRECISION RECORD
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Enter the Monte Alban Mezcal®



Be a Cowboy at Cody's!

You can be the winner of an exciting two-week vacation for two at Bill Cody's Ranch Inn, located in the rugged mountain country of beautiful Wyoming. That's the Grand Prize in Monte Alban's Wild West Vacation Contest.

To enter, all you have to do is answer the two questions on the entry blank and mail it to Monte Alban. You can send as many entries as you like. Additional entry blanks are available on the Monte Alban Contest display at your local liquor store. These are the prizes you'll be eligible to win.

GRAND PRIZE

All expense paid two-week vacation for two at Bill Cody's Ranch Inn. You'll enjoy a real Wild West adventure—complete with horseback riding, river float trip, barbecues, nightly rodeos and more. Cody's is located on the edge of the Shoshone National Forest and is operated by the grandson of one of the Wild West's all-time great cowboys—Buffalo Bill Cody. All expenses are covered, including round-trip airfare, deluxe accommodations, meals and transfers.

1,000 SECOND PRIZES

One thousand people will win a special-edition album by the King of Country and Western Music himself—Willie Nelson. This collector's edition features 20 of Willie's greatest hits, including "Whiskey River," "Born to Lose," and "Help Me Make It Through the Night." This specially made album is not available in stores.

1,000 THIRD PRIZES

One thousand winners will receive a colorful Monte Alban "Eat the Worm" T-shirt. These shirts, with their macho message, have become exceptionally popular during recent months.

Official Rules—No purchase necessary

1. On the official entry form (or a piece of paper 3" x 5") print your name, address and zip code and the answers to the two questions. Enter as often as you like. Each entry must be mailed separately and postmarked no later than December 31, 1981.

2. Mail your entry to: Monte Alban Contest, P.O. Box 6353, Chicago, IL 60677.

3. Winners will be selected in random drawings from among all correct and eligible entries by H. Olsen & Company, an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. Barton Brands reserves the publicity rights to use names and pictures of winners without compensation. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of entries received.

4. Winners will be notified by mail. Prizes are non-transferable, cannot be substituted and limited to one prize per family. Trip must be taken by July 31, 1982.

5. Contest void where prohibited by law. Entrants must be of legal drinking age at time of entry. Officers, employees, representatives and their families of Barton Brands, its affiliated companies, agencies and wholesalers and retailers are not eligible.

Yes, I'd like to enter the Wild West Vacation Contest. I've answered the two questions below.

1. What kind of worm is in the Monte Alban Mezcal Bottle? _____

2. Where is Monte Alban bottled? _____

Name _____ Age _____

(Please Print) Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

My T-shirt size is Small Medium Large X-Large

To be eligible, you must be of legal drinking age under the laws of your home state.

Mail completed form to: Monte Alban Contest, P.O. Box 6353 Dept. CM, Chicago, IL 60677.

© 1981 Monte Alban Mezcal. 80 Proof. Imported exclusively by Stuart Rhodes Ltd., New York, NY. Available in the United States in 750 ml (25.4 oz.) and 500 ml (16.9 oz.) bottles.



Tammy Wynette

September, 1981

Mr. Russell Barnard
Country Music Magazine
475 Park Avenue, South
New York, New York 10016

Dear Russ

You know, I've held a lot of jobs, from waitress to hairdresser, from picking cotton to working in a shoe factory, from babysitter to singer. But when I received an assignment from you to become a correspondent for Country Music Magazine, I felt my resume was finally complete.

Granted, I don't have the same journalism credentials as most who write for your magazine, but I do have one thing over those people. I've sat on the other side through dozens of question and answer sessions these past 15 years.

I've heard that writers do well when they stick to subjects they know best. That's another special qualification I had for the assignment. I knew my subject better than just about anybody.

Interviewing George Jones for a Country Music Magazine cover story this year was unique, to say the least. Through all our good times and bad, we covered a lot of territory. But sitting down with a tape recorder to conduct an "interview" was somethin' else.

Thanks for the job, the byline and the check. I loved it!

Your friend


Tammy Wynette



BELLAMY BROTHERS

The Bellamy Brothers spend about two hundred and seventy-five days a year on the road, and as a result of that, we never get to see your fine magazine on a regular basis.

Fortunately our Grandmother, Katie Cooper,

gets a subscription to *Country Music Magazine* and each time we're home from a tour she brings us up to date on all the back issues.

Grandma says you have the very best magazine in country music. We agree.

DAVID & HOWARD BELLAMY
BELLAMY BROTHERS

DON KING

In all honesty I have probably fought harder and sweated more in the defense of the good name of *Country Music Magazine* than your average artist. There have been hours spent on sun-baked, sparsely-grassed fields with multitudes throwing balls at me with only the slenderest of timber and a modicum of leather with which to defend myself. All because I proudly bore the banner *Country Music Magazine* across my chest. The round objects were hurled and hit by roving gangs with names like the Do-Rites, the Po' Boys and the Twitty Birds. And, lo, they brought many more fans than did we. Each annual clash concluded in defeat for the noble of spirit and weak of bat, us. Yes, for two years I labored under the *Country Music Magazine* crest at the Fan Fair Softball Tournament in Nashville with thousands, even hundreds of fans laughing and pointing. Good thing they weren't sure it was me. Proud though I was to do battle for the Barnard clan, self-esteem was not the only casualty suffered. The best pair of jeans I ever owned are still missing in action.

While on second base, a teammate hit a screaming line drive down the left field line. I, of course, streaked toward third. I knew it would be close so I set to slide. It was a beautiful hooking slide away from the ball! I was sure the left fielder had fired into the third baseman. As the dust settled, I looked up in smug satisfaction at a bewildered third baseman. Lifting myself smirkingly out of the diamond dirt to the thunderous applause of the adoring fans, my world was shattered at the ump's declaration, "FOUL BALL!!!" Dragging dejectedly back to second, my back turned to the jeering mob, I pounded the dirt from my pants. It was then I discovered the really bad news: I had left most of the rear of my pants at third and this was only the second inning. Recognizing the need to mask the exposure, I wheeled immediately to face the fans and backed into place at second. The inning ended as I was thrown out at home (do you have any idea how difficult it is to run sideways? I looked like a vaudeville act leaving the stage as I ran toward home trying not to give away my secret).

Alas, Russ, I'd do it all again if ever called on. This year *Billboard* and *Country Music Magazine* writer Kip Kirby called on me to joust in their behalf. The outcome was the same, though I no longer slide. But I'm a free-agent now, Russ. Call me. Write. Telex. Send smoke signals. The jersey's still clean. I'll do good for you. Put me in, coach!

DON KING

P. S. Actually none of this happened. I split my pants before we started. But congratulations on ten years of being the best there is!!!

SYLVIA

Just after a recent national television appearance, my husband and I were eating in a cafe in Texarkana, Arkansas, when the cashier approached me and said, "You know, you look just like a country western singer I saw on TV the other night." I said, "Oh really? Who was it?" And she said "SYBIL." I convinced her that I was Sylvia.

Since the recent *Country Music Magazine* article by Bob Campbell, most people know that I'm not SYBIL!

Good luck with the next ten years!

SYLVIA

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Yesterday And Today

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RAY PRICE/Born To Lose

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JANIE FRICKE/Playin' Hard To Get

JOHNNY DUNCAN/You're Gonna Need A Man
JOHNNY DUNCAN/It Couldn't Have
Been Any Better

JOHNNY CASH/Understand Your Man
JOHNNY CASH/Gone Girl



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3240/K265

Country Music has grown and changed... but the honesty, the humor, and the heartfelt emotion remain. Now, you can enjoy the best of both Country music worlds... *the old and the new.*

Thanks to this unique Columbia House musical treasure, you can own 30 favorites of yesterday right along with 30 of the smash hits that have set the pace in Country music today!

You won't find this kind of collection anywhere else! It's called *Country Music—Then & Now*—and it gives you dozens of your favorite classics, like Sonny James's 1956 "Young Love," Ray Price's "Heartaches By The Number," Charlie Rich's "On My Knees," Tammy Wynette's "Stand By Your Man" and lots more. Plus, it gives you dozens of today's super hits by superstars like Johnny Paycheck — "Friend, Lover, Wife" — Cristy Lane — "Let Me Down Easy," — Johnny Duncan — "It Couldn't Have Been Any Better" — and Tammy Wynette and George Jones's duet "Southern California."

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Imagine owning one single fabulous collection that lets you enjoy 30 Country classics right alongside of 30 of today's smash Country hits! Best of all, you can listen to this stunning chronicle of Country music as our guest — absolutely free — for 10 days. If you're not convinced that this unique treasure belongs in your own collection, then just send it back and owe nothing. Keep it and it's yours to enjoy while you pay in convenient monthly installments, with no interest or finance charge.

Important. *Country Music—Then & Now* is not available in stores anywhere. It's not being offered on TV. You can only get this exciting Country music treasury direct-by-mail through this special offer.

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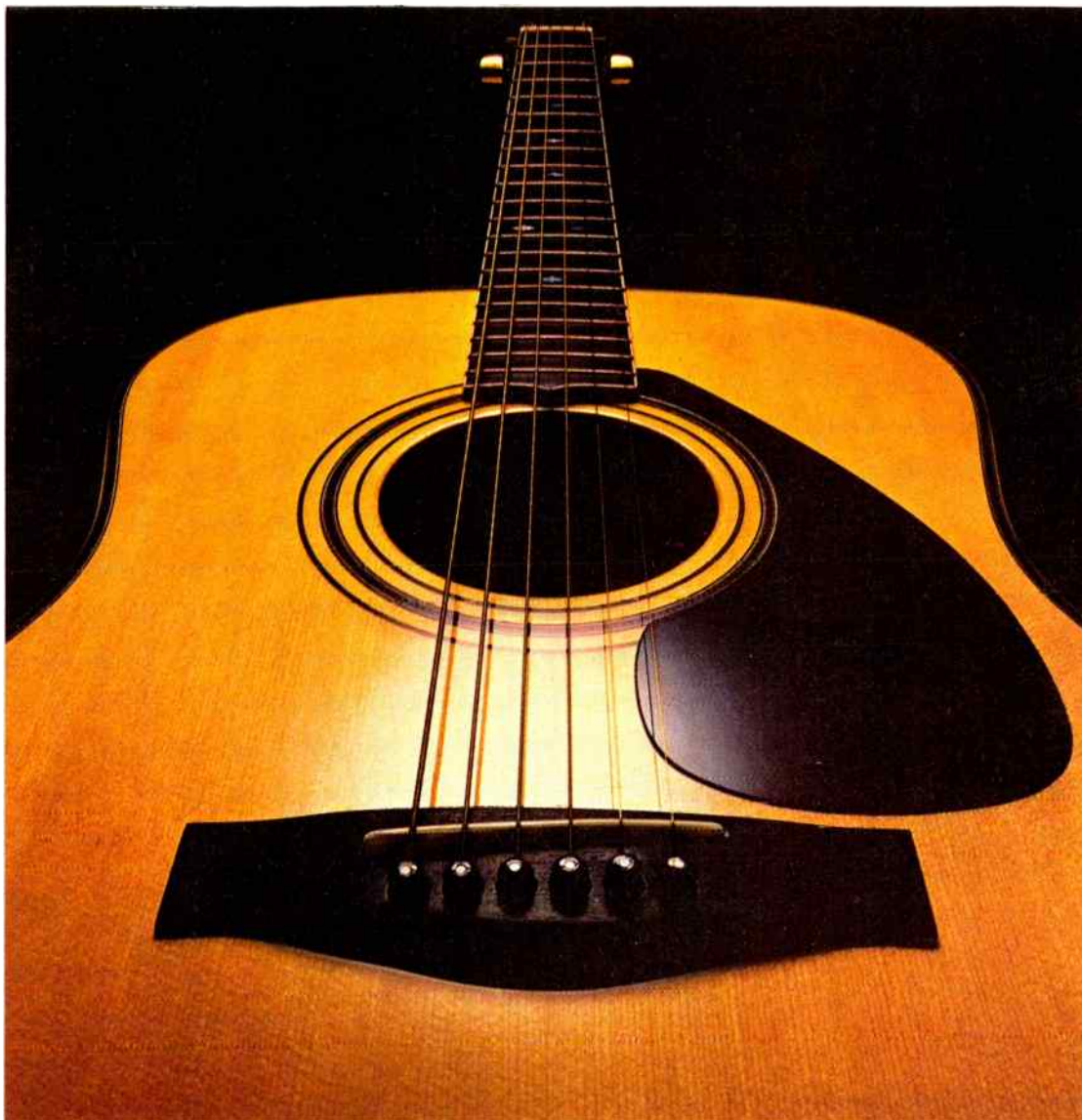
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Just for listening to COUNTRY MUSIC— THEN & NOW, you get this Free extra record or tape... to keep! It features 10 more big Country hits by 10 exciting Country performers from yesterday and today!

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Someone I Love
MARTY ROBBINS/ Devil Woman
JOHNNY CASH/ I Walk The Line
CARL PERKINS/ Pointed Toe Shoes
JOHNNY DUNCAN/ Sweet Country Woman
TAMMY WYNETTE/ Good
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But time passes and so does that feeling. So you move on to another guitar. And another. And another.

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For more information, write: Yamaha Musical Products, A Division of Yamaha International Corp., Box 7271, Grand Rapids, MI 49510.



BARBARA MANDRELL

You were country when country wasn't cool—and there's a lot of us who can really appreciate that.

As an entertainer who often appears in your magazine, I'm aware of the overall accuracy and honesty in your reporting and story-telling. And, since what you say about me seems so fair, I can assume—as a reader—that the high standards extend to the rest of the contents.

Although readers may assume that all country music artists know everything there is to know about each other, that's not true. We're all so busy, in and out of Nashville, that although we know each other, it's difficult to keep in touch. And that's where *Country Music Magazine* comes in: The way we, the entertainers, learn what our friends and everyone else is doing is to read magazines like yours—and knowing that the portrayals are truthful makes it that much more enjoyable.

Because your magazine is of such high quality, I love to save it. I keep a scrapbook and find it just downright amusing to turn back the pages. Even in ten years, my hairstyles and clothes have changed so much that it's fun and funny to see the differences—in my friends, as well.

Of course, saving your articles has its hazards, too. There's nothing more embarrassing than having a record of yourself saying something like, "No, I will absolutely never do a television series!" and then, just a short year or two later...

I also appreciate that you seem to stay on top of everything going on in country music. You



Barbara when country wasn't cool.

give a fair shake to everyone, including newcomers. I remember a time when I wasn't where I am today, but *Country Music Magazine* still cared enough to be there with me.

Enough roses! I have one bone to pick. Sometimes reading your record reviews makes me feel—as Loretta would say—meaner than a dadgum ole bear! If I have an album coming out, I worry about what you're going to say—I worry out of sheer fear! But I must admit, if the review is good, I'll kind of leave the magazine open to it, lying around for people to see—but if it's bad I'll sure hide it!

Anyway, congratulations on your tenth year, and I wish you many more good ones.
BARBARA MANDRELL.

GLENN SNODDY

As you are celebrating 10 years in this wild, crazy and always wonderful world of country music, we are celebrating our 14th year of cutting country hits at Woodland Sound Studios. So we congratulate you and your contributions to an art form that can have a most positive influence in our world today.

1981 promises to be the best year ever for big hit records from Woodland. Already *Elvira* by the Oak Ridge Boys, *I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool* by Barbara Mandrell, *Rest Your Love on Me* by Conway Twitty, *Am I Losing You* by Ronnie Milsap, *Fire and Smoke* by Earl Thomas Conley and *It's A Lovely, Lovely World* by Gail Davies, just to mention a few, are big chart hits and there are more to come.

We have cut digital sessions on Paul Williams and I even have a pair of digital dogs at home. Yes—believe it or not we have two poodles, one black and one white, named FLIP & FLOP! So how's that for being first?

Here's hoping your next 10 years prove as successful as the first.

GLENN SNODDY
PRESIDENT
WOODLAND SOUND STUDIOS

BURRITO BROTHERS

Congratulations on your decade in print; it doesn't seem that long. The work you and your staff have done promoting country music has been excellent and we hope you will be around for another decade.

BURRITO BROTHERS

JERRY CLOWER

Congratulations on 10 great years.
I hope you do it good—1000 more years.

JERRY CLOWER



CONWAY TWITTY

Just a short note to congratulate you and your staff on your tenth anniversary! Country music has come a long way in the past ten years and I'm proud to be a part of it. The efforts put forth by all of you have helped with this.

I know I've gotten a lot out of country music and I consider myself a lucky guy to be doing something I love to do and making a good living at it. My friends, such as all of you, have helped me be able to do this. The fans, too, have been a big part in my career. I'm now in the process of trying to give something in return. Construction is underway for "Twitty City," an eight-acre site that will include my museum, offices, souvenir record shop, my four children's homes and my home. This is all a part of Music Village, USA, a 28-acre tourist attraction that will eventually house offices, shops and museums of other country music entertainers. I want the fans to be able to come and enjoy what they have helped to create and to know how much I appreciate their constant support!

Again, congratulations on your tenth anniversary! Keep up the super job you're doing.
CONWAY TWITTY

DAVID ALLAN COE

Congratulations on your 10th Anniversary issue of *Country Music Magazine*. I've been with you since you started and all in all there have been many things written about me in your magazine. Some I liked and some I didn't (bad reviews). But I always felt you were fair and that's hard in this business.

You'll always have my support.

DAVID ALLAN COE
& FAMILY



A very odd couple: Coe & Anderson.

BILL ANDERSON

I have tried very hard to come up with something clever or something poignant to say to you on the occasion of your 10th birthday, even to the extent of going back and pulling out some of your old issues to remind myself of who you are and where you have been this past decade.

Country music has grown and changed a lot over the past 10 years and I realize now, as have you. You are a much more mature magazine than you were in the beginning; you are cleaner, crisper, and a clearer reflection of the music and the lifestyle you mirror.

I guess we all like to think we improve with age, and like a good wine, you certainly have.

May the next 10 years be as good to you—and to all of us in the country music industry—as the past 10 have been. Everybody at my house is whispering you a very Happy Birthday!

WHISPERING BILL ANDERSON

P.S. If you're so great, how come my "Question & Answer" column appears every month in your competition???

JIM FOGLESONG

Having just celebrated my own 10th Anniversary of total involvement with country music, I feel that *Country Music Magazine* and I have grown up, gone to school and, hopefully, matured together.

I wouldn't trade anything for the excitement and associations made during this decade which saw millions of people jump on the country music bandwagon.

I sincerely believe that *Country Music Magazine*, with its classy look and contemporary concepts, has made a significant contribution toward the growing acceptance of country music.

Congratulations, *Country Music Magazine*! Keep up the good work and I'll write again in 1996.

JIM S. FOGLESONG
PRESIDENT, NASHVILLE DIVISION
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ED SALAMON

When WHN changed format to become New York City's first full-time country music station in 1973, it had a neighbor in the new *Country Music Magazine*, both pioneers in promoting country music in America's most urban market.

In the past decade, Madison Avenue advertisers as well as broadcast networks and the print media community headquartered in New York have been exposed to country music through our efforts, and both *Country Music Magazine* and WHN have grown in turn as this national media has publicized country music throughout America.

Congratulations on your anniversary! WHN is proud of the success of our New York country neighbors.

EDWARD R. SALAMON
PROGRAM DIRECTOR, WHN

JEANNE PRUETT



Congratulations *Country Music Magazine*!

Russ, has it been only ten years since the magazine was founded? It seems to me as though we've never been without it. The great stories and articles the staff has put together over the past ten years are without exception the best and are the reason you are the Number One publication in America. Thanks to you and all the hard working folks at *Country Music Magazine* for every mention of me, my writing, performing and records. Your fans are like mine: they love country music and your magazine.

Years of continued success to *Country Music Magazine*.

JEANNE PRUETT

MERLE KILGORE

My personal congratulations for the excellence in which you have displayed the work of our arts to the world during the past ten years.

I well remember as I go back to my scrapbook (yes, I keep one) and read the first edition of your magazine and recall with great joy and excitement that an article was published about me in the first issue of *Country Music Magazine*. There I was, "The Boogie King" of country music with a *full head of hair*.

As I return the first issue back to the scrapbook, I mentally scan and remember the past ten years and what has happened to country music. Well, of course, books can and will overlook the most important aspect of country music history—the second coming of the cowboy hat.

Yes, thank God, just in time for my head and many other of my fellow entertainers who started noticing in Polaroid and Instamatic snapshots that the years were showing not only

in our faces, but also on our heads.

There were frantic trips to hair stylists who parted the hair just above the ear and then swept it over to cover that horrible *shining, egobusting bald spot*. After a while the hair stylist would suggest an expensive hair piece. Then everyone would tell you, "It looks so natural," only to see eyebrows raised and hear the snickering of the audience as you performed outside on a very windy day when you felt something flapping in the wind; gone was the natural look.

Then the outlaw music came in and hallelujah! so did the return of the cowboy hat. Now, the hat solved the entertainers' problems of thinning hair and bald spots. The hell with hair pieces, hair transplants, and back combing. Go natural and put your hat on, never ever to take it off in public again.

God bless you, Russ, your staff and of course all your readers.

MERLE KILGORE

JERRY BAILEY

It's hard to believe your magazine is ten years old now; it seems only yesterday I was a reporter for Nashville's morning paper, and Peter McCabe and Jack Killion were sitting across my desk trying to convince me to write a story about this new magazine they were starting. I was skeptical. Who ever heard of a limey and a yankee starting a country magazine in New York City? I never did write that particular story, but later they convinced me to contribute a few words to your magazine, most of which were published between 1973 and '75.

I still feel pangs of embarrassment when I remember how I blushed over Dolly Parton. There is no use denying she snowed me, even though my journalistic training kept nagging me to be objective. I knew I was just another nosey reporter to her, but it was so amazing and flattering when she recognized me months later and even hugged me backstage at the Opry—in front of my date! Man, my smile was as big as... well, you know how it felt! Next, there was that road trip with a gospel group called the Oak Ridge Boys. I thought it was so scandalous that a gospel group didn't wear underwear when they performed. Of course, the fans never knew the difference, but the Oaks felt it made them better entertainers, or something like that. After my trip with them, they called and asked me not to mention that they had enjoyed a few beers on the bus. They felt their fans wouldn't understand. I guess I let them off easy with that story, but am glad I did since nowadays I work for their record company.

I had no idea in those days that I would ever work for a record company. But looking back on the last decade, I feel very fortunate to have been in a position to watch great entertainers like Barbara Mandrell and the Oaks rise from relative obscurity to superstardom—and to have been a small part of it. Likewise, I am proud to have once been a part of your staff, and to have observed the growth and maturing of your magazine. I really never felt worthy of writing for *Country Music Magazine*; the other stories seemed so much better than my own. I did it anyway, because, among other reasons, I needed the money in those days. As much as I enjoyed writing for you, I'm glad I don't have to freelance anymore, because I understand you haven't given your writers a raise in ten years!

JERRY BAILEY
DIRECTOR OF PUBLICITY &
ARTIST DEVELOPMENT
MCA RECORDS/NASHVILLE

JO WALKER

It is with great pleasure that I write, on behalf of the more than 5,700 members of the Country Music Association, to congratulate *Country Music Magazine* on the occasion of its tenth anniversary.

Country Music Magazine's tremendous success exemplifies the increasing popularity of country music during the past decade and the growing impact it has had on our national culture.

In 1971 there were only 525 radio stations programming country music full-time in the United States; this year there are over 1,785 full-time country stations, a phenomenal 240% increase in just ten years.

Your publication has been a major influence in "spreading the word" about country music throughout the world, and we commend you for the fair, positive posture you have always taken on behalf of the music and the industry.

Best wishes for many, many years of continued success.

MRS. JO WALKER-MEADOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

T.G. SHEPPARD

Congratulations to you, *Country Music Magazine*, on your 10th anniversary! The past ten years have seen fantastic growth in country music. I for one feel that your contribution to country music through your publication has been one of the main factors in the explosion of country music in the past years.

My views on country music probably do not differ from that of my fellow artists and peers within the industry. I am terribly excited that country music is finally getting what it's due. My own theory of what's happening in country music is that there is finally something for everyone, i.e. gospel, traditional, contemporary, bluegrass, and what's commonly known as country crossover.

It would take many more words for me to express what's happening in country music, so I'll just end by saying I'm damned proud to be a part of it.

Here's to your continuing success.

T. G. SHEPPARD

SONNY CURTIS

On your 10th anniversary, let me say it has been a pleasure to watch your success. Having been in this crazy business for more than 20 years, I find *Country Music Magazine* a refreshing, well-written look at the best form of music in the world, and I look forward to your next 10 years. Congratulations.

SONNY CURTIS



SAM LOVULLO

Hee-Haw has been on TV for 13 years. *Country Music Magazine* is not very far behind. Keep up the good work, for the two of us will go on forever—as leaders in our respective fields.

SAM LOVULLO
PRODUCER

Be your own boss with your own small-engine repair business.

NRI shows you how to service and repair mowers, tillers, snow blowers, chain saws, outboards, garden tractors, mopeds, motorcycles, and dozens more. Then shows you how to start and run your own business.

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SAM PHILLIPS



Our November '73 issue paid tribute to Sam Phillips, who founded Sun Records.

I've enjoyed *Country Music Magazine* from its first edition. I have especially looked forward to the mini-biographical sketches of the many country music artists, writers, creators, and entrepreneurs you have covered so tastefully and informatively.

Country Music is a class publication of which I know you are proud.

My personal congratulations on the big tenth!
SAM PHILLIPS

DONNA FARGO

It is my pleasure to congratulate you and your staff on your tenth anniversary. *Country Music Magazine* is one of the first publications I became aware of after I got into this business and I continue to read it regularly.

Here's wishing you continued good fortune as you attempt to fulfill the responsibility of providing good reading material on the people in our business, always maintaining a quality of writing and standard of communication commensurate with the success you have enjoyed in the past.

Happy Tenth Anniversary!
DONNA FARGO

MAE BOREN AXTON

Congratulations on your "10th" Anniversary for *Country Music*, a publication that has become a "must" on my reading list!

As a pop, rock songwriter, who came to write, but more than that, to love country music so much some 28 years ago, I am personally grateful to you for the in-depth portrait studies of country music personalities that you present to people the world over.

As the Director of my own Public Relations Firm, but mostly as one who cares, I have worked closely through the years with many of the great superstars of country music, such as Jerry Reed, Hank Snow, Dolly Parton, Elvis, Tompall Glaser, Sonny James, Kenny Rogers, and I've been encouraging and tub-thumping as a friend for many others, such as Mel Tillis, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash, Kelli Warren, Barbara Mandrell, and including my own son, Hoyt.

I have seen country music come from the days when the artists' wives or friends would go into town ahead of the artist, rent a hall or school auditorium, nail placards around the town and country-side, to play for whatever crowd they could muster—from that to the current good times when country music is all over the TV and movie screens, and is the *one* most listened-to music in the world. It makes me proud to have been a small part of it, and proud to know your publication is helping its progress.

MAE BOREN AXTON
PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT

IRVING WAUGH

You and your magazine certainly are due congratulations—they are well deserved. Ten years is both a long time and the flicker of an eyelid. Country music had momentum a decade ago, but now there's movement and expansion and excitement that the most sanguine of us would not have dared predict.

Ten years ago a Kristofferson was just being recognized as a country writer and only the daft could have imagined him on the silver screen starring with a Streisand. The era of the superstars—the Dollys and the Willies—was hardly a gleam in an agent's eye. You and your associates were either gifted with a remarkable prescience, or you were lucky as hell. Some learned chap said that "information has become the world's fastest growing and most important business." If that is true, you are riding the right horse and are sitting the saddle well.

All the best for the next ten.

IRVING WAUGH
I.W. PRODUCTIONS

THE STATLER BROTHERS

Congratulations on your 10 years of contribution to country music.

Your treatment and coverage of our industry has been an asset that has benefited us all. You have provided an angle never before explored and have nurtured it to the successful rank it now enjoys.

We salute you. You keep providing the words and we'll keep providing the music.

God bless you in all you do.

THE STATLER BROTHERS



The Statlers also send greetings from their friends Lester "Roadhog" Moran and his Cadillac Cowboys, sometime *Country Music* contributors.

RONNIE McDOWELL

I would like to add my congratulations to the list on *Country Music Magazine's* 10th year anniversary.

I certainly do appreciate your contributions to the music world. Just keep up the good work!

Let's look for brighter things ahead for all in the world of country music.

RONNIE McDOWELL

MEL McDANIEL

Congratulations to *Country Music Magazine* on their big tenth year anniversary. *Country Music Magazine* will always be one of my favorite publications because they have been so good to me in the past. I was fortunate to win the Bullet Award in 1978, plus several good articles have been written about me and have kept me in touch with the fans. I believe that country music is definitely the music of the '80s and I know that *Country Music Magazine* will have a big part in it.

Again, congratulations to the staff of a great publication! Let's all stay countryfied!!

MEL McDANIEL

TANDY RICE

On behalf of the artists and staff of Top Billing and as this year's president of the Country Music Association, we would like to be among the first to send up flares in honor of *Country Music Magazine* for your first 10 years of publication.

Country Music Magazine has consistently offered its readers well-planned and comprehensive articles about the country side of show business, and that puts your publication on a level we are all proud of.

This has been a decade of tremendous accomplishments in the industry and it has held great challenges for us all.

Congratulations to *Country Music Magazine* for being a Survivor!

TANDY RICE, JR.
CHAIRMAN & PRESIDENT
TOP BILLING, INC.

CHARLES SCULLY

Congratulations to *Country Music Magazine* on its tenth anniversary and best wishes for the next 100 years or more. I'm old enough to remember not only the premiere issue of *Country Music Magazine*, but the many years that preceded it, when there was truly no publication of its size and stature in the industry. You and your staff have done much to promote country music throughout the world and to give it the recognition it deserves with a well-thought-out polished publication that is a credit to the industry as a whole.

I'm proud to be a longtime member of the Country Music Association's Board of Directors and an even longer-time member of the legions of country fans who read *Country Music Magazine* cover to cover each issue. As our good friend Barbara Mandrell has so aptly put it in her latest release, "I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool..." As a New Yorker, I'm particularly proud of that and even prouder that publications like *Country Music Magazine* have helped make country "Cool."

Again, my congratulations and best wishes for continued success.

CHARLES SCULLY
VICE PRESIDENT,
SESAC INC.

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Hohner understands.



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HANK WILLIAMS, JR.

I've been making records since I was 14 years old, and so far I've made 41 of 'em. During that time, ya'll have been on the scene for 10 years—where were you when I was 14? It's good to see a magazine with as much lasting power as I've got.

HANK WILLIAMS, JR.

RODNEY CROWELL

Congratulations on your 10th Anniversary Issue.

It was about ten years ago that my friend Donovan Cowart and I first hit Nashville in his old '65 Chevy, expecting to walk into Capitol Records where a ten-year recording contract was supposedly waiting for us. This we were told by a smooth-talking record producer of sorts who had found us and recorded some very crude demos on us. Needless to say, Capitol Records had never heard of any singing duo from Houston named Rodney & Donovan, nor had they ever heard of any record producer whose name I won't mention. Foolishly, we had spent all our money buying guitars, thinking all would be taken care of when we got to Nashville. It didn't seem very funny at the time and the first year or two was pretty tough, but now I look back and see those times as the stuff that fond memories are made of.

When I moved to California in 1975, country music was just bubbling under the surface of

BOB AUSTIN

Happy 10th Anniversary. *Country Music Magazine* has contributed greatly to the growth of country music. Best wishes for continued success.

BOB AUSTIN
PUBLISHER EMERITUS
RECORD WORLD

BUDDY KILLEN

Over the past ten years, it has been a real thrill for me to see articles on artists I have been associated with, either as a publisher or producer, in the pages of your magazine. Not only this, but your magazine has been a constant source of news and information which has kept me in tune with current happenings in the music industry.

I compliment you on the quality you have maintained throughout your ten-year history and will continue to look forward to receiving your magazine each month for many more years to come.

Country Music has certainly become a publication that can stand beside any magazine on the market. I wish you many years of continued success.

BUDDY KILLEN
PRESIDENT, TREE INTERNATIONAL

broader acceptance. Or I should say Willie, Waylon and John Travolta hadn't hit yet. So I became a subscriber to your magazine so I could keep up with what was going on back on ol' Music Row. In my early days in L.A., I got most of my country information from *Country Music Magazine* and the Thursday night talent contest out at the Palomino Club in North Hollywood, which is still one of your better entertainment values around Southern California.

So, in looking back over the last ten years in country music, as a fan I have to say that *Country Music Magazine* has been what I consider consistently the best publication to be found on the subject of country music and its people.

Personally, I view the past ten years as a springboard to the next twenty, so I'm looking forward to the future with new resolve.

RODNEY CROWELL

P.S. I have to say that I cancelled my subscription to your magazine shortly after I read what I thought was an unfair review of my first record album.



THE OAK RIDGE BOYS

It seems that these days country music can't do anything wrong, and I think the main reason for its widespread acceptance can be summed up in one word—quality.

Country Music Magazine has been a main source of quality in country music reporting since its inception ten years ago. And all of the Oak Ridge Boys look to the future as we all grow together.

JOE BONSAALL
FOR WILLIAM LEE GOLDEN,
RICHARD STERBAN AND DUANE ALLEN
THE OAK RIDGE BOYS

JOHN CONLEE

I'd like to be among the many fans of country music and *Country Music Magazine* to congratulate you on your tenth anniversary! I also want you to know that the interview which ran in *Country Music Magazine* last fall garnered more response from our fans than several other interviews in other publications combined.

I've been involved in country music either full- or part-time for about 7 of the last 10 years. It's been a little over 3 years since we had our first hit with *Rosecolored Glasses*. I've noticed many changes in country music and its audience just in the 3 years I've been traveling the country singing my songs. We've experienced the "cowboy" craze & the "outlaw" fad and these have served to expand the audience for country music immeasurably. Thanks to the "fads", country music has been popularized in movies and on TV, attracting a younger audience than ever before. I'm thankful for this expansion because when the fads fade away, I think most of the new country music listeners will stick with it. And the reason is simple. It's because the music is good and because it relates to the people who are listening to it.

Again, my congratulations on your last 10 years and best wishes for the next decade of country music and *Country Music Magazine!*

JOHN CONLEE

JOHN JAY HOOKER

Congratulations on your Tenth Anniversary. I read where *Country Music Magazine* increased its circulation over 38%, which makes it the fastest growing magazine in America today. I will recollect your telling me this would happen a couple of years ago. Congratulations on the vision and the talent it takes to make such a prediction come true.

JOHN JAY HOOKER

WESLEY ROSE

Heartiest congratulations on your 10th anniversary. I find your magazine informative, colorful, and interesting. Each publication makes its rounds from office to office here at Acuff-Rose and we all look forward to each issue.

Best wishes for continue growth and success.

WESLEY H. ROSE
PRESIDENT,
ACUFF-ROSE PUBLICATIONS, INC.



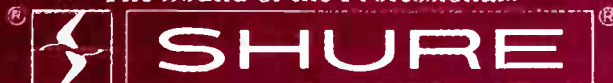
Rodney Crowell, subscription canceller, with the clan: Carlene Carter, wife Rosanne Cash, and Rosie Nicks.

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in September 1972 right thru last month's edition with Burt Reynolds. Virtually everyone who was ever a headliner is included, making this the most unique poster of alltime. Only a small quantity of posters have been printed, making this a limited edition that could very well grow in value in just a short time. So don't waste a minute, order your copy right away. You'll be glad you did.

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CHIP PEAY

On behalf of Ricky Skaggs, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and *Country Music Magazine* for your support in launching his career as a solo artist. Rich Kienzle's article entitled "Ricky Skaggs. A Superpicker takes a shot at Superstardom" (June, 1981 issue) is one of the best I've read in quite a while. It is the interest your magazine takes in new artists and career development that keeps the country music recording industry booming.

Thank you for the past ten years of work that has brought country music to the forefront in America's entertainment industry.

CHIP PEAY
CHIP PEAY ENTERPRISES

BARRIE BERGMAN

Congratulations on your 10th anniversary! Your book's excellent literary style and journalistic integrity have been a breath of fresh air in the music business. You were one of the very first areas of writing to accept country music as a serious art form, and in light of recent events you should be proud of your leadership. Country music is one of the very best selling types of music in our chain and your magazine has certainly helped make this come about.

Best wishes for many continued years of success.

BARRIE BERGMAN
THE RECORD BAR

JOHN D. LENTZ

My heartiest congratulations on the 10th Anniversary of *Country Music Magazine*.

As W.H. Auden once said:
"It takes little talent to see clearly what lies under one's nose, a good deal of it to know in what direction to point that organ."

Russ, you point well.
With best wishes and kindest personal regards.
JOHN D. LENTZ

BISHOP SYKES

Please accept our congratulations on your 10th Anniversary of successful business and important contribution to country music. We wish you many years of continued success.

BISHOP M. SYKES AND ASSOCIATES
EXCLUSIVE AGENT FOR MARTY ROBBINS

LOUIS B. ROBIN

I wish to congratulate *Country Music Magazine* on ten years of outstanding coverage of the country music industry. I have been deeply involved in observing the growth of country music on a worldwide level during my twelve years with Johnny Cash as well as promotion of many other country stars. It has been really incredible to watch country music catch on in so many nations and to see local bands all the way from Australia to Israel emulate this truly American sound.

As you and I discussed in the past, the further exposure of *Country Music Magazine* throughout the world can do nothing but help such a great industry to flourish and grow larger than anyone's expectations.

Here's looking forward to the 20th, 30th, 40th anniversaries, etc.

LOUIS B. ROBIN
PRESIDENT
ARTIST CONSULTANTS, INC.

LORETTA JOHNSON

We would like to take this opportunity to say a big "CONGRATULATIONS!" to all of you at *Country Music Magazine* for ten years of tremendous work in covering the world of country music!

During this same ten-year period, Fan Fair (another big plus for the country music business) was launched and has become the major event for all of us involved in the business in any way . . . whether as fans, artists, publicity agents, bookers, talent managers, record labels or the print/broadcast media.

We are, of course, delighted to be a part of the Fan Fair scene in Nashville each year and take particular pride in our annual International Fan Club Organization Dinner, Show and New Country Showcase . . . which drew a near-capacity house in the Municipal Auditorium this year (June 10, 1981) . . . our 14th Annual presentation!

We also are Fan Fair Exhibitors every year (with IFCO and the Loretta Lynn Fan Club booths) and are happy to work side-by-side with other fan clubs and publications such as *Country Music Magazine*! You are to be commended for taking an active part in THE fan event of the year. We're pleased to see that you're keeping your finger on the pulse of the fans as well as the industry!

And we hope all of us who read *Country Music Magazine* regularly will be blessed with many more years of interesting, accurate and entertaining reporting!

LORETTA JOHNSON
FOR THE WHOLE JOHNSON GANG
(LOU DILLA, LORETTA & KAY)
INTERNATIONAL FAN CLUB
ORGANIZATION
LORETTA LYNN INTL. FAN CLUB
TRI-SON PROMOTIONS & NEWS

EDDY RAVEN

Being somewhat of a newcomer (if you call 10 years in the business a newcomer), I've always enjoyed reading *Country Music Magazine*. I hope that before the next 10 years come and go I will be on your cover. Seriously, best of luck to you all, and keep that fine magazine coming. It's Number One on our bus.

EDDY RAVEN

LEONARD MENDELSON

We have been together now for almost 10 years and these have been 10 of the most exciting, fun-filled years of my life.

Working with the wonderful people in the country music industry has been a thrill I will never forget.

Watching our magazine grow from just a dream to a respected position as the world's largest lifestyle, music magazine makes me proud, and happy, to be associated with such a wonderful publication and our beloved country music.

Thank you for the opportunity of working with you and thank you to all of my friends in the music, advertising, publishing and business world for helping me in my work with *Country Music*.

Best wishes, and here is looking forward to many, many more years together.

LEONARD MENDELSON
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

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DON WILLIAMS

When I think of *Country Music Magazine*, I recall an almost catastrophic cover photo session for you people that happened in Nashville.

It started out to be a simple thing. Leonard Kamsler flew in from New York to shoot, and he asked me to stand there and hold a sparkler.

Those things don't stay going for too long, so we had to light one after another in order to get a series of shots. Sparks were flying and all of a sudden things got a little out of control when the paper backdrop suddenly caught on fire. You could say it was becoming a real "hot" session.

We scrambled to get the fire out. After jumping around on the backdrop to stomp it out, things settled down, but in the cover picture you can see flames from that fire off on the left hand side.

It sure was a good thing Leonard didn't want to use cherry bombs.

DON WILLIAMS

MERLE HAGGARD

Ten years? Has it been ten years? I must have dozed off. Seriously speaking, when I think about country music writers, these three come to mind: Jack Hurst, who is also a fellow bass fisherman; Paul Hemphill and his assorted characters; and Peter Guralnick, whom we tried to lose for two days in Meridian, but couldn't, so we did the interview. They have done some great work, and I hope they and your magazine continue.

MERLE HAGGARD

JERRY FLOWERS

Congratulations on making it ten years! I would comment on the great content of the magazine, but I cancelled my subscription when you started running cigarette advertising. Incidentally, I hear that the uncoated center pages make great papers, though I would think the ink would make it a bit bitter.

JERRY FLOWERS
MANAGER, ARTIST DEVELOPMENT
RCA, NASHVILLE

P. S. Do you think you could get *Car & Driver* to do a project car and give away a Nashville bus?

After we fired Flowers as a writer, his reputation was so tarnished that he was forced to seek unemployment as a major record company executive, which continues to this day. Executives get free subscriptions, so now you know why he really cancelled.—Ed.

RAZZY BAILEY

Thinking of your 10th Anniversary brings me thoughts of the emergence of country music in the same 10 years. Thanks to your fine job of promoting our industry, these years have given my colleagues and me a way to reach out to many people we might not have in the past.

Ten years ago we were limited. Now we have an opportunity to appeal to all kinds of audiences through the media now offered to us.

Country music is getting its well deserved recognition. Country music gives singers and writers, like myself, a way to express thoughts and emotions through songs.

I hope we all can have as much gain in the next 10 years as we have in the last 10.

Good luck in the future.

RAZZY BAILEY

JOE STAMPLEY

Congratulations on the 10th year of your great *Country Music Magazine*. I know that everyone who reads it enjoys it as much as I do.

Thanks for the fine articles you've done on me. Keep up the good work!

JOE STAMPLEY

FARON YOUNG

My congratulations on ten years of success. By owning a country music news publication for years, I know how demanding and difficult a job it is to try and report on what the people want to know, which you have done extremely well.

My sincere best wishes are coming to you and *Country Music Magazine*. I hope we the readers can look forward to many more years of *Country Music Magazine*.

FARON YOUNG

BRENDA LEE

I'm personally glad that I don't have many friends who are magazines. What to give one that has everything on its 10th Anniversary can be a problem.

I personally want to give Russ and the gang at *Country Music Magazine* my congratulations and thanks for their loyalty in reporting and encouraging the success of our musical form for these past 10 years.

I'm thrilled and honored to have been a part of that success story. But when you come right down to it, the real "honorees" at this anniversary celebration are the fans. For the staff of this magazine, as for every entertainer—whether struggling unknown, or superstar—the bottom line of what makes what we do worthwhile is your acceptance. That's the nicest gift of all.

I love you, and I thank you.

BRENDA LEE



Brenda and a fan.

BOBBY BARE

Congratulations on your ten years of publication of *Country Music Magazine*. I appreciate your recognizing the value of country music and the professional manner in which you edit and publish your magazine. Thank you for the stories and mentions about my career through the years.

BOBBY BARE

LORETTA LYNN

First of all I want to say "Congratulations!" to you and all your folks there at *Country Music Magazine* for ten great years. You know I don't like to do anything unless I can give it my best, so that must be something we have in common since *Country Music Magazine* is one of the best there is.

And second I want to thank you for being so good to me. I was on the second cover you ever had, so you know that makes me feel pretty special. I've always been real happy with the work you've done because I never have to worry that you will print something I didn't say. You always tell it like it is and that's how it should be.

I wish you the best of luck in the next ten years to keep *Country Music Magazine* where it is, and where it belongs . . . at the Top!

LORETTA LYNN



JOHNNY CASH

Congratulations to *Country Music Magazine* for 10 years. It has set a new standard for music publications. So far no other publication has come up to *Country Music Magazine*'s standard of accuracy, depth and understanding in its interesting and entertaining presentation of the stories, facts and fables about the people in country music.

The July 1980 issue of *Country Music Magazine*, devoted to my twenty-fifth anniversary in music, is one of the most wonderful things that ever happened to me.

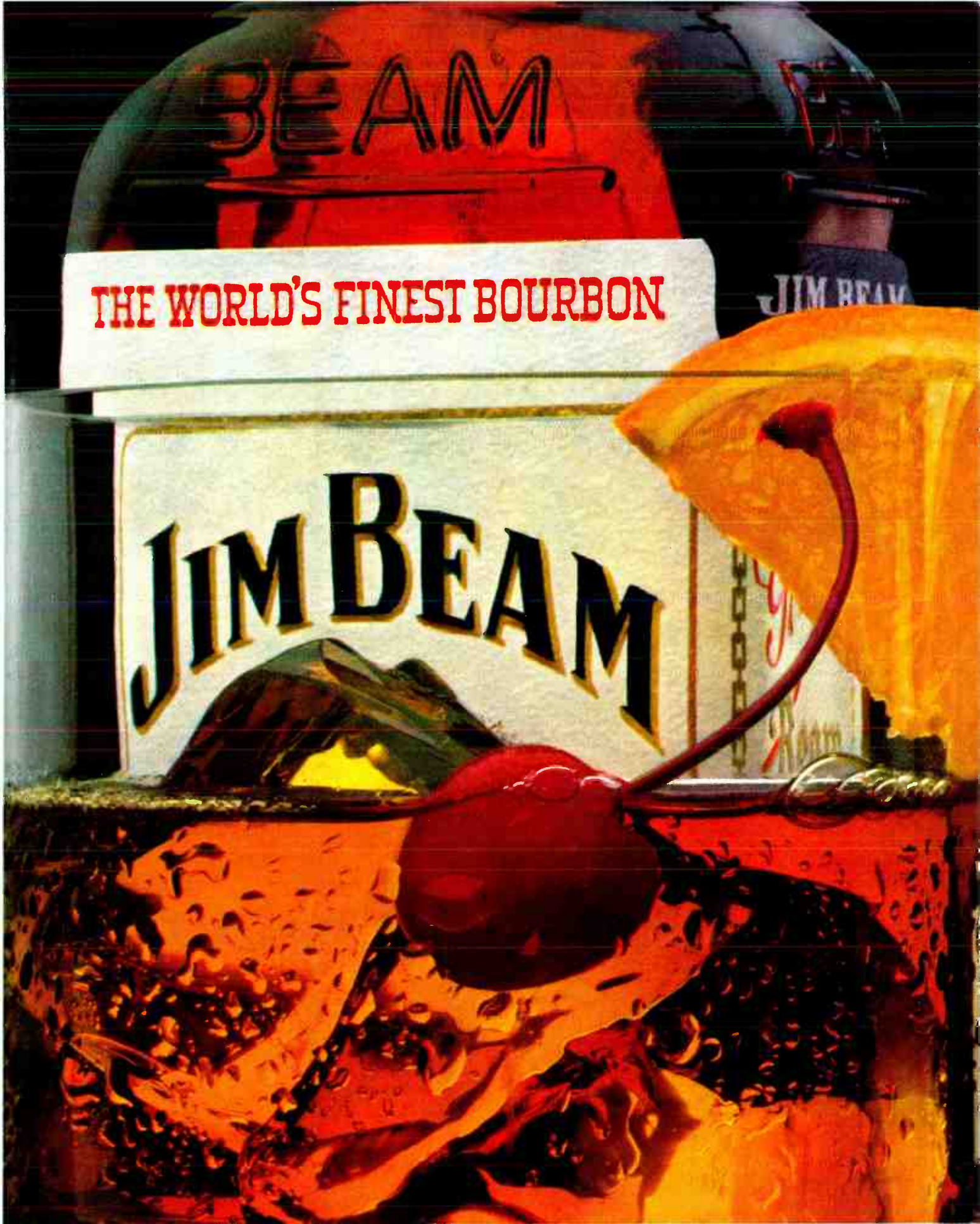
I can't thank you enough for all the hard work and effort and kind thought that was put into it. I'll treasure it as long as I live.

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE HAS CLASS!

Sincerely your friend,

JOHNNY CASH

We want to remind you—Readers, Writers, and Pickers alike—that our anniversary celebration will continue through every issue of this, our tenth year. We hereby invite you, therefore, to send us your messages—praise, condemnation, your views on anything relevant to country music and/or *Country Music*—and we, the editors, will do our best to pass your messages along in print.



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Ten Years Together

For the next twenty-four editorial pages, we offer you, the Readers, a composite, impressionistic portrait of country music and Country Music's decade. Here are some of our favorite pictures of our favorite Pickers, most of them posed by our favorite photographer, Leonard Kamsler. Here are some of our favorite quotes from those Pickers to our Writers, and our favorite words about the Pickers by the Writers. Finally, the Writers get their big chance: Most of our veterans have contributed an essay on the country music subject of their personal choice. We begin, logically, with a contribution from our first Editor, Mr. Peter McCabe:

For me, the biggest challenge at the beginning was to find top writers who were also interested in and knowledgeable about country music. With my background as a reporter for *Reuters*, as a writer and editor at *Rolling Stone* and as a freelancer, I knew lots of good writers. Still, it was tough going. But after a few weeks with us beating the bushes, and that news traveling around the grapevine, the connections started falling in place. Those we hadn't called called us. Among the best were Patrick Carr, John Pugh, J. R. Young, John Morthland, David Hickey, and Nick Tosches, who all made important early contributions to *Country Music* and through the years.

Seeing the first issue (September 1972) come off the press was a thrill. We thought it was good, and had confidence that you readers would, too. But...there remained the question, "Will they like it in Nashville?" We couldn't help being a little scared. For a couple of months there was mostly silence, nothing negative, but no outpouring of wild enthusiasm either. Then, in February 1973, I went to Nashville to interview Johnny Cash. This was definitely going to the Mountain. After the interview I asked him, "What do you think of *Country Music Magazine*?"

"Best thing the business ever had," he replied without hesitation.

John said he had read our January 1973 issue on a flight from New York to Nashville, while he was traveling with Roy Orbison. They had both liked the Jerry Lee Lewis story because as Cash put it: "It told it as it was," and they should know.

"I think you've got the magazine going good," Cash continued. "I think the Dolly Parton cover is the best one you've had. It looks a lot better than Jerry or Merle. I think you should have showed more of Dolly Parton though."

Not only did this mean that someone was paying attention; it was almost like Moses telling us that...so far...we had observed the Commandments. Needless to say, for me personally, this was a great moment.

Although I left *Country Music* after about a year and a half to do other things, I've always been proud of what I did, including bringing in Patrick Carr as the new editor. And I'm glad that many of those writers I brought in have continued through the years, indeed right through this issue, as the backbone of the magazine. And I'm glad that Johnny Cash still approves of the result. And I'm particularly glad that Cash no longer stands alone, as you can see from the letters in the preceding section.

— PETER McCABE

Michael Bane: *Forever The Road, The Road Forever!*

"Staring at that guitar in some museum in Tennessee Nameplate on the glass brought back 20 melodies Scars on the base show of all the times he fell Singing 'bout the stories he could tell..."

—John Sebastian

So a friend of mine's little sister married this country music star, and pretty soon my friend gets this panicked call from Sis. "What," said Sis, "am I going to do about *The Road*? He's gonna go out there and God alone knows what all's gonna happen to him or who's gonna do it to him, and what *am* I going to do!"

"You're going to do nothing," said my friend, who's been there. "Because nothing that happens on *The Road* is real. Pretty soon he'll come home, and it'll be like nothing ever happened—until the next time."

Willie Nelson can't wait to get back on it, and Waylon Jennings can't wait to get off. *The Road* looms large in country music, and I always figured it was so much hype, like cowboys always drinking Lone Star beer and honoring their horses. A convenient excuse for whatever manner of wretched excess you wanted to perpetrate. I thought, so I took my typewriter and went on *The Road*.

I slept during the day and stayed up all night, and when I started flagging I discovered that there were various and sundry ways to keep going. I talked and laughed and drank until dawn, listening to stories and songs that were more powerful than any narcotic. Then home for a while, and back on *The Road*—different performers, different cities, different stories, different songs, same *Road*. It unravelled like so much used Christmas ribbon, winding through mountains and valleys and places whose names I've long since forgotten, past people I'll never meet again.

The rhythms of *The Road* and the rhythms of the music blended together into a single steady beat that throbbed up through the wheels of buses or the steady vibration of jet engines. White line fever, they sang, ain't no kind of cure for that disease. The feel of the wheels, they sang, delivers me from a life where I don't want to be. Moving, they sang, is the next best thing to being free.

Much to my surprise, all the silly cliches proved to be true. It was all like a movie, a series of scenes that lurched from vignette to vignette, and I found myself a participant in events over which I seemed to have no control whatsoever. Like in a darkened theater, watching it happen to somebody else. Once, in Texas, I sat on the roof of a burning honky-tonk with a three-quarter crazed singer. The fire climbed up the wall, and he leaned back in his folding chair and sipped a beer. When the fire department came, we climbed down and left town. One morning, around dawn, I found myself driving across Nashville at a high rate of speed while the driver—you'd recognize him in a flash—steered the new Lincoln with his knees and played a ukelele with his hands. Once I was taken to a classy bordello, where, mortified with embarrassment, I sort of talked my way out of doing anything I'd hate to think of in the morning. It ended up just another Nashville story, one more for the road.

Then I'd go home, have dinner with my friends, go see a couple of movies, and decompress. Only I kept drifting away, slipping back to this endless procession of scenes. My friends fretted, and I went back on *The Road*.

My best trip was from Charlotte, North Carolina, where I lived, to Nashville; from Nashville, via chartered Lear jet, to Chicago; from Chicago to Memphis in Charlie Rich's private jet; from Memphis to Nowhere,

Arkansas, by camper; back to Memphis by car; then Nashville, Atlanta, and Macon, driving. All in a week.

When I finally hit Macon, humming like a ten-penny nail hit with a greasy ball peen hammer, I ran into Charlie Daniels, in Macon to do some overdubbing on a Marshall Tucker album. Along about dawn (when you sleep all day, dawn is right about when things start coming together), Charlie coined one of the great phrases of our time: "Michael," he said, spitting tobacco into a paper cup, "sometimes it don't amount to a nickel's worth of warm piss." The only time in my life I ever bought a cowboy hat (forgive me), the first person I saw when I was wearing it was Charlie, who glared at it real mean-like and then suggested that I let him "block" it for me. He took my new hat, wadded it up in a little ball, crushed it all together, then smashed in the top with his ham-sized fist. "There," he said, pleased. "Looks all broken in, don't it?"

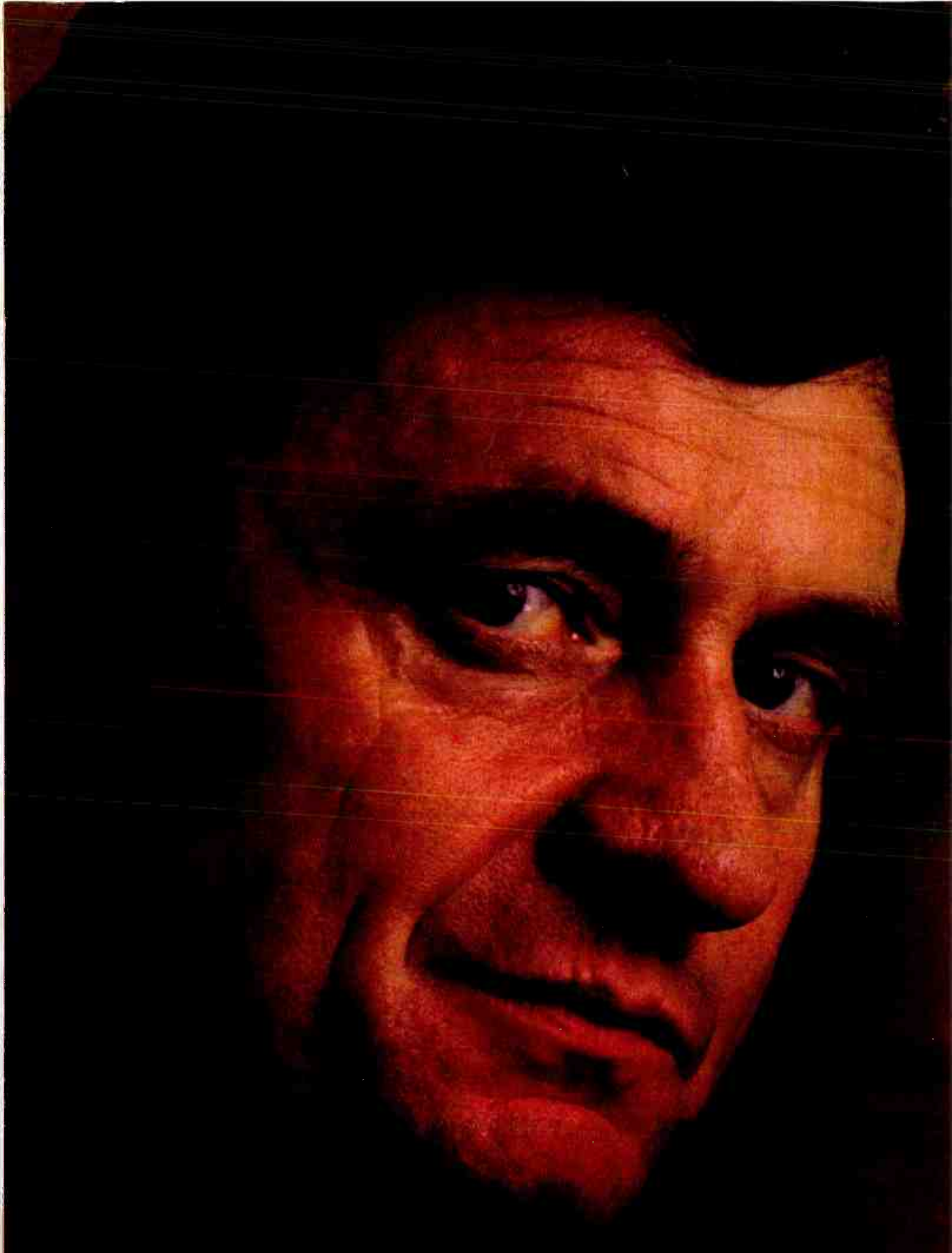
Stories, stories . . . I discovered that the first thing to do when I woke up was lie in bed and try to figure out where I was, what town, what motel, what odd place I'd ended up. I discovered that the Austin Hilton served fried eggs on a tortilla topped with hot chilies and tabasco sauce. I discovered pinball in a big way, courtesy of Tompall Glaser's obsession and a tremendous willingness to part with his quarters so he wouldn't have to play alone. When Tompall and I first met, he had me thrown out of the studio. I don't remember why. I fell hopelessly in love with Jessi Colter (don't worry, Waylon, it passed), shot tin cans with Hank Junior, traded one-liners with Olivia Newton-John, spent a terrible week with Billy Swan in Atlanta (nobody came to the shows), rode in buses, limos, Lincolns, a few pick-up trucks, little planes, big planes. Heard hit songs before they were hits, sometimes before they were even songs. Helped some of my favorite singers off and on barstools. Listened to some songs that were so bad they made my teeth ache. Fielded threats of imminent death in honky-tonks in several states (buy drinks; nobody ever kills someone who's buying drinks). Watched the

Johnny Cash

Cash has been edging up to it these last few years, and now he's hit it. He's pulled the stops out . . . and he's made the best album of his life.

Given Cash's voice, his intelligence, and his musicality, the achievement should not come as a surprise, but it does . . . for some time now it has sometimes seemed that the work might never surface, that somehow or other Cash would get distracted by the demands of one of his many other (non-musical) roles—a great moral force, a great statesman, a great patrician, a great family man—and would simply fail to apply himself to the task of being a great recording artist. . . . Instead we are confronted with the fact that in his middle-middle age, with a quarter-century of recording behind him, Cash has come down from his mountain, gathered only the best of his buddies around him, found himself a whole new fountain of youth, and busted loose with a vengeance. His album restates and reworks the muscular heart of rockabilly music, re-energizes the fading intelligence of the modern country song, and scatters pretenders to the winds. . . . Good old Cash, still the father-figure but still the renegade too; still the Indian in the white man's camp.

**From a review of the
Rockabilly Blues
album by Patrick Carr,
January/February 1981**



time roll by like high-line poles on the highway.

Through it all, the music rolled through my mind, a never-ending jukebox of Hank and Lefty, Tammy Wynette and Jimmy Buffett, George Jones and Charlie Rich. A trendy rock critic once asked *Country Music* writer Dave Hickey, who discovered The Road long before I did, why he listened to Waylon Jennings. Hickey said he didn't know about the critic, but that Waylon Jennings was singing the soundtrack to his life. I had, totally by accident, found the soundtrack for my life, sandwiched between all-night truckers' stations and Saturday night at the Opry. And I loved it.

I learned something performers have known almost forever, and that is that The Road never really lets you go. No matter what happens, there's always the sense that tomorrow is another day, another city, another stage, a whole new shot at life. Your failures (and your triumphs) end at the city limits, and you're only as good as your last show (or article). The Road stretched all the way back into the past and away into the future, and it echoed with the steps of every pilgrim who ever passed by the way.

"You know," my friend Nancy told me one day, "the more you do this, the less suited you are to do anything else." She was right, of course. The Road was like a narcotic, and more and more, I couldn't understand why my old friends didn't have

any stories to tell. Stories were the currency of The Road, the only certain medium of exchange. Stories and songs explained everything, eased miles in the morning. Like modern jungle drums, telegraphing your exploits ahead of you in stories, hearing them explained in song. It's the cold gray morning and you're stoned at the jukebox, they sang. Strange situations, wild occupations, living your life like a song. And The Road did truly seem to go on forever.

So it was hot and steamy one afternoon in Tampa, where I live these days, and I was talk-

ing old times with a friend from the days before The Road. It had been a pleasant afternoon, and he got up to leave, then sat back down abruptly.

"I've got to ask," he said. "You used to be a newspaperman, and a pretty good one. You had a *career*, and you threw it all away to run around with a bunch of country and western singers! How can you face yourself in the morning, man? Why, why on *earth* did you do it?"

"Why," I said, "I did it for the stories," then I showed him the door.

Patrick Carr: A Battle Memoir Of The Nashville Wars

This article should probably be a birthday poem, but instead it's almost an epitaph. More accurately, it's a soldier's reminiscence, the doodlings of a veteran ('72 to '77) long after the battles of Nashville in which he fought were finalized, their issues forgotten and their dead buried.

The battles were fierce. *WHAM!* a salvo from Waylon (five hits)! *ZING!* Eight rounds from his record company (all misses)! *CRUMP!* A direct hit from the Olivia Newton-John

battery (*very heavy!*) *FIZZLE!* The Association of Country Entertainers' latest cluster-MIRV subsides back into its silo! *PING!* A sniper round, far too close for comfort, is incoming from the Man in Black, just to let us know he's watching! And from the distant North and West comes, of course, an ominous rumble, the sound of ersatz cowboy hordes and media Moguls advancing slowly but surely (Hey, boys, better get this thing sorted out before they get here; civil wars ain't their thing; they'll bury us).

The battles were very confusing. Our side's main positions—Bunker Tompall, Bunker Clement, Bunker *Country Music* and Camp Austin, Willie's Sunny Southwest R&R Rink & Drugarama—were obvious enough, but where, pray, was the enemy?

Was he incarnate as Owen Bradley or Billy Sherrill or the Jordanaires, or was he incorporate in RCA New York, CBS New York, the nation's radio conglomerates, NLT Nashville? Even worse, was he perhaps some malevolent force contained somewhere beneath Sixteenth Avenue South, pumping bad vibes into all manner of offices and studios, spreading discord and causing non-rational business decisions? He was said to have been in all those people and places, con-

Merle Haggard

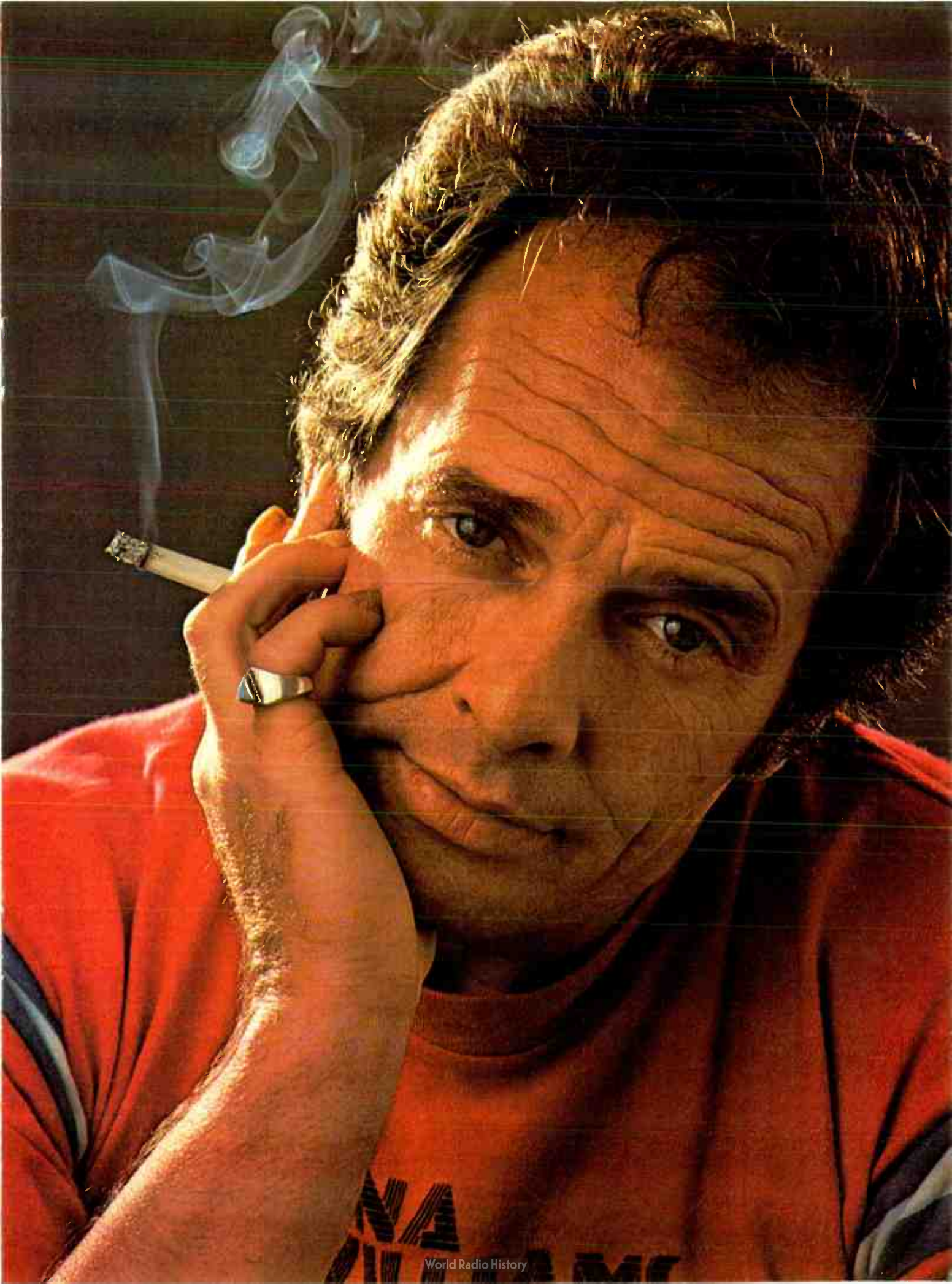
Merle Haggard is perhaps the last true outlaw, the one hold-out against wrapping up and merchandising feelings, the last rebel against high-gloss packaging. The music industry today, it almost goes without saying, speaks less of music than it does of industry, but for Merle Haggard clearly the only truth lies in art. Even after 20 years in "the business," he still lives, breathes, sleeps—he is consumed by music. . . . Merle strains against the mold, clings desperately to the irrational response, however outrageous. He makes brave statements that indicate he will *never* tailor his beliefs to fit the proper image, never rein himself in to do what he is supposed to do. He lashes out wildly against an enemy he cannot quite identify, an invisible enemy who has transformed the American dream from the great move west to the move to the suburbs, transformed the hero from rugged individualist to Saturday afternoon hero.

from "Haggard at the Crossroads" by Peter Guralnick, January/February 1981

Jack Clement, our most eloquent ally, on a typical night in his bunker, otherwise known as The Cowboy Arms, etc.



The Cowboy Arms Hotel and Recording Spa
CLOSE COVER
Morgan Enterprises, Nashville, TN 37203





Nelson & Carr in Atlanta, 1976: Exhausted veterans enjoy a brief respite between Battles of Nashville.

spiring to scatter the various soulful forces of true music, but he was an elusive little devil, hopping from spot to spot. All we really knew about him was that his name was "Schlock," that he was somehow (though how *exactly*?) related to "Pop," and that (praise be) he was relatively inactive at night, which is when we did our best work.

The nights, it's true, were lots of fun—how pleasant it was, hunkered down in Bunker Clement, to listen to the Cowboy's latest waltzes dancing fifteen sheets to the wind, or to witness a maniacally sensible Tompall dawn rap, or to watch Waylon call down midnight lightning (successfully) on the Hall of Fame Motor Inn, or, on the home front, to praise Gary Stewart to the skies on paper in the wee hours, knowing for a fact that the words would be printed and the pictures would be great—but then of course the daylight would always roll around again, and Schlock would get into gear, and, often feeling quite poorly after the night's exertions, we would have to face questions like "Why are there so many beards in this magazine?" and "Why *won't* you put John Denver on the cover?" and "Why bother writing about all these *old* people?" (the journalistic equivalents of "Why *won't* you cover *Rose Garden*, Waylon?"). Then Schlock would want us to fire some favorite writer because he'd written a negative record

review, or to run an article about some not-quite-exciting country-pop singer to accompany a photograph of him sitting astride a certain advertising-bucks-attractive brand of motorcycle, and all hell would break loose. Life in *Bunker Country Music*, then—as in all the other combat centers—was as paranoid as it was pleasant during the battles, and the central question of the whole damn war—What *is* country music, and who gets to decide?—became extremely tedious, especially since it was in fact a trick question designed to cover up the main point of the whole entanglement: Who gets the money, and how much should the getting cost?

Eventually, everybody became bored with the "What is country music?" question (though not with the issue behind it), and the battles ended when the combatants simply ran out of energy. The adrenalin rush of combat is heady stuff, and it generates prodigious amounts of creative energy (the records of the battle years—*whooh!*), but it leaves exhaustion behind it. So combatants became veterans; some jumped ship, some changed horses, and others just retired, a few of them gracefully.

You can pinpoint some of these moves—Willie's *Stardust* album, surely the ultimate in veteran's relaxation; George Jones's *Alone Again*, which signified Billy Sherrill's final

(selective) acceptance of Outlaw-style production methods; Dolly's flight to Hollywood, a giant kiss-off conducted in the grand manner; the disappearance, bruised and/or angry, of myself and several other writers and editors from this magazine—and strangely enough, you can equate the moves quite neatly with the actual arrival of the ersatz (urban) cowboys and the national media tastemakers and the rain of outside money which finally put an end to little squabbles about how records should be made, etc.

Somehow, all this reminds me of one of the big nights of the battles, the night when Richard Nixon opened the brand-new, unconsecrated, smile-button-bedecked Opry-In-Opryland. That night, Nixon—upon whom the deadliest rounds of the Watergate barrage were that very week impacting with terminal effect—inspired the performing artist within himself to such heights that he won the crowd over completely. He actually convinced that houseful of hardcore realists of the notion that, after all his horrid sins, he did in fact have a heart and that this made up for everything.

I never thought I'd live to see the Opry full of suckers, but that night I did, and it really bothered me. The fact that the existence of the Opryland complex would probably increase the incomes of otherwise fading country stars did not placate me, either, because I felt that they more than anyone else had been conned, fobbed off with something they probably didn't really want in exchange for something they would never get again.

Something was lost out there at Opryland—some real flat-out love for the music and respect for the traditions and joy in the work—and the way I felt about those Opry stars at the time was very similar to my feelings when, after much bitterness, I finally pulled out of *Country Music*. I was sick to death of fighting off Schlock attacks; I was going somewhere Schlock couldn't follow, and that felt good, but the notion that he would claim the magazine in my absence was, frankly, nauseating.

I severed all ties, then, continuing to write about country

Waylon Jennings

I couldn't go pop with a mouthful of firecrackers. Merle Haggard's drummer told me that once, and it's true."

Waylon Jennings, quoted in "Waylon Jennings" by Patrick Carr, April 1973

The record company executives, you know, the ones that are really in control, you play them a tune, you know when they hear it, they sit there and pat their foot to the wrong damn beat, and then when it gets through, they'll say, 'That's got a snappy little rhythm to it, hasn't it?' They sit there and like... judge... they say 'that's good' or 'that's bad.' You'd be better off to say, 'He wore a black suit, his shirt was kinda off-white this time.' I told one of them that, and he said, 'Well, we'd look pretty stupid if I sat there criticizing the way you look,' and I said, 'Not half as stupid as you look when you're trying to criticize the way we do our music.'"

Waylon Jennings, interviewed by Johnny Cash, April 1981



music for other publications—with such accelerated media interest in the subject, it was next to impossible for any credentialed expert to avoid the gig—but feeling much less like a soldier in the righteous cause and much more like some bitter old man working quality control down at the Goddam cowboy factory. I was seen but rarely in Nashville, and not at all around *Country Music*.

Why, then, am I sitting here in the *Country Music Magazine* office, not only writing this piece, but also helping to conceptualize and edit this Anniversary Issue? The answer is really quite simple: After being invited back into the fold some two years ago by similarly-scarred veterans on the management side and after those two years of being allowed to write about whom I please *how* I please, it has become quite evident to me that Schlock did not, after all, overrun my old battlefield. The magazine's veterans treat me with respect and affection and professionalism, and I try to return the favor. And, they also admire the other veterans of the battles—Hickey, Tosches, Guralnick, J.R. Young, Morthland, Doug Green, and all the rest—and, moreover, seem to have a low tolerance for absolute bullshit and a high regard for true music. And that's just fine.

So here we all are again, some of us still somewhat disoriented by what seems to be an

almost total cease-fire within both the magazine and the wider world of country music (room for *everyone* there, folks!), but most of us still (or once again) having fun and working together with pride. Country

music is not as exciting as it was during the battles, but there are lots of good records and high times, and personally, I find it quite liberating to move around without having to keep one eye open for the nearest foxhole.

J.R. Young: Yahooers Fiddle As Country Burns

There's a hamburger joint in North Hollywood that I go to all the time for lunch, and the same people are always there. The regulars. Sitting on the patio under green umbrellas eating great cheeseburgers and drinking the cold bottles of beer that Barbara brings them. Secretaries. Guys who take their sport coats off. A few young execs, male and female. But mostly guys. Lots of guys in orange tank tops and Coors T-shirts. Guys who think they work hard for a living, and loaf a lot. Grips and electricians who work at the studio down the street. Guys in construction. Siding. Guys who grew up listening to the Allman Brothers. Guys who need a haircut.

Except this one guy. Part of the same crowd, but different. Always sits off to the side. Seldom talks. Just sits and smiles.

Smokes Lucky Strikes. Taps his finger to the jukebox. Oh, yeh, I forgot the jukebox. It's inside. It plays lots of country music. The waitresses pump most of the quarters into it. We hear Merle, Terri, Barbara. And pop music. Most of the big hits. Blondie. *Bette Davis Eyes*. The Rolling Stones. Bob Seger. A good cross section of stuff. But mostly country. Anyway... this guy just sits there with the others. Apart... and looking real cool, ya know? Fancy oversized handcrafted straw cowboy hat with a thin leather band and a trimmed peacock feather. Cowboy boots. Starched cowboy shirt. And red and blue plastic-framed wrap-around mirror sunglasses. Jesus, is he something to look at. Just ask him. Quite a sight.

I hate to say it, but this particular dude is my personal vision of that vast new country

George Jones

Drinking gives me courage. I know that. I'm easily depressed. I can feel it creeping up, and when things start to bother me I tell myself the best way to simmer down is with a drink. Now, I admit it, I've overdone this at times, going for weeks until I wake up one day as sick as a woman having a baby. Then I swear I'll never do it again, but I do... But what I *really* don't understand is when you've got it all, why you can't be happy with it."

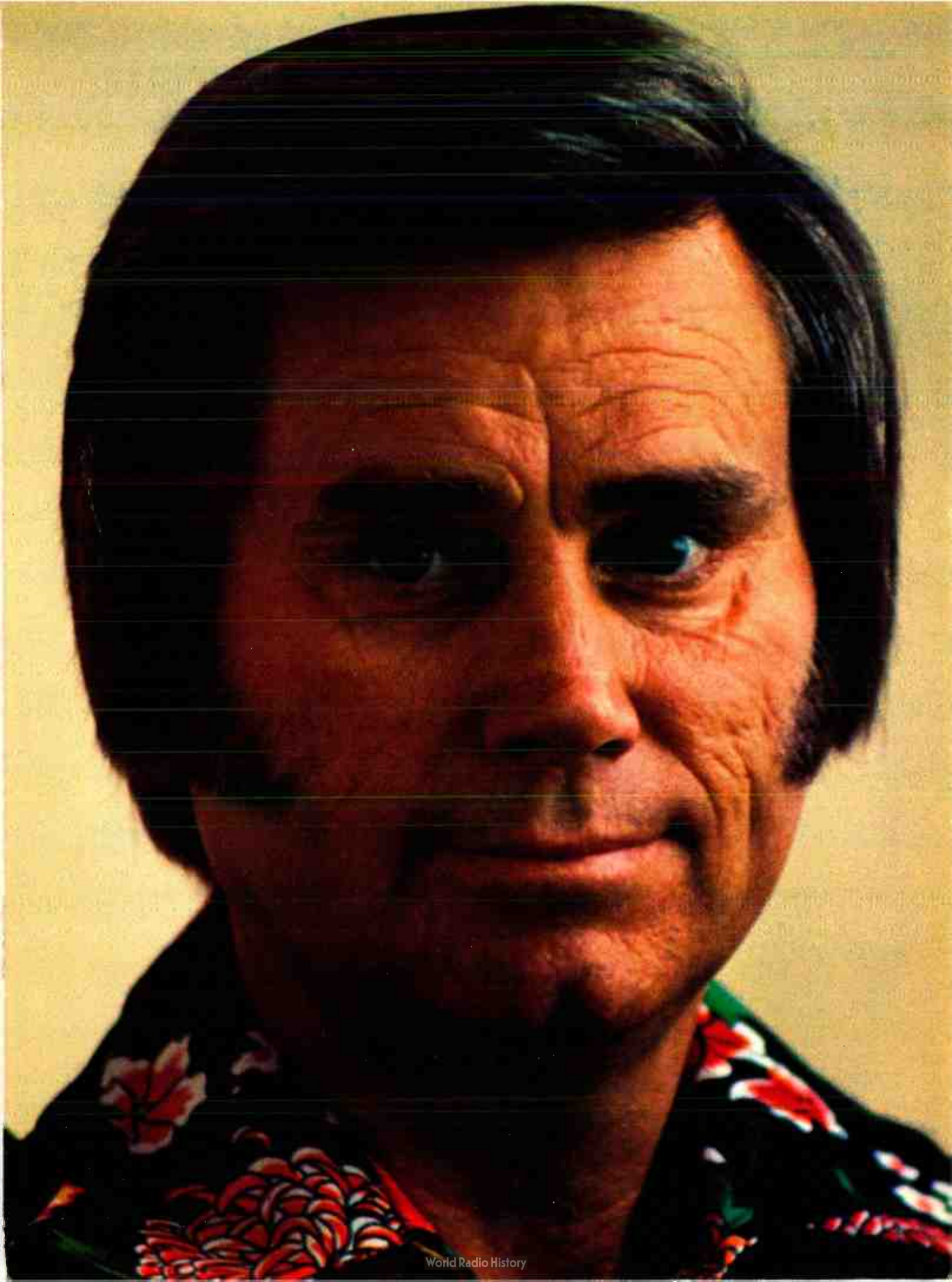
George Jones, quoted in "The George Jones Explosion" by Joan Dew, August 1977

George is the best country singer who ever was or likely will be. He's country all the way. How many people could have the problems that George has had, yet still come back all the way? I idolize George Jones. When George does a song, you know within three notes that it's George Jones. He's got it. Country soul."

Moe Bandy, interviewed by Patrick Carr, July/August 1981.

Heroes of the Yahoo Wave, no further identification necessary: Will country music survive their fickle attentions?





crowd out there today. Not a real good vision for me, but not bad. I can just see him at a Charlie Daniels concert. Or Waylon. Or Willie. Waving his hat and *yahoing* each time "Texas" or "dope" or "shit" is mentioned. One hat in a sea of hats. A lot of *yahoing*. I don't take it seriously. I don't wear a cowboy hat when I'm typing. Like I say, it's just a vision. A simple guy in a preposterous pose. He's in aluminum siding. He's one of those people that our local KHJ convinced "we all grew up to be cowboys." Three years ago, this same guy was hanging out in discos, loaded down with gold chains and a winning smile, a slick shirt unbuttoned to his navel. That's probably when he got the wrap-around sunglasses. When he thought he was Italian or something.

But today, God forbid, he's a cowboy.

Yahoo!!!

And goddamned proud of it! Just look at him.

I mean, I don't care one way or the other what this yahoo does with his time or life out on the aluminum range, until it comes down to the music. *His* music. *My* music. Then, all this *yahoing* gives me cause for concern. Because there are so many *yahoo*-ers today that the *yahoo*-ees (the people who actually make the music) are actually aiming their product (that means *music*) at all these ex-disco *yahoo*-ers, and believe that this is how the world was meant to be. And I wish them all the best of luck. Meanwhile, it isn't any coincidence that longtime country fans feel de-

serted in all this insipid *Urban Cowboy* brouhaha. And why not? The loyal should. Because the disco-*yahoo*-ers are tampering with history for no good reason. It's like a pristine and ordered world—the whole world of George Jones, Lefty Frizzell, Hank Thompson, Ernest Tubb, Jimmie Rodgers, and on and on and on—is being set upon by ex-shake-your-booty-discophiles. This time country music is the fad in the long pantheon of fads that the Baby Boom has concocted in its never-ending quest for perpetual youth. The quest is getting destructive. Disco's demise didn't mean a damn thing. Its roots only went back as far as Barry White and his Love Unlimited Orchestra. Country's roots, however, run much deeper. Draw more water. Feed more blossoms. The strength of country music has always been its continuity. Its past has always been the source of its future. Like good farming land.

Until this recent aberration. You see, I think that this incredible burst of enthusiasm being shoved down country music's throat (only because the industry can't take big enough bites) is bloating it, creating myopic vision, re-ordering its past, and unalterably changing it. For the worse, obviously. But that's been the pattern of the Me Generation (Baby Boom again) whenever it sinks its talons into anything. In country music's case, when that incredibly large and singular rush of *yahoo* enthusiasm (not to mention the big bucks, but that always goes with the Me Generation) impacted upon the scene, the in-

tensity was enormous. I mean, it's hard to dismiss even the little things like chi-chi women in cute-as-a-button purple cowgirl blouses and matching leg warmers over Nocona boots marching down Rodeo Drive. I mean, it looks like something's up! And I'm afraid all the *yahoo*-ees have bought into that *yahoo*-er's promise that we shall "love you forever!" It's a myth. Because next year, when all those cowboy hats and boots are tucked in the back of the closet, the *yahoo*-ers are all going to be wearing zoot suits and purple and orange oxford saddles and neon argyle socks and sporting Caesar Romero haircuts . . . and those are the women! I mean, who knows? Hell, if someone had told me three years ago that my mother, in 1981, would be wearing designer jeans and listening to Willie Nelson, I'd have laughed long and loud. But like I say, the *yahoo*-ees believe in the promise of the present, while dismissing the past—and, therefore, the future. I, for one, don't think it looks good. But that's only me. Hank Williams, Jr. thinks it looks great. I mean, when I read that he believed he was finally out of his father's shadow, I was happy for him, but still felt a nagging loss. Nobody in country music should be out of Hank Williams's shadow. That's goddam near a given. Nobody should ever say, "Hank Williams? Isn't he Hank Williams, Jr.'s old man?"

I read in *Billboard* the other day that more than a dozen country music clubs in San Diego shut down last month. I was glad. Especially when I read that the only ones still open are those that were open before "the trend" began.

"Now that the fad is over," one owner said, "the people left are the authentic country buffs. Who know their music."

Maybe. Maybe not. All I know is, I don't think it will ever be the same again. The past will never focus quite correctly. The future will always be in terms of *remember Eddie Rabbit? Bux Deluxe! Let's get it!!!* But, hell, it is 1981 after all, and I guess for most people, *yahoo*-ers, *yahoo*-ees, and even those dedicated country buffs . . . everybody understands. *Money talks . . . bullshit walks.*

Loretta Lynn

The bus stops at a truck-stop near Waverly, where Loretta lives, to pick up 22-year-old Ernest Ray Lynn, Loretta's son, who is travelling with her and opening the shows. Everyone hops out for the first of several cheeseburgers. It's pitch black and cold.

"Come see the twins!" calls Loretta.

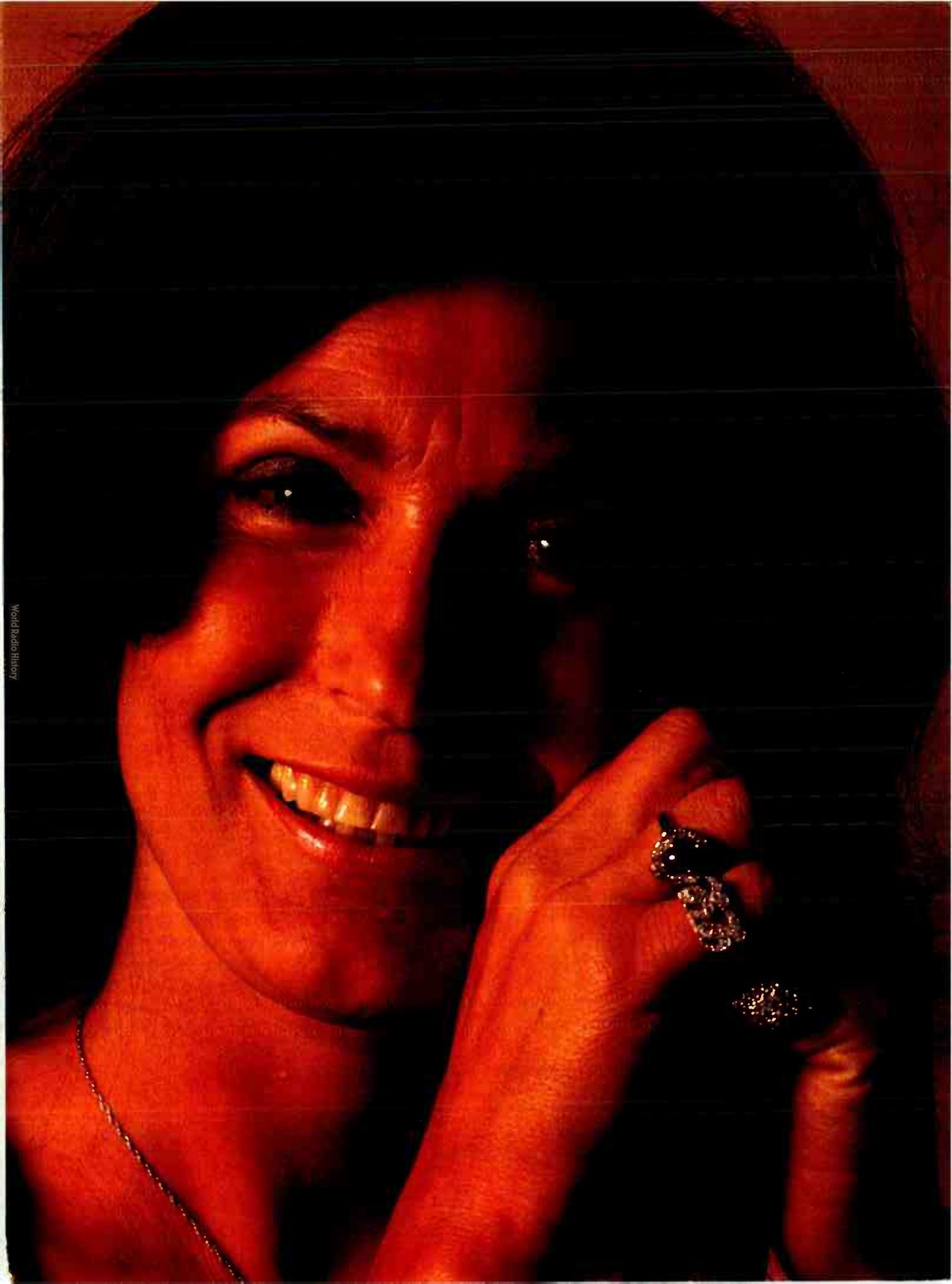
I go over to a small Volkswagen and peer inside. In the back, sleepy and wrapped in blankets, sit two tow-headed little girls, their big eyes staring suspiciously at the stranger. Loretta explains that the housekeeper had to get the girls out of bed to bring them because no one was at the house to stay with them while she dropped off Ernest Ray. It's past two in the morning and the girls, Peggy and Patty, aren't much in the mood to talk. Their mother kisses them goodbye and the little car drives off into the night. I realize that this could be the longest they've been with their mother during the two days she's been home this trip; she had suffered another of her headaches the day before and had to be in bed. The scene doesn't seem unusual to Loretta.

From "The Strange and Private World of Loretta Lynn" by Martha Hume, January 1976



"Nobody in country music should be out of Hank Williams' shadow. That's goddam near a given.

Nobody should ever say, 'Hank Williams? Isn't he Hank Williams, Jr.'s old man?'"



John Morthland: Merle Haggard And A Strange Decade

It is late 1970 or early 1971—I'm not sure anymore about the date. I also don't recall for sure whether Merle Haggard has yet released *Someday We'll Look Back*, his troubled declaration of independence from *Okie From Muskogee* and *Fightin' Side of Me*, but I'm pretty sure he hasn't. At any rate, it's those two songs that most people know him for—even the shamelessly opportunistic President and Vice President (both of them discredited since then) have hailed Hag specifically for those right-wing ballads, as though they were the only things of value he's done in his entire career. These are extremely polarized times, and how Merle feels about his notoriety—how he even feels about those two songs, which he says were a joke but he sorta means it and sorta doesn't, or something like that—is not very clear. But at the very least, he's uncomfortable with both the amount and the kind of attention he's been getting.

I, too, am uncomfortable on this particular evening, for Merle Haggard is playing the Oakland Coliseum, and myself

and a friend have gone to see him. Though not entirely sold out, the Coliseum is a big place, and there are probably about 15,000 people at the show; about 14,998 have short hair, and the other two of us have long hair. In retrospect, it seems like not that big a deal, but retrospect is a real liar in this case—these were, if I may repeat myself, *extremely* polarized times. The man sitting in front of us, for example, looks over his shoulder repeatedly, grinding the fist of one hand into the palm of his other, shouting out for *Okie* and *Fightin' Side* all the while, as though those songs would constitute his cue for . . . what? Fortunately, by the time Merle got around to wrapping up the evening with perfunctory run-throughs of the two easy crowd-pleasers, the man in question had nodded off after one nip too many from his flask. But thanks to him, I'd had a little trouble that night enjoying Merle Haggard's show.

Merle Haggard did too, obviously. It was a strangely dispirited performance. Not just the kind you often get when an entertainer has to project in a

room way too big for him, but the kind you get when the entertainer also just happens to be fed up, period. With each new request for *Okie* and *Fightin' Side*—and there were many from all over the hall—he grew more detached. His comedy cliches and his impersonations (of Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins, etc.) seemed demeaning—why should the man who wrote and/or sang *I'm a Lonesome Fugitive*, *Strangers*, *Branded Man*, *Today I Started Loving You Again*, *Mama Tried*, and *Hungry Eyes*, to name just a few, have to even *bother* with crap like that? I went home that night more intrigued than I'd ever been before by a basically unfulfilling show.

Now, a lot has happened in the decade since then, and country music is bigger than ever—so pop(ular) that you can barely call its top artists "country" anymore. There was even a whole movement centered around "hip," long-haired country fans and artists. But to this day, no country artist intrigues me as much as Merle Haggard.

Merle's had some decade as well. He did manage to shuck off much of the misleading image he'd picked up via *Okie* and *Fightin' Side*, and he did pay a price for doing so. (I remember well a mid-Seventies show with the wonderful expanded group including several former Texas Playboys that was interrupted by a nincompoop "fan" shouting out, "Play something country!" in the middle of a song.) But it could have been worse. He did seem, most of the time, to be doing what he wanted, whether it was his own songs or standards or those of Lefty or Hank or Wills and Western swing or Jimmie Rodgers and Depression ballads or Dixieland jazz.

I wish I could say that it had been a consistently great decade for him musically, but I don't think that's true; taken as a whole, I'd say his work was fairly spotty, certainly not up to his Sixties efforts. But maybe that's the inevitable by-product of walking that harrowing tight-rope between art and commerce and self-expression and unwillingness to be anybody's icon. For unlike so many of his colleagues, Haggard never bought his own image to the extent that

Willie Nelson

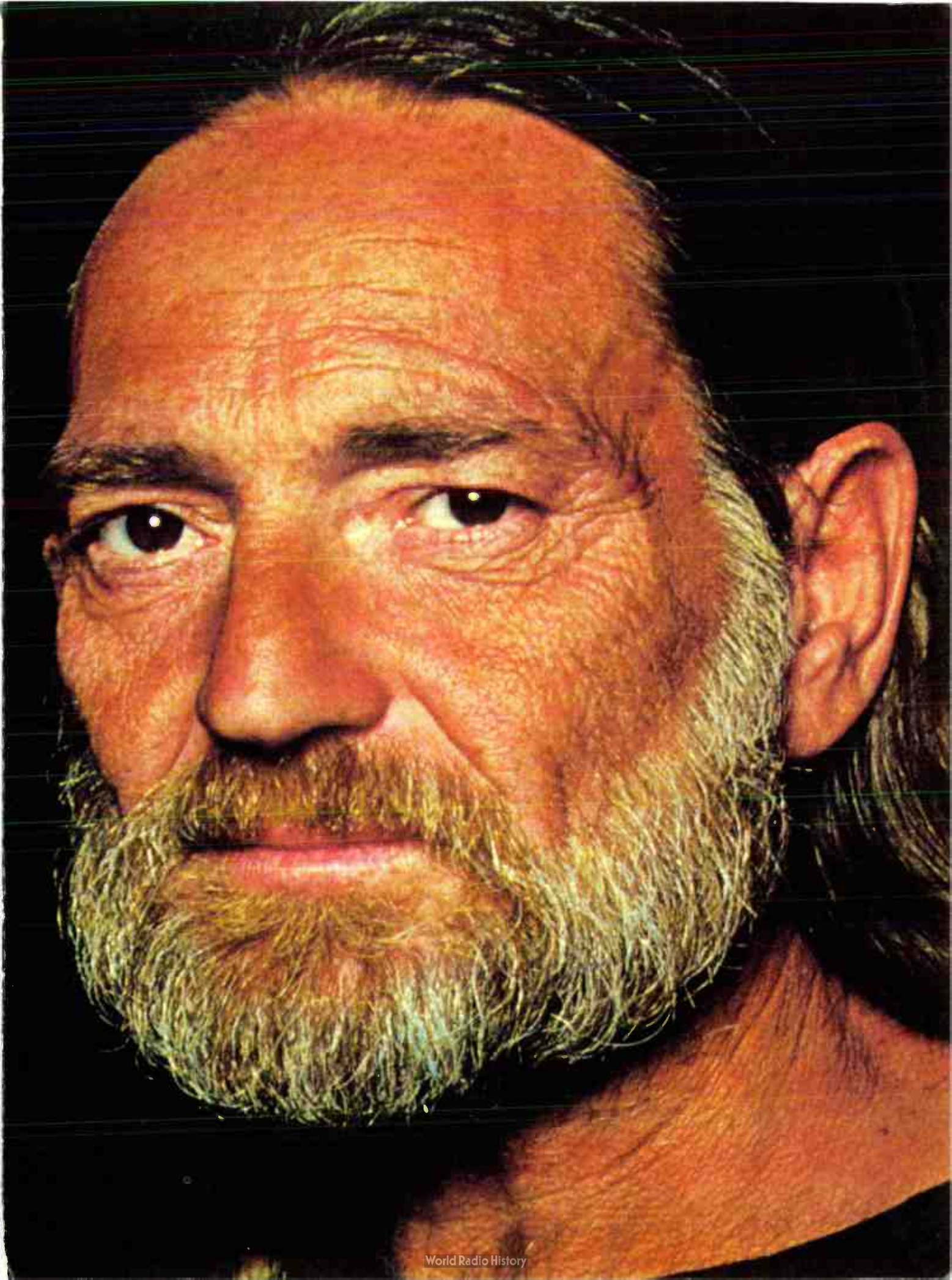
It was a very heavy crowd and not particularly sedate, until Willie walked up on the stage and started singing, and things got quiet. The best was singing to the best . . . and as hit followed hit the applause began to be accompanied by heads shaking in open-mouthed amazement as the men in the room began to realize just how many great songs Willie had written. Guys were slumped back in their chairs with silly incredulous grins on their faces. A voice from the audience said "Hey, Willie, what *didn't* you write?" and Willie just kept on playing *Pretend I Never Happened*. Not very likely.

Then he started into new songs and as the lines rolled out, snapping together with a frightening simplicity, spontaneous applause breaks out . . . this is professional applause, and the best kind of praise . . . the kind that comes from men who understand the difficulty of what is being done with such apparent ease. In one short pause, Mentor Williams, one of the best young songwriters around, author of *Drift Away*, leaned across the table and said, "How old is Willie?" When I said "about 40," Mentor shook his head in despair and said "I guess it takes that long." And Willie, he just kept playing.

From "In Defense Of The Telecaster Cowboy Outlaws" written by Dave Hickey after the Country Music Disc Jockey Convention, January 1974



Ironies of the hippie/redneck wars by Doug Marlette, published May '76.



it became self-parody, he never got swallowed up by television or record production machines, he never softened his approach to suit Las Vegas (though he got there anyway on his own merits), he never stayed in one place long enough to stagnate, and he never self-destructed or burned himself out (the one time he came close, he recharged himself by singing about it brilliantly). He just kept laying his own restless, flawed self out there on the line, and it's a measure of his power and charisma that even when Merle Haggard is not very good, he is still very interesting. For me it is two Haggard albums that best book-end the decade we're discussing in this issue. They are the aforementioned *Someday We'll Look Back* and 1979's *Servin' 190 Proof*, an equally probing work dealing with mid-life crisis. Still . . .

I last saw Haggard when he made a mid-1980 appearance at the Lone Star Cafe. He appeared uneasy at first about the reception he'd get in Manhattan, and solved the problem by putting on a totally balanced show. At the end of one classic, he'd just jump right into whatever entered his head next, and before long he was filling requests as well. By the end of his two-hour set, he was adding impromptu between-songs wisecracks, something I'd never seen him do. Band members were snapping off one impossibly hot solo after another.

Now New York country fans can be a self-flagellating lot, and they have been known to be jaded enough to like the music for all the wrong reasons. Haggard wound up singing *Okie From Muskogee* for them, announcing it as "a song we don't do anymore but we've had so many requests for it tonight I guess we'll have to." He said that good-naturedly enough, of course, and his reading of the song was strictly a goof. But as he was singing it, I couldn't help wondering what he was thinking. The crowd, after all, was as ecstatic in its own way as that Oakland bunch had been ten years earlier, and this was not your basic mainstream country audience from the heartland; it was mostly the trendy sort of people *Okie* had originally attacked. Did Hag suspect he was being mocked or patronized?

(And was that the case?) Did he now see the song as camp, like much of the crowd obviously did? Who was laughing at and who was laughing with? Did this strange rite now unfolding symbolize some kind of rapprochement that had taken place some time earlier? Or did it symbolize some sort of nothing-matters-anyhow attitude? Did Hag marvel at the way reactions to the song have changed, at the way the nation

has changed? *Has* it really changed, and if so, has it changed for good or for bad?

After all these years, all I could see for sure was, whether you chose to take it as a joke, a threat, or a relic, that one song could still catalyze something ugly in people. For a couple of minutes I felt depressed and confused, and then Merle Haggard began singing a lonesome blues that gave me chills, and I felt fine again.

Nick Tosches: *Pleasant Brits & 180-Degree Spins*

I remember buying the first issue of *Country Music Magazine* at a New York City newsstand nine years ago. I had moved back to town that summer from Florida and was making a reasonable facsimile of a living writing about this and that for various monthlies and weeklies. (I was also a contributing editor of Hugh Hefner's new *Oui* magazine, but this was a position that sounded much better than it paid.) I liked country music very much and wanted to write about it, but the magazines simply weren't interested. It was, in their precious eyes, an undeserving subject, and they were prejudiced against it. The sole C&W periodical I read—and not with unwavering allegiance—was *Country Song Roundup*, a magazine whose lack of substance was equaled only by its lack of literacy; a magazine that seemed to confirm those other magazines' low opinion of country music.

So I bought *Country Music* and I was impressed. Here at last, I thought, was a well-made magazine that knew who Ernest Tubb was. I wrote a letter to the editor, who at that early time was Peter McCabe, a pleasant little Brit who had written a book called *Apple to the Core*, perhaps the best book that we have about the darker side of rock'n'roll big business. I offered Peter some ideas, and a week or so later he took me to lunch at a Japanese joint near the old *Country Music* offices

on Fifth Avenue.

The first story I wrote for *Country Music* was about moonshine and moonshine songs. This appeared in the magazine a few months after the Japanese lunch. It was the beginning of a happy five-year relationship between me and the magazine.

Working for *Country Music* was fun—at least that part of working which occurred away from the typewriter. I remember going to a series of Jerry Lee Lewis recording sessions in Memphis that was like a cross between *Nightmare Alley* and *Ma and Pa Kettle Go to Town*. I remember spending a weekend with Hank Thompson at a Nashville hotel where every other guest was a convention-eering black Baptist preacher. I remember hunting for women with Johnny Rodriguez in the sleepy little Rio Grande town of Harlingen, Texas—hunting for women and waking up the next morning with nothing but hangovers. I remember playing all-night poker with Tom T. Hall as his bus barreled through a seemingly endless thunderstorm in seemingly endless rural Michigan. (I think we were both cheating.) I remember Doug Kershaw's wedding at the Astrodome in Houston, an occasion for which half of Louisiana's Cajun population seemed to have come west. (At least three gentlemen introduced themselves as the undisputed Boudin King.) I remember being asked by George Jones's

Dolly Parton

It is really charming, I think, to be around a woman who is so sexy, and so straightforward and so self-confident that she never even thinks about being seductive. Then I realize: *That* is how she is able to fog Uncle Harry's contact lenses and still keep Aunt Harriet as a fan. Aunt Harriet, you see, doesn't mind if Uncle Harry gets dazzled, as long as he doesn't get vamped.

While my mind is involved in these libidinous speculations, I know that I am talking to one of the most gifted and sensitive singers and songwriters in the country. . . . If you hang around Nashville a little, you can see how its cynical milieu of snuff queens and ardent secretaries could give rise to the ultra-romantic "Warm-And-Tender-Body-Next-To-Mine" school of songwriting, but I really can't get off on the albums in which a girl's voice sings a catalog of Music Row Male Fantasies.

. . . As much as I would like to believe that women are just so many pneumatic, warm and tender statues standing by their men like inflatable party-dolls, just lovin' them all day, I suspect that this is not the case. And Dolly's songs give me a glimpse of this undiscovered country.

From "Dolly Triumphant!" by Dave Hickey, July 1974



manager to hide the pistols in preparation for driving George to perform at a benefit concert at the Nashville penitentiary. I remember creeping through Macon, Georgia, in a taxi at five in the morning with Delbert McClinton's piano player, Lewis, looking for a bootlegger. (We didn't find one. To vent our frustration, we picked the lock on Delbert's motel-room door and covered his snoring body with shaving cream.) I remember a 180-degree spin on ice in Tompall Glaser's Cadillac at a Nashville intersection at rush hour. I remember Waylon Jennings when he was modest. I remember other things that are better left unprinted.

By 1977 I was living in Nashville, editing the record review section of the magazine. By then the attitude of the establishment press toward country music had spun round almost as drastically as Tompall's Ca-

dillac. Country music was now the darling of the media, and *Country Music Magazine* had helped to bring about the change. I had just written a book called *Country: The Biggest Music in America*. Five years earlier, it perhaps would have been impossible to sell this book to my New York publisher.

My friend Patrick Carr, another Brit who had long since taken over from Peter McCabe as editor of the magazine, was eventually replaced by someone new—someone with whom I did not get along. We argued, and I was fired, swearing never again to write for the magazine. Then, a year or so ago (the editor had long since gone), as I was working on *Hellfire*, a book about Jerry Lee Lewis, I published an interview with the Killer in *Country Music*. And now here I am again, if only to say happy birthday to us all.

zine since the beginning, and looking back over them I can see that the magazine really did come along at the right time, when the industry was beginning to experience the changes which are bearing fruit today. These changes—and the whole country area—needed more substantive coverage than they had been getting, and it seemed that *Country Music* could provide it.

I began writing for *Country Music* eight years ago, when I fired off an unsolicited record review of a Commander Cody album and had it accepted. After working on a daily newspaper, turning out throwaway tripe about community day parades and council meetings—five paragraphs on the sewerline problem, please—it felt good to be published in a national market. Any writer who tells you differently is, as we say here in Pennsylvania, jerking your chain. At *Country Music*, I could nose around subjects that interested me, such as the traditional styles of the music (Western swing, etc.) which at the time seemed neglected by all but a few of us. I could look at musicians who stood in the shadows of the stars, or expose the great records nobody knew about because they weren't widely distributed.

All of these things wound up making me one of *Country Music's* resident "purists," and in that capacity I have been paying particular attention to what seems like a recent phenomenon in country music, a backlash against "MOR Country" at the grassroots level. It began in the mid-Seventies with the sudden popularity of Moe Bandy, but its full impact began to be felt only a year or so ago when (for instance) it became obvious to everybody in the country music industry that Slim Whitman and Boxcar Willie were selling a lot of records. True, their methods (saturation-level TV mail-order marketing) were high-pressure, but their success made one hell of a point: Out there, in a world which wasn't dominated by the 18-to-34 age group and the two-acre record mall, there was a market for "traditional" country music.

Thus it is that today, the small-label and reissue businesses are booming as never before: The demand is there,

Elvis Presley

Everywhere you go you can see Elvis Presley as he might have been. At the ballpark eating a hot dog. Sitting at the bar with a flowered shirt hanging over his belt. Cruising the interstate hauling a load of frozen vegetables. A heavy-set, worn-looking man with a graying ducktail and wide muttonchop sideburns. These are commonplaces, they don't mean anything one way or another, except that the commonplace is the one thing that escaped Elvis Presley in his numbingly long stay at the top. For Elvis there was no escape in art, since his original triumph was his very artlessness. He didn't write songs; nor did he aspire to anything more than success. Even his films were no more than a magnification of his image, a further reinforcement of the impossible perfection which transformed him, like all our public figures, from a living presence to an all-purpose, economy-rate icon.

From "Elvis: Faded Love" by Peter Guralnick, January/December 1977

It's like someone just came up and told me there aren't going to be any more cheeseburgers in the world."

Felton Jarvis, Elvis's producer, commenting on Elvis's death, December 1977

Rich Kienzle: Does Country Plus Pop Equal Crock?

When I first saw *Country Music*, writing for it was the last thing I had in mind. As one of the few country fans on my college campus, I liked the magazine's concept, and I

became a reader. That was because the stories had more depth than the PR hype available in other publications; the magazine was willing to cover things off the beaten path. I've saved all but two issues of the maga-



Moe Bandy, "The King of Honky Tonk." His success opened the way back to hard-core country.



and it's being addressed with vigor. Can you imagine the Smithsonian issuing an eight-record boxed collection of country classics ten years ago? Or the Franklin Mint and Time-Life planning even more elaborate boxed sets? Or a major commercial label (CBS) working on a reissue series gracefully entitled "Heritage"? The reissue business makes financial sense today: If the material is picked intelligently and the price is right, reissues (which are relatively cheap to produce—obviously, they require no new recording) can be made to turn a very respectable profit.

I applaud this phenomenon because I have a longstanding prejudice in favor of simple music, music that will still sound fresh five or ten years after its recording, and to some extent I feel that for some time now, the bulk of mainstream Nashville's record production has not met this standard. The more extreme MOR "crossover" products have been particularly irritating—the mechanical nature of such records bothers me a great deal, and supports the view of Harold Bradley, the dean of Nashville session men, that "Nashville's more like Hollywood now." Hollywood is where they turn out all those hot new TV shows which air for two weeks and are gone (quite rightly) forever after, and the same kind of thing is happening in Nashville. It's become a mecca for record producers and arrangers and musicians to whom Bob Wills, Lefty Frizzell, and Jim Reeves are mere abstractions from the past. The aim of these guys is to turn out as many records as fast as possible, then promote them onto as many charts (country, pop, R&B, whatever) as will take them. The overall quality of the records suffers accordingly. And when I start seeing hairstylists getting album cover credit, I have to wonder.

My criticisms of this MOR movement do not, however, mean that I dismiss, as do many "keep it country" advocates, all the country music recorded since 1956. The fact is that Emmylou Harris, the Statlers, Johnny Cash, Joe Ely, Jack Clement, Billy Joe Shaver, Rosanne Cash, Gail Davies, Hank, Jr. and, of course, Waylon and Willie, are making contemporary country music which will

include the "classics" of the future. Some of them slip up now and again by abandoning their earthy styles in search of success in the Kenny Rogers/Crystal Gayle market and thereby overreaching themselves (just because Dolly did it successfully, that doesn't mean *everyone* can), but overall the quality in these regions is high indeed.

Similarly, my criticisms do not mean that I embrace all "traditional" country music with open arms. Although I can agree with some of my "keep it country" colleagues on certain points, I think that by condemning contemporary artists out of hand, they are no less irresponsible than the "contemporary" artists and producers who write off all the old-timers as has-beens. It's fine to gripe about Willie Nelson cutting pop songs, but it's necessary to remember that Bob Wills and Jimmie Rodgers did it, too, and that *Lovesick Blues* started out as a piece of 1920s vaudeville razzmatazz. It's fine to carp about Gary Stewart singing too many rockabilly songs, but it should also be kept in mind that Marty Robbins did the same thing 25 years ago. You may feel that you need a lot more of Hank Williams and a lot less of Hank, Jr.'s Dixierock, but remember that before Hank Williams made it big, he had added horns and drums to his band and sung old blues tunes in Alabama dancehalls. Reflect, if you will, on the "good old country" of Cowboy Copas, then listen to the sappy 1950s pop record, *Don't Leave My Poor Heart Breaking*, in which he and a female vocalist croon the wretched lyrics to horrific effect. Keep one more thing in mind. A

lot of kids who may never have heard Bob Wills' and Lefty Frizzell's music anyplace else, got their first taste through Willie. Then start arguing about how today's country music isn't "country" anymore.

The point is that the "keep it country" controversy is not a modern phenomenon; it's been raging for decades. The creative tension between modernists and traditionalists began when electric guitars and slick bands like Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys took their place on the Opry's stage alongside older, acoustic string bands. It continued when, after Elvis and rockabilly music swamped the whole world, Ray Price led the country back to hard-core honky-tonk music, and when Buck Owens and Merle Haggard and George Jones countered "The Nashville Sound" of the early Sixties with harder stuff.

Now, it seems that the tide may once again be turning away from "pop" and MOR, back to the essential hard-core country of (again) George Jones and John Anderson and Moe Bandy and a host of others—but while this happens, keep in mind that the pop/country pendulum will continue to swing back and forth into the foreseeable future, just as it has in the past.

The pendulum will swing, but in the end, the greatest—and most enduring—country music will be that which is contemporary while also drawing on the past; it will not only *be* timeless, but will also *feel* timeless. That's the music they'll be reissuing 20 years from now, no matter what anyone on either side of the country/pop debate has to say about it.

Bob Allen: *Me And My Uncle And Ole Tom T.*

"The best times we ever had together were when we were riding over the mountains at night. My old man would be leaning against his door, half chewing, half smoking an El Producto cigar . . . looking in the rear-

view mirror to check on the swaying trailer that was loaded to the ceiling with giant spools of cotton twine headed for a Goodyear plant in Akron. It would be three o'clock in the morning and we would be barreling over

Hank Williams

This was between shows in San Diego, and we were driving around, trying to keep him from getting anything that would make him get in worse shape than he was, and trying to keep the crowd away from him. He would go with me, and he wouldn't go with anyone else, so he trusted me. So we started singing. I remember his feet were big and his legs were so long, and he was hunkered down in the car with his feet up, and he was looking out the side of the car, and he was singing *I Saw The Light*. And then he stopped, and he turned around, and his face broke up, and he said, 'Minnie, I don't see no more light. There ain't no light.'

"This was his problem at that time, which was an allegorical thing. His life at that time did a lot of things, and I don't blame anybody. At that time Hank's life was a tunnel, the way he described it, and it was as if he were in a cage. And if he could have seen one ray of light come in, we might have saved him."

Minnie Pearl, quoted in "Remembering Hank," compiled by Patrick Carr, March 1975



the eerie Blue Ridge Mountains, trying to make time before the sun came up. And the only noise other than the whining of the tires and the groaning of the motor came from the radio, which was tuned to a high-powered outlaw station that boomed all day up from the Mexican border and played country music for people like us. . . .”

—Paul Hemphill, from the introduction to *The Nashville Sound: Bright Lights and Country Music*, 1970.

These vivid recollections of Paul Hemphill’s which I’ve read time and time again over the years, have always struck a warm note of nostalgia and recognition with me. Like Hemphill, I too developed my own permanent fascination for country music and the people who played it by travelling with a family elder: my Uncle Lawrence.

My Uncle Lawrence was my father’s brother. An old bachelor, he worked for one of the county school systems near his home in Northern Virginia as what used to be called a janitor. (Nowadays, they prefer a title more along the lines of “sanitation engineer.” thank you.)

Whenever Uncle Lawrence had a few days off and was a few dollars ahead of the game, he

loved to take off on a quick trip somewhere. Often, he’d just drive on down to Nashville by himself for a weekend and just pass his time sitting in Tootsie’s Orchid Lounge or across the street at Linebaugh’s Cafeteria. Usually, he’d spend a couple of hours browsing in Ernest Tubb’s Record Shop and then catch an Opry performance or two at the old Ryman Auditorium just up the street before coming back home again.

I never really got to know Uncle Lawrence very well until I was in my mid-twenties. But when I did, we soon became fast friends. And whenever I could, I started going on those trips with him.

I’ll always remember heading across the Ozark Mountains one spooky overcast early March evening in Uncle Lawrence’s beat-up old blue Chevrolet. We were travelling east after visiting his mother (my grandmother) in central Kansas, with a brief stop-over in Nashville next on the agenda. As the sun sank behind the dark mountains, the far-away country stations began coming in clearer and clearer. Though Uncle Lawrence’s formal education had ended somewhere around the fifth grade, it seemed that no matter what country singer came on the radio, he could tell you more about them than you could ever find out on your own

or would ever need to know.

As we headed down the twisting narrow mountainside highways, Uncle Lawrence would send cold chills up my spine when he began telling all the “true” ghost stories he’d heard over the years, but eventually, his talk would always turn to his musical heroes like Mac Wiseman and Tom T. Hall . . . particularly Tom T. Hall.

“I tell ya, Bobby,” he would declare emphatically as he puffed on a Pall Mall, gulped down a chocolate bar and twisted his 5’8”, 250-pound-plus frame around in the passenger’s seat trying to get comfortable. “I think that damned song about Clayton Delaney is about the best country song anybody ever wrote!”

And as the night wore on and we headed southeast, across the Mississippi River and through the West Tennessee flatlands, Uncle Lawrence would go on and on. He’d talk about the time he’d met Tom T. Hall in Tootsie’s, about the time he’d visited Johnny Cash’s house. . . .

And of course, I was intrigued by all this to no end. Because by this time I’d become acquainted with contemporary Nashville legends like Kris Kristofferson and Charlie Rich. I’d read everything I could get my hands on about the Music City rags-to-riches legends and the romance of the starving songwriters (all

Tammy Wynette

Most of her writing centers around longing and loss, the sad aftermath of fairytale romance. . . . “I write exactly what I feel,” she says, and indeed compositions like *Singing My Song*, *Another Lonely Song*, *The Woman I Am*—even though they may have been co-written with Billy Sherrill or Glen Sutton or George Richey—express very precisely the sense of deep personal hurt, give life to the proud but bedraggled persona which the world knows as Tammy Wynette. She feels no embarrassment at writing about “anything that’s happened to me, anything I’ve gone through or experienced or just been mad about. I’ll write about it and pretend it happened to someone else. I won’t talk about it, but I’ll write about it—and I guess that’s just my little fairytale world. But I always figured the public knew everything about me anyway”. . . .

Even the songs she does not write . . . extend the sense of personal intimacy, bear out the unique persona she has created for herself, as if each new release brings with it the latest installment in the running diary of her life.

From “Tammy: The Only Time I’m Really Me” by Peter Guralnick, March 1979





of whom, I thought at the time, wore flannel shirts and spent their evenings drinking beer and swapping songs on the wooden porches of their houses along Music Row), but two books in particular stand out in my memory.

The first was Paul Hemphill's brilliant *The Nashville Sound: Bright Lights and Country Music* which is still in print today (Ballantine Books). With this book, Hemphill gave country music credibility and legitimacy as a topic worthy of intelligent discussion, and opened the floodgates for dozens of writers like myself.

The second book was John Grissim's 1970 *Country Music: White Man's Blues*, now, unfortunately, out of print. In it, Grissim captured the almost bohemian allure of Nashville's seamy side—the seedy bars, the all-night restaurants, the flea-bag apartments and swingshift recording sessions where broke and hungry writers might polish off two bottles of wine while trying to write a song for Jerry Lee Lewis.

So naturally, when Uncle Lawrence got around to showing me the Nashville he knew, I also brought along Hemphill's and Grissim's books, anxious to get a glimpse at the behind-the-scenes world that they portrayed.

Uncle Lawrence and I had a glorious time on those 12-hour Nashville trips, and I recall how, as we rolled into Lower Broadway around sunset, he'd jump out of the car and go scrambling desperately up the sidewalk, going door-to-door among the clubs and bars, look-

ing for a clean restroom. And I remember how fascinating all those ancient buildings down there on Broadway, near the Cumberland River, were to me, how they looked like they had been there forever, so quiet and desolate.

Often, we'd stay in a \$2-a-night room at the Andrew Jackson or one of those other dilapidated midtown hotels. Until the early hours of the morning, we'd haunt the bars, clubs, shops and peep shows along Lower Broadway, hoping against hope to catch a glimpse of Tom T. Hall. Then, we'd get up early the next morning, before the sun had even cleared off the mist, and go look over the fence at Johnny Cash's house out in Hendersonville.

It was another two years or so before I would, for reasons of my own, decide to relocate permanently to Nashville. By that time, Kris Kristofferson had started making movies and had left Nashville for the West

Coast. Linebaugh's, as well as most of the flea-bag hotels where Uncle Lawrence and I had stayed, were gone; the Opry had moved on to its fancy new headquarters out at plastic-fantastic Opryland; and Uncle Lawrence was dead from a heart attack.

Sometimes I get a little sad when I think back to those early trips, that all the magic I sensed when I first came as a tourist has faded somewhat during the five years that I've lived here, and that the city has become so familiar.

Still, I sometimes imagine what a good time Uncle Lawrence would have if he were still around and could come down and visit me now, and I think about all the ways that I might be able to thank him for showing me this town in the first place.

But mostly, I hope that wherever he is now, Tootsie is behind the bar serving the cold beer, and that *The Day Clayton Delaney Died* is on the jukebox.

But I was reading about people like George Jones, Merle Haggard, Tom T. Hall, Dolly Parton, Tammy Wynette and Loretta Lynn. These people had been singing country music forever. Their careers in country music had started long before the pop acts started crossing over onto the country charts. The songs they sang were about lost loves, getting drunk, cheating and crying in your beer. Straight and simple. At this point, I knew more about the artists and their music from what I read than from listening to the music. Although I was still a novice, I was becoming familiar with the names in country music. I could tell the difference between Loretta and Tammy, and I could see why they called George Jones "The King."

Then, in late 1976, *Country Music Magazine* was putting out a book called *The Outlaws*, and, in addition to my proofreading the magazine's galleys, I was going to proofread the galleys on *The Outlaws*. This book, however, was not about the stalwarts of country music. The names I was seeing were Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Tompall Glaser, Kris Kristofferson, Jack Clement and Jessi Colter. They were a new breed of country musician. They were called "Outlaws," and were causing quite a commotion in Nashville. An *Outlaw revolution*, the book said.

A revolution? What did country music artists have to rebel against? I wasn't unfamiliar with songs of protest. The music I had been listening to since I was a kid had advocated all sorts of revolution. From the folk songs of Peter, Paul and Mary to the rock 'n' roll of the Beatles. But country music? I thought I had it all down pat. George Jones sang cheating songs and Loretta Lynn sang women's songs. Story songs straight from the heart. What was the problem?

But these Outlaws were different. They were breaking the rules. They wanted control. Control over the songs they sang, in the studio and out. They wanted to be left alone to sing their own kind of music. The traditional Nashville sound wasn't for everybody, least of all the Outlaws. And, they wore their hair long.

Rochelle Friedman: A Country Fan Grows In Brooklyn

You might say that I got into country music through the back door when I was hired by *Country Music Magazine* as an advertising assistant in late 1975. My knowledge of country music was somewhat primitive. Somewhere in mid-1976 I start-

ed helping out in the editorial department.

Among my first duties was proofreading the galleys that came back from the typesetter. I really didn't need to know that much about the music itself, since I was mostly checking for spelling errors. I had no idea, at that time, that what I was reading was going to acquaint me with a music that had a history and character all its own. At this time in 1976, I was learning about music that was as foreign to me as the South itself (I grew up in South Brooklyn).

Unlike the rest of the editorial staff, who had grown up listening to country music, I had grown up listening to the rock and pop hits of the day. Of course, I knew who Johnny Cash was (wasn't he in prison?) and Glen Campbell (the Rhinestone Cowboy), and John Denver, Olivia Newton-John and Linda Ronstadt were on top of the pop charts (weren't they country, too?).



Kris, Willie and Waylon at Dripping Springs, Texas, 1972: boys who capture hearts everywhere, even in Brooklyn.

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All of a sudden, country music had a new meaning. I wanted to know what it was all about. "Listen to their music," said Michael Bane, Associate Editor of *Country Music* and the author of *The Outlaws*. "You'll understand." So I began listening. I began to take home every record I could get my hands on by Willie, Waylon, Kris and Tompall.

This couldn't have come at a better time. My interest in rock 'n' roll had never waned, but the sounds of the day were disco. Now disco was good to dance to, but it wasn't the type of music I wanted to listen to after a long day in the office. But **Red Headed Stranger** by Willie Nelson and **Wanted: The Outlaws**, by Willie, Waylon, Jessi and Tompall, were. Not only was their music different, but it was good. These songs were straight and simple—deadly earnest. I was beginning to get the idea.

By the time *The Outlaws* was completed, my understanding of country music had changed considerably. So had my record collection. On any given night, it wasn't uncommon for me to listen to the Beatles and Willie Nelson in the same hour. Sometimes one after another. But it wasn't enough. What I needed was to *see* them perform.

Aside from the yearly concerts, New York City in late 1976 and early 1977 wasn't the best place to hear country music. But a new club had opened and was attracting country artists. The Lone Star Cafe was billed as the best honky-tonk north of Abilene. I now had a chance to see country artists right in my backyard. The Lone Star holds about 400 people with a stage that is as close to you as the person you are sitting with. A *real* honky-tonk. My prior association with concerts had been in places like Madison Square Garden in New York and the Nassau Coliseum on Long Island, where you normally couldn't hear anything over all the screaming. But here was a place where you could actually make eye contact with the performer. They *wanted* to sing. The people loved it, and so did I.

By this time I was working full-time in the editorial de-

partment and was offered the job of Assistant Editor. It was time to go to Nashville and find out what all this was *really* about. It was one thing to go to a honky-tonk every other week in New York City, but Music City was the place where I could have it all. The place was the Municipal Auditorium, and the event was Fan Fair. The record companies put on shows for four days and almost every artist was in town. In one day I saw Bill Anderson, Loretta Lynn, Conway Twitty, Dolly Parton, Mel Tillis and Tammy Wynette. It might have taken years to see all of these artists at home. And, of course, there was the Opry. By this time the Opry had moved from the Ryman Auditorium to Opryland. Although I longed for the memories of the old hallowed walls and knew that this wasn't really the place where it all had started, it was all I needed. Roy Acuff was still the host, and the people in the audience still loved the Opry. I no longer felt like an intruder. I had been to Nashville, to the Opry, and seen most of the artists I had been reading about in the months before.

And I had been to a real honky-tonk. After Nashville, a trip to Texas, and to Nashville again.

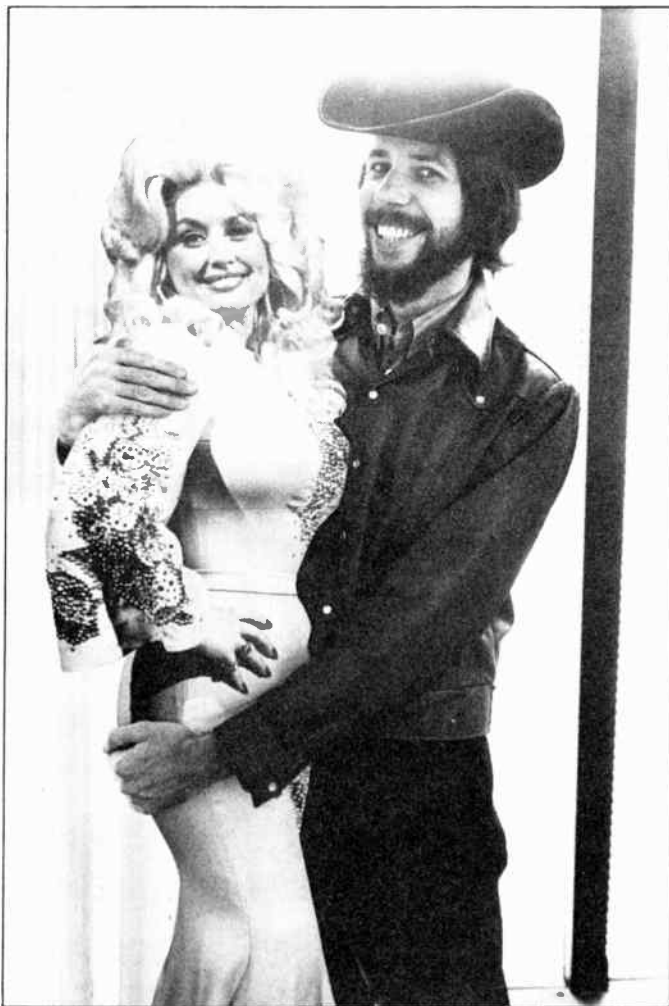
Back home, sometime in 1978, country music started showing up all over the city. The Lone Star Cafe wasn't the only place where you could listen to country music. Country music came to small clubs, large auditoriums and giant arenas. Emmylou Harris played Carnegie Hall, and Waylon played Broadway. I was made Managing Editor.

I like to tell myself that "I was country when country wasn't cool," but in reality I was just a few years ahead of the new country fan. I also like to think that since I was always into music, I would have started listening to country music anyway. But I just don't know. I was lucky. I was given an opportunity to learn about a music and a people that years before I might have scoffed at. And it's done more. Because of country music, I can let the sounds of jazz, blues, bluegrass and any other musical forms into my mind and into my heart.

John Pugh: Country Snowball Mushrooms Madly!

In the last ten years, country music has literally snowballed like a mushroom [what we think John means is "mushroomed like a snowball"—Ed.]. It has gone from being the music of people who have to stand on their feet and sweat like horses all day long, like the ones down here at Cloverland Creamery, to being for people who get to do good brain work while they sit on their you-know-whats. It has come out of the cheap honky-tonks like Buzzo's out here on Route 27 South, and other crummy places where half the rednecks have to be hauled out feet first because they're either

knocked out or passed out, to take over America everywhere from New York on down. Even the big high-tone snobs in college like it. I saw Jerry Lee tear them up at a fraternity party at LSU one night after they had stomped Tulane 34-7. And I mean tore them up! You can't go anywhere without hearing it anymore. Stores, people's homes, big office buildings downtown, it's everywhere. They even have it over in Japan where they play all that ching-chang stuff. I read in the paper that the wife of the king of Bulgaria or one of those countries has a whole collection of Tammy's albums that she orders



John Pugh and (???) Dolly: Only In America.



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2. RAZZY BAILEY
If Love Had a Face



3. Jim Ed Brown/Helen Cornelius
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20. JIM REEVES
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21. WAYLON JENNINGS
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22. DOLLY PARTON
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23. DOLLY PARTON
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37. ELVIS PRESLEY
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- 8. WAYLON JENNINGS
Are You Ready For the Country
- 9. RONNIE MILSAP
Where My Heart Is
- 10. ELVIS PRESLEY
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- 11. WAYLON JENNINGS
Good Hearted Woman
- 12. JERRY REED
East Bound and Down
- 13. THE BROWNS
Best
- 14. WAYLON JENNINGS
Honky Tonk Heroes
- 16. ELVIS PRESLEY
Spinout
- 17. WAYLON JENNINGS
This Time

- 18. WILLIE NELSON
Before His Time
- 19. ELVIS PRESLEY
Pure Gold
- 24. ELVIS PRESLEY
King Creole
- 25. WAYLON JENNINGS
The Ramblin Man
- 26. ELVIS PRESLEY
Harum Scarum
- 27. JIM REEVES
Best of Sacred Songs
- 28. DOLLY PARTON
My TN Mountain Home
- 29. ELVIS PRESLEY
G.I. Blues
- 30. SONS OF PIONEERS
Cool Water
- 31. ELVIS PRESLEY
In Person, Las Vegas
- 33. GARY STEWART
Out of Hand

- 34. ELVIS PRESLEY
Sun Sessions
- 36. CHARLEY PRIDE
Sunday Morning
- 38. CARTER FAMILY
Mid the Green Fields of Virginia
- 39. WILLIE NELSON
Yesterday's Wine
- 40. ELVIS PRESLEY
His Hand In Mine
- 41. CHARLEY PRIDE
I'm Just Me
- 42. DOLLY PARTON
Heartbreaker
- 43. DAVE & SUGAR
Tear Time
- 44. ELVIS PRESLEY
Elvis Country

- 45. CHARLEY PRIDE
The Happiness of Having You
- 46. EDDY ARNOLD
Welcome to My World
- 47. FLOYD CRAMER
Best
- 48. CHARLEY PRIDE
Amazing Love
- 49. GARY STEWART
Steppin Out
- 50. CHARLEY PRIDE
In Person
- 51. John Wayne
America, Why I Love Her
- 52. JOHN STEWART
Cannons In The Rain
- 53. CHET ATKINS/LES PAUL
Chester & Lester
- 54. Jim Ed Brown/Helen Cornelius
I'll Never Be Free
- 55. FLOYD CRAMER
Cramer Country
- 56. Dave and Sugar
DAVE AND SUGAR

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special. Next thing you know, it will be in Russia where they don't even allow our kind of music. But like someone said, music can knock down things like politics and different countries. President Nixon even made it a law that October was the one month for country music when they give the awards. Yes, country music is truly the biggest ever.

Now there is a magazine about this great new music, *Country Music*! It covers them all. George Jones, the greatest! Bill Anderson, Mr. Cool! Loretta Lynn, my sweetheart! Conway, the rock 'n' roll star (boo) who went country (yay)! Not to mention Merle Haggard, Barbara Mandrell, Billy Crash and a whole issue of Elvis! Elvis! Plus much, much more every month! In fact, you can't call yourself a country fan and not read the best, *Country Music*! It's exciting, informative, down-to-earth and clear. I would buy it even if I didn't get it free. It's *that* good.

Fortunately, I have been able to play a small part in this magazine and hope to more in the future. For that, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the editor, staff and readers of *Country Music* for keeping me in there and letting me write about our wonderful music, and all the dedicated, hard-working people who have given so much of their time, energies and talents, and selflessly worked sometimes around the clock in spite of all obstacles, never once wavering in their belief or dropping in their dream, always keeping up everybody's spirits with their warmth and cheer like fresh wine, for making it all possible. Without you none of us would be anywhere today, much less the last ten years. Me least of any of them. You're beautiful, and I love you all.

So, here's hoping for ten more just like the last ten, from the ole boy whose hand may sometimes be where it shouldn't, but whose heart is always in the right place.

P.S. The reason I know about the people down at Cloverland is because I worked there one summer in high school, and believe me I earned every penny. Think about that next time you drink a glass of milk, and you'll realize how lucky you are to be living in a country like ours.

Doug Green: Saddlebags Full Of Print And Memories

In the several years since *Country Music* first accepted and published my first little piece, I've collected a couple of saddlebags full of widely varied memories—some frustrating, most (at least now) amusing, and a few very poignant.

Many of them stand out like faded photographs in a mental scrapbook: my first trip to New York since the age of 10, dragged about the Big Apple, discovering office politics, and spending an exhilarating night at Jack Killion's lovely, ancient New Jersey farmhouse; chasing after Leonard Kamsler all over Nashville in the heat of June as he attempted to break the Guinness world record for photos taken of a city in a fourteen-hour period; a late dinner and the astonishing, unfailing graciousness of Janie Fricke; endless bewilderment at the hate mail engendered by readers who, ah, did not quite agree with my interpretation of a reviewed record; a drunken evening at the Hall of Fame Motor Inn with Dick Nusser and others on the occasion of my 30th birthday, and closing out the evening jumping in and out of

the spinning loop of Red River Dave's lariat; endless concern over late paychecks; long, occasionally sober, serio-comic conversations with Patrick Carr; an afternoon spent with Leonard Kamsler and Alanna Nash at Dolly Parton's house (with photos of Ms. Parton and myself in near-embrace to prove it); the call from a long-aspiring but still little-known performer who asked, "Say, how about doing a cover story on me?"; putting together the *Country Music Magazine Coneheads*, the softball team which may have won almost as much as we lost, and finished as high as fourth in the Fan Fair Tournament one year (losing 5-0 to Barbara Mandrell's championship team); these and hundreds more.

Much more, of course: the astonishingly varied temperaments and styles of the host of editors and managing editors I wrote for: Patrick Carr, Martha Hume, Arthur Maher, Michael Bane, Russ Barnard, Bob Allen, and of course the Brooklyn Bombshell, Rochelle Friedman—people with whom I still stay in close touch, for whom I still have a great deal of af-

fection.

As for specific highlights: the first Janie Fricke story, difficult and, I think, ultimately satisfying for both of us; the six chapters I was fortunate enough to write, or co-write for *Country Music's* book, *The Illustrated History of Country Music*, which gave me the opportunity to do my most sustained and best work in terms of research, scholarship, and writing. And most of all, the opportunity to talk at length with the elusive and reclusive Bob Nolan, the Poet Laureate of the West, before his death in 1980. This is the man whose music first enthralled me as a child, and whom I still admired (and, indeed, admire) as the finest songwriter to grace American traditional music, the man of whom I wanted to ask the deepest, most meaningful questions. My wish came true thanks to Fred Goodwin and to *Country Music*, and the resulting interview, published in the January/February, 1979 issue, means more to me than any other work I've done.

As a general rule my fondest memories are of work done with performers of an earlier era of country music, currently overlooked and forgotten in this fast-paced, chart-dominated era, and overall the memory of doing stories on Nolan, Ray Whitley, the Sons of the Pioneers, Elton Britt, Sara and Maybelle Carter, Herman Crook, Foy Willing, Rosalie



Doug Green (left) and a fellow *Country Music Magazine* Conehead. Winning isn't everything: Tradition counts, too.

We're looking for people to write children's books

Writing for children is the perfect way to take up writing, says the author of 53 children's books. Your ideas come right out of your own experience. And while it's still a challenge, it's probably the straightest possible line between you and publication — if you're qualified to seek the success this rewarding field offers.

By Alvin Tresselt, Dean of Faculty

If you want to write and get published, I can't think of a better way to do it than writing books and stories for children and teenagers. Ideas flow naturally right out of your own life experience. While it's still a challenge, the odds of getting that first unforgettable check from a juvenile publisher are better than they are from just about any other kind of publisher I know.

Later on, you may get other checks from other publishers. But right now, the object is to begin — to break into print — to learn the feeling of writing and selling your work and seeing your name in type. After that, you can decide if you want your writing to take another direction.

But after 30 years of editing, publishing, and teaching — and 53 books of my own — I can tell you this: you'll go a long way before you discover anything as rewarding as writing for young readers.

Your words will never sound as sweet as they do from the lips of a child reading your books and stories. And the joy of creating books and stories that young people 'really dig' is an experience you'll never have anywhere else. (In this age of boob tube illiteracy, convenient morality, and plastic values, do you know of a more important audience?)

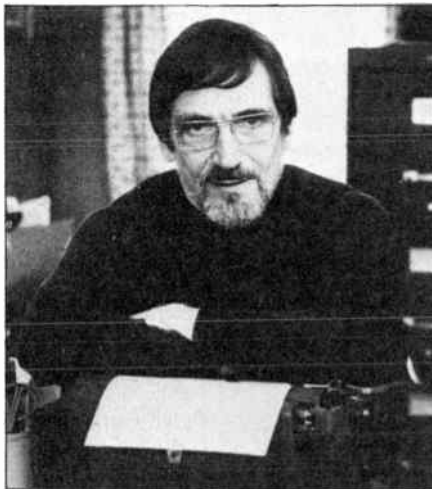
But, that's not all. The financial rewards go far beyond most people's expectations because there's a surprisingly big market out there for writers who are trained to crack it. More than 130 million young people's books are purchased each year. Between 2,000 and 2,500 new titles appear annually and new authors account for as many as half of them.

There are also 250 monthly magazines looking for material for young readers. You can imagine how much writing it takes just to keep them going!

'Am I really qualified?'

Yet two big questions bedevil nearly every would-be writer: "Am I really qualified?" and "How can I get started?"

This is our definition of a "qualified person": It's someone with an aptitude for writing who can take constructive criticism, learn from it, and turn it into a professional performance. That's the only kind of person we're looking for. The reasons are simple: our reputation is built on success, and if prospective students don't have the earmarks of success, we probably can't help them. And we tell them so. It's only fair to both of us.



Alvin Tresselt was Vice President and Executive Editor of Parents' Magazine Press, the first editor of *Humpty Dumpty's Magazine for Children*, and a board member of the Author's Guild. His 53 books for young readers have sold over two million copies.

To help us spot potential authors, we've developed a revealing test for writing aptitude. It's free, and we don't charge for our evaluation. But no one gets into the Institute without passing it. Those who pass and enroll receive our promise: You will complete at least one manuscript ready to submit to a publisher by the time you finish the Course.

When we teach, you learn

I've learned a lot about writing for children and I love it. Now I'm passing my knowledge on to my students so they can profit from it. When I'm not writing my own books I spend my time at The Institute of Children's Literature, a workshop for writers that does only one thing and does it better than any other educational institution I know of: It trains qualified people to write for the young reader.

This is the way I work with my students, and my fellow instructors — all of whom are experienced writers or editors — work more or less the same way.

When you're ready — at your own time and your own pace — you send your assignment to me and I read it and reread it to get everything out of it you've put into it. Then I edit your assignment with a red pencil just the way a publishing house editor would — if he had the time. I return it along with a detailed letter explaining my comments. I tell you what your strong points are, what your weaknesses are, and just what you can do to improve. It's a matter of push and pull. You push and I pull and between us both, you learn to write.

The proof of the pudding

This method really works. I wouldn't spend five minutes at it if it didn't. Last year we received hundreds of letters like these from successful students: "Before taking your Course, the short stories I scribbled for my two tiny tots never caught an editor's fancy," writes Emily Burns of Salem, Ore.

"My first sale, to *National Catholic Weekly*, was a Course lesson. Then I sent another

Course assignment to a writer's competition and won first prize of \$400!"

"My instructor's advice was invaluable in plotting, character, motivation, and dialogue. I am most grateful for her personal interest and encouragement. Best of all she helped me understand my own strengths and weaknesses and how to emphasize the first and remedy the second. Better instruction hath no man than this!" Elizabeth Henley, New Cambria, Mo.

Marilyn Day of Marissa, Ill. says, "I'm proud of this accomplishment. Now I'm no longer a housewife, I am a writer!"

And Mary Carruth, Dublin, Cal., writes, "I sent out my first article with a prayer and a hope, and it was accepted. Your Course with its structure and support, has been everything I hoped for and needed."

"When I started this course, I did not really think that I had the ability to write", writes Sister M. Laetitia Mudde, West Haven, Ct., "But my instructor made me believe in myself." I have a file full of similar letters. People like yourself so full of pride they could easily convince you that indeed it is a pity more people — men and women — don't take up writing for children.

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H-28

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Stars to stir the passions of traditionalists and hillbilly historians. From the top, they are: the young Hank Snow, the young Ernest Tubb, the young Webb Pierce, the late Jimmie Rodgers, and (bottom left) master guitarist Merle Travis.



Allen and others is, upon reflection, extremely satisfying work. I harbor a hope that it was meaningful to some readers of *Country Music* as well.

But a journalist's work, though occasionally mildly glamorous and usually lonely, difficult, and introspective, is ultimately a job like most others; though one is proud of work well done, it is ultimately the personal contact which will endure long after the ephemeral story has been written and printed and paid for and forgotten. It has been both a privilege and an honor to work with, and become friends with, some of the finest music writers working today: Nick Tosches, Patrick Carr, Michael Bane, Alanna Nash, John Morthland, and Peter Guralnick, who may be the most sensitive music journalist of our time, and the most gifted at articulating that special sensitivity. These are writers whose styles and personalities both personally and pro-

fessionally are extremely varied, but all share a common consuming passion and care for the music and musicians they choose to chronicle, a genuine love of music which more frequently than one might imagine surpasses that of the career- and business-oriented performers about whose work and lives they write.

Country Music has eagerly assigned and accepted some of the finest work of these deeply committed people from the start, and having been associated with these writers both personally and professionally in the heady regions of creativity has unquestionably been one of the most exhilarating and enjoyable continuing episodes of my life.

I think I speak for most of us when I say "Thanks, *Country Music*, for ten great years . . . and say, Russ, when will the checks be mailed?"

The check is in the mail, Doug.
—Ed.

Art Maher: *The Triumph Of The Traditional*

Although I lived in Brooklyn, New York, I became an intense country music fan in the late 1940s. The nation was experiencing a mild boom in country music (still called hillbilly music then), and the New York area had some fine country disc jockey shows, some emanating from nearby New Jersey, others right from the heart of Manhattan. Late at night, my radio would also pull in stations WWVA, from Wheeling, West Virginia, and WCKY from Cincinnati.

Hillbilly programming was gutsy and diverse. You'd hear Hank Williams, Hank Snow, Ernest Tubb, Red Foley, Bob Wills, Bob Atcher, Moon Mullican, the Delmore Brothers, Grandpa Jones, the Blue Sky Boys, Bill Monroe, Montana Slim, Elton Britt, Kenny Roberts, Merle Travis, the Sons of the Pioneers, the Maddox Brothers and Rose, Gene Autry, Floyd Tillman, Jimmy Wakely,

and sometimes even J.E. Mainer and his Mountaineers, the Carter Family or Jimmie Rodgers. It was something to hear. A few years later, people like Lefty Frizzell, Carl Smith, Ray Price, Porter Wagoner, Webb Pierce and Chet Atkins came to the fore. Things still sounded fine.

But in the early '50s, Hank Williams died and rockabilly appeared. These two events were too much for hillbilly music to overcome, and one of the industry's greatest eras—perhaps its greatest era—faded rapidly away.

In April, 1976, when I became Editor of *Country Music*, Nashville seemed polarized around the outlaws and progressives on the one hand and the mainstreamers on the other. The former were insisting on more artistic control, more feeling in the music and more flexibility in production. In short, they wanted an end to the saccharine-sweet, highly formularized Nashville Sound approach.

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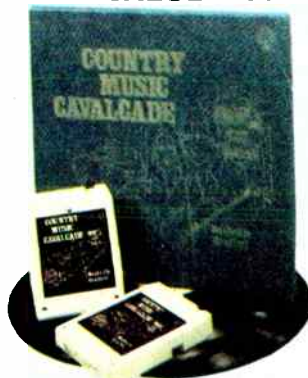
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The mainstreamers, of course, wanted to maintain the status quo. Their approach had been selling records, and had helped give country music a more respectable image than it had during the hillbilly days.

Totally forgotten in this polarization, it seemed to me, were the millions of fans who had no particular ideology. These fans didn't care whether a song was progressive or recessive, outlaw or inlaw. They just wanted to hear good country music presented simply and well, as long as it had some guts.

When I attended Fan Fair, 1976, as Editor of this magazine, I felt initially like one of the forgotten fans. Sure, I liked a lot of the performers I heard and met, but I still felt there was a void that needed filling. Then I saw a ray of hope.

Wandering around backstage at the annual Reunion Show, which features stars from the past and not-so-past, I ran into Scotty Wiseman, of the husband-and-wife team Lulubelle

and Scotty. He'd written *Remember Me*, the first country song I'd really flipped over—when it was a hit for T. Texas Tyler back in the '40s, not when it was a hit for Willie Nelson in the '70s. Then I chatted for a while with an old gent who turned out to be Wade Mainer, brother and singing partner of J.E. Mainer. Wade later went on stage and sang *Maple on the Hill*, which I still think is one of the finest songs ever written in or out of country music. Later, an aging Kenny Roberts proved he was still one of the all-time great yodelers. There were lots of other performers, all well received by an enthusiastic crowd. But the high point for me was when old Merle Travis strode out to center stage carrying his Gibson Super 400 and did *Nine Pound Hammer*. His guitar style had bowled me over when I'd first heard it in 1949. I jostled a bunch of camera-toting fans out of the way to get a good shot of my own, then riveted my eyes to Merle's fam-

ous right hand with the thumb and index finger that manage to sound like two whole hands working full tilt. Later, I spoke to Merle backstage, and found him very pleasant and excruciatingly modest. I've been fortunate enough to have stayed in touch with Merle since that day, and consider that first meeting with him one of the most important events of my tenure as Editor.

Back in New York a few days after the close of Fan Fair, I reflected a bit. Aside from the fact that I'd heard and met some of the gods that had stalked the Earth of my teen years, I had discovered that what I considered real country music still lived. Nashville still honored it and fans still loved it. With a little luck, I'd see a day when someone would record a few songs with the traditional country sound—perhaps even a revival or two. There'd be some hits, and—bingo. Traditional country music would climb out of limbo and back

onto the all-important charts.

For a while, I thought I'd been wrong. Nashville artists like Dolly Parton, Ronnie Mil-sap, Crystal Gayle, Kenny Rogers, and Eddie Rabbitt began to climb up and down the pop charts, almost, it seemed, at will. As more and more Nashville artists tried to do the same, any hint of a traditional sound in a Nashville studio was a mortal sin.

Fortunately, the fans weren't completely in tune with this movement. Along came Gene Watson's *Reflections* with two solid, traditional hits, *My Farewell Party* and *Pick the Wild-wood Flower*. Then people noticed that the Bellamy Brothers had a traditional-sounding hit or two. Emmylou Harris did great with *Blue Kentucky Girl*. Willie had been selling oldies since his *Red Headed Stranger* album, and *Coal Miner's Daughter* (the song) was a smash hit. So the cry went out within the industry: "Back to Basics! Keep It Simple!"

Leonard Kamsler: *Just Folks*

I came to photographing country singers by way of golf photography. Choh Low, who had been the art director of *Golf Magazine*, was art director of *Country Music*, and, remembering my people photography at *Golf*, he asked me to try my hand with the country folk. It was an easy transition for me, since I'm a North Carolina-born country music fan who wanted to be a picker from the age of six.

The folks involved in golf and country music are much the same. I find the same distaste for posing in Waylon that I find in Jack Nicklaus, the same readiness to try anything in Dolly that I find in Ben Crenshaw. I guess folks are just folks whether they're hitting a golf ball or a B flat.

All the other *Country Music* contributors have written their essays, but since I'm a photographer, I'm doing mine in pictures. These shots are from my private collection. They were all taken after *Country Music* photo sessions, and I treasure them.



Today, traditional tunes both old and new share the charts with the country-pop stuff that was supposed to be the only

sound the fans would buy. The Fan Fair Reunion Show of 1976 had been, for me, a harbinger of good things to come.

Peter Guralnick: *Family Feelings, Vocal Response*

Country music for me was a discovery that took a little bit of time—both the magazine and the music. I had written about rockabilly and blues singers for a good number of years before *Country Music*, the magazine, ever got started, and I had listened for years to blues-influenced country singers like Hank Williams, Jimmie Rodgers, and Merle Haggard. But my first article on a strictly *country* singer was on Waylon Jennings, another Jimmie Rodgers-influ-

enced musician, in 1974. Waylon changed my whole sense of contemporary country music—and was just about to change most other people's, too. Then in 1976 I wrote my first story for *Country Music* on Charlie Rich, someone I had known (and admired) for seven years but never thought of as a country singer particularly. My next subject was Ernest Tubb, and from there I went on to write about Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard, Hank Snow, Jack Clement, Tammy Wynette and

others.

Writing for *Country Music* for me has been a different experience than writing for any other music magazine. The reason is quite simple. I myself have always written as a fan. I've never written about someone I didn't admire in some way, and I don't think I would feel honest about conducting an interview if I did. Many of the people I've written about over the years have been somewhat obscure—either on the edge of stardom, long past their popularity, or never destined to be stars at all. The gauge of my interest in them has been their music and the person that lay behind the music. Writing for *Country Music* allowed me for the first time to indulge both my passions as a fan and my curiosity as a writer while at the same time reaching a broad audience of people who were as interested in the subject as I was. This wasn't like writing for a fanzine, and it wasn't like writing for a scholarly journal.

Country music (both the magazine and the music) has at its best upheld tradition while at the same time forging ahead with the new. This is what a journal of popular culture is supposed to do, and what a broadly based popular music is supposed to represent. It allows maverick classicists like Merle Haggard and Willie Nelson to stand side by side with their boyhood heroes—with Jimmie Rodgers and Bob Wills and Ernest Tubb—while simultaneously creating a new synthesis of their own. It allows a writer like me to do stories in succession on traditionalists like Bill Monroe and contemporary stars like Tom T. Hall. It allows *Country Music* to include a feature on an artist like Sleepy LaBeef in the same issue that runs a cover story on Merle Haggard.

I've never gotten a more vocal response than I have to the stories I've had published in *Country Music*. Most of the response has been positive; some has been negative; but all has been forcefully expressed, and *involved*. It's come from both fans and performers, who are themselves fans, too. It's come from the people I've written about, whom I've always tried to portray honestly but not necessarily with kid gloves. Most appreciate the honesty and wouldn't be caught dead in kid gloves. Country music has been said over and over to be one big family, and in this magazine it's almost as if you're writing for that extended unit in which family feuds are not unknown, but family feelings are much more the rule.

Writing for *Country Music*, I feel as if I am reaching someone or some ones out there who care as much as I do about the subject I am writing about. This is a good feeling, and by no means a universal one (with many publications you wonder if there's anyone out there listening), and I only hope that both *Country Music* and country music can retain their sense of roots and evolution, can withstand Hollywoodization much as they have survived previous commercial trends, and can stay on the sometimes lurching, not always steady, but broadly encompassing course that has sustained them for the last 10 and 50 years, respectively. ■



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Ten Long Years, Five Great Albums

Michael Bane

Actually, I'm really not much of an album person. I have a solidly jukebox mentality, and I would happily swap every album I own for a couple of vintage Wurlitzers stocked with my favorite singles (in fact, I just struck a deal on a vintage Wurlitzer that's so good it's probably illegal, but that's another story). I tend toward "Best of..." and compilation albums, which cause most critics to blanch. With a lot of country artists, though, that's actually the best way to go—there's an incredible amount of dead wood on a lot of country albums, especially early ones which featured one hit single and nine songs written by the producer's brother-in-law.

Still, there are a few albums that deserve to be singled out, albums that I would genuinely hate to be without.

I always keep two copies of **Elvis: The Sun Sessions** handy, in case I accidentally sit on one. This is a compilation of all Elvis's recordings for Sam Phillips's Sun label in the mid-1950s, and it is some of the most powerful and most vital music ever made. A song like *Mystery Train* practically defies description, except to say that it is proof positive that there is still a touch of magic in the world. This is the music that changed the world, and anybody with even a passing interest in either country or rock should have a copy of **The Sun Sessions** just to listen to once in a while, to remember what the real stuff was like.

There's no doubt that I have a certain prejudice about Hank Williams, Jr., but even with

Several thousand country albums were let loose upon the marketplace during the ten years of this magazine's life. Some were applauded; others vanished, and rightly so; but the vast majority simply disappeared into personal collections or the back files of radio stations. We have asked our writers and editors to choose the five albums of the decade which haven't (or shouldn't have) disappeared. Here are their individual selections, and, for an ending, their consensus vote.

that, **Hank Williams, Jr. and Friends** remains a truly under-sung classic album. It is the much ballyhooed fusion of country and rock, but it is a fusion that doesn't lose sight of its roots in either direction. Hank Jr. is also one of country's premier song stylists, and with the right song—like Vince Matthews's *On Susan's Floor* or Toy Caldwell's *Can't You See*, which puts Waylon's version to shame—he can make the hairs stand up on the back of your neck. The ideal Hank Jr. album, I think, would include most of **Friends**—*On Susan's Floor*, *Losing You*, *Can't You See*, *Stoned at the Jukebox*, *Brothers of the Road*, *Montana Song*, and, of course, *Living Proof*—and a bunch of his newer releases, including *Women I've Never Had*, *Dixie on My Mind*, *Family Tradition*, *Old Habits*, *Footlights*, and a whole side of him doing his daddy's songs. All in all, I think I've gotten more pleasure from listening to Hank Williams, Jr. than any other artist, and I expect that situation to continue indefinitely.

On the subject of the Wil-

liams family, I'd have to include one Hank Sr. compilation album. It doesn't really matter which one. I have several, and I play them interchangeably. There are times when only Hank Williams will do the trick—the other night, for example, when the poker game went on until almost dawn and the whiskey bottles began running low. After an evening of mixed rock and rockabilly, assorted girl singers and greatest hits from the Sixties, it all came down to **Hank Williams' 14 Greatest Hits**, over and over. As trite as it sounds, Hank Williams remains the greatest poet of the common folk; his songs have a way of getting inside you without going through the brain. Listening to Hank Williams is like listening to the Sun Sessions of Elvis—sometimes you almost forget just how good it can really be.

I also find myself drawing closer and closer to George Jones. There are whole days when all I want to do is listen to *She Thinks I Still Care* or *The Grand Tour* or *He Stopped Loving Her Today* or even his wonderful *Bartender Blues* over

and over. As far as albums go (and with George, that's not very far), my favorite is **Alone Again**, which has got to be the most painful album ever recorded by a human being in agony. I use this album to introduce the uninitiated to George Jones, and usually they begin laughing and talking about crying in their beer. The important thing is that they never finish the album laughing. I've also come across a new Epic album called **George Jones: Encore**, part of a new series they're putting out which is sort of a "Best of..." package on everybody. It's pretty good, too.

The last album is a toughy, and the fact is I really can't say. Part of me points to Waylon Jennings's **Dreaming My Dreams**, which is definitely my favorite Waylon album. It is also, I think, one of the single greatest albums to ever come out of Nashville. It features more memorable cuts than any other straight album that readily pops to mind, including the great *Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way*, Allen Reynolds's lovely title cut, and Cowboy Jack Clement's demented *Let's All Help the Cowboy Sing the Blues*. But then I think about the British Charlie series of Memphis music, which features such greats as **The Original Johnny Cash**, **The Original Carl Perkins**, **The Original Jerry Lee Lewis** and, a particular favorite, **The Original Charlie Rich**, with such all-time wonderful songs as *Sitting and Thinking*, *Philadelphia Baby*, and *Mohair Sam*. It features Charlie at his best, and that is very good indeed. Johnny Cash's recent **Gone Girl** album is another contender, as is daughter Rosanne's **Seven Year Ache**, although, in honesty, neither album has been around long enough to stand the Michael



Bane torture test. Jack Clement runs through this list all over the place (he produced Waylon's **Dreaming My Dreams**, wrote *Let's All Help the Cowboy Sing the Blues*, strongly influenced Johnny Cash's **Rockabilly Blues**, tinkered around with Sun Records, which covers Elvis and Charlie Rich, and, on his own album, sang probably my favorite single cut ever, *When I Dream*). I also like Jack's *California Girl* and *the Tennessee Square*, which he wrote for the Glaser Brothers and which, if there was any justice in this world, the Glaser Brothers would recut. There's also Willie Nelson's **Red Headed Stranger**, which I used to be very attached to but, with the Willie apparently everywhere (I check under my bed at night, in fact), I sort of got bored with it. But I'm pretty sure I'll come around in a couple of years.

Now, ask me what I'm going to put on my Wurlitzer! Won't that be a list!

Rochelle Friedman

My five favorite albums:

Willie Nelson: **Red Headed Stranger**—Maybe it's because it was one of the first albums to infiltrate my rock collection, but basically because it's a great album.

Willie Nelson Sings Kristoferson—Anything that Kristoferson writes or Willie sings is my favorite. So for me, this is a double-header.

Jack Clement: **All I Want to Do in Life**—This album is like being tucked into bed after a long, hard day.

Dolly Parton: **Coat of Many Colors**—Story songs, straight and simple. No frills and nothing to get hung up about.

Merle Haggard: **A Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player in the World**—Bob Wills and Merle, another double-header.

John Morthland

Joe Ely: **Honky Tonk Masquerade**—For my money, country-rock begins and ends

“Anybody with even a passing interest in either country or rock should have a copy of *The Sun Sessions* just to listen to once in a while, to remember what the real stuff was like.”

with this Lubbock neo-rockabilly, because he's the only one to fully embrace both styles without diluting either. He's also been one of the more consistent artists of the last five or so years, in that while some of his five albums (one available only on import) may be weaker than others, none are routine. I consider **Honky Tonk Masquerade** his best: it's rugged and lyrical simultaneously, and it ties together more roots-music forms in ten songs than most musicians conquer in an entire career. Along with compadres Butch Hancock and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Ely is one of the most vivid and startling songwriters around. Check out *Cornbread Moon* or *West Texas Waltz* for their evocations of the American Southwest, its landscape as well as its people. Check out the title song for the way it deals with a classic male-female situation in such a refreshingly egalitarian way. Check out the mysticism at the center of *Because of the Wind* and *Tonight I Think I'm Gonna Go Downtown*. Check out the way *Boxcars* so perfectly captures the small-town ennui that keeps so many people stuck in one place long after it's time to move on. Why isn't this man a star?

Willie Nelson: **Phases and Stages**—Yes, I know that **Red Headed Stranger** was the real Texas music breakthrough, and **Stardust** was the real American music breakthrough. But like the former, this album is about broken dreams and starting over; like the latter, it's about learning to get the most out of small pleasures. It's also about

guilt and love and lust and regret and disbelief and fear and recrimination and even optimism—and about being too wasted to get a real handle on any of it. *I Still Can't Believe You're Gone* is one of the most devastatingly sad songs of the last ten years. With a lean Muscle Shoals band playing Symphony-Sid-meets-Floyd-Tillman arrangements on songs like *No Love Around* and *Sister's Coming Home/Down at the Corner Beer Joint*, it's the most musically diverse album Willie's ever cut. Shouldn't all that count for a lot?

Best of Dolly Parton—Which **Best of Dolly** do I mean? The one with *American Gothic (Down From Dover)* and bitter-sweet nostalgia (*In the Good Old Days*) and an unlikely combination of the two (*My Blue Ridge Mountain Boy*), as well as standards like *Mule Skinner Blues*? Or the more mature, more complex Dolly of nostalgia-transcending nostalgia songs like *Coat of Many Colors* and *My Tennessee Mountain Home*, genre-defying genre songs like *The Bargain Store*, *Touch Your Woman*, and *Jolene*, and such disarmingly direct songs as *I Will Always Love You* and *Love Is Like a Butterfly*? Take your pick, because either album is fine by me.

Gary Stewart: **Out of Hand**—Here's a raucous whoop of sheer stoned joy all too rare in country music. Stewart knows all about drinking too much and going home with the wrong person—or worse yet, going home alone because his mate has wandered. He knows how

to find trouble, how to get into it and how to get out of it. That's his milieu, but—and here's his saving grace—it's not necessarily his own life. Which allows him to sing stuff like the title song and other hell-raisers with a knowing wink, with just enough distance to let everybody in on the absurdity of it all. Gary Stewart is a country Puck, ruminating on what fools we mortals be. He offers sin-with-a-smile, and if you can't take it that way, why take it at all?

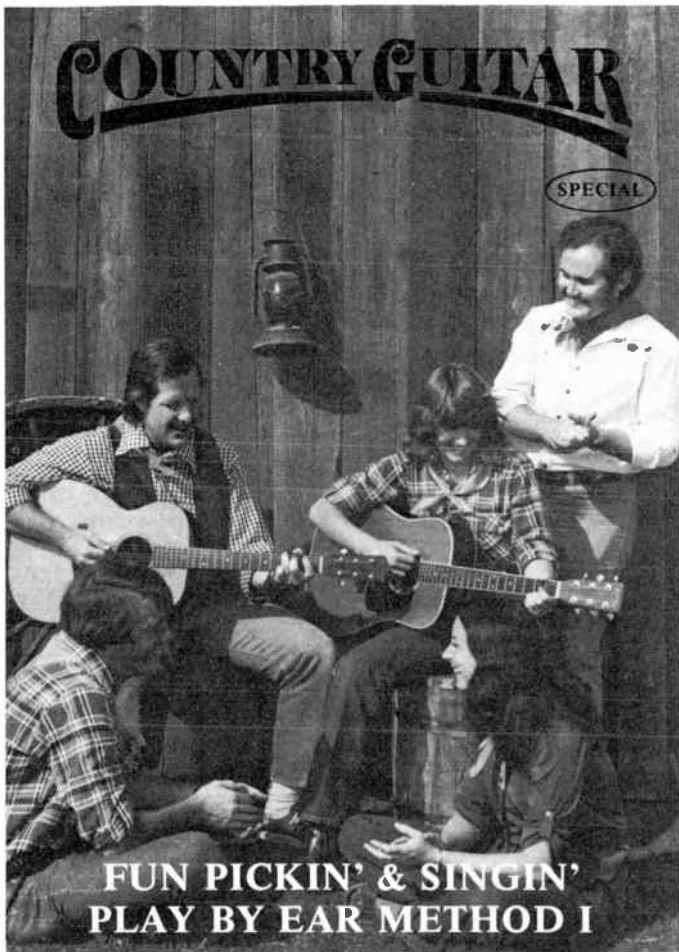
Hank Williams, Jr. and Friends—A jolting collection of songs that state his dilemma and finalize his break with Nashville and the Williams legend in terms so absolute that Hank Jr. has never been able to get past this one; he's been merely repeating himself ever since, and never as effectively. In short, it sounds like catharsis but isn't—but it *is* a once-in-a-career album anyhow. If all that sounds highly contradictory, so be it, for there is no country performer more riddled with self-contradictions than Hank Jr. This is an agonizingly, gnawingly personal album, anchored by durable Southern rock riffs and finely crafted country honky-tonk as well. It features some of the most unusual (and best) songs he's ever written, and six years on, its impact is still undeniable.

Bob Allen

Like an old and trusted friend, a favorite album offers you consolation when you're in your cups or otherwise trying to deal with hard times. Similarly, it's someone to dance or drink with when things are going good. It can pick you up and supply you with the necessary drama and enthusiasm to cope with otherwise hopelessly boring tasks like vacuuming your apartment or doing the dishes. A favorite album will tell you stories you want to hear, and tell you that it is, after all, OK to feel whatever you're feeling. A favorite album can get you through a long night when there just isn't anyone else around to keep you company.

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here are five albums that, in addition to being my five all-time favorites, are also some of my best friends:

Gary Stewart's **Steppin' Out** is the one album where this extraordinary vocalist comes closest to fulfilling the (as yet unfulfilled) expectation that he might emerge as the Jerry Lee Lewis of the 1970s, the still-missing link between country and rock.

John Prine's **Diamonds in the Rough** is a wonderful album by the most perceptive and poignant country-flavored writer to emerge in the last decade. Prine's debut album, **John Prine**, is just as powerful, but it was issued too early to fall into the decade under discussion here.

Serving 190 Proof by Merle Haggard is a brilliantly arresting and personal album which stands as the high point of Hag's long career. It's also one of the best country albums ever recorded.

The best of Kris Kristofferson's studio albums were released before 1972, but his influence as a writer is still felt today. For that reason, I would include **Songs of Kristofferson**, a recent compilation of some of his best original songs, among my top five albums of the decade.

From the precariously uneven output of one of country's most powerful and original vocal stylists, Waylon's **Are You Ready for the Country** stands as my personal pick.

Among my close also-rans—albums covered with just a touch more dust than my top five, are Billy Joe Shaver's **Old Five and Dimers Like Me**, Bobby Bare's **Greatest Hits**, Guy Clark's **Old Number One**, Steve Young's **Seven Bridges Road**, Willie Nelson's **Red Headed Stranger**, Lee Clayton's **Border Affair**, Joe Ely's **Musta Notta Gotta Lotta**, and Ed Bruce, by, of course, Ed Bruce.

Art Maher

During *Country Music's* decade of life, I'd have to say that Willie Nelson's **Red Headed Stranger** was very important indeed because it proved once



“Red Headed Stranger proved once and for all that slick production and rigidly formularized creativity were not the only elements which could sell country records.”

and for all that slick production and rigidly formularized creativity were not the only elements which could sell country records. Spontaneity and feeling suddenly became important again in country music.

Wanted: The Outlaws took the point made by **Red Headed Stranger** and rammed it home.

Dolly Parton's **New Harvest, First Gathering** was a giant step towards today's scene in which country music is not only cool, but tremendously popular among former fans of rock and (ugh) disco.

Gene Watson's **Reflections**, with its fine cuts *My Farewell Party* and *Wildwood Flower*, showed Nashville that you could be *real* country and still sell a bunch of records. In other words, it was a critical milestone on the road to re-legitimizing traditional country music.

Finally, Johnny Cash's **One Piece at a Time** returned Cash to the forefront of country music's awareness. Cash had always commanded tremendous respect, even when his records weren't selling up a storm anymore, but this album re-cemented his position in the industry.

Rich Kienzle

If you're a record reviewer by trade, you learn one fact very quickly: Among all those records pouring into your post office box, only a tiny percent

age represents material you'll want to listen to five years later. You've gotta dig for the good ones, but once you've found them, they become an essential part of your life.

I have split my selection of favorite albums into three categories: All-Time Favorites; the Best of the Last Ten Years (i.e., the best since this magazine started publication); and, since I write the Buried Treasures column for *Country Music*, my favorite reissue albums of the past ten years.

Merle Haggard's **A Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player in the World** tops my All-Time Favorites list. A tribute to Bob Wills released in 1970, the album was my first introduction to the joyous eclecticism of Western swing. Likewise, Johnny Cash's **Live at Folsom Prison** remains a true testimonial to the sheer power of Cash's basic sound and presence. Carl Perkins's **Original Golden Hits**, a late '60s compilation of his Sun classics like *Blue Suede Shoes* and *Dixie Fried* remains to me the ultimate rockabilly party album with its stinging guitar, snappy drumming, and Carl's dixiehop vocals. Another two favorites are, unfortunately, out of print. Floyd Tillman's **Let's Make Memories** (Starday), recorded with Leon McAuliffe's Cimarron boys, is one of the tightest, most dynamic honky-tonk albums ever done. Tillman's voice slips and slides around the lyrics of some of his standards, like *Each Night at Nine* and honky-tonk staples like *Drivin' Nails in My Coffin* and plays against McAuliffe's

driving band. The other, Jerry Lee Lewis's **There Must Be More to Love Than This** is one of his early '70s country albums with a more or less typical selection of songs for that period, but with a psychotic, kick-out-the-jams version of *Sweet Georgia Brown* and the unreal *Fool-Aid* that appeal to me for God knows what reason.

The past ten years have yielded their share of classic albums. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's groundbreaking effort, **Will the Circle Be Unbroken**, featuring Merle Travis, Earl Scruggs, Jimmy Martin, Maybelle Carter and Doc Watson, took an enormous step in reconciling the old and the new influences in bluegrass in a highly listenable fashion. Hyped as a landmark, this album lived up to the hype. Waylon's **Honky Tonk Heroes** is another favorite that broke new ground (though a good case could be made for **Dreaming My Dreams**), showing Waylon's tougher, streamlined sound and his peerless choice of material. The title track remains, to me, one of his finest moments.

Willie's **Shotgun Willie** album came along at about the same time as Waylon's, and it, too, was a new beginning, both a departure from and a reaffirmation of his past. **Phases and Stages** also comes very close, but I think **Shotgun** still has the edge. Asleep at the Wheel is now pretty much defunct, having abandoned their vision of Western swing, jump blues and Count Basie music combined, but they made some great music on **Texas Gold**. Aside from the obvious country appeal of *The Letter That Johnny Walker Read*, they came very close to achieving their musical goals with *Runnin' After Fools* and *Let Me Go Home, Whiskey*. Delbert McClinton's **Victim of Life's Circumstances** also reflected a vision that took several years for everyone else to catch up with. Delbert's R&B honky-tonk music packed a wallop on that album that has held up well now that everyone knows who he is. Right behind these come Jack Clement's **All I Want to Do in Life**, Emmylou's **Blue Kentucky Girl**, and Willie and Ray Price's **San Antonio Rose** (never thought I'd hear Ray sing this way again).

As for reissues, the **Bob Wills**

Roy Rogers

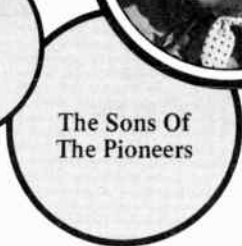


Patsy Montana



Tex Ritter

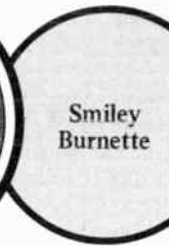
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Anthology was certainly an important step in bringing his music in its purest form to a new audience. Though I disagreed with some of the selections, it is still the best introduction to his music. Elvis's **The Sun Sessions**, originally brought out in England, was (and is) the finest single Elvis reissue around, bringing together most of those still-incredible Sun recordings of 1954-55. Ernest Tubb's **Country Hall of Fame** is a superb gathering of Tubb classics from the beginning. The Columbia reissue of Lefty Frizzell's greatest work, **Remembering**, is essential for anyone who wants to understand where Willie (and the honky-tonk idiom itself) drew much of its greatness. On a more contemporary note, I'd say that **For the Record: Austin Country 1973-1978** is an important document of the music that helped put that town on the map in the middle 1970s.

My choices, of course, are strictly subjective. There are a lot of other favorites that didn't make the cut, but to me, these are the albums I'll probably wear out the quickest.

John Pugh

The Session by Jerry Lee Lewis. It just goes to show the wonders he can perform when someone stands back and lets the Killer rock. An all-time classic. Maybe *the* all-time classic.

Country Music Then and Now by the Statler Brothers. Debut album of the ole Roadhog, still the funniest character in country music, even if he regrettably retired some years ago.

Pieces of the Sky and Elite Hotel by Emmylou Harris. Debut albums of Emmylou Harris. (Sigh! Okay you sticklers for detail, omitting the late, unlamented **Gliding Bird**.) Though recent albums haven't lived up to expectations, subsequent disappointments can in no way ever dim the luster of these twin jewels.

The Streak by Ray Stevens. One of the greatest testimonials to one man's talent and creativ-

ity ever produced.

Tammy Wynette's Greatest Hits, Volume 1. Stand By Your Man, D-I-V-O-R-C-E, Apartment No. 9: all the early standards which established Tammy as America's foremost purveyor of feminine blood, sweat and tears. Particularly the latter.

Doug Green

I must say right off the bat that I feel eminently unqualified—especially in the company of such erudite and illustrious colleagues—to discuss contemporary records of merit over the last decade, for, antiquarian that I am, the great majority of my record-listening consists of historical reissues of one sort or another.

Therefore I'm compelled to make two separate lists, one concerned with the small but steady stream of excellent reissues which have trickled out over the last decade, and one of contemporary product.

Among the many great reissues, **The Bob Wills Anthology** on Columbia stands out for its wonderful music and lengthy liner notes by Bill Ivey, which were both extremely informative and eminently readable. Probably my favorite for listening is the set of Sons of the Pioneers radio transcriptions Ken Griffis put together for JCMF called **The Sons of the Pioneers Live from the Lucky U Ranch, 1949-1953**. Bluebird's **The Blue Sky Boys (Bill and Earl Bolick) and The Monroe Brothers: Feast Here Tonight** may or may not be landmarks of any kind, but they contain excellent music indeed, and they remain a joy to listen to. Likewise Rounder Records' reissue of the Louvin Brothers MGM sides is a very moving set of some superb country music.

These are the five outstanding reissues that leap to mind, but many fine compilations of older recordings were also memorable indeed: **Bill Boyd's Cowboy Ramblers** on Bluebird, the two separate reissues of Bob Wills' Tiffany transcriptions, **Songs That Tell a Story** by the

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Louvin Brothers on Rounder (and Rounder's forthcoming re-issue of the *great* Louvin album on Capitol, **Tragic Songs of Life**). Rounder and County also reissued a good deal of really excellent classic bluegrass of the 1940s and 1950s.

As for modern records, I can only judge with the heart and not with the head; my knowledge is far too spotty and haphazard. I only know that Emmylou Harris's **Pieces of the Sky** was one of those records that came along at an extremely difficult period of my life, and it hit me with extraordinary power—it was one of those times when every line echoed with feeling, with meaning, with emotion which rang so true. This, of course, is judging music as it is perceived, not as it exists in the grooves, and while this is a patently unfair (or at least unscientific) way of judging a record, it is, perhaps unfortunately, the only way I know how.

Linda Ronstadt's **Heart Like a Wheel** performed a similar, though lesser, cathartic function for me, and likewise remains one of the most memorable records of my decade.

Though it has its flaws, I think the record I was happiest to see during this decade was the Sons of the Pioneers **Western Country** on Granite; the sound was great, and I was delighted to write an extremely enthusiastic review for *Country Music*. Sure wish somebody would record those boys again.

It's hard to assess the decade without mentioning Willie Nelson's **Red Headed Stranger**. What beauty; what simplicity; what focus!—and all in an age of wildly overdone production. It was and is a joy to listen to and learn from.

And how to choose a fifth? There was so much great music this decade—Asleep at the Wheel's second and third albums; the Skaggs and Rice debut album on Sugar Hill; Rosanne Cash's **Right or Wrong**; Bob Nolan's overproduced but intensely moving **The Sound of a Pioneer** on Elektra; Carl Perkins's return to rockabilly on Jet Records; not to mention my own group's two albums, which cost me personally an incredible amount of time, anguish, energy, frustration, and soul—Riders in the

Sky's Rounder albums **Three on the Trail** and **Cowboy Jubilee**. The list may be endless; thank heavens the music also is.

Patrick Carr

I love all these albums—play them all the time, wouldn't be without them—but I also believe that each of them, at the time of its release, advanced the art of country music. Therefore they are presented here in chronological sequence.

Grievous Angel by Gram Parsons (with Emmylou Harris as much more than his backup singer) was by far the man's most beautiful, complicated, and tragic album. He died barely a year after it was made, and there's a lot of ghostliness about it. Parsons, who pushed the Byrds into their **Sweetheart of the Rodeo** album and was the motive force behind the original Flying Burrito Brothers, never "crossed over" into "country," but he did more to convert thrill-happy rock kids into full-scale romantic country depressives than anybody but Willie Nelson. His music, very deep and very country, came too early to achieve mass popularity, and that is everybody's loss.

Phases and Stages is often dismissed as the prototype of Willie Nelson's universally-acclaimed **Red Headed Stranger**, but it's much more than that. Its theme—the breakup of a love affair chronicled from both the man's and the woman's point of view—presented a far greater challenge to the writer (Willie) than the stately frontier myth recounted to such good effect on **Red Headed Stranger**. The shifts in mood and perspective, the sheer human accuracy of the songs, the craft evidenced in their execution and arrangement—all these factors represent Willie at the absolute peak of his powers. The album is his masterpiece.

Gary Stewart's **Out of Hand**, his first RCA album, was simply electrifying, a wild and thrilling fusion of Hank Williams and Jerry Lee Lewis and the Stanley Brothers and the Allmans and all *kinds* of echoes from the swamps and the mountains and

the honky-tonks. Stewart was, and still is, the most exciting young country singer around; he's got that crazed rockabilly fever *and* that trembling country flaw. His failure to produce more than two great albums after **Out of Hand** has complex causes, and should not be viewed as any indication of his future.

Waylon's **Dreaming My Dreams** was a sublime meeting between recording artist and producer. Jack Clement set out to prove that Waylon was *the* country singer, and, mainly by cutting waltzes on him, he proved it. Waylon came out so smoothly, with such clarity and depth (and pacing and material) that even his fans were stunned by the gentle magnificence of it all. The sensuous spell cast by this record is unique among Waylon's or any other country singer's work.

Rockabilly Blues, by Mr. Johnny Cash, was (like George Jones's **Alone Again** album, the runner-up for this spot) a sudden shock. Cash pulled all his strings together, straightened up and *did* it as he hadn't since his Folsom Prison album. **Rockabilly Blues** is stuffed—with the great voice, the magic thumb, the enormous taste and passion of which Cash is capable—and it proved once again that a hero can still be a hero when he tries hard enough.

Nick Tosches

With no ado whatsoever, these are my choices: **The Best of Moe Bandy**; **Lefty Frizzell's Greatest Hits**; **The Session**, by Jerry Lee Lewis; **The Sun Sessions**, by Elvis; and **Alone Again**, by George Jones.

Peter Guralnick

This top five is a listing of my personal favorites over the last decade as they strike me right now. I've had lots of other favorites, and I'm sure other records will strike me more forcefully at another time. Lists are always suspect anyway, for the simple

reason that they presume to represent a critical judgement, a critical summation, when really all they represent is the need to justify, to codify, one's personal tastes. With that proviso in mind, here's my current top five.

Honky Tonk Heroes by Waylon Jennings. This turned around my whole idea of country music. It's hard to recognize the slaggering, boastful, romantic hero who is portrayed here, for Waylon Jennings has lost both the self-assurance and the vulnerability implicit in these macho renderings of Billy Joe Shaver's paradoxical love songs. It's amazing how fast revolution turns to nostalgia, and how well the music holds up.

Serving 190 Proof, The Way It Was In '51, A Working Man Can't Get Nowhere Today by Merle Haggard. Almost anything by Merle Haggard would make my top five. **Serving 190 Proof** is the most personal of these choices—and one of the most personally profound country albums that I have ever heard. The other two are exquisite collections, like all of Haggard's work grouped around a theme or themes. **The Way It Was In '51** evokes Hank Williams and Lefty Frizzell in a way that only the very best of Hank's and Lefty's performances can do. **A Working Man Can't Get Nowhere Today** is more of a blues album, concluding with a prototypical Haggard statement: "I'm a white boy just looking for a place to do my thing."

Phases & Stages by Willie Nelson. My favorite Willie Nelson. It's the summation, in a way, to Nelson's brilliant songwriting career, and a sad prelude to the long, bland, and not-so-winding road on which he seems to be stuck today. This is one of the few concept albums that works both conceptually and musically, and the Jerry Wexler-Muscle Shoals production is nothing short of inspired.

Electricity by Jimmy Murphy. This is largely an acoustic album, but it's the most exciting, eccentric, and electric collection of rockabilly bluegrass/gospel that you're ever gonna hear. Murphy is a true original, a great writer, an effective singer, and a fine instrumentalist, with a backwoods

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I'm going to stop here because I've been limited to five selections, but I don't know how I could exclude the autobiographical memories of Dolly Parton (**My Tennessee Mountain Home**) and James Talley (**Got No Bread, No Milk, No Honey, But We Sure Got A Lot of Love**), the latter-day rockabilly of Gary Stewart (**Out of Hand**), Johnny Cash (**Silver, Gone Girl**), and Sleepy La Beef (**Down Home Rockabilly, It Ain't What You Eat It's The Way How You Chew It**), or the very personal journey of Hank Williams, Jr. (**Hank Williams, Jr. & Friends, The New South**).

Russell Barnard

At the Altamont Pow Wow we posed ourselves this question: Which five albums would each of us take to a desert island? Later, for this issue, we modified the question, asking each writer/editor to list five favorite albums released since *Country Music* began—and that, of course, is a different question.

If I had to pick my five favorite albums ever, they'd probably all be by Johnny Cash, but I've confessed that prejudice on these pages before. When I picture myself alone on a desert island with five albums released since *Country Music* began, here's what I hear, arranged in the order in which they were released:

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About the author:

Robert Palmer, pop critic for The New York Times, also writes regularly for Rolling Stone, which has called him "perhaps America's most respected and prolific rock and jazz critic." An accomplished rock 'n' roll saxophonist himself, he is also author of the highly acclaimed book "Deep Blues."

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Dreaming My Dreams by Waylon Jennings. A master musician singer, master songwriter, and a master producer ("Cowboy" Jack Clement)—the watershed of Waylon's career. (Since somebody stole my last copy, I can get along with **Honky Tonk Heroes**.)

I Am What I Am by George Jones. Sherrillization at its best, and you can't do any better than that. And George—well, after everything that's been said about him everywhere else in this issue, I can still pay him the supreme compliment: He is the Tammy Wynette of male country singers, and you can't be better than *that*, either.

Rockabilly Blues by Johnny Cash. The Master at his best.

It pains me not to be able to pick *all* of Emmylou Harris's albums, so I'll have to get along with a vision of her digging around in the Acuff-Rose song catalog like some South African miner looking for diamonds—and finding them.

And what about Tammy? If I could only sneak in a copy of **Tammy Wynette's Greatest Hits**—but alas, it was released before *Country Music* began. But wait a minute! Who says I have to go to this desert island alone? I'm taking Tammy with me! Then she can sing me all the songs I couldn't bring. ■

Readers who would like to receive a complete list of all the albums mentioned in the preceding pages, with their labels and catalog numbers, should send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to "Anniversary Albums," c/o Country Music Magazine, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

The Final Count

By counting up every "favorite album" vote cast on the previous pages, and then adding in the votes cast at our Tenth Anniversary Pow Wow, we have arrived at our clear consensus. Herewith, then, is Country Music's list of the last decade's top ten country albums. Also included is a list of other albums (runners-up, if you will).

And since in certain cases (Dolly Parton and Jerry Lee Lewis, for instance) the "favorite album" vote was split between various albums by one artist, we have also composed a list of the decade's top album artists—that is, the artists whose works received the most votes overall. Here they are, then: the greatest of the great, listed in alphabetical order.

The Ten Top Albums

Alone Again

George Jones

Dreaming My Dreams

Waylon Jennings

Hank Williams, Jr. And Friends

Hank Williams, Jr.

Honky Tonk Heroes

Waylon Jennings

Out Of Hand

Gary Stewart

Phases And Stages

Willie Nelson

Red Headed Stranger

Willie Nelson

Rockabilly Blues

Johnny Cash

Roses In The Snow

Emmylou Harris

Serving 190 Proof

Merle Haggard

Also greatly favored by our writer editors were Jack Clement's *All I Want To Do In Life*, Merle Haggard's *A Tribute To The Best Damn Fiddle Player In The World*, Dolly Parton's *Coat Of Many Colors*, George Jones' and Tammy Wynette's *Greatest Hits*, Johnny Cash's *Gone With The Wind*, Linda Ronstadt's *Heart Like*

A Wheel, Joe Ely's *Honky Tonk Masquerade*, and *The Session* by Jerry Lee Lewis. In addition, it is essential to note that Elvis Presley's *The Sun Sessions* received more than enough votes to qualify it for our Top Ten list, but we disqualified it on the grounds that the material was actually recorded in the 1950s.

The Ten Top Album Artists

Johnny Cash

Merle Haggard

Emmylou Harris

Waylon Jennings

George Jones

Jerry Lee Lewis

Willie Nelson

Dolly Parton

Gary Stewart

Hank Williams, Jr.

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