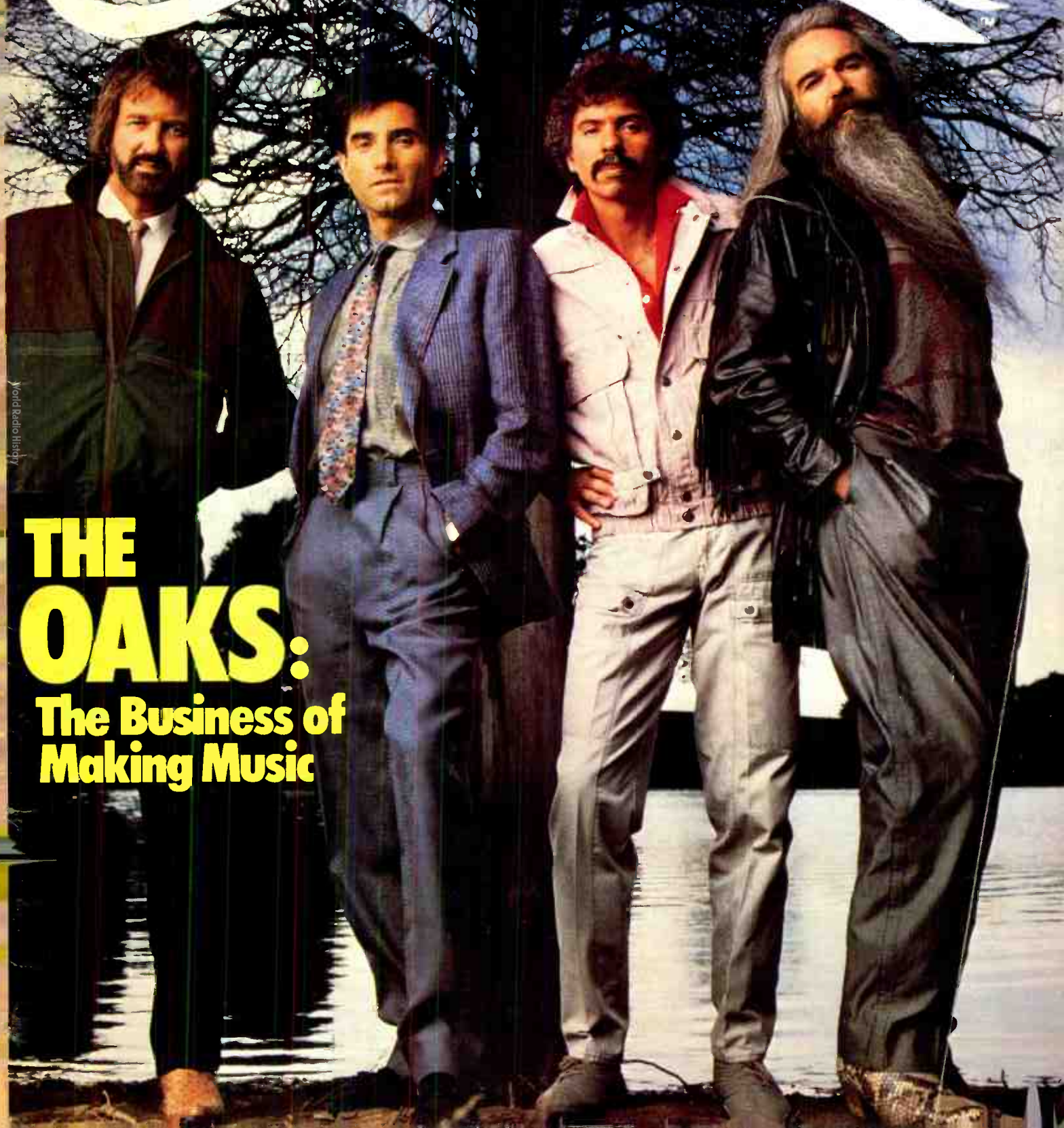


Alabama: Readers Interview the Boys from Ft. Payne
Mel McDaniel / Dan Seals / Judy Rodman / Pinkard & Bowden

MARCH/APRIL 1986 \$3.00

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by Rich Kienzle

Letters

Alabama Coast to Coast

As an avid Alabama fan, I greatly enjoyed Bob Allen's "On the Road With Alabama" in the November/December issue. I wholeheartedly agree with him that they are "the people's band." I have seen their show six times in the past two years, including this past year's June Jam IV, and I think Mr. Allen will be happy to find out that they have not entirely dropped the chain style playing of each other's guitars. They have done this each time I've seen them, and the audience never seems to tire of it.

I also enjoyed the article on "Country Bands Come of Age." How about doing a story on Atlanta? I think they're great.

Carol Kuhlmann
New Haven, Missouri

Hi! Congratulations on a well-written article on my favorite group, Alabama. They are fantastic! I really liked the photos too. I'd like to buy a couple of your November/December issues.

Kay Sutton
Ridgeville, Indiana

Extra copies available in this office for \$3.00 each. Mark envelope, Attention: Back Issues.—Ed.

Thanks so much for the story and pictures on Alabama. I'm a fifteen year old girl who loves country music! All my friends think I'm a little strange, but I still love it. My favorite is Alabama. I love them sooo much, especially Randy. I want to thank Bob Allen for the great story. Is the Readers Interview coming soon? I'll be looking for it.

Tonya Franke
St. Louis, Missouri

For Readers Interview Alabama, see this issue.—Ed.

In Bob Allen's story on the supergroup Alabama, he mentions that Jeff Cook still picks his guitar with his teeth now and then, and that when Jeff, Teddy and Randy line up chain-style has been dropped from the routine. Then all the people at their concert in Salisbury, Maryland, on November 8th must feel a little privileged, because at this concert Jeff picked his guitar with his teeth and Jeff, Teddy and Randy lined up chain-style and played each other's guitars. I



not only enjoyed this portion of the show but the whole concert.

Charles Bredbenner Jr.
Seaford, Delaware

I really enjoyed your November/December article on Alabama. They are my favorite group. I have five of their six albums. The article came at such a great time because they were in concert in Salisbury, Maryland, just that week. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend because the ticket price was just too expensive for a separated mother of two. People stood in line for two days for tickets, which I also could not do, as I had to work.

I would like to join Alabama's fan club, but I do not know how or where to write.

Katherine P. Dukes
Dagsboro, Delaware

Write Casey Case, Alabama Fan Club, P.O. Box 529, Ft. Payne, Alabama 35967.—Ed.

Alabama's concert on October 6th at South Bend, Indiana, was great. They were so full of enthusiasm and the crowd loved them. I will say one thing for Alabama. They take time for their fans. Everytime I've been to their concerts, they always sign autographs. They are great, good guys, and we in Rockfield, Indiana, love ya.

Pennie Barnes
Rockfield, Indiana

I just had to write and say what an absolutely terrific time I had Friday night, November 22nd at the Alabama concert in Los Angeles. Even though I sat clear across the Forum from them so that they looked only about two inches tall and I mostly had to watch the big video screen, it was impossible not to feel the electricity that those four guys generate. People were clapping and singing and having a lot of fun with them.

Sharlsee Baldwin
Oceanside, California

That's what Randy says it's all about. For more from Alabama, see Readers Interview Alabama in this issue.—Ed.

Morris Book on Alabama

I talked with Randy Owen at his home in June 1985 about Edward Morris' book *Alabama*. Randy said that he had no idea what was in the book and that he hadn't talked to Mr. Morris. He said that my copy was the first he had looked at.

I think the book is very interesting and well worth its cost. The pictures are super, especially the old ones. Randy laughed when he saw the old pictures. I've had my copy since the day it hit the book store.

Kim Keener
Pinson, Alabama

To order a copy of Ed Morris' book, see page 47.—Ed.

From Star Search to the Stage—Sawyer Brown are Showmen

Thank you so much for the mention of Sawyer Brown in the article on "Country Bands" in the November/December issue. I first heard Sawyer Brown on *Star Search*, and I used to tune in every week just to see them. I was sad when the final championship came around because I knew they would win, and wouldn't be on there anymore.

You can imagine how excited I was when I bought tickets for the Kenny Rogers concert in Philadelphia not long ago and saw that Sawyer Brown was the opening act. Needless to say, the show was spectacular! Everyone around me kept saying, "Who were those guys, they were great!" I didn't sit down the entire time that they were on stage.

Kristine Stock
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



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Mark Gray

And now you can get it too! His new album includes "Please Be Love," "Walkin' After Midnight," "She Will," "You're The Reason," "I Need You Again" and more.

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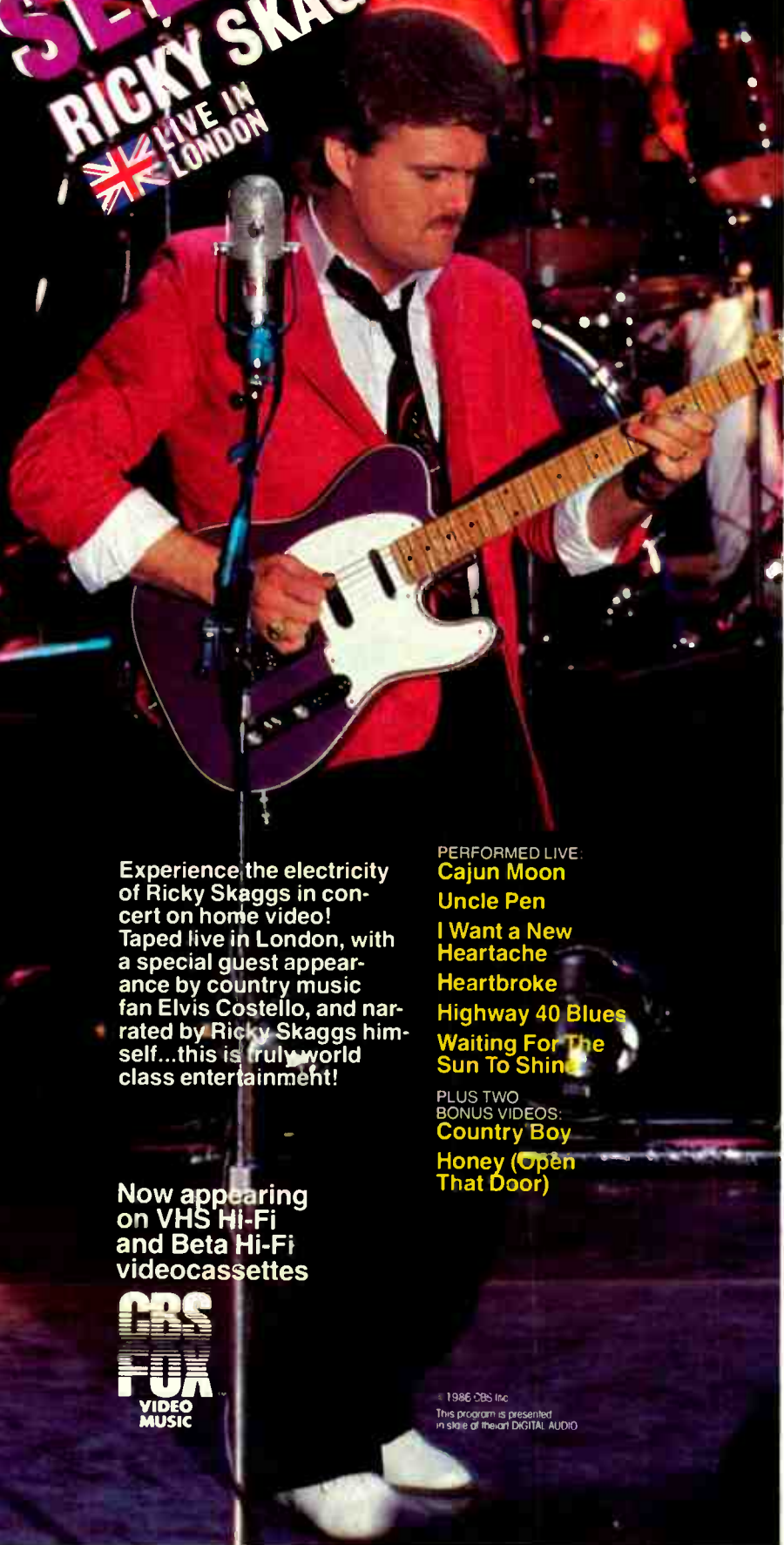


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Sawyer Brown is touring with Kenny Rogers, and, to tell you the truth, when I saw them I thought they put on a better show than Kenny did. They were like dynamite exploding. They are entertainers. The lead singer, Mark Miller, is the catalyst for the group's success. Once he gets the crowd going, there's no stopping Sawyer Brown—or the crowd. From the minute they hit the stage until they leave, it's constant action. It's Mark Miller's dancing, Bobby Randall's energy and Hobie Hubbard's antics that give Sawyer Brown their neverending energy.

There is one correction I'd like to make, however. In your November/December record reviews, Mr. Kirby quotes some lines from Sawyer Brown's "The Secretary's Song." The correct words are "All those three-piece suits..." not "creepy suits."

Laurie Luck
 Damascus, Maryland

Thanks for the correction on suits, and it's Ms. Kirby, not Mr. See Letters in the November/December issue.—Ed.

Triple Treat Concert— Kenny Rogers, Sawyer Brown, The Oaks

I went to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, recently to see a concert in which Sawyer Brown opened for Kenny Rogers and The Oak Ridge Boys. I got to meet and shake hands with Kenny Rogers and Richard Sterban of The Oak Ridge



Sawyer Brown signs for Melissa.

Boys. That was great! What was even greater was when I got pictures and the autographs of Sawyer Brown!

Sawyer Brown has the best live performance I have ever seen. They are so energetic and they just don't slow down! They are all great guys, and I would like to write to them. Do you have an address?

Melissa Johns
 Duncan, Oklahoma

For Sawyer Brown's Fan Club, write Star Bound Management, 128 Volunteer Drive, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37075.—Ed.

Country Bands but No Bandana

I have just read your *Country Music Magazine* for November/December, given to me by a friend. I read it from

cover to cover and really enjoyed it. I will have to subscribe.

I was disappointed with the "Country Bands Come of Age" writeup in that issue. It did not include my favorite band Bandana. The only mention of a bandana was the one around Willie Nelson's head on the July/August cover.

I think Bandana sounds great. I got to see them in concert when they played here in Brunswick, Georgia, about two years ago. They put on a good show, and they were not even mentioned with the other struggling groups at the end of Kip Kirby's writeup. I haven't heard of Restless Heart and Southern Pacific, but I guess somebody has.

Donna Johnson
Brunswick, Georgia

Willie's Bandana, Sawyer Brown's Record, Hank Jr.'s Video

Just to let you know that you have support behind you on this ridiculous debate over Willie Nelson's being disrespectful of the flag by wearing it in the form of a bandana, as commented upon by several readers in the November/December issue. He is displaying his pride in just another form, is all. And as far as Mr. Estep's remark on Willie's voice, tell me—when will the next Richard Estep album soar up the charts? Hmm? While I'm on the subject, thanks to Willie for all his work, love and support for a desperate cause—the American farmer. Good luck to all of them.

An appreciative thank you is also in order for Kip Kirby and her excellent exposure, in the November/December issue, of four exceptional bands destined to stay at the top—particularly Sawyer Brown. This group is extremely talented and, in my opinion, has a fantastic taste in songs which they've chosen to record on their albums.

Also, I'd like to congratulate my Number One artist, Hank Williams Jr., on landing another music video award, this time from the CMA. Don't worry, Hank, you'll be elected for a few awards in the audio portion next year, buddy!

Johnny P. Nixon
Margate, Florida

Mr. Estep is entitled to his opinion, but there has been some support, in addition to yours, for the position this magazine has taken about the headband. The vote so far is about two to one, our favor. President Reagan called that kind of margin a landslide.—Ed.

Country Scene in Los Angeles

Hi! It's not easy being a girl from Beverly Hills who is also a diehard country music lover. Sometimes I feel as if I'm the only one in this state that likes country music. Which is why I'm thankful I found your magazine. It's a fantas-



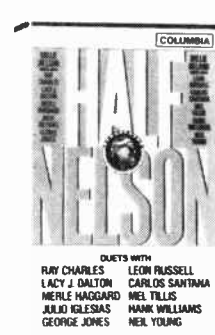
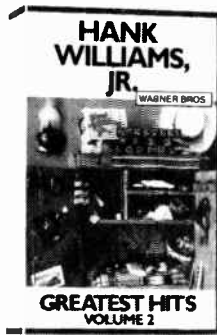
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337998. #1 hits Seven Spanish Angels; To All The Girls... & Pancho And Lefty.

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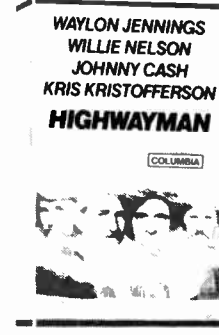
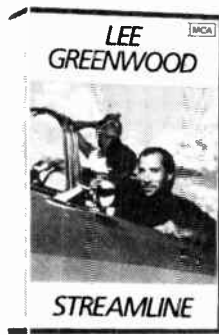
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shutter. I use either 70-210 or 75-300 zooms. It also helps to buy tickets early so you're seated close! The manager of the custom photo lab I use asked to enlarge several of my shots to decorate a wall in the shop.

Would love to see a feature on The Oaks soon!

Brenda Sievers
Chicago Heights, Illinois

For you and all the other Oaks fans who have asked, the feature is in this issue. —Ed.

Carr Takes a Whuppin' For Whuppin' Those Judds

In your November/December issue, Patrick Carr reviewed The Judds' new album *Rockin' with the Rhythm*, and it sounds to me like he only listened to one song on the whole album, "Working in a Coal Mine." He obviously didn't bother to listen to "Grandpa (Tell Me About the Good Old Days)." It is probably one of the most beautiful and sentimental songs I have ever heard. It is so full of feeling and soul that most of the people that I know that have heard it get tears in their eyes just listening to it. Also tell Mr. Carr he should go back and listen to "Have Mercy." Then watch the charts because more than likely it will be another Number One hit for The Judds.

Joy McBride
Odessa, Texas

What? The Judds have no *what?* no soul, you say? Sorry, guy, but The Judds have more soul than anyone else in country music, Wynonna has an emotional voice and, baby, everyone's home at Chez Judd. Yet as you can tell, what really irked me were the low-blow cuts that have no place in an unbiased review. Example: "singing doll" (give me a break, *doll?*). Worse was your remark on "Working in the Coal Mine," and I quote, "there's nothing bright, bubbly, or female about it." Since when does a song have gender? Besides, nobody takes that song seriously. Sorry, but I don't hear it and think of "heavy manual labor."

Wyonna and Naomi have soul. Listen to "Cry Myself to Sleep" or "Grandpa (Tell Me About the Good, Old Days)." Then (if you can) say they sound like Chipmunks, Junior League or squeaky.

Rocio Sinaya
Granada Hills, California

Latest on Judds' Health

I would like to reply to the letters from Ms. Hedrick and Mrs. Furney about two of The Judds' performances last summer, published in your January/February issue.

Throughout most of The Judds 1985 Summer Tour, daughter Wynonna experienced problems with her wisdom



The Judds catch up on the news.

teeth. Not wanting to disappoint their fans by cancelling shows, she continued to perform though sometimes she was quite ill.

On August 24th following the final show in Shaefferstown, Pennsylvania, it was clear that the infection had spread to her throat causing it to swell to the point that it would not be possible for her to perform. Wynonna returned to Nashville and the following morning had four severely impacted wisdom teeth removed. As The Judds' manager I had no choice but to cancel a number of dates to give Wynonna time to heal and have her stitches removed.

Wynonna and Naomi value their fans highly, and the people who have supported them and their music, and are very glad to be given this opportunity to let people know the circumstances surrounding the decisions that were made in the latter part of August.

Kenneth M. Stilts
Nashville, Tennessee

George Jones' Shoes— Bob Allen's In Trouble Too

Bob Allen's correct about enraging fans of George Jones in his review of George's new (and Great) album *Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes*. All I can say to Mr. Allen is, listen again. As for George sounding like himself, don't most singers? I'd love to see another "45 minute" live George Jones show. Perhaps it seems short because time flies when you're having fun.

My question is, "Who's Gonna Fill George Jones' Shoes?"

Betty M. Law
Sherburne, New York

I was very disappointed with the record review on George Jones' album *Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes*. I think that reviewer was too hard on him.

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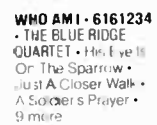
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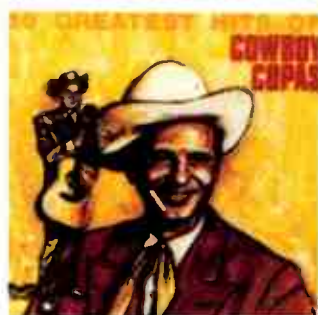
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HAWKSHAW HAWKINS: 16 GREATEST HITS Featuring: I Suppose/Lonesome 7-7203/Sunny Side Of The Mountain/Little White Washed Chimney/I Love You A Thousand Ways/I'm Waiting Just For You/Teardrops On Your Letter/Dog House Boogie/Slow Poke/I Wasted A Nickel/Pan American/Barbara Allen/Be My Life's Companion/Silver Threads And Golden Needles/I'm Slowly Dying Of A Broken Heart/Rattlesnakin' Daddy.



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WILMA LEE & STONEY COOPER: THE CARTER FAMILY'S GREATEST HITS The combination of old Carter Family songs and the artistry of the Coopers assures that this album is country music at its purest. Included are: Sweet Fern/You Are My Flower/Keep On The Firing Line/Hello, Central, Give Me Heaven/Worried Man Blues/Wildwood Flower/Picture On The Wall/Little Darling Pal Of Mine/Lulla Wall, more!



"LITTLE" JIMMY DICKENS: THE BEST OF THE BEST OF Every major hit recorded by this country music mainstay is included on this special album. Such as: May The Bird Of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose/Take An Old Cold Tater And Wait/Country Boy/A-Sleeping At The Foot Of The Bed/Hillbilly Fever/My Heart's Bouquet/I'm Little But I'm Loud/Out Behind The Barn/Another Bridge To Burn, more!

Rated ★★★★★ In *Country Music*, Sept./Oct. '85

Hawkshaw began with King covering whatever Ernest Tubbs was doing. But "Sunny Side of the Mountain" and "Slow Poke" in 1948 and 1951 were enough to establish him as a force in his own right. Like Copas, Hawkins fell by the wayside, with no hit records, though he was a member of the Grand Ole Opry and had contracts with RCA, Starday and Columbia. Then in March 1963, just days before he died, his King recording of "Lonesome 7-7203" hit Number One. Hawkins, like Copas, made other fine records, "Rattlesnakin' Daddy" and "Dog House Boogie" among them, that hinted at rockabilly. *16 Greatest Hits of Hawkshaw Hawkins* (Gusto SD-3013) covers all these and more.

Copas first made his mark as a vocalist with Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys... "Filipino Baby," his first hit, came in 1944. Throughout the 1940's he had still more hits—with "Tennessee Waltz," "Tragic Romance" and others. In the early 1960's, Copas was successful with Starday, with the hits "Alabam," and "Signed, Sealed and Delivered" in 1961. Some of his best-known songs are available on *16 Greatest Hits of Cowboy Copas* (Gusto SD-3012). Most of the material is from his Starday period, though "Filipino Baby" and "Tragic Romance" are also included. Copas never got the credit he should have, considering his rich, supple voice and laconic, offhand delivery.

Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper worked together nearly 40 years... *Early Recordings* (County CCS 103) compiles 12 Columbia songs, leased from CBS, that helped establish their reputation. A second Wilma Lee/Stoney album from the 1970's is *Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper Sing The Carter Family's Greatest Hits* (Starday SD 980), an outstanding salute to the Carters cut in the early 1970's. Wilma Lee and Stoney tackle such Carter classics as "Keep on the Firing Line," produce a delicate version of "You Are My Flower" and are back on Wilma Lee's stops-out treatment of "Lulla Walls." The Carter style and the Coopers' sound blend easily here.

RICH KIENZLE, SEPT./OCT. 85
PAGE 67, *Country Music Magazine*



THE BLUEGRASS HALL OF FAME Stringbean: String's Mountain Dew/Grandpa Jones: Old Rattler/Stamley Bros.: Rank Stranger/Flatt & Scruggs: Foggy Mountain Break-down/Carl Story: Tramp On The Street/Lonesome Pine Fiddlers: Windy Mountain/Hylo Brown: Hills Of Georgia/Country Gentlemen: Sunrise (Instrumental)/Reno & Smiley: Home Sweet Home/J.E. Mainers: Mountaineers: Run Mountain/Jimmie Skinner: Fallen Leaves/Rex Allen & Kentuckians: Beautiful Blue Eyes/Jim & Jesse & The Virginia Boys/Let Me Whisper, and more!



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MAC WISEMAN: GOLDEN CLASSICS
This album is a compilation of some new recordings of the very best traditional bluegrass songs, plus some newer releases. Included: Jimmie Brown, The Newsboy/Goin' Like Wildfire/I Saw Your Face In The Moon/Barbara Allen/The Prisoner's Song/Johnny Cash & Charlie's Pride/Sweeter Than The Flowers/18 Wheels A Humming/Don't Make Me Go To Bed, more!



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PATSY CLINE/COWBOY COPAS/HAWKSHAW HAWKINS: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
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346-8

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Would you wear this man's face on your truck? Waylon by Bettis.

Let me tell you something else. George Jones is one of the few in country music today who is *true* country. I'm thirteen years old, and unlike other people my age, I love traditional country music. Although other artists have gone pop/rock crossover, George has stuck with traditional country. I hope he's reading this because I want him to know that he has fans of all ages and that he is, indeed, a "Living Legend."

Anita Stapleton
Enola, Pennsylvania

Waylon on My Window

I am writing to find out about ordering a Waylon Jennings picture or scene that you glue on a rear truck window. It is a 1973 Ford truck. I would like to know if I can order one and the cost of it.

Ann Lee
Bushnell, Florida
Johnny Cash says Waylon's too ugly to have a decal made of him. But for you and all his other fans, there's a feature on Waylon coming soon.—Ed.

Sweet Dreams Gone Sour

We went to see *Sweet Dreams*, the movie about Patsy Cline, yesterday, and I'm sorry to say I was disappointed. This was not the memory I want to keep of Patsy Cline, who is at least one of my favorites. I think it made her look cheap and trashy. Maybe she was, but that's not what I want to remember. Also, I don't think they even mentioned that Cowboy Copas and Hawkshaw Hawkins were the other two occupants of the plane who died with Patsy and her manager.

Bob Renner
Lincoln, Nebraska

Today I went to the movies to see *Sweet Dreams*. The music was great, and Jessica Lange did a fabulous job, but the language used throughout the movie would put a "drunken sailor to shame."

I lived in Virginia near Patsy's hometown of Elkton for my first eighteen

years but *never* did I hear such language used by anyone. How times have changed! I just hope this movie doesn't change the way Patsy's fans feel about her, for she was the greatest!

Cleta R. Lam
Baltimore, Maryland

Trick Band Strikes a Chord

I hate to be picky, but since Hazel Smith was naming the members of Lee Greenwood's Trick Band in *People* in the November/December issue, let's at least get it right. Paul Uhrig is the bass



Lee Greenwood has many fans—this one's Traci Nichols.

player and his brother Nick, not *Rick*, plays rhythm. They are recovered from the bus accident now, but Paul is still using a cane.

The Trick Band is one of the most talented tour bands I have had the pleasure of seeing in concert. Their opening number "Kansas City Limits" is always fantastically performed, and they set the girls' hearts all a-flutter almost as much as Lee does. They are all wonderful, friendly people and like Lee, so nice to all their fans. Thanks to them, my daughters, Gretchen and Angie, and I are all converts to country music, and we're so thankful that the bus accident was not more serious than it was.

Broni Holcombe
Rock Hill, South Carolina
Thanks for setting the record straight about Paul and Nick. Feature on Lee Greenwood coming soon.—Ed.

Memories of Tootsie's

Was so happy to read about Tootsie's Orchid Lounge in *People* in your November/December issue. I worked for Tootsie when I first came to Nashville in 1970. I drove to Tennessee in an old beaten up car with my clothes and my guitar. Buzz Robin and Jimmy Johnson wrote a song that I was fortunate to demo with Pete Drake backing me, in the studio band. I sang at Central Songs

one day, and Buddy Wise liked me so he put me to work listening to tapes and copying the words down. Tootsie gave me a room above her bar to live in. I loved her a lot. She told the spokesman of Possum Hollow one night to have me sing up there, so he did, but I had to pay \$1.00 to get in.

After I got heartbroken over a songwriter down there, I came to Wisconsin. Tootsie and I sent Christmas cards to each other after that. I'd love to live there again.

I'm divorced and have two sons, Jerry Lee and Waylon Conway. I'm into writing a lot of songs now and am signed up with a company in Massachusetts to do my demos. I pick and sing at a lot of jams up here.

Farrel Fay Bearce
Richland Center, Wisconsin

Rocky Road to Silverthorn

I saw an ad about Merle's Silverthorn Resort in the November/December issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Guess you could say it stirred up an old thorn with me.

After reading about the Silverthorn in the July/August issue, I made up my mind I had to go. So on our way home from Reno, Nevada, we went out of our way to *find* the Silverthorn. There are no signs or advertisements of any kind. We asked, to get the general direction.

After driving about 10 or 12 miles on this little ol' country road, we stopped to ask if we were on track. Were informed it was about five or six miles on up this road. The road got more narrow, steep and winding the farther we went.

This was about 8:30 Thursday evening, September 26th. When we got there, to our surprise, everything was buttoned up tight. Needless to say, I was a little upset. Had planned to eat there and buy souvenirs. Like the ad states in the November/December issue, open 365 *days* a year? That sure doesn't stand true for evenings.

I am still a Merle Haggard nut. But not so crazy about the narrow little mountain road leading to the Silverthorn. My advice to Mary Sgroi of New York is, *don't* go to the hills in California looking for "the Hag."

I live 300 miles from Shasta Lake, and I will get back there one day.

Shirley Roane
Springfield, Oregon
We have a call in to Silverthorn to find out what happened.—Ed.

Send Letters to the Editor to Country Music Magazine, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. Do not send them to Marion, Ohio. Mark envelope, Attention: Letters.

People



Memorable moments on the Opry's 60th: The bluegrass segment with old and new legends, (top), Dolly and Willie and Roy and Loretta (left), and the entire cast paying tribute to "The Grandest Lady of them All" (right).

THE OPRY'S 60TH

Hell's bells! Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner were both on the Grand Ole Opry stage at the same time, and I saw it. The occasion? The 60th Anniversary of the Grand Ole Opry. That do outdid any do I've ever seen since the date of my birth. I was seated in the very front row, the best seat in the house, with my doll of a daughter, Takako Smith, who was made in Japan but lives in Tennessee. Up went the curtain and right before my very eyes, along with Dolly and Porter, were Willie Nelson, Alabama, Loretta Lynn, Reba McEntire, Ricky Skaggs,

PeeWee King, Lordy mercy-Kitty Wells, Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe, Little Jimmie Dickens, The Whites, John Conlee, The Oak Ridge Boys, The Four Guys, The Gatlins, Jean Shepard, Chet Atkins, Grandpa Jones, Herman Crook & the Crook Brothers Band, Jeanne Pruett, George Hamilton IV, Bill Anderson, Minnie Pearl, Jan Howard, Charlie Louvin, Jack Greene, Earl Scruggs, Jeannie Seely, Jim Ed Brown, Jim & Jesse and the Virginia Boys, Charlie Walker, Billy Walker, Jerry Clower, Jimmy C. Newman, Stoney Mt. Cloggers, Stonewall Jackson, Teddy Wilburn, Grant Turner, Osborne Brothers, Wilma Lee Cooper,

Lorrie Morgan, Connie Smith, Archie Campbell, Tom T. Hall. Riders in the Sky, Skeeter Davis, Justin Tubb, Johnny Russell, and Lordy me, I hope I ain't leaving nobody out! Friends and neighbors, picture this... all the above, right in front of my face, standing on stairs which made each one almost as close as the other! It literally took my breath away. Seeing all this in one moment's time—when I came to my senses, I was standing and screaming as loud as I could. I closed my mouth tight, looked around and everything was a blur. It was then I realized I was crying. Embarrassed as I could be, I asked my little girl for a hankie. Carefully, I dried

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

People

the tears and composed myself, and as I did, I realized that all the 4,000 plus were on their feet. I quickly realized that everyone was screaming, and I then saw that a lot of us ladies were crying, and not for the last time that evening. All this happened before a tune was hummed or an instrument played!

Leading off with Roy Acuff singing "Wabash Cannon Ball" at 8:00, the time moved so quickly, it was 10:30 before I even looked at my watch again and thought I'd only been there an hour. Each segment was as good or better than the previous. The portion of the show on Ladies of the Opry was so tastefully done, and the Hank Williams segment featuring the handsome men of the Opry singing their hearts out couldn't have been better. Alabama's "Mountain Music" will never be sweeter than it was when 87 year old Herman Crook and the Crook Brothers joined the hottest group in the world onstage and by God jammed as the Stoney Mountain Cloggers danced across that stage. The old and

the new. I feel that **Randy Owens**, **Teddy Gentry**, **Jeff Cook** and **Mark Herndon** knew that they were truly being used onstage at the Grand Old Opry, used for country music history! Those members of Alabama will tell their great grandchildren about the night they jammed with the great Herman Crook, the last living member of the original Grand Old Opry.

Lo and behold, I would give a week's pay if my dear friend **Martha Hume**, who used to edit this prestigious magazine from whence you read, could have seen the beautiful, classy lady, Miss Kitty Wells, sing "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels" during the evening. I made my throat sore yelling for Kitty. And that special segment done on Dolly was so wonderful. Each little part was so touching, so real, so honest. God sure was good to country music when He gave us Dolly Parton.

Back to the Opry. There ain't nothing in this world greater than this show and shows like it that include great

country music. **Sharon White** of **The Whites** told me that when she realized she was onstage with Loretta Lynn and Kitty Wells, she started to cry, then composed herself, looked out at me on the front row bawling like a baby and got all tearified all over again!

But there's more. Legend is and truth has it that the Japanese love bluegrass almost as much as sushi—and my Takako is no exception. When the bluegrass band formed on the front of the stage that night, it included Ricky Skaggs, guitar and vocals; Bill Monroe, mandolin and vocals; Earl Scruggs, banjo and vocals; Bobby Hicks, fiddle, along with the Bluegrass Boys. It was just unbelievable! Now, I screamed until my head hurt, it was so good. Beside me my little girl Takako had stayed silent all through the long night. It was past midnight and she was tiring...but...n-o-o-o longer! The entire audience stopped applauding and screaming and seated themselves, but quiet, gentle little Takako continued to scream, "I can't believe; I can't believe!" Finally she calmed down enough for me to ask, "What can't you believe?" She answered, "Earl Scruggs! I can't believe I see Earl Scruggs picking banjo." I hugged her, and the two of us screamed together. This was truly an historic moment. For the first time in over thirty years Earl Scruggs and Bill Monroe, two international giants, were picking together with the young buck, Ricky Skaggs. Ricky had dreamed of this reunion since he was seven years old! What a rush.

Listen, I don't usually go to TV tapings. They are the most boring things on the face of this planet. But that night there was not a dull moment. The taping went past the midnight hour, and the longer it went on, the more exciting it got. Willie Nelson, singing "I'm Walking the Floor Over You" in honor of the late Opry star **Ernest Tubb**, had the entire place sniffing, and then Ernest's son Justin joined Willie onstage where they performed the E. T. classic "Waltz Across Texas." It was another great moment! If you ask me, the smart thing for the Opry folks to do is put that entire sucker on video and market the two-hour show around the world. Lordy, wouldn't that be wonderful to have that on tape at home?

JCC's DO

Every year **June Carter Cash** has a sale of furs, jewelry, clothes, linens, household goods, and other items she no longer needs, and 1985 was no different

RAZZY'S VIDEO IS ME-O-MY-O-GOOD-O



Razzy Bailey's single "Old Blue Yodeler," a tribute in song to **Jimmie Rodgers**, spawned a fine if not outstanding video. Anytime a body is smart enough to use a kid and/or an animal, you got yourself a better picture. That's what old Razzy has got—a state-of-the-art kid playing the

role of the waterboy. Almost 4 years old, the kid in question is **Ryan Walls**, and of course Ryan not only steals the show, he just ups and steals your heart to boot. A good song that should go a long way and last a long time for Razz-a-mah-tazz. Capital idea.

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Bill and his F-5 Lloyd Loar—with the Gibson name before it was destroyed.

except for the chow. This year it was a feast for the famous. Jeannie C. Riley, Emmylou Harris, Suzanne Clark, Rosanne Cash and her sisters Cathy, Cindy and Tara and step sister Rosie Nix enjoyed the luncheon. So did Jessi Colter, Mae Axton and Sharon White. John attended his wife's sale sporting a newly-formed moustache he's grown for his forthcoming movie, *The James Story*, co-starring hillbilly turned movie star Kris Kristofferson. Speaking of the movie, which was shot here in middle Tennessee, Music City's own, and my good friend, Ed Bruce will also have a role in the flick.

IT'S A CRYING SHAME

Will the person or persons who vandalized Bill Monroe's Goodlettsville, Tennessee, home please stand up! It's best to get your punishment here on earth rather than in the great hereafter... 'cause God will never forgive such a horrible sin. Bill's F-5 Lloyd Loar Gibson mandolin was probably one of the most famous musical instruments in the world. The culprit used a poker and jabbed it to death, along with another Gibson mandolin that the legendary founder of bluegrass music kept tuned a special way to play "My Last Days on Earth," a morbid instrumental Bill wrote himself. A week before the inci-

dent, Bill and the Bluegrass Boys had performed on TNN's *Nashville Now* TV show with Ralph Emery. Ralph brought up the subject of the F-5 Lloyd Loar mandolin and its legendary value. Monroe explained that he bought the instrument in a barber shop in Miami in the early 1940's. He saw it in the window with a hand-scrawled sign—\$125.00. Later Monroe sent the instrument to the Gibson company for minor repairs, "and they done a bunch of stuff I didn't want done, 'cause it didn't need it," according to the 'Big Mon.' So that God and everybody would know he didn't like what had been done, Monroe promptly took out his pocket knife and scratched "Gibson" from the head of the mandolin! "The" remained! A couple of years ago, through Grand Ole Opry member Billy Grammar, who had made friends with a representative from the Gibson Company, Monroe, after saying his piece, made peace with Gibson and allowed "Gibson" to once again decorate the headstock of the mandolin. Those folks in Kalamazoo, Michigan, who manufacture the fine Gibson products were ecstatic to say the least. Really, I think Monroe was quite pleased that the instrument was restored to its original pedigree. Forty years is a long time to hold a grudge, even for the maker of bluegrass!

About ten years ago, when Bill was

hurriedly leaving Bean Blossom, Indiana, where he hosts the famed annual Bean Blossom Bluegrass Festival the second week in June, he laid the self-same mandolin (inside a leather case) on top of his station wagon while he unlocked the back door in order to load up the car. When he was finished loading, he got into the driver's seat without thinking, put the car in reverse and took off. Suddenly he felt a bump. He had run over his mandolin! However, the instrument didn't even have a busted string! No harm done.

Back to the Ralph Emery/Bill Monroe interview on November 4 (the mandolins were busted November 13):—Monroe allowed as how he'd been offered 40 grand for the F-5 Lloyd Loar—as he held and caressed the instrument—but, he explained to Emery, "It would take on up yonder past a \$100,000 to get it." Apparently whoever did the damage saw the show and knew how much Bill thought of his mandolin.

Personally, I am surprised he even left the mandolin at home. He usually kept it where he could touch it anytime. There's much speculation on who did it. It couldn't have been a musician... musicians know the feeling between a person and his instrument. You know, they do say "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned"—whatever that means. Also damaged in the incident was a huge photograph of Monroe taken from the living room wall and poked through the face with the poker. Various awards and mementos also on the walls of his home were thrown into a pile with the other items and Monroe's name pruned off each one.

One strange fact connected with the vandalism is that Monroe is a very private person. He's never allowed many people on his farm, even for a visit. Whoever is guilty knew that no one would be home for an hour and a half, they knew the door was easily pried open from the back, they knew the exact spot where the mandolins were kept and they knew to get gone and when. All this narrows the question of who could be the guilty party down considerably.

I hope they catch whoever did this crime. And I wish they would let me ram the poker through the guilty person's face. This is the worst way in the world to hurt a musician... it's almost as bad as if someone smashed Gabriel's trumpet! I am so sorry, and I do hope that the F-5 Lloyd Loar can be repaired somehow. The Gibson people flew Bill a mandolin the day after the vandalism and took the pieces of the broken instruments back to

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Kalamazoo hoping there by some miracle to repair them. Also coming to Bill's aid is California's *Frets* magazine. They have offered a \$2,500 reward for information leading to arrest and conviction of the vandals.

QUEEN MAE IS A QUEEN IN MAY OR WHENEVER

Nine women were recently honored at a banquet in Oklahoma City to name them to the Women's Hall of Fame. Nashville's **Mae Boren Axton** was among the honorees. Attending the banquet with Mae were her multi-talented son, **Hoyt Axton**, Governor **George Nigh**, BM'er and Nashvillian **Harry Warner**, and Mrs. **Christine Boren** who is Mae's sister-in-law and mother of Senator **Boren** from the state of Oklahoma. Congratulations are due to Queen Mae, who, among her many other contributions, wrote a little ditty called "Heartbreak Hotel." I know all her subjects are as proud of Mae as we are.

SON HOYT KEEPS A-MOVIN'

Hoyt Axton's up to everything these days—a movie with **Charles Bronson** shot in Canada, a three-hour radio show over the holidays, and playing Miss Ellie's daddy on TV's *Dallas*, *The Younger Years*. Plus a New Year release of a new album followed by a trip down under to Australia for another movie. Busy man.

OLD STARS NEVER DIE—OR PRISCILLA, DID YOU HAVE TO?

Elvis and Me is a best seller, but we all knew it would be, didn't we. I never doubted that for a moment. No matter what *she* had written, it would have been taken for the truth. But did *Priscilla Bealieu Presley* really need money *that* badly? I know, I mentioned "the book" a couple of issues ago, but that was before I had read it. **Mel Tillis'** *Stutterin' Boy* is much better. I don't feel that Mel hurt anybody with his book, especially his five children. As I read Priscilla's book, I could not help but think of **Lisa Marie**, Elvis' only child. Rumor has it the book upset Lisa so much she told her mother she planned to move out when she was of age! If my calculations are correct, I think the young lady becomes of age this year. Won't she be 18 in '86? We will see if she moves, won't we.

Another point... all the so-called exposes, such as *Elvis—What Happened*

by the **West** boys, left some doubt as to the validity of their contents. Priscilla not only confirmed all the other tales of drugs and weirdness, she added a few more of her own. Hell-hath-no-fury-like-an-ex-wife-left-out-of-a-will is about the size of that one, I reckon. *Dallas*, give that poor little girl a raise!

CHARLIE'S MOVIN'

New time and place for **Charlie Daniels'** Volunteer Jam XII: July at the new amphitheater located in Nashville at the corner of Old Hickory Blvd. and Murfreesboro Road. The amphitheater accommodates 15,000 spectators as opposed to the Nashville Municipal Auditorium's 9,000, it's outside where there's plenty of fresh air, and the month is July, when there won't be a foot of snow and ice for the fans to ford. Sound good to you? Well, it sounds like hell to me. I think the glamour for little folks like me is being backstage, rubbing elbows with people like **James Brown** and my policeman friend **Mark Garafola**. Will we be

able to see such sights as **Charlie Daniels** looking big and beautiful alongside tiny demure **Gail Davies**, or **Roy Acuff** in a cowboy hat with **Woody Herman** and his **Thundering Herd**? I think not. There's no way that the romanticism will be the same in a place that big. There's also the chance that it may rain or be too hot for it to be comfortable. The Jam just may not jell on these terms. However, this is just my opinion. I'll pray that things will work out and that **Charlie** and his manager-supreme **Joe Sullivan** can have a XIIIth Jam, after XII is all over.

MOVIN' AND GROOVIN'

Movin' and groovin' is the tune most played these days on Music Row. **John Conlee** moved from MCA to CBS while **Ronnie McDowell** left CBS for MCA. **Waylon Jennings**, after twenty or more years with RCA, left for MCA. Also new on MCA are **Roger Miller**, a rockabilly **Earle** named **Steve** and guitarist **Albert Lee**; Lee will actually be on the label's Master label. In the meantime Reba

FROM ONE OPERA TO ANOTHER



Not that Puccini's opera *La Boheme* and ABC TV's soap opera *Dynasty II: The Colbys* are similar in any way, but they do have one thing in common—**Gary Morris**. Gary made headlines in late 1984 when he co-starred with **Linda Ronstadt** in the Joseph Papp production of *La Boheme* at the Public Theatre in New York. This year he's back in the news after landing the role

of country singer **Wayne Masterson** on TV's *The Colbys*. Gary's character has been scheduled for at least ten episodes, and if all goes well, he may be in for a longer run. If he gets as good reviews on TV as he did at the theatre, we may be seeing Gary on the tube for a long time to come. That's Gary, far right, above, with the cast of *The Colbys*.

People



THAT OLD FAMILY FEELING

Many of our readers have asked questions about country singers and their families. Most times when singers are on the road touring, they have to leave their wives, husbands and children home. But Fan Fair is one place where you are almost guaranteed to see the stars with their kin. Even though Fan Fair

is a few months away, we thought it would be fun to show you who and what you might get to see, based on last year's event. Pictured clockwise are: Shelly West and daughter Tess, Marie Osmond and son Steven, Eddie Raven, wife Gail and son Coby, Steve Wariner and son Ryan, Billy Crash Craddock with wife and son Steve and Gary Morris and son Matthew.

GORTY & JOAN GOODWIN

McEntire's brother Pake joined RCA along with Eddie Rabbitt and Michael Johnson. While Rabbitt was signing his RCA pact, his best friend and partner, Even Stevens' girl friend Hillary Kanter, departed the label. Stevens produces Kanter and co-produced and co-wrote songs with Rabbitt for years. Now rumor has it that both Mel Tillis and Dolly Parton are departing RCA. A couple of huge ones, I would say! Mel has done some label hopping in his time! In the last half dozen years, he's might' nigh signed with every major in Music City. It's a sad day for RCA and Kenny Rogers for a couple reasons... Kenny loses his duo partner and RCA loses one of their biggest stars when they lose Miss Dolly.

Terri Gibbs left Warner Bros., but I haven't yet heard where she went. Song-writing giant Sonny Throckmorton joins Warners, along with virtuoso instrumentalist Mark O'Connor. O'Connor is about the hottest picker in Nashville. He excels on fiddle, guitar, and mandolin. Just about anything he picks up is well-picked when he lays it

down. Wanna hear a Mark O'Connor story? About ten or twelve years ago, I was at the Picking Parlor down on Second Avenue watching some hot young acoustic pickers called Blue Haze who later disbanded. Mark O'Connor, who hails from the Northwest, came in with his mother. Mark had a fiddle with him. At that time, if I recall correctly, the youngster played only fiddle, but he was exceptional. Matter of fact, he and mama had made their way across the U.S. of A. on money Mark earned winning fiddling contests! He got onstage, young as he was, and played the living daylights out of that fiddle.

Joining both of the above on Warners is Michael Martin Murphey, who departed Capitol. Capitol/EMI meanwhile signed New Grass Revival. I have been singing the praises of Sam Bush, instrumentalist virtuoso, for more years than I care to remember... Sam heads up the Revival. Tanya Tucker also signed on with Capitol while Lane Brody split. MTM Records added Marty (son of Merle) Haggard, and former Statler Brother Lew DeWitt signed at Com-

pleat Records. If Marty Haggard is gonna sing for a living, I hope whoever works with him in the studio has got enough smarts *not* to let him record his father's songs. I heard the kid live once, and it was a huge mistake for him to sing "Today I Started Loving You Again," one of dad's biggies. Merle Haggard, a singer's singer, can just about out-sing anybody on the face of the earth. and for the boy to try and sing daddy's songs is as big a mistake as Audrey Williams force-feeding Hank Williams Jr. Hank Sr.'s songs. Thank God and Jimmy Bowen, Hank Williams Jr. don't have to sing nobody else's songs or walk in nobody's footsteps no more. His records outsell just about all of 'em, and it's my conviction that if Merle's kid Marty has it, he too can make it without singing *his* daddy's songs. Is anybody listening?

NAILED BUT NOT TO THE WALL

Editor Russell D. and all you other frothing-at-the-mouth human male persons... Paul Kennerly nailed her, her being the *beauteous* Emmylou Harris.

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TEN YEARS AGO

Following his biggest year ever, Freddy Fender graced the cover of our March 1976 issue. His hits, "Before the Next Teardrop Falls" and "Wasted Days and Wasted Nights," were million sellers.



Fashion, morals, health and sports were also news in country music a decade ago. Donna Fargo and Tammy

Wynette were declared to be among the ten worst-dressed women in America by Mr. Blackwell, a noted Hollywood designer. They shared the limelight with Caroline Kennedy and Nancy Kissinger, among others. Neither Donna nor Tammy thought this was too much of a problem. "I hope my singing is appreciated more than my wardrobe," said Tammy. She added that she thought she was in great company. Donna remarked, "My husband Stan will be happy to hear this because he thinks I spend too much money on clothes anyway." Speaking of clothing, Faron Young was charged with inde-

cent exposure in Oklahoma. A spokesman for Faron said that the charge was an accidental type thing that occurred when Mr. Young, after asking people to leave his dressing room so he could dress for his performance, went ahead and changed his clothes anyway. Then-Governor Ray Blanton said... "It was a frivolous matter."

The management of radio station WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia, instituted a policy of censorship of records which contained suggestive or profane lyrics. They decided that records which their management found objectionable would not be aired on WWVA. Immediate targets of the airplay ban were Faron Young's "Here I Am in Dallas," Conway Twitty's "You've Never Been This Far Before" and Tanya Tucker's "Would You Lay With Me in a Field of Stone."

Meanwhile some country stars were being praised for their life and character. Johnny Cash's book, *Man in Black*, got an award from the Laymen's National Bible Conference. Johnny and June Carter were also invited to visit with President Ford. Life and death issues took their toll. The country music world was saddened by news of the death of Cari Bare, 15-year-old

daughter of Bobby and Jeannie Bare, while Harlan Howard had a narrow escape. He was involved in a serious auto accident and his lungs were severely damaged.

On the business end, Nashville's famed Exit/In nightclub-bar filed for bankruptcy, and Pittsburgh Steeler quarterback Terry Bradshaw recorded his first country album.

The top spots on the country album charts were held by both men and women. Waylon, Willie, Jessi and Tom-pall were at Number One with *Wanted: The Outlaws*, followed by Emmylou Harris' *Elite Hotel* at Number Two. Freddy Fender's *Rock n' Country*, Merle Haggard's *It's All in the Movies*, and Cledus Maggard's *The White Night* were all in the Top Ten, as were Loretta Lynn's *When the Tingle Becomes a Chill*, Tanya Tucker's *Lovin' and Learnin'*, and Jessi Colter's *Jessi* album. Hot country singles were "You'll Lose a Good Thing," by Freddy Fender, "If I Had It to do All Over Again," by Roy Clark, "Til I Can Make It on My Own," by Tammy Wynette, "Til the Rivers All Run Dry," by Don Williams, "Drinkin My Baby off My Mind," by Eddie Rabbitt and Larry Gatlin's "Broken Lady."

Her third time down the aisle, whilst he's on his second-go-round, happened in Maryland. She sings like an angel, he writes like **Stephen Foster**, but talks slightly like **Richard Burton**. Being from jolly old England, the boy does have a bit of a brogue. He's a mighty lucky man, isn't he, Russell? Russell! Russell! All you guys, quit crying!

HAZEL'S UPS AND DOWNS

Readers and those who don't like my column... I love you all the same. If it weren't for fans, there would be no music, no TV, no magazines and no jobs. All the readers, those who like my column and those who don't, I love you for loving country music and for subscribing to the magazine. The holidays and the new year are behind us now, but I hope that each of you had a Happy Holiday in your own way. Whatever you believe, I hope that you were with someone during that time who brought comfort to you and helped to deepen your faith. After all, this is the only face of the earth we're about to see, so let's join hands with old Kenny Rogers the last of

May, and let's thank God for the privilege of sharing some laughs and of being entertained by the great Grandpa Jones

and Little Jimmie Dickens and Minnie Pearl and whatever or whoever it takes to entertain you!

SEEING DOUBLE



Two sets of Oaks with an "Elvira" added for good measure? That's what happened when the Gatlins and T.G. Sheppard decided to pay The Oaks back for the gags they had pulled when both acts were appearing in different hotels in Las Vegas at the same

time. Dressed as The Oaks, the Gatlins and T.G. commissioned Mike Campbell to appear as "Elvira" and ran on stage unannounced during the famous song. The eight country stars harmonized on the song before a stunned and cheering crowd.

People

EYE SAW

You thought eye forgot eye saw, didn't you? Well, eye didn't. Eye saw **Jeannie Kendall** of The Kendalls in Hendersonville at the post office one recent Wednesday, and the next day eye saw Jeannie at Mallard's in Hendersonville having lunch.

THIS, THAT AND THE OTHER

January 13 in Texas, USA, the filming of the TV-movie *Stagecoach* began with **Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson**. Rumor has it, including that deep source *The Hollywood Reporter*, that the film is budgeted at almost 3 mill, the largest amount ever for a made-for-TV movie. Well, when you get the best, you pay more! I figure these four are worth many mills...or bills...whichever.

KENNY RECEIVES AND PRESENTS AWARDS—BOTH TO AID THE HUNGRY

Kenny Rogers jetted into Music City along with his lovely wife, Marianne Gordon Rogers, to receive the first Roy Acuff Award, in recognition of his charitable contributions to society. The award, presented at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, was created by the Country Music Foundation's board of trustees in 1981 in honor of Roy Acuff to recognize outstanding service to mankind by country music stars. It is currently co-sponsored by *The Tennessean*, The Gannett Foundation and The Country Music Foundation. Rogers was cited for fighting hunger. During a 90-day tour in 1984, he collected canned food for local food banks wherever he

SITTIN' AND A-CHATTIN'



When people came to the grand opening of the Willie Nelson Exhibit at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, they found songwriter **Harlan Howard** engaged in conversation with someone they thought was

the real Willie Nelson. But, after a closer look, they realized that Harlan was talking to none other than "Fast Eddie," Willie's look-alike mannequin. "Eddie" is included in a five part show documenting Willie's career.

played. On May 26, 1986, Memorial Day, Rogers plans to have a whopping 7 million people join hands across the nation singing "America the Beautiful" and "We Are the World." It will cost \$10.00 to participate in this human chain. Rogers and the other organizers hope to collect 100 mill to fight hunger. Oh Lord, I want to be in that number, don't you?

Kenny is very serious about the plight of the hungry. In 1982 he established the

World Hunger Media Awards to encourage, honor and reward members of the media whose significant contributions bring the issues of world hunger to public attention. This year, he and Marianne presented Bob Geldof a Special Achievement Award. Geldof was honored for his African relief efforts, including the widely distributed single "Do They Know It's Christmas" from Band Aid and the successful Live Aid benefit. ■



Kenny receives from John Seigenthaler, Frances Preston and Bill Ivey. (Right) Kenny and Marianne present to Bob Geldof.

20 Questions with LUNATICS IN DISGUISE & PINKARD & BOWDEN

Life, said the robot in A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, don't talk to me about life. Well, Sandy Pinkard and Richard Bowden talk about life better than any robot. Or, at least, they seem to talk about something resembling life. With songs like "Drivin' My Wife Away," "I Lobster But Never Flounder" and the more or less classic "Mama, She's Lazy," Pinkard and Bowden have infused (that's a real word, too) new life into country comedy. In fact, if they were one person, they'd probably be referred to as the Weird Al Yankovich of country music. Maybe not.

Anyhow, 20 Questions caught up with P&B just before they went out hunting squirrels. Why they were doing that was a question we decided not to get into. They agreed to answer 20 questions, but it took them a long time.

1

Homer and Jethro—fixtures of the country community, stars of the 1950's and 1960's in mass media, and members of the Grand Ole Opry. Do you find that you are embraced by the traditional country community in the same way they were?

We haven't been embraced as yet, but we think it's coming. Just the other day, Roy Acuff



said something about kissing his... actually, we didn't catch all of what he said.

2

How do you define a good country song?

A good country song is one that inspires people into upward mobility, networking like rats and swilling Perrier in their leased BMW's.

3

How do you feel about the trends in country music today?

Madonna Fargo songs, definitely. What the world needs is more songs like "The Happiest Girl in the Whole USA is Still a Virgin."

4

What country music female vocalist would you like to have with you if you were stranded on a desert island?

Cristy Lane—because she's been to Viet Nam and she knows what it's like.

5

Do you ever anticipate going "pop"?

We thought about it, but going pop entails making a lot more money, and we're having trouble managing what we have right now.

6

You have, on occasion, appeared in "drag" as "The Dudds, Nairobi and Wyoming." Do you enjoy wearing women's clothes?

No.

7

Many singers say they started out singing around the house, singing to mop handles or cornstalks or anything available. How did you get started?

We actually got started singing in the shower, but it was a bit crowded, and we ruined a lot of guitars.

8

What directions are you currently headed in?

We think we're gonna be doing more "country rap songs," and our people are supposedly talking to Barry Manilow's people about us doing some sides together, because, you know, "we write the songs that make the old girls cry."

9

You did a video on "I Lobster But Never Flounder," off your first album. Are there plans for any more videos?

We just did an episode of *New Country* on *The Nashville Network*, and we understand that they are planning to use a clip from that show on their video programs, *Country Clips* and *Video Country*. We're hoping that *MTV* and *VH-1* will make cassette copies of it and use it on their channels, too!

10

What mode of travel do you use in touring?

Shopping carts have always been good for us. It's a safe, economical way to go—except it's hard to find one with four good wheels on it, unless you take one right out of the store.

11

You guys have opened for a lot of big name acts. What's Alabama like?

Well, they are always coming over to our houses and stuff, and we like to sit around and drink Manischewitz Light and sing those old Statler Brothers songs we all love so well.

12

How do you feel about the Statler Brothers sweeping the Music City Songwriters Awards this January?

We would have felt better about them sweeping the building.



Dressed to kill, or maybe maim—the boys with coach Shirley Hemphill and referee Bobby Bare before their match.

13

What's your favorite song?

We have so many, it's really hard to say... "Happiest Girl" ranks right up in there, but "Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport" would probably hold the top slot.

14

There were a lot of big time benefits this past year. Did you work FarmAid?

No, we had prior commitments, but we *do* like doing our part. We've just committed to do a benefit for the endangered species of reptiles in South Louisiana called "Gator Aid."

15

What stars have had a major influence upon you?

John Wayne, Wayne Newton and Olivia Newton-John.

16

When did you first know you were funny?

It was when the doctor spanked us—instead of crying, we both *smiled* about it.

17

As comics, what's the cheapest shot you've ever had to take to gain exposure?

We believe it was being stripped down to wolf-mask G-strings before an audience of 5,000 hard-core wrestling fans and taking a fall against two female disk jockeys from Nashville 95-FM.

18

What would you do if you weren't in show business?

Well, show business, naturally, is our first love, and if we couldn't do that, we'd probably have our own little gynecological practice.

19

You were the first to rate your album, *PG-13*. Now there's a big move by Tipper Gore and a group of concerned parents to rate all the rock 'n' roll records. How do you account for all this?

We've always been several weeks ahead of our time, but we are confident that the rock community will eventually catch up to what we're doing.

20

You've come a long way as far as acceptance is concerned—how big do you see yourselves becoming?

We believe that world domination is our manifest destiny.



THE OAK RIDGE BOYS

**The Business
of Making Music**

There's more than eighty people in the Oak Ridge Boys Organization who help them plan, promote, set up new and original stage shows and choose the right songs. This formula for success has served them well. / By John Morthland



As the Oak Ridge Boys' bus pulled out of the parking lot of the brand spanking new Cajundome in Lafayette, Louisiana, to begin the 11-hour haul back to Nashville, Oaks operations manager Danny Watkins allowed himself a short sigh of relief before hopping onto one of the two crew buses. Though there were still loose ends to be tied up and it wasn't time yet to pack away his walkie talkie, the lion's share of his work for the day was done as he took a seat at the front table in the bus among production manager Jon Mir, stage manager Ray Sanderson, and various light and sound men. By Oak Ridge Boys standards, this had been rather a modest day.

The Oaks had just finished the last of ten dates opening for Kenny Rogers, which meant they did only a 50-minute set instead of the usual 90. It also meant they had to contend with an octagonal stage and a sound and lighting system that might be fitting for a solo performer like Kenny but was not well-suited to the high-stepping vocal group's act. The idea was thus to make the best of the situation and then hightail it back to Nashville. That being the case, though, why accept such gigs at all? Well, there's the exposure and the money and the fun, as Joe Bonsall pointed out a couple of hours before they hit the Cajundome stage, plus there are the intangibles.

"Ever since 1978 the only act that's ever gone on after the Oak Ridge Boys has been Kenny Rogers. And you must realize that the person I think we have learned the most from, aside from ourselves, over the years, is Kenny Rogers," Bonsall said. "He is the class of our business; he knows more about this business than most people. So every now and then it's nice to go back and just kinda join up with Kenny. It's always a growing experience."

Perhaps more than any other act in country music, the Oak Ridge Boys realize that this *show business* they are in is, in fact, made up of equal parts *show* and *business*. That's why they carry so much crew on the road that it takes two buses

to transport them and three semi-trucks to move their 40 tons of equipment. That's why back at their offices in the Nashville suburb of Hendersonville, they have another 30 or so people working for them, one of the largest staffs in the business.

This all makes a huge difference in how the Oaks approach their work. Here's Bonsall again: "When the manager of a state fair books the Oak Ridge Boys next August, there's a bunch of things he's gonna know about us that he probably won't know about other acts. He knows that the Oak Ridge Boys are gonna be as healthy as we can be, and we'll go out there and work as hard as we can to put on one of the best shows he has ever seen. But he also knows we're coming in there with a top-notch production crew that'll set everything up as near to hassle free as can be done. And he knows that there's also gonna be an office staff behind us that's been helping him promote the shows and get people out there for him. That kind of reputation is another thing that spells out longevity and long-range planning."

So the hell with Duane's favorite color of socks and what Richard likes to eat for lunch on Thursdays; thanks to the Oaks efficient P.R. juggernaut, you probably already know that anyhow. I will say that during this interview the Boys interacted as much as they do onstage, tossing lines back and forth,

prodding each other on. Joe talked with his hands and his mouth simultaneously; Duane, fighting a cold and spooning down a bowl of gumbo, spoke softly but confidently; William Lee was silent and spacey, a little grin playing around his lips when the others said something he liked; Richard was amiable but businesslike (though more animated later

"Ever since 1978 the only act that's ever gone on after the Oak Ridge Boys has been Kenny Rogers."

when talk turned to baseball). But that's all the fan-mag talk — let's look at the Oaks instead as an organization. If you count the employees of their two radio stations in Terre Haute, Indiana, the total numbers 82 people plus the Boys and their six band members.

They have always been unusually organization-minded, and even back in their gospel days they did things a little differently. Jon Mir, who's been with them 12 years and recalls sleeping

crosswise on the floor of the bus when he was the entire road crew, notes that even back then they carried their own sound system—a crude one, to be sure, but it was more than anyone else in gospel music was doing. Sitting around a table in their luxury hotel in Lafayette this November afternoon with no chores except one interview before hitting the stage to sing for 50 minutes, the quartet describes what a typical day was like.

"Well, we'd have two rooms to clean up in, instead of a room each, and they wouldn't be such great rooms, either. We'd be down at the place unloading our own sound system right now, settin' up records in the back of the hall. We'd do a gospel show; and when it was done and we'd sold as much as we could in the back, we'd tear it down and come back to our rooms and clean up and go to the next place, driving our own a bus through the day," Bonsall began.

"We were our own crew; we didn't have a crew so we divided ourselves into mini-crews," Duane added. "One of us was in charge of the sound, I was usually in charge of the bus—when they were settin' up the sound, I'd be in a garage gettin' the bus worked on."

By the mid-1970's the Oaks were at the top of their field. William Lee, always a strong man, was more or less managing them by then, but Duane had picked up enough business

In 1975 and 1976 The Oaks actually lost \$100,000. Today they think nothing of taking a \$9200 laser show to a small town, because they figure it will pay off somewhere down the line.



MARSHALL FALLWELL, JR.

SCOTT NEWTON

smarts to be running a lucrative gospel publishing company—and to realize that, despite their 12 Doves (the gospel equivalent of a Grammy), “We could be the Number One group in the business and starve to death.” The subsequent transition to country-pop was by no means a sure thing; though considered too contemporary now for gospel fans, they were still too gospelish for country fans. Trapped in this programming netherworld, their earnings dropped to \$75,000 in 1975; in 1976, they actually lost \$100,000, and accountant Karin Boulanger, now a 15-year veteran of the Oaks office, recalls the singers skipping paychecks back then so the staff could be paid.

The transition finally triumphed in 1977 with “Y’All Come Back Saloon,” their first record with producer Ron Chancey and the secular ABC/Dot label. (ABC/Dot subsequently merged into MCA and has been recently re-activated.) And after “Elvira” went mega-platinum in 1981, nobody has even had to consider the possibility that their success would be a short-lived fluke; the 1982 “So Fine” (an “Elvira” sound-alike) is the only one of 25 singles they have released that didn’t go to Number One “somewhere in the world,” according to Duane, and it was a record the Boys didn’t want cut. They bowed to their record company’s wishes in that instance, and, “The record company was wrong. We consented to it, so we were wrong too,” Duane explained. “But we’ve been right on about 25, and I think that’s an alright record.”

Meanwhile, their live show has become a legend. Joe Bonsall will readily admit that, “Making good records is the key to going out there and having good crowds on the road, but the main thing for the Oak Ridge Boys has always been to go out there on the stage and sing. I think that’s what we do best.” And the Oaks think nothing of taking a \$9,200 laser show into a Murfreesboro, Tennessee, or a Little Rock, Arkansas, knowing that it will almost certainly cost them. Because they also know the people in Murfreesboro have probably never seen a laser show before, and they figure it’ll pay off somewhere down the line.

The idea,” Richard said, “is never go back to the same market with the same show. We have to leave room for flexibility, but we must come up with a completely revamped show at the beginning of each year.”

That’s where Jon Mir comes in. The Oaks make a lot of suggestions for their own show, and they also do things like take the whole crew out to see Bruce Springsteen so they can pick up new ideas. But in the end, designing the whole stage, light and sound package is



“Singing for the people,” says Bonsall, “is what we do best.”

production manager Mir’s job. As the crew bus rolled through Louisiana the night we spoke, he was toying with possibilities for 1986 on his pocket computer, keeping in mind always that the Oak Ridge Boys require a “clean” stage, with lights and sound equipment hung from the ceiling.

Stage manager Ray Sanderson takes care of that, and his workday is not the sort of thing people like you and I care to contemplate. Because the Lafayette gigs belonged to Rogers, the Oaks crew logged a mere eight hours—under normal circumstances, they spend more like 16 to 18 hours daily on the job.

Work begins around 9 A.M., when local rigging crews and truck loaders report to help assemble sound and lights, including the snazzy new Vari-Lites, a computerized system that runs

through 60 colors in less than a second. This job is done in stages, with an elaborate system of ropes, chains and cables holding everything above the stage. By about two in the afternoon, the crew usually starts setting up amps, instruments and monitors on the stage itself. (The Oaks work on a stage no smaller than 56 feet wide and 40 feet deep.) Around 4:30, the band takes its sound-check, with Mir on the mixing board and Sanderson coordinating adjustments from the stage. After the show, they’ll have two-and-one-half hours to tear it all down (That’s the most hectic time of the day,” Jon insisted), load the trucks, then get on their own buses for some junk food and sleep in a narrow bunk before hitting the next town 350 miles down the line.

While the crew is setting up, Danny

Watkins will probably be negotiating last minute details with the promoter. Like many on the Oaks crew, he began working for them in merchandising, which takes in \$1,500 to \$2,000 on an average night, but can go three times as high, before moving up to his current position. Most of his work is actually done out of the Hendersonville office, where he books dates, arranges support acts and the like. On the road, his main responsibility is to collect the evening's fee from the box office, which makes him one of the few crew members who seldom sees the show. "If I've done my job well, I should really have very little to do on the road. Unfortunately, sometimes I don't do everything right..." he cracks.

By the time the crew bus reached Hendersonville the morning after leaving Lafayette, the Oaks office staff was already at work, so Watkins went home for just a few hours more shuteye before returning to his desk job. Meanwhile, up in his front office, Oaks manager Ted Hacker was fielding his regular quota of a dozen or so phone calls per hour.

In an organization where most have been around a decade or so, Hacker is a newcomer. He's worked there two years, after stints as a roadie for Goose Creek Symphony, with Dr. Hook's management and production company, and as manager for the artist careers of Larry Willoughby and Michael Foster, two writers at the Oaks Silverline and Goldline publishing houses. Hacker is unusual also in that, unlike most managers who take a percentage and who in many ways have the artist working for them, he is a salaried employee of the Oaks. Though he oversees eight companies for them, his specialty is career guidance; he is not so much a "numbers" oriented man as he is an idea man. Ultimately, the Oaks "manage" themselves, in practice if not in title. They make their own business decisions, meeting about every six weeks and conferring frequently with each other in between; as in the old days, each has a special area of responsibility.

"An artist who's been around for a long time knows what's best for him in terms of career direction," Hacker believes, "so I discuss what I think is best for them, but it's their decision. I don't interject my philosophies on them; they interject theirs on me, and I carry it out."

Thus, when Hacker took over, his first order of business was to "work on the relationship with the record company" and with producer Chancey. Then he put the word out to international contacts he'd built up on his previous jobs. The Oaks had made overseas forays already, thanks mainly to their association with superagent Jim Halsey, but there "was never any kind of overall battle plan to

develop them internationally." Hacker's final step was "to tighten up the organization, to make it a tight, trim, lean fighting machine, if you will." Since then, he's continued work in those areas while constantly working with the boys, artist development head Kathy McClintock, and promotions staff Donna Jean Smith and Brittan Kisshauer to come up with new schemes for keeping the group in the public eye.

The results are plain to see. Last year, for example, the Oaks opened a performing theater in Nice, France, donat-

"The main thing for the Oak Ridge Boys has always been to go out there on the stage and sing. I think that's what we do best."

ing their fee to Feed the Children. Record heads from most of western Europe attended, and the Oaks next single was released simultaneously in 16 countries. "Now we're looking to get real hits in those countries to follow up," Hacker grinned. "The Boys will be doing a promotional tour of Europe in 1986 and hopefully a fair amount of TV."

In the last couple of years, their involvement with the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse expanded from the local to the national level, because "you have to give back to the community." In 1985, they did a massive Fourth of July show with the Beach Boys and sang the national anthem at the World Series. When the Oaks played the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, they sponsored a cabdrivers' picnic to make up for the fact that the Grand, unlike most Vegas showcases, doesn't have a special show for cabbies — whose approval is important because they steer so many others to the shows they like best. They also handed out Oak Ridge Boys buttons to the 3000 hotel employees, and then awarded \$25 three times a day to a random employee wearing his. They gave out a cassette tape to one person on each of United's 7750 flights one month, then picked a grand prize winner from among them to attend one of the Vegas shows and meet the Oaks. All this is designed to rein-

force what Hacker and the Boys believe their role is as entertainers.

"I have a real focus on what I think the Oaks are and how I think the American public perceives them. I believe that they're a grass-roots, mid-American type group with strong ties to things like baseball and children," Hacker said. "I think they represent family and community and traditional American values. They're not Motley Crue and they're not Pavarotti."

It was Hacker who crystallized the idea behind *Seasons*, the new digitally recorded album. William Lee had frequently spoken of the quartet in terms of seasons of the year, but the notion took shape for Hacker last summer when he was listening to songs, a duty he and Duane are usually most eager to perform.

"I listened to a Christmas song that I thought was a killer. Then there was one about baseball that seemed to represent springtime, and one about the Statue of Liberty that represented patriotism and summertime. This was all something the Boys had been talking about for years, so when I stumbled onto it, they were quick to embellish it. We thought in terms of what we could do throughout a year. You can do all kinds of different things with the four seasons, so of course the record company liked it a lot too."

After commissioning a title song from their own publishing company, the trick was to fill the album with songs that tied together the theme with individual personalities: Duane, says Hacker, represents summer, because he's an outdoors guy into farming; William Lee, due to his relationship to children, represents Christmas and winter; Joe and Richard, both baseball nuts, suggest spring, but Bonsall gets that one since Sterban is such a clotheshorse he's most suitable for fall and fashion.

Once the concept was firmed, the ball was passed to Kathy McClintock, who, like others, is a long-time (13-year) veteran of the Oaks staff. She worked with MCA's art department and with freelance photographer Annie Leibowitz, who shot the cover, to design the package. The tour book concentrates on how the Boys spend their free time, a notion that ties in with the theme a little but not too much. "There's definitely such a thing as too much promotion; it's like having too much insurance," McClintock warned. "It's a gut feeling, and you have to watch it carefully." The book also features four as-told-to stories that detail each member's career chronologically. Though she also puts together a poster and other promo material, McClintock's job is largely over once the album actually comes out.

Then it's up to Donna Jean Smith and



ANNIE LEBOVITZ

Sensitive to children and their needs, The Oaks became the 1985-1986 National Honorary Chairmen of the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse. Their commitment goes back many years.

Britt Kisshauer. They specialize in concert promotions, another area in which the Oaks stand virtually alone since they supply their own radio spots and TV packages and do so at their own expense. Normally, a promoter must provide these services for himself.

"But it's worth it for us because we like to keep control over the image that we've got," Kisshauer explained. "We know exactly what's going out, and we can keep it consistent all the way through. And when somebody sees that, they know it's the Oak Ridge Boys and there's no question in *their* mind that they know what they'll be getting."

By this point in the process, of course, Jon Mir will have designed the new stage and Ray Sanderson and crew will have mastered how to put the whole thing together. Danny Watkins will have the tour mapped out and "all" the Oak Ridge Boys will have to do, ha ha ha, is show up and sing.

Duane: "I think it's like Classic Coke. You can just keep making it forever and people will buy it now. What we must keep doing is making that Coke, and the Coke for us is a hit record."

Joe: "If you're new, if you've been around a while, if you've been around as long as we have, that three-minute hit

record is still the biggest thing that can happen to your career—"

Duane: "— the next thing is two three-minute hits, and the third thing is three..."

Joe: "And then, to be big in this business, the invariable thing that you need is to have the vehicle, businesswise and stagewise, to carry that hit as far as you can get it. And when you finally get the chance to get out there and sing that hit to people, *smoke* 'em with it! Knock it down; sweat and bleed. People have to go away from there saying, 'Wow, I just saw the Oak Ridge Boys, man, and they were *great!*'"

Over the past months, we asked you readers what questions you would ask if you could interview the boys from Ft. Payne yourselves. The stack of suggestions was almost overwhelming, but here, culled from what you wrote, are the best of the best.

Randy, Teddy, Jeff and Mark took their assignment seriously. We explained to them that these were the *readers'* questions, not the ideas of professional journalists. People to people. The people's band responded.

Several questions are answered by more than one member of the band. Each man states the question before phrasing his response. Teddy leads off.

TEDDY

This is Teddy. I'll be answering the next few sets of questions.

How many dates do you play a year?

Approximately 150 to 160.

How are the cities and other stops on your tours selected?

Combination of our manager, booking agency and the boys in the band.

Do you ever get tired of performing and traveling and just want to go home?

I get tired of the traveling. I never get tired of performing. Sometimes I like to be home more than I am but not more than fulfilling my dream of playing music and traveling.

What is the toughest part of being out on the road?

The idle time. The time when you're doin' nothin', just sittin' in a motel.

What do you do to relax and have a good time when you get home?

Spend time with my kids and as much time on the farm as I can. Sometimes I go fishing.

Do you ever get stagefright?

Not really stagefright, but I guess you get butterflies, just because you're concerned that everything's gonna go right and the sound system's gonna sound good. You don't have any lack of confidence in your own ability. It's just a matter of you hope the electronic equipment performs the way it should.

READERS INTERVIEW ALABAMA BAMA

The Ft. Payne foursome take time out from their busy schedule to answer questions sent in by you readers.

How do you feel before and after a performance?

Before a performance, I just try to relax and get ready for a burst of energy, because you got to put every bit of your energy into a show. After a performance, if it's a particularly good one, you feel real peaceful and relaxed and ready to go to sleep—most of the time. Sometimes you're wound up from it and can't go to sleep. If you're not particularly happy with your performance that night, it can be kinda a battle with yourself because I think you always want to be 100% and you can't be every night. Those are the hardest times for me, the nights when I tried 100% and only 80% came out.

Why do you not ever see our

families in TV or in magazines?

Well, I think your family's somethin' that's completely different from your career, and you try to keep them as far removed as possible. You like to have a normal family life when you get home instead of taking a bunch of pictures with your wife and kids. I think Alabama is a very special group within itself, and my family is very special in their own way, but the two certainly don't mix.

Is Teddy ever going to take over any of the lead vocals?

I sing some lead vocals now. On each album I've sung at least one. On the show I always sing at least one solo. I think my talents and my abilities toward the group itself

are in other fields rather than bein' the lead vocalist. I think my harmony parts, and my bass playing and my songwriting are just as important to me or even more important than singing leads. I think Randy does a great job at singing lead and...uh...that doesn't mean that Jeff and I don't enjoy singing lead, it's just that you have to realize your part within the structure of the group itself and go for what's best for the group. I try to give to the group what it needs from me without getting into a personal ego thing of what I want to do. I try to do what's best for the group itself.

Are you trying to go more country by adding, say, mandolin, banjo, etc., or are you



trying to go the other direction? *40 Hour Week*, for example, seems to be less country.

I have an entire different opinion of the *40 Hour Week* album. I think it's very country, from the title cut, which is very much bluecollar working man to me, to some of the ballads on there. I think it's one of the countriest albums we've put out in a long time. And as far as addin' other instruments to our group to make it more country, I don't think we're interested in becoming more country or more pop, I think we're interested in doing what we've always done—try to put a good sound out—and if it calls for mandolin or banjo, sure, but just to add it to be

more country, I don't think you should try to be anything that you're not.

RANDY

This is Randy Owen, Three, two, one.

How does it feel to have half the women in America in love with you?

Huh, huh, huh. Well, my answer to that is *real* simple. I'd rather that people... I'd rather that girls... like what I do as to not like what I do, and the more that love me and that love Alabama, the happier I am because that's what it's all about is making people happy and havin' people love you and enjoy your music and come to the shows and jump around and have a good time.

Are you trying to change the group's image with the video "There's No Way"?

No, we're not trying to change the image of the group at all. I personally felt that that was our best video that we'd ever done. I thought that it was very... tasty... and I know that, from my standpoint, it took a lot more hard work and it was different, a change of pace for me, but I thought it was time to do somethin' like that and that's what the song called for. I talked to my wife about it, and we decided that that's what I should do, so that's what I did.

Who's the girl in the video, and how much would it take to be in her place?

The girl in the video, her

name is Kelly Lang. She's an actress from California. The way you get into a video with the group Alabama is to be selected by the director of the video, which in this particular case was David Hogan. Kelly was paid for her part in the video, and she did a very professional job. She was quite sick while we were doing the video, but she did a really good job, and she hid it—being sick—very good.

Do any of your children play a musical instrument yet?

No.

Are you going to do a live album?

We have done several cuts live, and I'm sure someday there will be a live album, but right now I'm not sure what the immediate future holds for a live album.

Are you going to do a TV special or a movie?

We filmed the June Jam IV for a possible TV special that could be in 1986. It was recorded digitally. That means the quality'll be very good and... uh... very clean, so it should work very good. The Dick Clark organization filmed the possible TV special, so it should be a very interesting and a very well-done piece of material.

How do you handle criticism?

You listen to criticism, and you think about it and then you do whatever you think is best for the group Alabama.

How do you handle disagreement within the group?

You handle disagreement just like any other group or organization or company would handle one, and that is, you have disagreement, you talk about it and then you come up with whatever you think is the best possible solution.

Are you going to go more country by adding, say, mandolin, banjo, etc., or are you trying to go the other direction? *40 Hour Week*, for example, seems to be less country...

I absolutely cannot believe that anyone would think *40 Hour Week* is less country. If you get any more country than *40 Hour Week*, I wouldn't know how to go that direction. All we try to do is record ten good songs and be who we



Randy, Jeff and Teddy with their wives; Mark with a date at the CMA Awards in Nashville in October.

are, which is a country group, and try to get the most out of our talents, our songwriting—along with other people's songwriting—that we can and give it our best shot. And

is three or four days a week as a rule, a general answer to that question would be no. **What do you do to relax and have a good time when you get home?**

Do you or any other members of the group read your own fan mail, and do you ever answer any of it personally?

We get so much, it's very hard to answer *every* individ-

MARK

To Mark, how many marriage proposals do you receive?... this is Mark, too.

About... ranging from a hundred to two hundred, most of them fortunately which are of the short-term nature.

Yeah, are Mark's glasses prescription or sunglasses? They're both.

Am I going to have a drum solo?

Well, I'm gonna have a drum solo some nights and some nights I'm not, because sometimes I don't feel like it. It's all according to how the show goes. If it's hot, it's gonna be hot.

Are we planning a European tour in the near future?

Yes, we are. It'll probably be sometime this year. Some of the indications of the radio/media people really show a positive demand over there, so we're gonna go over and check it out and hope for the best.

Questions submitted by Country Music Magazine readers. Thanks to all who participated.



Alabama at work—the instrument fits the song.

continue to do very energetic, professional, well-coordinated concerts.

JEFF

OK, this is Jeff, and... **How many dates do we play a year?**

We have planned on 150 or so for the last two years, but actually we've done 168.

How are the cities and other stops on your tours selected?

By our manager, by the demographics, by the size of the building—the capacity of the crowds they can hold—and the record market.

Do you ever get tired of performing and traveling and just want to go home?

Only after an extended time on the road when you get tired and wore out and get tired of seein' hotel rooms. But the way we work, which

Well, I check on the other three businesses I have, which is Cook Sound Studios; Bass Builders, which is a construction company; and a radio station that I'm in the process of building. And then what time's left I like to spend fishing or with my family.

Do you ever get stagefright?

I don't think I've *ever* had stagefright. I haven't been *nervous* since I was thirteen years old because I started playing in a group at that age.

Do you ever get tired of fans wanting to know more and more? Where do you draw the line between your public and private life?

The first part of that, I don't mind fans wanting to know more and more until it *gets* into a personal or private part of my life, and the line is drawn, I guess, by the specific question.

ual piece personally, but I do have a secretary, and I think it's true of all the guys in the band, that answer the mail, but it is discussed before the answer is written, in most cases, unless there're general questions which they already know the answer to.

Are you going to go more country by adding, say, mandolin, banjo, etc., or are you trying to go the other direction? 40 Hour Week, for example, seems to be less country...

Well, I do not agree. If you're talkin' about the album, it might be a little slicker than most country albums, meaning a little more production. Uh...I would also say we use whatever instruments the song calls for, or that we think it calls for. Hopefully it's something one of us can play.



Newsletter

NEWSWORTHY

Making It

In the long, long climb to the top and the struggle to remain there, there are successes of many kinds. There is the amateur who remains true to his or her interest in music and plays or sings, throughout life, in his or her spare time. There is the local star, who brings the pleasure and the uplift of music to friends and strangers in the local club or church or fair or on the local radio

station. There are professionals in the ranks of road bands, studio musicians, backup singers. And there are those writing songs or singing them who are looking for that lucky break—like winning the Wrangler Country Showdown or appearing on the Midnight Jamboree. The love of music and the joy of performing bind these people together and make them attractive, whether old or young, nationally-known or heroes or heroines of the local scene.

Sweethearts Strike Gold

Winning the Wrangler Country Showdown is one way of making it big. It brings a performer or a group a big cash prize, lots of exposure and a shot at performing at the national level. This year's winners are The Sweethearts of the Rodeo, a duo originally from Los Angeles and now from Franklin, Tennessee. Sisters Janis Gill and Kristine Arnold are delighted with their good fortune and look forward to what the future holds.

The two runners-up in the 1985 Wrangler Showdown were women also. There's another performer in Janis' family—she's married to rising male star Vince Gill.

Those interested in making it to the national scene by the contest route can think about *Star Search* also. It brought us Sawyer Brown.

Persistence—"really believe in yourself, get involved," says Kristine. Talent?—"that's really important," admits Janis. And watch the audience reaction—both sisters agree. This is the formula for success The Sweethearts of the Rodeo would like to pass along to those who would like to do as they have done.

Janis Gill and Kristine Arnold, The Sweethearts of the Rodeo, are Los Angeles girls, born "on the beach" in California, in the L.A. community of Manhattan Beach. They 'low as how their voices are "identical" on the phone. They are right. A graduate of Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, older sister Janis went on to two years of college studying music, but once Kristine had finished high school, the duo was off and running. They developed their "progressive, contemporary" sound as they call it, in and around Los Angeles, playing the showcase clubs where they knew they could count on



Wrangler winners, clockwise from top left, Janis Gill, Kristine Arnold, co-hosts Gail Davies and Moe Bandy; first runner-up Sheri Roberts; Sweethearts performing; second runner-up Lisa Lauryn.

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- Musician on the Road
- Collections

the music industry being represented in the audience, places where people came to hear new voices and new bands. Places with names like the Troubadour, the Pallimino, the Roxy, Starwood and the Palladium. They took their name, The Sweethearts of the Rodeo, from the title of The Byrds' 1968 album *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, an album they admired greatly, in 1973.

They also admire The Judds greatly, today, but did not meet them until they came to Nashville. The Judds, in their opin-

ion, have opened a lot of doors. Someone they did meet in that fertile Los Angeles music scene was Vince Gill, now Janis' husband. He is so happy for their success, Janis says—or is it Kristine?

The sisters' voices are not identical when they sing. Kristine's is in a lower register. She sings lead on most of their songs, Janis the harmony. Janis does a lot of the arranging also, and writes some of their songs. Some of her favorite songwriters, to date, are Don Schlitz, Rhonda Fleming and Rodney Crowell. The Sweethearts' first single, out in early March on CBS Records, features a tune by master tunesmiths The Everly Brothers, "Hey, Doll Baby." The Everlys were also an inspiration to The Judds when they were developing their close harmony singing.

The sisters are also different in temperament as performers—Kristine the more outer-oriented of the two, quick to seek feedback about a performance—"How were we? Do you think they liked it?"—these are the questions that come bubbling out of her the minute they come off stage, while Janis says, "I need a moment to myself."

The final performance for the Showdown both girls describe as "extremely intense, stressful" and "extremely exciting." The only thing they can compare it to was performing, many years ago, at a Long Beach, California, bluegrass festival before an

audience of 10,000 people, but even so, the last two days of the Wrangler Showdown were harder. There was a lot of "hurrying up and waiting, a lot of anxiety," Kristine said. "It was like a Miss America pageant," Janis added. "I kept thinking that it must have been a lot like that for the girls in those pageants." There was a different audience each night, and the girls do "feed" off the crowd. Kristine felt pretty good about their final performance. Janis thought it was "kind of funny." There were a lot of little errors—something happened with the mike, and then the curtain came down and hit them. But the judges gave them their votes, and The Sweethearts are delighted.

The Sweethearts have met with good audience reaction all through their career. Partly due to where they grew up, they have always had feedback from industry and in their own words, "attracted a good following." Janis feels that this is important in developing a career. "You have to judge by the audience reaction," she says. Coming to the Wrangler contest from the local radio station in Franklin, Tennessee, next door to Nashville, one of the big seats of industry know-how and feedback in the U.S., may have given The Sweethearts an extra edge in "confidence," maybe, "probably," but they're not sure. They are sure that what they need now is for their

first record to do well. "We need a Number One hit," says the high flying Kristine. "Just to have our first release be somewhat successful," harmonizes the more conservative Janis.

It's also exciting for them to be putting together a band and getting ready to go on the road. Before this, they've always played with house bands or Janis would play the guitar for them if they went on as a duet. Having their own band, which they have helped put together, is new. As they go out to do fair dates, possibly open for George Jones, even get in some TV shows, their spirits are high. As they hit the boards, they may be wearing some of their own designed-and-sewn costumes. "No gingham," both Sweethearts say, instantly. "We are both slender. We like tight jeans and boots. We sew and design a lot of the clothes we wear. We always have. We like to put together jackets and skirts." So keep your eye upon the costumes, and your ear out for the sounds of The Sweethearts of the Rodeo, 1985's Wrangler Country Showdown winners, because here they come.

They say they appreciate the \$50,000 prize money, too. It will help them with their career, and it has allowed Kristine to make a down payment on a home. They like the Dodge van too! "It's neat," says Janis. This time she's the one whose voice glows. Happy rolling! —Helen Barnard

Thirteen Years Old and Rising

Lori King of Fairless Hills, Pennsylvania, is an enthusiastic young person hoping to ride her star all the way to the top of country music. Accompanied by her manager and her mom, she plays all kinds of dates and might even be a Wrangler winner herself some day. She's competed in that contest twice and appeared this fall on the Ernest Tubb Midnight Jamboree in Nashville.

"I am a kid. I don't get my hopes up too high," says Lori King. Her voice is full of enthusiasm, not disappointment, as she discusses her journey to the state finals in last year's Wrangler Country Showdown. She did not get past that level, but this is the second time she got that far, and she's ready to try again. "My point average was just not high enough," she says realistically. The judges rate the performers on such things as stage presence, originality and how well the act reflects country music. Lori accepts their verdict this time, but her hopes and her spirits remain delightfully, youthfully high.

Lori is only thirteen, the only one in her family to perform, though she has some cousins who play instruments who "just fool around." She started singing about five years ago, started performing in earnest



A famous old program graced by a young performer—Lori King on the Ernest Tubb Midnight Jamboree in Nashville.

two years ago. Her favorite kinds of affairs to play are big stage performances with a big audience. She also likes live TV, the big lights and the anticipation waiting to go on. Some clubs won't take her as a performer, not so much because of alcohol being served as because of child labor laws. In any case, her mom goes with her, and Lori

says she feels comfortable, not overwhelmed in a world of adults.

Lori has been an opening act for some big-name stars at dates in and around eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the last two years, people like Kitty Wells, Gus Hardin, Leon Everette and Johnny Russell. In early February she was set to appear

with Lynn Anderson and Mel McDaniel in York, Pennsylvania. As we spoke, she was getting ready to don one of her two cowgirl outfits—she has a black one with pants and a red one with a skirt—and take her alto voice out in front of the crowd to see how they liked “Louisiana Man,” “There’s More Love Where That Came From,” “Teddy Bear” and “I Saw the Light.” On choosing music for a performance—“You think about the audience and select music according to how you think the audience will be.” Her mom and disk jockey manager Ronnie Allen help. She doesn’t have her own band yet, but works with a local group

called The Night Raiders occasionally. “I skip around,” she allows cheerfully.

Lori’s been to Nashville to appear on the Ernest Tubb *Midnight Jamboree*, where she sang “Teddy Bear” and “I Saw the Light” last September 28. She loved the experience. She says Nashville is “a really nice place” and that Justin Tubb and the band on *Midnight Jamboree* are “really nice.” While there, she spent some time with Johnny Russell whom she had met before in Pennsylvania.

Lori’s mom puts the finishing touches on her costumes, and her mom and Ronnie help her choose songs and get the music or

the records so she can learn them, but it’s Lori who steps out to sing, and it sounds as if she loves it. “It makes me happy to see people happy,” she bubbles. “They smile a lot and clap a lot. I’ve never been in a situation where the audience did not like my music.”

—Helen Barnard

Ronnie Allen, Lori’s manager, is a disk jockey at WTTM/AM in Trenton, New Jersey. He first made contact with Lori when her mom was trying to get him to play a song on the radio so that Lori could learn it.

A Short Note From the Down Side

Not everyone makes it every time. Magee, songwriting hopeful from Florida, wrote the CMSA in January 1985 about what appeared to be a break-through for him at the time. He had succeeded in placing some songs of his with a publisher in Memphis. Things did not work out so well. Magee is not discouraged, but the news is not good.

First of all, I would like to thank you again for printing my tribute song, “Mister E. T.,” in your January/February Newsletter. My Memphis recording session was a rip off. I received nothing for my \$4,000, which I borrowed. The company I recorded with, Blackwood Productions, is on the verge of bankruptcy, and my lawyer has filed charges against them with the F.B.I. for mail fraud.

Not easily discouraged, I am still writing. I have had no success in mailing out hundreds of demos. Most of them are returned stamped “Unsolicited Material Not Accepted.” The last tape I sent out was returned unopened. It was sent to the Sue Brewer Fund.

The best song I’ve written is an antidrug song. I read your article on Johnny Rodriguez in your September/October issue of *Country Music*. I believe my song parallels his trials as well as those of thousands of other unsuspecting victims. I have



Magee in a happy moment.

never used drugs. This song was written from personal observations. I’m sending these lyrics to you in hope that you may print them. If I could help just one person recognize that he or she has a problem, which is the first step to the cure, it would be the best Christmas present—or any kind of present—I could receive.

**Magee
Marathon, Florida**

The Sue Brewer Fund, a resource for songwriters hoping to make it, does not unfortunately, as Magee discovered, accept unsolicited material. To make use of its very

generous services, songwriters must apply by calling 615-329-1782 or by writing The Songwriters Guild, 50 Music Square West, Suite 207, Nashville, Tennessee 37203. Guild services include collaborators service, contract review service, newsletters, workshops, song critique sessions and information on copyrighting and presenting songs to professionals.

Another new route to making it as a songwriter is now open. Similar in format to Star Search, it’s a half-hour weekly TV show called You Write the Songs, hosted by Ben Vereen. Three songs compete each week. Weekly prize—\$1000 and a chance to compete again, year-end grand prize—\$250,000. Established writers in the field as well as amateurs may submit songs.

Entries may be directed to Bob Banner & Associates, 8687 Melrose, Los Angeles, California 90069. The show is scheduled to start airing in September 1986.

Thanks for the Legend

I was very pleased to see the article on Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper in the July/August Newsletter. I remember them from the WWVA Jamboree in Wheeling, West Virginia. I used to go to the radio station, WWVA, to watch the performers when they were airing their programs in the daytime. It was this way that I met and had a good acquaintance with Hawkshaw Hawkins, a wonderful entertainer, also “Doc” Williams and his Border Riders. So many of the country and western singers got their start, it seems, on WWVA—Hugh Cross and Shug Fisher, Cowboy Loyce and Just Plain John, Frankie More and his Log Cabin Boys and Girls, Big Slim the Lone Cowboy and many more. Your magazine makes me feel as if I am back in my boyhood days in West Virginia.

**John W. Lewis
Laurel, Maryland**

SNOWBLIND by Magee

You can’t be Santa Claus,
ridin’ an empty sleigh
You can’t love your loved ones,
when you drive them away
You’re paranoid of life,
afraid to live or die
You spend your time alone,
and often wonder why

Man with the cocaine eyes,
can’t read between the lines
Cocaine eyes, cocaine eyes,
the snowman went snowblind

You treat strangers like friends,
and friends like enemies
You put your faith in fools,
that share in your disease
You’ve turned to skin and bone,
and sunken lonely eyes
You bow your head in shame,
are you too sad to cry?

Man with the cocaine eyes,
can’t read between the lines
Cocaine eyes, cocaine eyes,
the snowman went snowblind

Who's Who in Readers Create

Last issue we ran a new feature called Readers Create, made up of contributions from you readers of a particularly creative kind—puzzles, cartoons and drawings. Here are some of the faces behind the work you saw, each one making it in his or her own world in his or her own way.

Mike Mackenzie of Pulaski, Virginia, contributed two drawings, Hound Dog and Don Williams, to Readers Create. Mike's a mere youngster at 24. Along with his other jobs, he's been a disk jockey at WPSK/FM in Pulaski for about 10 years. His station has some 50,000 country music listeners. Mike says "I've seen most of my favorite groups and singers in concert at least once. I've also met many of them and interviewed several, including Hank Williams Jr., John Anderson, Steve Wariner and Larry Gatlin. Hank is shy, John Anderson is humble. Steve Wariner is laid back and very friendly. Larry Gatlin is much more polite

than the press portrays him." Mike adds, "Couldn't do without *Country Music!*" We're glad to have had his contributions.

Joan Darden of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, started out singing and playing guitar with her then-husband Roy Darden and the Darden family band in and around Portsmouth, Virginia. She and Roy sang together and had a comedy act. Joan and Roy are now divorced. Another Roy in Joan's life, Roy Lane, a current friend and singing partner, also plays piano. Joan and Roy sing together locally whenever they can. Joan is the author of the puzzle Say It With Country Stars in Readers Create. Thanks, Joan.

Gene Larson of Miles City, Montana contributed the Sneaky Snake cartoon to Readers Create. Formerly a disk jockey, Gene now works as an artist and is available to write humorous radio commercials. He is also the staff artist for the North American Radio Archives publication, *NARA*

News. NARA is a non-profit educational corporation which works to preserve the memory of old-time radio. According to Gene, it has one of the largest old-radio show libraries in the country. NARA members may rent their favorites for a nominal fee; annual dues are \$15. Of special interest to country music fans, Gene suspects, would be the Red Foley shows, Roy Acuff's Royal Crown Cola shows, Gene Autry's *Melody Ranch*, Grand Ole Opry shows and possibly Tom Mix. Anyone interested in reaching NARA through Gene, we'll forward the mail.

New member Ross Bunch of Quincy, Illinois, is the creator of Barbie, the comic strip based on many people's favorite, Barbara Mandrell, that appeared in Readers Create. Ross feels the world needs a comic strip such as Barbie. He's looking for a newspaper ready to take it. Anyone who'd like to reach Ross, we'll forward the mail to him.



Mike Mackenzie, left, is into interviewing stars.



More frames of Barbie on Ross Bunch's drawing board.



Joan Darden, 1, high-steppin' with Roy Darden in 1959; today with partner Roy Lane. Joan's working on another country story.



Gene Larson's humor is his meal ticket.



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Optional light bar, grille and brush guard
shown here not available until April '86.

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BUILT TOUGHER FROM THE GROUND UP Every Hardbody truck is built around a new, reinforced box-ladder chassis as tough as the steel from which it's cast—a chassis that handles a 1400 lb. payload on all the new E, XE, and SE models. A clean new underbody design—

featuring a beefed-up independent front suspension—creates Nissan's best-ever ground clearance. And more galvanized steel is used in its underbody and sheet metal for even more rust resistance.

ONE-TON PAYLOAD For extra-big loads, Nissan's got an extra-big, extra-tough Hardbody—the new Heavy Duty Long Bed. V-6 powered, it's got an 88" bed and a 2000 lb. payload.



Nissan XE Long Bed 4X4 in Platinum

NISSAN—OUR BIGGEST, WIDEST,

BIGGEST CARGO BOX Double walls of steel shape a cargo box so wide and deep, this new Nissan has the biggest cargo volume of any leading standard compact truck. It's wider, too, between the wheel wells, accommodating a wider track and bigger tires. Incredible attention was paid to even the smallest details. Case in point—the tie-down hooks. They're hidden—set into the cargo-side walls until you pop them out. These patented pop-up hooks are a Nissan exclusive, standard on all SE models.



BIGGEST, FATTEST TIRES The biggest, widest (P235/75R15) factory-available tires of any compact truck are standard on the SE 4X4. If the biggest aren't big enough, trick-out the SE with Nissan's optional 31 X 10.5 R15's mounted on new alloy wheels. It's the hot set-up. **BIGGER KING CAB®** America's best-selling extended-cab compact truck is now even better—and bigger. With more lockable space behind the buckets—for people or cargo. This new King Cab® introduces hideaway jump seats that fold flush into the side walls—another Nissan exclusive. And, new side windows wrap into the roof for extra visibility.

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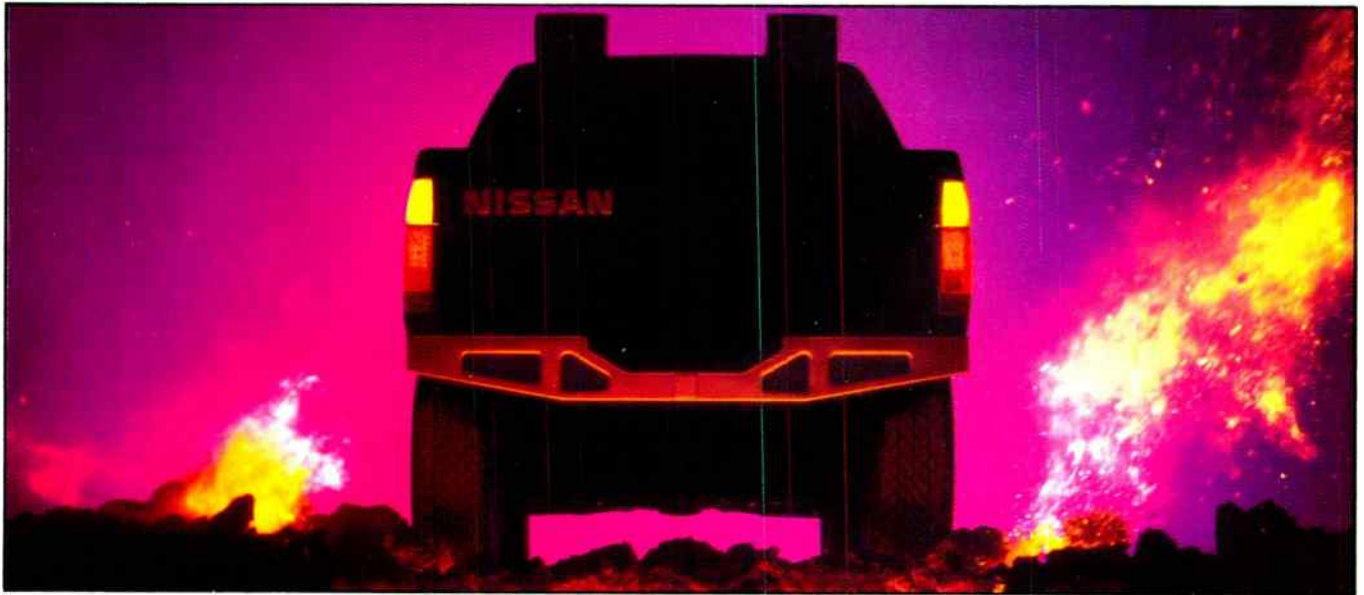
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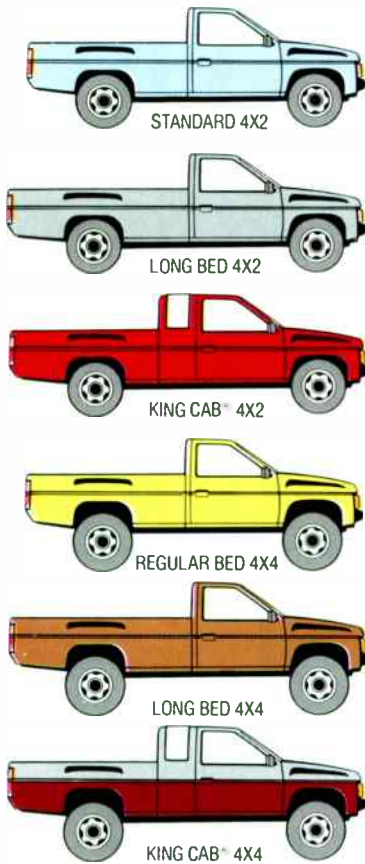
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NISSAN TRUCKS DIMENSIONS AND WEIGHTS	REGULAR BED	LONG BED	KING CAB*	REGULAR BED	LONG BED	KING CAB*
	4X2			4X4		
Wheelbase (in.)	104.3	116.1	116.1	104.3	116.1	116.1
Length Overall (in.)	174.6	190.0	190.0	174.6	190.0	190.0
Width (in.)	65.0	65.0	65.0	66.5	66.5	66.5
Height (in.)	62.0	62.0	62.0	66.7	66.7	66.7
Track—Front (in.)	54.9	54.9	54.9	56.1	56.1	56.1
Track—Rear (in.)	54.5	54.5	54.5	54.5	54.5	54.5
Headroom—(in.)	39.3	39.3	39.3	39.3	39.3	39.3
Legroom—(in.)	42.2	42.2	42.6	42.2	42.2	42.6
Shoulder Room (in.)	55.3	55.3	55.3	55.3	55.3	55.3
Payload (lb.) ¹	1400 ²	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400
Bed Length (in.)	72.6	88.0	73.4	72.6	88.0	73.4
Bed Width (in.)	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8	59.8
(Between Wheel Wells)	41.7	41.7	41.7	41.7	41.7	41.7
Bed Depth (in.)	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1	17.1
Transmission (std.)	M50D ³	M50D	M50D	M50D	M50D	M50D
Transmission (opt.)	A40D ⁴	A40D	A40D	N/A	N/A	N/A
NISSAN TRUCK ENGINES	2.4L I-4			3.0L V-6		
Displacement (cc)	2389			2960		
Horsepower @ rpm	106 @ 4800			140 @ 4800		
Torque (ft. lbs.) @ rpm	137 @ 2400			166 @ 2800		
Induction System	Single Point Fuel-Injection			Single Point Fuel-Injection		

¹Heavy Duty Payload Available 2000 lbs. ²Regular Bed Standard Payload 1000 lbs. ³Manual 5-Speed Overdrive. ⁴Automatic 4-Speed Overdrive

Nissan trucks are available with a wide choice of trim levels (STD, E, XE, and SE), exterior colors (11—including 3 great new two-tones), and interior colors (4—including a new dark red).



THE NAME IS
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A Legend in Her Own Time

No space to do our regular feature *Legends of Country Music* this time, but we thought you'd get a kick out of this little "photo essay" on Dottie West, then and now—a lady who's been a national star for a long time.

One of the many highlights of Fan Fair 1985 was seeing Dottie West again. I believe it was in 1965 in Omaha, Nebraska, I first met her. Twenty years is a long time between times, but as you can see, Dottie looks better than ever, and is a wonderful person and a great singer.

She was very busy at Fan Fair with long lines waiting to see her, but she had time for everyone. I asked her if I could have a picture taken with her, and she got up on a table and set down by me. I told my friend Doris to take her time in taking the picture, and Dottie got a kick out of that as well as the crowd. I sent her some pictures of 20 years ago as I said I would, and I got a "thank you" letter back from her. That was very nice of her!

**Dennis Devine, Sr.
Council Bluffs, Iowa**



Dottie West looking good front and back, top. Below, Dennis Devine and Dottie, left, and Johnny Western, Dottie and Dennis in 1965 in Omaha.



May on the Mountain Bluegrass Festival

May 9-11

The Louvin Brothers Music Park
Fourth annual three-day festival featuring the following performers: Charlie Louvin with Steve Helton, Osborne Brothers, Jimmy Martin. Patent Pending, New Tradition, Family Band, Elmer Bird, Southern Strangers and more. Held at the Louvin Brothers Music Park in Henagar, Alabama. Free parking, free camping in the rough, limited number of electrical hookups available on a first come, first-served basis. Nearby KOA campground and motels. Bring lawn chair; bring sweater. No drugs; no alcohol in concert area; dogs must be on a leash. \$15.00 for three days; children under 12 free. Call 205-657-5700 or write Louvin Brothers Music Park, Route 2 Box 156A, Henagar, Alabama 35978. Reserved tickets available through April 1.

Cold Hamburgers, Warm Beer and Hot Licks

What's it like to go on the road? To play town after town, sleep on the bus, do goofy things, and sleep and eat when you can? This story gives one version of that lifestyle, written by one who knows. We are grateful to road musician and sometime writer Cal Sharp on Madison, Tennessee, for the opportunity to print this inside view.

Lone Star beer signs shine dimly from the walls; at the far end of the barn-like building a row of cowboys leaning against the bar are barely visible through the thick haze of cigarette smoke. This is Texas honky-tonkin' at its quintessential best—a huge dance floor jammed to the edges with two-stepping dancers swooshing softly as they glide past the bandstand and a whooping crowd of truck drivers, oil field workers, rodeo riders, and foxy Texas ladies with legs that come all the way up to here.

We finish our fourth song amidst the sound of applause and clanking glasses. The bass player, who fronts the group—front men sing, emcee the show, collect money, and ward off squirrels, among 6,759 other things—squints through the murk, searching for our boss, a well-known country singer with a long list of top ten records to his credit.

"One more, guys," he calls. The drummer clicks his sticks and I kick off the next tune, a thumping 4/4 shuffle guaranteed to fill up any dance floor in Texas. Being a steel guitar player, I like playing this kind of song, and really get into the charm of the moment, hitting all the hot licks I think I know as the singer warbles about loony limbs.

We always have a good time when we play Austin—or is this Amarillo? I don't know, but I do remember that last night we played Billy Bob's, the biggest night club in the world, in Fort Worth. Anyway, we're somewhere in Texas in the middle of a two-week tour, and the motels and bars can get confusing after a while. Last night after the gig, for instance, I went to room 216 at the Holiday Inn, but the key wouldn't fit. I

finally realized that I was supposed to be in room 301—216 had been last night. And the other key in my pocket—£65, from two nights ago—didn't help much. But I can get all this stuff straight eventually. A desk clerk in New Mexico once gave me the key to a room that already been taken for the night and I walked in on two guys smoking a joint. One of Ernest Tubb's band members was wakened in the middle of the night by someone with the key to his room, but he thought it was great; the intruder turned out to be Mickey Mantle.

By the end of the song our boss has appeared at the bar, and the front man introduces him to the anxious crowd. He comes prancing across the dance floor, waving at the audience, and hops up on the stage. He totters just a little and says hello into the microphone. "If I can get these s.o.b.'s to turn down, I'll sing y'all a song." He fixes us with a baleful Jack Daniels stare, and we kick off one of his big hits, the one we always start the show with.

"Hold it!" he hollers into the mike. "I don' wanna do that one." We stop the music, one at a time, and sit there looking dumb. The guitar player lights a cigarette and we all grab a sip from our drink. We're not really supposed to drink or smoke on stage, but he probably won't be able to tell what we're doing tonight.

We finally get the music started and stumble through the set, starting and stopping his hit songs in mid-chorus (or even worse, mid-hot lick), changing keys in strange places, and just generally being creative. Sometimes a few people will ask for their money back, and sometimes someone will take umbrage at one of his wisecracks and want to fight, but a lot of them seem to kind of enjoy seeing a famous person acting goofy in public. "Golll-eee," some of them might think, "that's just the way I get on Saturday night." Identification.

Finally the set is over and the star mingles with his fans, shaking hands and insulting them on his way back to the bus as we drag out the T-shirts and records and do a brisk little business for a few minutes (the

band gets 20% of the revenues), signing autographs and answering questions. "Do you know Johnny Cash?" "Where y'all go from here?" "Do you really live on that bus?" "Remember me? I met you at Gilley's in 1975." "What's your room number, honey?"

The house band gets ready to start their set, so we go to the bar for a cold one or two. Drinks are on the house tonight, which is a nice change from the stingy club owners we've had to put up with lately. Actually, this is a pretty good night, what with the house band to share the night's work, and their public address system to use. Our sound equipment sits out on our bus, a place we like to keep it as much as possible.

The piano player—"No, hon, I'm not married"—sneaks off to the bus with a leggy friend, and the rest of us retire to the game room for some pool and Pac-Man. "Hey, so-and-so's bass player got 200,000 on there last week!"

When the house band finishes their set, it's our turn again, and we manage to get through most of our second show before the boss gets too ridiculous. Once we get the guitars loaded, it'll be Miller time. Actually, it's been Miller time all night.

Our next gig, tomorrow night, is 500 miles away, about a ten hour drive, so we have to spend the night travelling. Our bus is a 40-foot Silver Eagle fitted out with a couch, table, and chairs up front, eight bunks in the middle, and a stateroom for the boss in the back. For up to \$200,000 or so you get all this and a lot more—stereo, micro-wave, TV, video cassette. It makes the road a whole lot easier to handle than it used to be years ago when everyone travelled in a station wagon pulling a trailer.

Once we get the boss hustled off to bed, we cook up some nachos (with the *hot* jalapeno peppers) and press the piano player for details of his evening's activities, knowing he would never lie to his pickin' buddies.

Later, after everyone has gone to bed, I'm drinking one more beer, watching the dark Texas plains slip by our speeding bus.



Good ole boys—Faron Young (left), Stonewall Jackson (opposite right) and Little Jimmie Dickens (opposite below) and assorted revelers.

COLLECTIONS

Collecting the Magazine

Two members are close to a complete set, thanks to responses to this column.

● Assuming the Prepublication Issue is actually the September 1972 Johnny Cash cover magazine, then I can now join the list of Complete *Country Music Magazine* Collections. I have them *all*, from September 1972 up to the latest Alabama issue, November/December 1985, including the elusive Hank Jr. No Date and Stella Parton issues. Thanks to the *Newsletter* and the contacts I made through it—the Coulters of Illinois, Glenda Urbaniak of New Mexico and Alois Krttil of New York—I only needed three issues, October 1972, January 1973 and No Date, and I got them all for about \$17.00. Also have a 1974 *Country Music Encyclopedia* and the red, hard-bound *Best of Country Music*, Vols. I, II and III.

Thank you all, and maybe I'll mail a photo of the entire collection. **Doug S. Halliday, 15 Loring Place, Rochester, New York 14624.**

Bad news. The Prepublication Issue is not the same as the September 1972 Johnny Cash cover magazine. The cover photo is the same, and some of the articles are the same, but it is a different, separate issue that came out before the one dated September 1972. At the top of the Prepublication Issue, above the Country Music logo, these words appear in white: Preview Issue 60 cents. Above the logo on the September 1972 issue, you'll find Volume One, Number One, 75¢. Good luck, and we'll be watching for the photo.

● I keep reading about three issues of *Country Music Magazine*—September 1981, Hank Jr. No Date and January/February 1982 with Stella Parton on the cover. How come they are so valuable? I have *all three* and might sell them, but how much are they worth and why? **Lois Wood, 1720 Poplar St., Lexington, Missouri 64067.**

Good question. To review, the three issues you name above came out during the period when Country Music Magazine was sold to new management and then went out of publication, remaining unavailable until Russ Barnard, one of the original founders, repurchased it, with the help of investors, and brought it back to you, its loyal readers, in September 1983. We have no idea how valuable each of those issues is, but that's why they're of interest and controversial.

● May I say thank you for printing my letter several months ago in your *Newsletter*. I'm still receiving replies from that letter. I want to say thanks to all those who did reply. I still need the October 1974 issue of *Country Music Magazine* to complete my set. I have extra copies of April 1973 and November 1980. Anyone needing either

can contact me. Am also still searching for information or material relating to the late Charlie Monroe, brother of Bill Monroe. **Bobby R. Knight, 804 W. Jackson St., Mayodan, North Carolina 27027.**

Many Thanks

Members thank those who responded to their inquiries in Information, Please.

● In response to my request for recordings of two Hank Thompson songs in the November/December *Newsletter*, I received 20 letters, 4 tapes plus two 45's and several responses of where I could get lists of all country records.

Thanks so much for all your help. Without it, I guess I would still go on living, but not quite as nice as knowing that there are still lots of loving people in this old country yet. **Vernon L. Richardson, 160 California St., Ashland, Oregon 97520.**

● I want to thank everyone who responded to my request for "Shepherd of My Heart" and "Our Honeymoon" in the November/December *Newsletter*. You've been so wonderful. A special thank you to Anne and John Connor of Cape Coral, Florida; William Reynolds of Lake Station, Indiana; Gene Polk of Mt. Jackson, Virginia; and Paul Koskuba of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. I love you all and really appreciate everyone for taking the time to write.

The song "Shepherd of My Heart" was recorded by Eddy Arnold first in 1952, later by Johnny Cash. **Mrs. Virginia Craig, R. 1 Box 212, Stonefort, Illinois 62987.**

Information, Please

Requests are running very heavy now for Information, Please. It may be six months before your item appears. Don't be discouraged. It looks like the response is worth the wait.

● Does any country music lover out there have a copy of Eddy Arnold's "Live and Learn," 78 r.p.m. record, or know where I might locate a copy? It was recorded in 1946. **Marvin G. Liller, Rt. 6 Box 300 SP 115, Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401.**

● I am trying to find out the name of the song and who made this particular record. It has these words in it—"Way down deep in my soul/Something's got a hold and it won't let go-oh/She's a miracle to me." Thank you. **Mildred Knox, 1520 Illinois Avenue, Ottawa, Illinois 61350.**

● I have two questions. Mac Wiseman sang a song about Muhlenburg County and a town called Paradise and the Green River. How can I get a record of it? Second, who sang "A Letter Edged in Black," and how can I obtain a record of it? **Richard Rothwell, Route 9, 2824 White Crossing, Verona, Wisconsin 53593.**

● I need four albums to complete my

Loretta Lynn collection: Decca DL 74457 *Loretta Lynn Sings*, Decca DL 74541 *Before I'm Over You*, Decca DL 74639 *Mr. and Mrs. Used To Be* (with Ernest Tubb), Decca DL 74744 *I Like 'Em Country*. I have been looking for several years. Will someone please help me? **Leon E. Bjella, 1918 16th St. South, Fargo, North Dakota 58103.**

● I am searching for the music, record, cassette tape or whatever it comes on of a song called "If Jesus Came to Your House." It has a recitation part in it about what you would do with your magazines and if your Bible would be in view, etc. I am not sure who made the recording—maybe Eddy Arnold or Tennessee Ernie Ford. The approximate years would be 1955 through 1960. Does anyone know how I can get it? **Carole Tingle, 106 Cedar Drive, London, Ohio 43140.**

● Where can I get a tape or cassette by Charlie Douglas with his song "Outhouse" on it? Also, may I have the address of the Ernest Tubb Record Shop in Nashville? **Darlene Marquardt, 228 State St., Apt. 4, Mankato, Minnesota 56001.**

The mailing address of the Ernest Tubb Record Shop is P.O. Box 500, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. There are several branches of the shop. The main one is 417 Broadway.

● I am looking for Michael Martin Murphey's "Wildfire" on Epic—the other side is "Night Thunder." The record I have is cracked, belongs to my daughter's friend. I sure would appreciate an 8-track tape of the songs. **Evelyn A. Campbell, R #2 Box 558, Fulton, Mississippi 38843, c/o Nocle Lesley.**

● For some time now I have been trying to track down a recording by an artist named Judy Bailey. The name of the song is "Slow Country Dancin' (To a Good Old Country Song)." It has been played by our local country station WKMB in Stirling, New Jersey. Can anyone help me? I've gone to several large record stores, Sam Goody included, with no success. It may be part of an album. **Mrs. E. Chappina, 6 Thomas Rd., Somerset, New Jersey 08873.**

● I am looking for the following albums by Johnny Duncan: *Johnny One Time*, released in 1969, and *Sweet Country Woman*, mid-70's. If anyone has one of these that they would be willing to sell, please write and include purchase price and condition. **Diana Blanco, 513 Catalina Drive, Frontenac, Kansas 66762.**

To submit material to the Newsletter, write to Country Music Magazine, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. Mark the envelope, Attention: Newsletter. Include membership number. If you would like material returned, include SASE.

This is a story about newcomers in transition. On a Thursday afternoon in the waning weeks of 1985, the offices of MTM Records in Nashville are not a pretty sight. The fledgling label is moving to bigger and brighter quarters on Music Row the next day, so everything is in boxes or shoved in corners; meanwhile, there's still record-biz work to be done—calls to be made, sessions to be scheduled, promotion and publicity to handle—and the staff is trying to work around the mess.

One room has already been stripped bare except for a desk, two chairs, and a wall graph listing the label's current chart action and radio play around the country. Here it is a little less chaotic, a little less noisy. Judy Rodman, the label's first and, so far, best-selling artist is sitting in one of the chairs, dressed simply but strikingly in a cream-colored blouse and blue jeans that are tucked into her boots.

Though still in her early thirties, Rodman lived all over the country and in England before moving to Nashville five years ago. Like her friend and onetime Memphis roommate Janie Fricke, she was a jingles singer and then sessions singer before she was a solo artist. So far, her radio-friendly voice and Tommy West's crystalline pop production have resulted in two hit singles, "I've Been Had by Love Before" and "You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone." As we speak, a third, "Sure Need Your Lovin'," is Number 49 with a bullet; all are from *Judy*, her debut album—also MTM's debut album—released in September. She now must think about putting together a band and hitting the road. So Judy Rodman herself clearly knows something about transitions, too.



DON PUTNAM

JUDY RODMAN

Newcomer on the Move

One of a new breed, musically trained and musically strong, Judy Rodman shows promise of hitting it big. The road holds new adventures while radio seems secure.

by John Morthland

Two more things are equally apparent. Judy Rodman is one of the 1985 success stories in a business that tightened up too much in a year to permit many new successes. And her fate and that of her label are, at this point, bound together even more closely than is usually the case. Which, she figures, is not that bad a situation to be in.

"I've got my first album out a lot faster than most new artists, after all," she begins, "and they've gotten me on things like the FarmAid show that I doubt would have been pushed for me had I been on another label. I'm kinda like their flagship now—the degree to which I do well is kinda the degree to which they're doing well.

"But I guess the label has to prove *itself*, too," she adds, pointing to the downside. "These people are all very experienced and well respected in the record business from their previous jobs, but it is still a new company. But you'd be surprised at how much they've done in such a short time."

Judy is one of the new breed of country artists. Her music derives as much from Carole King and James Taylor as from Kitty Wells and Hank Williams. Though her parents are Mississippi farm people, she never lived in the country. She studied music in college, and is hardly a raw talent waiting to be shaped; she has sung solo and in groups, and can arrange vocals, read and write music, read "number" charts (the system of notation used in Nashville to learn a piece), and do "head" charts (improvised on the spot, with no music written down). On the other hand, accomplished as she is, she's paid no dues in honky tonks or road bands.

Her father was a pretty fair bluegrass mandolin player, the kind who thought anything more contemporary than, say, "Columbus Stockade Blues" was a tad too highfalutin' for his tastes, the kind who during Judy's college years wouldn't let her practice her classical piano while he was in the room. When the Rodmans threw a party, there were no records on the turntable; instead, her father handed out instruments and the family and guests picked.

He was also an air traffic controller;

which accounts for Judy's relative rootlessness and her eclectic tastes. She was born in Riverside, Southern California, but the family moved to England when she was six months old. By the time they'd settled in Miami, Florida, for a seven-year stretch beginning when she was in third grade, they'd also lived in Alaska and Mississippi. In Miami, Judy acquired a taste for Cajun and calypso to go along with the country music she'd learned at home; when the family moved from Miami to Jacksonville, Florida, she picked up classical training and refined her taste in pop-rock.

She began college in Jacksonville, but also did her first jingle there—at age 17, for Jenos Pizza. When her father got transferred to Memphis in 1971, she moved again with the family, planning to continue college and ultimately become a choral director there.

By then, Memphis' fabled music scene—from the rockabilly of Sun Records to the soul of Stax-Volt—had faded. Nobody could figure out whether the collapse was due to bad business or to changing tastes in pop music, but most of the key singers and players in town were bailing out, taking sessions jobs in Nashville or on the coasts.

College soon fell by the wayside anyhow, and Judy took the best music work available, singing commercial jingles for the Tanner Advertising Agency. To keep her sanity, she began taking on what little session work was still available, doing backgrounds for producer Larry Rogers on records by Charly McClain and Billy Swan and for producer Willie Mitchell on soul records by Al Green and Ann Peebles.

"I did that for the pleasure of it; it was extra money, but it was mainly a great deal of pleasure," she says. "Jingle singing is a very demanding thing. You have to be happy all the time, real bright and cheery; there can't be any moodiness, and you have to get all that energy into 60 seconds at the most, sometimes three seconds or five seconds. It's real hard on your vocal cords, and you use your whole body.

"You'd be amazed at how physically tired you get from a whole day of spouting these things out," she continues. "Plus you're told exactly what style to sing it in. You can't be yourself. So it's also stressful that you're not doing your natural own thing. After doing this a whole day, I would actually wind down by singing at some soul or gospel session. And my vocal cords, by the time I got home, would be in much better condition than when I left work at the jingle mill."

Janie Fricke came down from Indiana to sing jingles in Memphis and shared an apartment with Judy before moving to Nashville. Karen Taylor-Good did both



"Once you go on the road, you're out of circulation so far as sessions go, even if you want them."

jingles and recording sessions there during this same time. The three also worked together in a lounge act called Phase II, which opened at the Sheraton Motor Inn and soon played nightclubs all over town, but the trio could never tour because that would require giving up their bread-and-butter work in the studios. Still, Judy began singing some leads with this group, and the experience intensified her ambivalence toward Memphis and the jingles business.

"Jingles singing was what I did for a living. What made me as far as what I am now artistically was what I grew up with, the singers I worked with like Janie, and the club work I did, and the different types of music and songs I was exposed to. That's what *my* music is. It has nothing to do with jingles," she flatly declares.

So she and her husband, a Memphis studio drummer who's since quit music to become a professional bass fisherman, moved to Nashville in 1980. By

then Janie Fricke was already proving that there was indeed life after jingles. Judy did jingles in Music City for Miller Beer, Chevrolet, Opryland, Budweiser, McDonald's and more, but she was mainly looking for recording session work, and eventually she found it singing behind Bobby Bare, Johnny Cash, Tammy Wynette, Jerry Lee Lewis, Crystal Gayle, George Jones, Dolly Parton, Merle Haggard, Ray Charles, and—oh, irony among ironies—Janie Fricke, to name a few.

Through Taylor-Good, who'd also already scratched out a foothold in Nashville, she met producer Tommy West, the man behind Jim Croce's early-1970's hits and currently a producer for Ed Bruce. West liked Judy's voice and original songs well enough to cut five sides with her on speculation and then shop them to major labels. The majors all declined, but West also had good reason to believe that Mary Tyler Moore's company would soon be launching a Nashville record division with himself in the top slot, so he bided his time. Within a year, he was running MTM Records and producing Judy, who was signed as an artist and writer both.

"I'm continuing to write, and some of my stuff is a little more contemporary. My singles have been especially, but some of my stuff is also very... acoustic. So we'll just continue to make music... I hate to categorize it. Country itself is a wider field than it used to be. And some people are afraid it's getting too pop and they'll lose that old country sound, the traditional sound. Some are afraid that if they don't go entirely pop, they'll lose the marketplace. I think the truth lies in the middle," she says.

Session work is tighter than ever in Nashville these days. Because of the rise of the self-contained group and an increasing number of records cut with harmony singers rather than background choral groups, Judy Rodman gets but five or six sessions a week; two years ago, she often did three or four a day. Those sessions are still what pay the bills, which leaves her in what she calls "a sort of twilight zone between making my living on the road as an artist and making my living doing sessions. I can't afford to go on the road unless it pays me well enough, because my session work is paying my expenses. Once you go on the road, you're out of circulation as far as sessions go, even if you want them."

Her first live gig was at Fan Fair 1985, and her next was at FarmAid, where none less than Bob Dylan praised her records; a few weeks later, he pitched her some songs. This year, though, she'll be touring with some regularity. And with that transition, this newcomer will have arrived. ■



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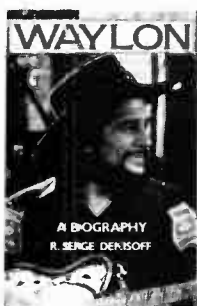


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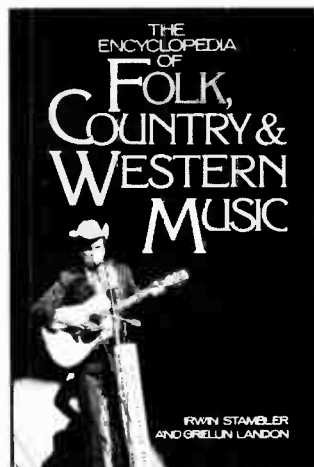
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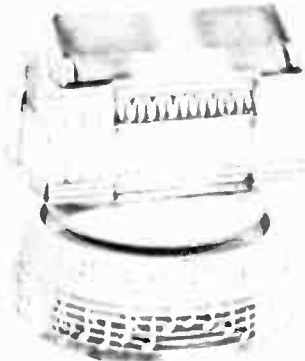
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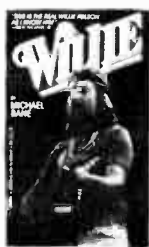
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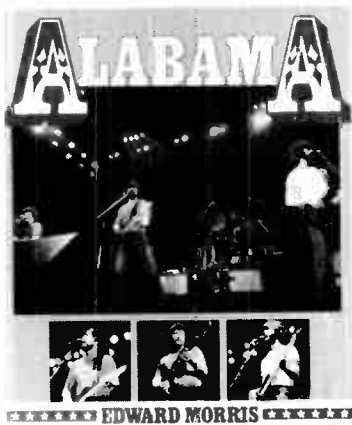
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ALABAMA Here's a new book you don't want to miss... the rags-to-riches story of America's number one country music act, as told by author Edward Morris, columnist and Nashville insider. Based on extensive interviews with Alabama's members, relatives and friends, here is the whole fascinating story. From the Band-in-residence at Canyonland Park to three years in a row as winners of the Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year Award. ALABAMA contains more than 80 photos, an exclusive "Alabama Almanac," discography, and more! Item No. B11-ONLY \$6.95



THE "I LOVE COUNTRY MUSIC" T-SHIRT It comes in blue with white and red lettering, in adult sizes only. This half cotton/polyester shirt is available for a limited time only. Order now and specify small-medium-large-X-large. Item No. G20-ONLY \$8.95



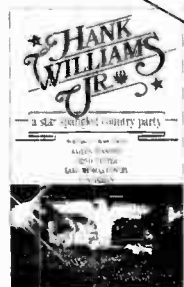
THE COUNTRY MUSIC ALLSTAR PHOTO CARDS Here is one of the most unique decks of playing cards you are likely to find anywhere. Each card carries a full color photo of a different country music celebrity. You'll find Loretta Lynn, Conway Twitty, Johnny Cash, Barbara Mandrell, Roy Acuff... 54 in all. If you're more than just an occasional country music listener, you should have them. Item NO. G2T-ONLY \$3.95



THE "I LOVE COUNTRY MUSIC" ADJUSTABLE CAP This unique blue cap adjusts to fit all adult sizes. It is fully vented to insure cool wearin' during these hot summer months. And it carries the country music message on a handsome 3-color patch. You'll love it. Item No. G2N-ONLY \$6.95



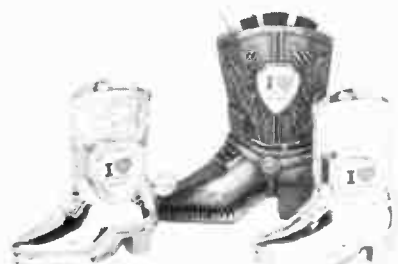
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HANK WILLIAMS JR. VIDEO A star spangled country party on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Constellation. With Waylon Jennings, Jessie Colter, Earl Thomas Conly and Gus Hardin. The Los Angeles Times says, "Visually awesome..." Included: Honky Tonkin', Texas Woman, Good Hearted Women, Luckenbach Texas and more. 60 color minutes. VHS only. Item No G5L-ONLY \$29.95



"MAKE MINE COUNTRY" OVERSIZED CERAMIC MUG This heavy duty mug is a must for every fan. It's extra tall, a big 4 3/4" high. It weighs a hefty 1 1/2 lbs. and holds a whopping 16 ounces. And of course it carries the handsome multi-colored country message. Item No. G1V-ONLY \$5.95



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I LOVE COUNTRY MUSIC TOOTHPICK BOOT Heavy metal with the country music message, it even comes with toothpicks. Item No. G3I-ONLY \$2.95



Mel McDaniel's Recent Arrival

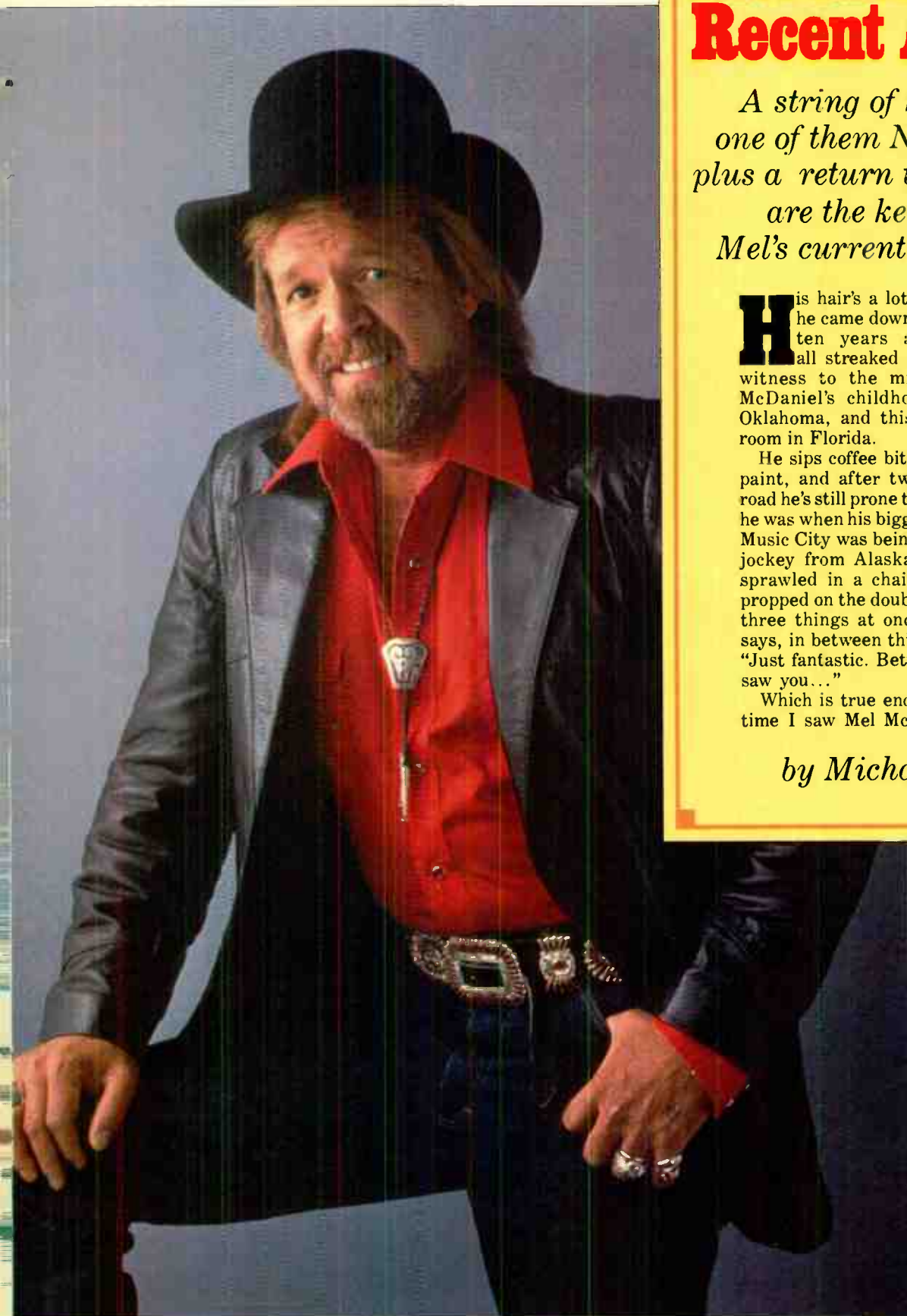
A string of hot singles, one of them Number One, plus a return to songwriting are the keynotes of Mel's current good times.

His hair's a lot grayer than when he came down from Alaska, over ten years ago. The beard's all streaked with gray as well, witness to the miles between Mel McDaniel's childhood in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, and this high-dollar hotel room in Florida.

He sips coffee bitter enough to strip paint, and after twenty years on the road he's still prone to grinning, just like he was when his biggest claim to fame in Music City was being, "that gas station jockey from Alaska who sings." He's sprawled in a chair, snakeskin boots propped on the double bed, trying to do three things at once. "Fantastic," he says, in between things two and three. "Just fantastic. Better than last time I saw you..."

Which is true enough, since the last time I saw Mel McDaniel he was still

by Michael Bane



CON PUTNAM



He doesn't usually get to spend too much time at home, but when he does, Mel likes to tinker with his 1963 Ford Galaxie and spend time with his wife Mary and daughter Danielle. His success, he says, is as much Mary's as it is his own.



working in a gas station. That was, of course, ten years ago—before “Baby’s Got Her Blue Jeans On,” before “God Made Love,” before “Louisiana Saturday Night,” even before Capitol Records gave him his first shot with “Have a Dream on Me.” It was back when Mel McDaniel was one of the thousands who trek to Music City from all over the country, guitar and songs in hand. As a matter of fact—and certainly fitting for country music—I first heard about Mel McDaniel in a bar, a sleazy bar, even.

“Listen,” Al Bianculli, ex-writer, heavyweight with Combine Music and full-time Nashville character, told me that evening ten years ago, “we got this guy who’s so good you won’t believe it. From Alaska! Works in a gas station! What’s left?”

I figured it was a good shot, because ‘Cooley joked about everything but music. He was, and is, one of the few people in Nashville who was both will-

ing and able to present an objective opinion about a new singer. Back in his offices at Combine, he played me a tape of McDaniel doing demos of songs penned by Combine writers. He sounded like Kenny Rogers without the pop—offbeat enough to stick with you long after the song ended. Out in the hallway, we bumped into Mel, who grinned and shrugged his shoulders. He’d love to hang around and talk, but he had to get to work.

Prodded by Combine’s founder, Bob Beckham, an executive from Capitol listened to those tapes and signed McDaniel up to do a single, “Have a Dream on Me.” In those “outlaw” days of the mid-1970’s, a good country song didn’t necessarily set the world on fire. Hell, it was a love song, and it didn’t even mention beer, Texas or Willie even once. Still, “Dream” did well enough to keep Mel McDaniel working, which was all he ever wanted.

Even sitting in the hotel room in Florida, he can’t resist tinkering with his songs, changing a line here, a word there. Making changes to “Roll Your Own,” the first song he wrote to be recorded—by Hoyt Axton. Life changes, he says, so the songs ought to change, too.

Like any good country singer’s life, Mel McDaniel’s is all about change. When he was fourteen, back in Oklahoma, he chanced to walk past a television set with Elvis on it. The more he watched, the more certain he was that that was what he wanted to do with his life. He worked out the chords for “Frankie and Johnny” on an old guitar, and pretty soon he was working high school dances. His career was off and running, except that real life intruded to put a stop to things.

“I was married at 19,” Mel McDaniel says. “My wife, Mary, was 17, and pretty soon we had a child on the way. All I could do was pump gas and hope for the best.”

Music stayed on the back burner through a procession of nickel and dime jobs until he found himself in Nashville. Then the bug came back full force, but Nashville wasn’t interested. A relative suggested a move, north, to Alaska, the last frontier. McDaniel was less than thrilled. Alaska was cold and about as far away from the heart of country music as you could get and still be on the same planet. Within two weeks, though, he’d landed a singing job at a club called King’s X, his first full-time music job.

Over the next two years Mel McDaniel honed his musical skills. “I used to try to sing like everyone else in the world—Merle Haggard, Kris Kristofferson, Glen Campbell, John Cash,” he says. “But after a while I realized, man, you need to do it your own way. You need to just sing it the way you want and see what happens. So that’s what I did. I couldn’t keep doing it like someone else forever—it was too hard.”

After two years in the Frozen North, he decided to give Nashville another try. Things didn’t move too fast until he heard about the job at Combine Music Publishing to cut demo tapes of their songs.

Even after the first few songs, Mel’s career didn’t exactly head for the stratosphere. “Thank god I was able to keep my head above water and keep making records,” Mel says. In 1981 he finally hit the Top Ten with “Louisiana Saturday Night,” a low-key, solid song that sounded just like what it was—country, without apologies.

At that point things began to pick up, culminating in his 1985 Number One hit, “Baby’s Got Her Blue Jeans On.” “That song’s made everything mean something,” he says. “A payoff, you know. It’s

as much my wife Mary's success as mine. We used to sit at the drive-in, and I'd sing "Love Me Tender." She saw that singing was what I wanted, and she was willing to stay with me."

When "Blue Jeans" hit, it was Mary, the woman he'd married when she was 17, and Mel's father who helped keep his head "real" amidst the excitement of big time success. "It's all so damn hard," he says. "As you learn, you grow, but that doesn't make it any easier." He's even found himself getting back to songwriting, a task he'd neglected while out on the road—"busting my hump" as he says, to "make a living."

While at Combine Mel worked with some of the top writers in the business. One of his collaborations with Dennis Linde, "Goodbye Marie," was a hit for Kenny Rogers and Bobby Goldsboro.

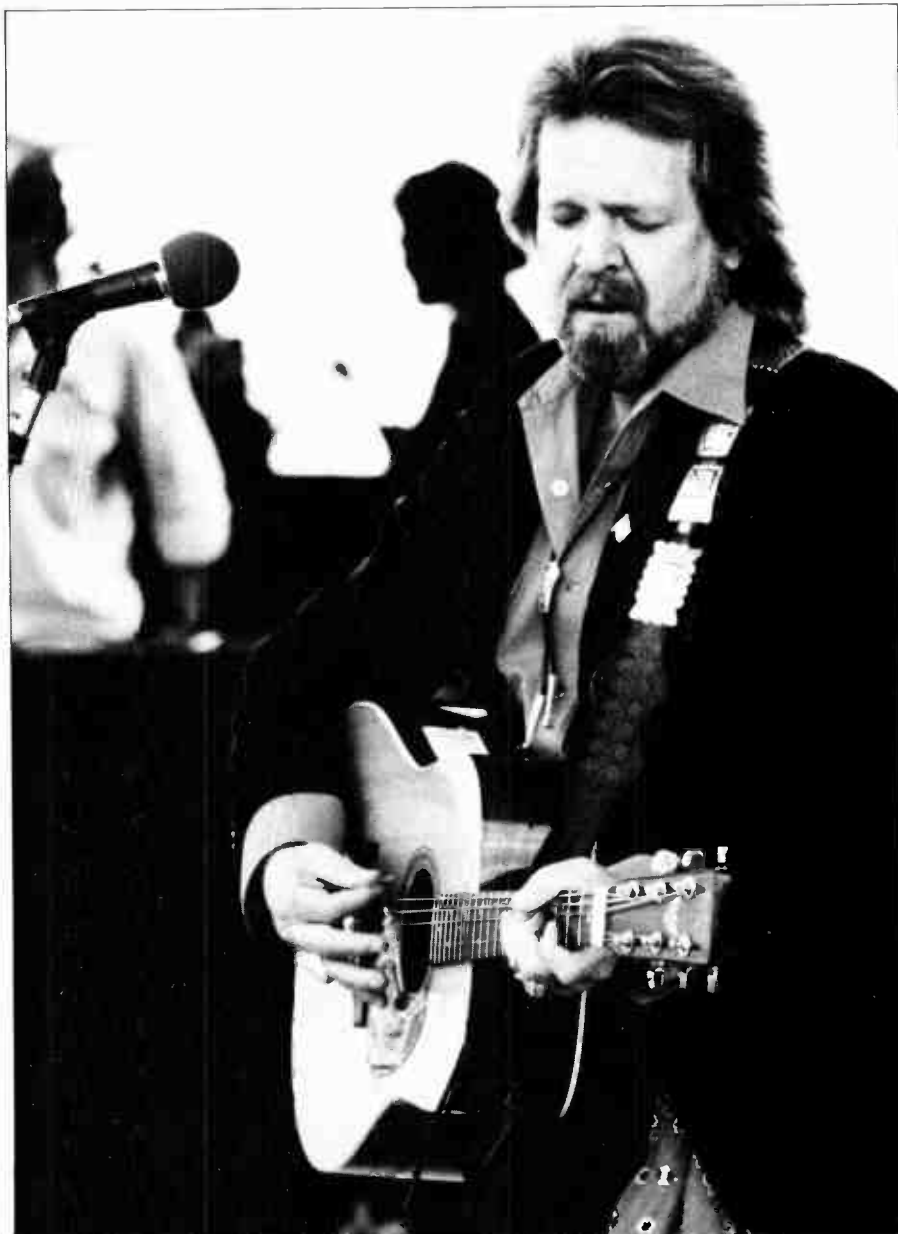
*"I couldn't keep doing
it like someone else
forever—it was
too hard."*

The recent death of his father, though, changed his attitude about collaborating, among other things. "One of the things he always told me was to get off my ass and do what I've got to do. So I said to hell with it and started writing by myself, without a co-writer. I never really considered myself a songwriter. I guess."

Working with producer Jerry Kennedy has been another bonus—"He told me things about the music business I've wanted to know for years"—and with a Number One hit under his belt, things come easier.

In addition to being a Number One hit, "Blue Jeans" has gone even farther—Mel was nominated for the 1985 Grammy for Best Country Vocal Solo Performance—Male for the song and "Blue Jeans" itself was nominated for Best Country Song. And what certainly has to be one of the high points of his career as a songwriter, Mel's "Grandest Lady of Them All" was the grand finale song on the Opry's nationally televised 60th Anniversary Special, featuring many of the biggest names in country music singing the words he wrote so long ago. To add to that, Mel himself was inducted as the 62nd member of the Opry recently.

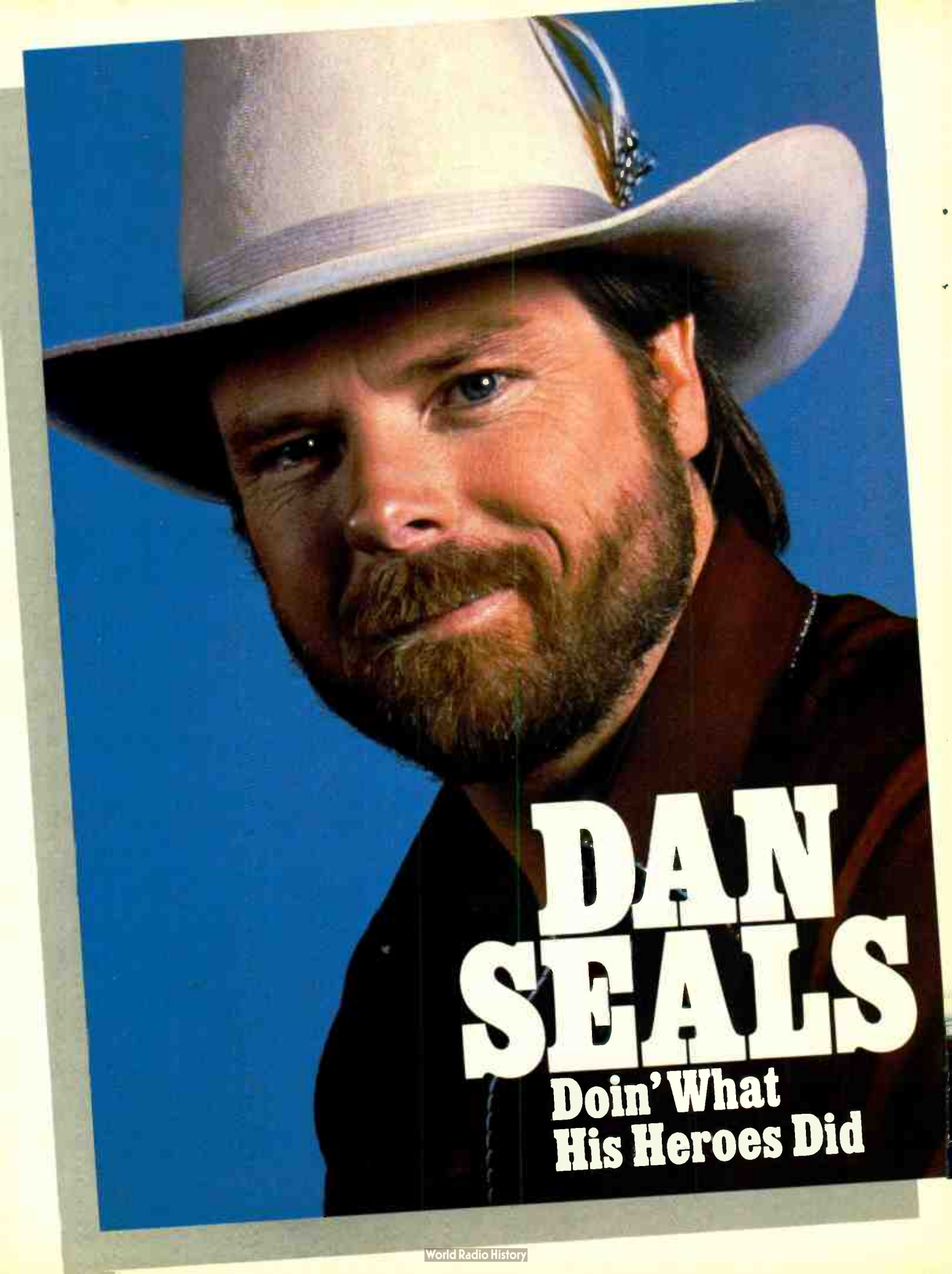
And all in all, if you're grinning in the hard times, it's really easy to grin when the good times start rolling. Just ask ol' Mel. ■



Songwriting and performing his own songs gives Mel great satisfaction.



WSM's Charlie Douglas and Hoyt Axton, the first artist to cut one of Mel's songs, share a visit and a few laughs.



DAN SEALS

**Doin' What
His Heroes Did**

Could it be?

A former pop singer now country to the core? Dan Seals may have lost his way in the 1970's recording pop singles, but now he's right on track singing country to a new-found audience.

by Patrick Carr

We are in the WSM radio studio from which the legendary Charlie Douglas broadcasts his syndicated country show. Lynn Schultz, a veteran Capitol/EMI Records Artists & Repertoire executive renowned for his almost unprofessional enthusiasm for music, is here; so is Paul Lovelace, a sly and humorous seen-it-all promotion man also affiliated with the Capitol/EMI organization; and so is Charlie Douglas himself, the original cigarettes-and-coffee consumer whose voice has been a key ingredient of the national midnight country airwaves since the bright young stars of the day sported names like Robbins and Arnold and Jones.

Charlie, of course, is here every night, working his routine in this plush and modern state-of-the-art studio while a shifting parade of tourists gazes on through windows fronting into the lobby of the Opryland Hotel, and Lynn and Paul aren't exactly strangers to the premises, either; being Nashville-based record company executives with a lot of artists to shepherd and product to push, they drop in on Charlie on a pretty regular basis. There is, therefore, an easy familiarity in the conversation during Charlie's off-the-air moments, and also something else: an air of security, even of permanence.

Which is only natural, for in a very real sense these men *are* secure. Record companies and radio stations and recording studios and booking agencies and record pressing plants and distributors and magazines rise and fall just like the fortunes of the writers and singers who make the music which supports such organizations, but no matter who or what in the business is hot, people like Charlie and Lynn and Paul are always in there working, making a living, at their chosen trade. The reason isn't hard to figure; when it comes right down to it, they are the only people who really know how to run the music business machine. And unless they are foolish enough to disgrace themselves in some truly spectacular fashion, that makes them the only fixed, finite, irre-

placeable resource of the whole game.

So yes, tonight the affair has the tone of pleasant, easy business-as-usual among old hands; it's a night like many others past and future. Its only truly distinguishing characteristic is the identity of the artist (who is also the product) at hand.

Tonight that happens to be Dan Seals, a fellow approaching his early middle age who falls into the "new artist (with potential)" category; while his name may not be at the tip of every country fan's tongue, he has scored a couple of significant hits ("God Must Be a Cowboy" and, with Marie Osmond, "Meet Me in Montana") and is watching his current song, "Bop," ascend the country charts faster than any other tune in recent history. In other words, this particular "new artist," one among many, is hot.

That alone might explain the fact that Dan seems to be part of the club in this late-night radio studio, not just the transient task at hand, but I think not. He joins in with the vets' easy shop talk—great old country hits of the Fifties, the sad latterday career of Hank Snow, the deceptive economics of band buses—with suprising knowledgeability and a keen understanding of the nuances of the subjects, the kind of familiarity you don't expect from today's typical "new country artist"; often, those folks' appreciation of the heritage they're buying into extends about as far as a passing familiarity with Ricky Skaggs' latest up-from-the-archives hit or, in rare cases, the early work of historic country acts like the Eagles and Olivia Newton-John. Not so with Dan Seals. *He* has heard of Don Gibson. He can even sing you the man's songs. That makes him special; it may be why the vets seem to really care for him, and care about him.

He looks different, too, not exactly the "visual" (that is, skinny, trendy, countrified-New-Wave-sexy) type I've been reading about lately in my record company press releases. A big, creased-up, rough-cut bearded fellow, Dan looks more like the kind of character you'd expect to chew bacey, cuss only moder-

ately and *never* in front of the ladies, and know how to fix a sump pump. Tonight he is "dressed up"; he's wearing a red-on-beige Western suit which looks like an outfit some forgotten farmer, ignoring the protests of his wiser better half, might have bought on Broadway during a starry-eyed once-in-a-lifetime trip to Nashville around 1949.

Obviously, something unusual is going on here.

Listening to Dan Seals' music before I met the man, I did not receive any strong impressions of anything very unusual, or anything particularly country. "God Must Be a Cowboy" was a sweet, good-hearted song, but arriving as it did in the exhausted aftermath of the late 1970's manic cowboy-and-cowboyism sales campaign, it hit my tune-out button kinda sharply. "Meet Me in Montana" was nice, too, but Marie Osmond doesn't impress me as an alternative to Loretta Lynn, and as a longing-for-you-away-from-all-this-soul-destroying-city-stuff duet number, it didn't stack up nearly as well as Shelly West's and David Frizzell's "You're the Reason God Made Oklahoma."

Then there was "Bop," which is a (very tight, danceable, pleasant) generic rock-rhythm song with a 1950's theme, and the *Won't Be Blue Anymore* album from which it was taken. Mostly, that album *sounds* like Soft Rock, or Easy - Listening - Folk - Pop - Country - Contemporary, or Sensitive Semi-Urban Adult White Soul, or just about anything not too hard, not too soft, not too surprising, and *definitely* not too genuinely Merle Haggard/George Strait/Reba McEntire-type country. Basically, Dan Seals' music sounds like a whole lot of other contemporary ballads which get called "country" simply because they're marketed to a country audience.

Dan's record company biography revealed some facts behind these impressions. Dan Seals was in fact "England Dan" of England Dan and John Ford Coley, a 1970's duo who hit with "I'd Really Love to See You Tonight" and became a part of the big-time rock scene, touring in the company of acts like Three Dog Night, Chicago, and Elton John. On the other hand, he was *not* the Seals of Seals and Crofts, another big-time 70's soft-rock act; that was Jimmy Seals, his big brother, who was also the one who named him "England Dan." But all this stuff, the biography told me, was behind him now; he had found his true calling, his real home, in Country Music...

It was at this point that I smelled the rat in the hype tank. Frankly, I've met a few too many burned-out International

Pop Stars just dying to tell me about how their new career playing country music to crowds one-tenth the size of their former (now uninterested) pop audiences constitutes the realization of an ambition which has been burning secretly in their heart of hearts for the duration of their whole misguided professional lives. Hell, they never *really* wanted all that fanatic looned-out pop-rock adulation, all that excitement, all those drugs, all those girls, all that *money!* It was—well, it was just plain *unnatural!* But now they can atone. God put them on earth to drag around the state fair circuit in a beat-up sleeper bus, singing about sweet stuff—sunsets and simplicity and sincerity and suchlike—to *real* people like all you wonderful country-loyal ticket-buying readers out there! Usually it was a beautiful moment when they realized this fact, and now they're just purely humbly thankful that it dawned on them before it was too late. That is, before the sheriff came around to repossess the Porsches and confiscate the cocaine stash.

With this background, the Dan Seals case did not look promising, especially since his much-stressed commitment to country did not involve any particular alteration in his music; England Dan and John Ford Coley were a middle-of-the-road ballad act with a country-folk twist, and so is Dan Seals. The difference is in the “image” and the marketing.

I approached the case, therefore, with caution, alert for snow jobbery and wool-pulling, fearing one of those “sincere” encounters of the coldly calculated kind—and then I met the homey character in the out-of-date cowboy suit, the one who knows his Don Gibson songs. That was a relief, but it was also a mystery. What was really going on here? Where and who *was* this man?

The “where,” it turns out, is as homey as the suit. Dan is out there on the road most of the time, playing any place that'll have him: small civic auditoriums, high schools and colleges, hotel ballrooms, dance joints, honky tonks, and out-and-out dives. He and his band travel in a 15-seat Dodge van because at their level of finance, the purchase and maintenance of even a second-hand tour bus would ruin them.

The original “where” is also pretty hard core: Iran, Texas, a one-store oilfield town named after the son and daughter (Ira and Ann) of the man who built it. For a while, Iran had the deepest oil well in the world, its only claim to fame then or now. Dan grew up outside town in a pre-fab Army barracks hut his father, a transplant from Tennessee, rented from the oil company for whom

he and everyone else in town worked. The oil business has moved on from Iran now, but Dan's mother and father still live there; a few years back they bought the Army hut from the oil company for \$10, added shingles, and settled in for the long haul.

You would expect Dan's childhood to have been touched by country music, pretty much the only entertainment available in small-town Texas in those years, but in fact it was a whole lot more than touched. His father, like all the

*“It moved people.
That's all I really
want to do, you
know; being able to
do it fulfills me.”*

Tennessee Seals before him, was an accomplished semi-professional musician—he was good enough to work in local pick-up bands behind the biggest country stars of the day—and Dan followed in his footsteps; by the age of four he was playing stand-up bass (actually, stand-on-a-stool-bass) in the family band, travelling to such stellar events as the Big D Jamboree in Dallas, and generally picking up a first-class hands-on musical education, hard-core country division. Ernest Tubb and Hank Thompson and Bob Wills were the everyday attractions locally. “They weren't legends,” Dan remembers. “It was more like, ‘Oh, hell, that's just Bob Wills. Him and Ernest live down the road here an' play all the time!’” The Grand Ole Opry was the big time. Among other attractions, the Opry brought Hank Williams to Dan's attention, and Hank became his number one hero, the person he really wanted to be when he grew up. It is significant that he retained that allegiance; he loved Marty Robbins and Johnny Cash and the Everly Brothers when they came along, but Elvis didn't inspire him unusually: “He was all right, but that was stretchin' it a little for us.”

For a musician coming of age and seeking employment in the middle-late 1950's, however, a love of fiddles and the old high lonesome was not the stuff of which meal tickets could be made. Dan's early career, therefore, was spent playing saxophone at the VFW hall and the Lions' Club in a Top 40 band: everything, over the years, from “Johnny B. Goode”

to “I Want to Hold Your Hand” to the revolution-rock of the Jefferson Airplane and the funk-psychedelic journeys of Jimi Hendrix. At that point, Dan says, “it got so damned awful I just couldn't stand it. It wasn't my cup of tea. I had friends who had black lights and lived under parachutes and smoked dope and all that, but somehow it just didn't fit with my lifestyle. So John and I started writing simple country-folk songs, and finally we got a deal with A&M Records in early 1970.”

John was John Edward Coley, a high school buddy and Top-40 band colleague, and together these two ventured forth as England Dan and John Ford Coley to open shows for whoever would have them for “about six *lean* years” until “I'd Really Love to See You Tonight,” hitting as mainstream rock tastes softened to incorporate artists like Elton John and Cat Stevens, changed their status radically. They hired a Los Angeles rock and roll band to back them up, and went for “a *real* quick ride” on that high-octane pop machine for three or four years.

“We never really fit in,” says Dan. “I don't think *Rolling Stone* ever wrote a word about us, for instance, and we never really made it in the large cities. I mean, our lifestyle didn't meld with a lot of people's image of us; like, when we opened our mouths onstage, they realized we weren't from England real quick. In fact, as big as we were, we never headlined in New York City. We just weren't hip enough. Our accents, our dress, our manner, our lifestyles, everything was too hick, too country.

“We realized that, so we consciously went out into the outlying areas, places like Idaho and Montana, playing state fairs and all. There, we were just Texas boys playin'; they didn't think of us as rock and roll. We built our crowd out there.”

Which wasn't a bad state of affairs, after all. As Dan points out, “We built somethin' out there that a lot of people weren't aware of—except the fans who bought the records. We were spared *People Magazine* and all that stuff.”

Eventually, after Dan and John Ford Coley had been together fifteen years, John felt the need to express himself in a harder rock and roll direction than either Dan or the act's record company was willing to travel. The act split up, and that left Dan with the task of making another two albums to fulfill contractual obligations. He made the albums; they went nowhere.

“Out of that I realized two things,” says Dan. “One, that I didn't like what I was doing, trying to keep on by myself to fulfill some marketable idea, and two, that I *loved* the country songs and the simple acoustic songs I'd written with

Rafe Van Hoy and Dave Loggins for the albums. So I decided to just put all my country things together. I collected 'em all up and showed one song, 'Everybody's Dream Girl,' to Lynn Schultz at Capitol. He shelved it for a few weeks, but then he called me and said, 'You know, I think that song's a hit. Let's make a deal.' And that's where it started."

Another place it started was at the bottom. Following the breakup of England Dan and John Ford Coley, Dan made the not-unusual discovery that the act had been involved in all manner of business deals of which he was not aware, and that as he puts it, "we were totally devoid of sustenance on this planet."

In a way, that made the decision to commit to an entirely new marketplace, in which he was almost totally unknown under his own name, easier than it might have been. "I'd already been thinking of just doing straight country music for the rest of my life—you know, just 'Screw it! That's what I want to do!'—but when everything was ruined, bankrupt, over with, I realized that I didn't have anything to lose. There was absolutely nothing stopping me from doing exactly what I wanted to do."

Therefore he took himself out to the little clubs and motel lounges, making money the hard way. Then he hit with "God Must Be a Cowboy," and "people started taking us seriously. Then it started feeling real good. There was a challenge to it, but it felt like all my pieces were finally comin' together. All those people I'd always looked up to—Hank and Marty Robbins and everybody—I was doin' what they did!"

Dan says all this, as he says everything, with such a lack of calculation that there is no doubt whatsoever as to his honesty. If this man is putting us on, the Pope is Italian and Hank Williams is fronting a heavy-metal band on Long Island.

Out at Morningstar Studio in Hendersonville, the same bare-bones little studio where Dan made most of his records with John Ford Coley, he and I have been reflecting on the ironies of the "what-the-hell-do-you-call-it?" game—all those questions about this image versus that image, this sound versus that sound, which can and do make country music professionals a lot crazier than they need to be—and really, it has led us nowhere. People seem to like the different kinds of songs Dan sings, and that's nice. It puts food on the table and tape on the recording machines, it keeps the IRS from the door, it settles the nerves.

Dan, now dressed in baggy overalls and happily responding to the title



"Meet Me In Montana," with Marie Osmond helped take Dan's music up the country charts.

"Farmer Dan," is explicit on that last point. "Three years ago, just about this time of the year—just about this *day*, in fact—we were sittin' here in this room, and we didn't have money for a damn hamburger," he says. "I was sleepin' under this piano here. We were hiding from people, we were so broke. And then Lynn Schultz called, and there was some hope."

We talk about Lynn and his colleagues for a while, about how they really seem interested and excited by the music and how encouraging (and unusual) that is. Then we talk about the big-time video Dan has just shot in Los Angeles—his first—and how that may really help clear up the pesky business of who this Dan Seals fella really is (Seals of Seals and Crofts? Some folk-rock Brit? Danny of Danny and Marie?). Finally we start talking about the songs.

Dan likes "Bop" and he liked "Meet

Me in Montana," but the hit which gave him the most satisfaction was "God Must Be a Cowboy." Dan and his people had a hard time figuring out whether they should release such an odd song as a single, but they did, and it hit the Top Ten. To Dan, that meant everything. People responded to the song, he thinks, because "it had a freshness, even an *innocence*, and it moved people. That's all I really want to do, you know; being able to do it fulfills me."

He really means it. He really wants to go out there and bring a little light into people's lives, sing stuff that'll spread some compassion around the place.

Dan's a good man. I feel like sticking around in this little studio, not moving on to other assignments out there in Music City. It's cold and dark outside the studio, warm and dark inside. It feels friendly and honest, earnest and innocent and true in the heart. ■

Record Reviews

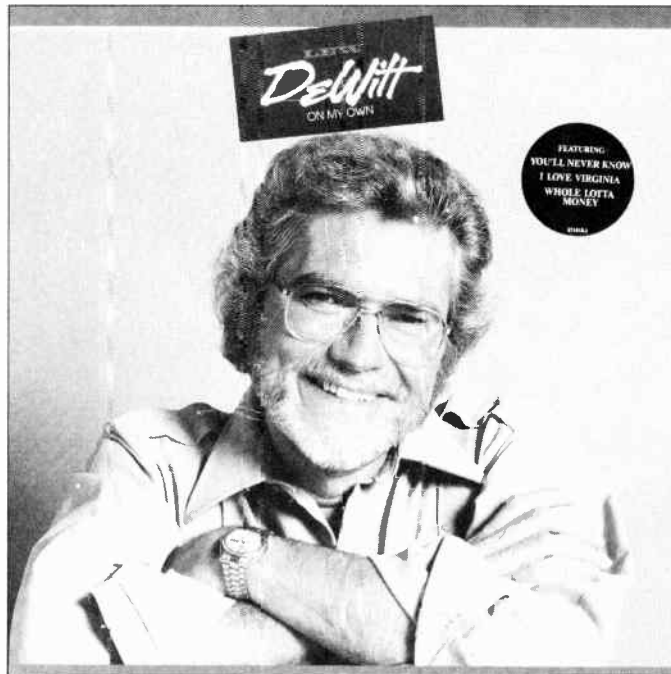
Lew DeWitt
On My Own
Compeat 67101R-1

Back in 1981 when tenor Lew DeWitt was forced into involuntary retirement from The Statler Brothers by a debilitating case of Crohn's disease (see story in May/June 1985 issue of *Country Music*), many people—including DeWitt himself—assumed his singing days were over for good.

Happily for everyone, however, DeWitt, now 47, has survived with that robust tenor voice of his intact. It seems, in fact, that he's made a remarkable recovery. The extent of his recuperation is most obvious on *On My Own*, his newly-released solo album, which follows *Here to Stay*, a spirited cassette of country, rock and gospel oldies that he released through limited distribution last year.

On My Own sparkles with a rare blend of contemporary vitality and nostalgia-tinged charm. The unique blend of poignancy and insight that DeWitt, as tenor singer and songwriter, brought to The Statlers during his 22 years with the group is in evidence throughout.

Almost as if he were offering us a symbolic point of reference in his hard-fought transition from sidelined ex-Statler to promising new solo artist, DeWitt, who, along with Chip Young, also co-produced *On My Own*, gives us an updated version of "Flowers on the Wall" on side one—the classic song he wrote for The Statlers some two decades ago. He brings to the song a buoyant new ar-



rangement and a slightly more comically anguished vocal interpretation than heard on the original Statlers version. In the process, he practically makes a new song out of this well-worn piece of musical history.

I feel certain it's no accident that the album's opening song is "You'll Never Know," an almost gushingly romantic piece of pop nostalgia from the early 1940's. This song won an Academy Award in 1943 as part of the movie soundtrack to *Hello, San Francisco*, *Hello*. DeWitt has revived it with a mannered and delightfully antiquated vocal reading that is reminiscent of the great pop crooners of the 1940's. The song sets the tone for the entire album, and Lew would be perfectly at home singing it on *A Prairie Home Companion*.

DeWitt wrote or co-wrote half the songs on *On My Own*,

including "So This Is Love," another romantic number, co-written by Statler Don Reid. One particular standout in the DeWitt catalogue of originals is "I Love Virginia," a lighthearted and affectionate tribute to his home state, which is said to be getting ample airplay in the mid-Atlantic region. Another is "I Read Your Letter," which, perhaps more than any other song on the album, brings to mind the introspective despair and small-town pathos that earmarked so many great Statler classics.

"Welcome To the Holiday Inn" and "Wanda Glenn," though not written by DeWitt, are two more selections that echo with the familiar images of everyday Americana and life in the shadow of the rural interstate stop.

Having written this, I find that my backward-looking comparisons to the Statlers

are more excessive than I intended them to be. What DeWitt has done here, to his credit, is successfully bring his unique musical shadings and peculiar philosophical perspectives as a singer and writer, which were so essential to the soul of the Statlers, to the forefront. With *On My Own*, he's done a masterful job of reemphasizing, amplifying and incorporating these unique talents of his into a warm and ingratiating solo style.

Without the other brothers Statler singing or even listening over his shoulder, DeWitt has proven that you simply can't keep a good man down.

—BOB ALLEN

Emmylou Harris
Thirteen

Warner Bros. WB1-25352

Thirteen (which I am assuming is her thirteenth album for her longtime label, Warner Brothers; since, if there are other references to this ominous number herein, they have escaped me) is just the kind of impeccably tasteful and emotionally on-target effort on which Emmylou Harris has built her long-standing and overriding reputation for musical integrity.

Produced by Harris and her husband and all-round musical partner, Paul Kennerley, *Thirteen* comes on the heels of *The Ballad of Sally Rose*, her noteworthy concept album of last year. It is not quite as ambitious an album as the latter, but it is certainly every bit as intelligent and fully-realized a project.

Thirteen is not a groundbreaking roots-oriented

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To celebrate the 100th birthday of our most famous lady, the giant New York publicity firm of The Direct Connection will distribute a limited edition of the famous Statue of Liberty Commemorative Knife for the astonishing "celebration price" of only \$5 each only to those who write to the company address (below) before Midnight, May 31, 1986.

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order quickly. First come, first served. There is a limit of two (2) knives per address at this price, but requests which are mailed early enough (before May 17) may request up to five.

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Resale Value Guaranteed!

The resale value of this commemorative knife is guaranteed to increase before the end of this Statue of Liberty Centennial year. If for any reason you feel that this knife is not worth more than the price you paid, we will buy it back from you for the full price before the end of this celebration year!

To obtain your Statue of Liberty Commemorative Knife, mail this original Publicity Ad together with your name and address and \$5 for each Knife. Add only \$2 shipping and handling no matter how many Knives you are requesting. Allow up to 60 days for shipment. Mail to: The Direct Connection, Dept. 5731, 37 West 26 Street, New York, NY 10010.





LYNN ANDERSON

CHARLIE RICH

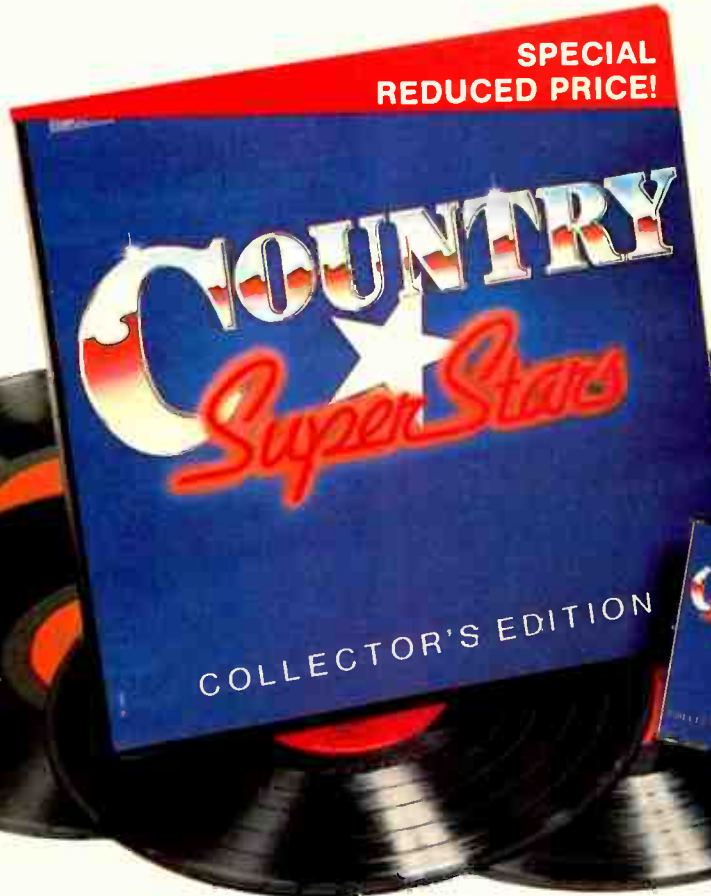
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CHARLIE RICH: The Most Beautiful Girl/My Elusive Dreams/I Do My Swinging At Home/Will The Circle Be Unbroken/July 12, 1939/Set Me Free/Every Time You Touch Me (I Get High)/I Love My Friend/A Very Special Love Song/Since I Fell For You.

LYNN ANDERSON: Cry/If All I Have To Do Is Just Love You/Stay There, Till I Get There/He Turns It Into Love Again/What A Man My Man Is/All The King's Horses/Don't Say Things You Don't Mean/Wrap Your Love All Around Your Man/Keep Me In Mind/You're My Man.

MARTY ROBBINS: Streets Of Laredo/Are You Sincere?/ Laura (What's He Got That I Ain't Got)/The Girl With Gardenias In Her Hair/Ribbon Of Darkness/The Great Speckled Bird/Tonight Carmen/Among My Souvenirs/El Paso/Padre.

TAMMY WYNETTE: Stand By Your Man/Till I Can Make It On My Own/Bedtime Story/Take Me To Your World/

Honey (I Miss You)/D-I-V-O-R-C-E/Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad/Good Lovin' (Makes It Right)/I Don't Wanna Play House/Don't Touch Me.

RAY PRICE: Heartaches By The Number/Danny Boy/ Burning Memories/Welcome To My World/I Won't Mention It Again/I'd Rather Be Sorry/She's Got To Be A Saint/ Make The World Go Away/Help Me/For The Good Times.

JOHNNY CASH: The Sons Of Katie Elder/Look At Them Bears/Don't Take Your Guns To Town/Folsom Prison Blues/Ring Of Fire/One Piece At A Time/Daddy Sang Bass/Five Feet High And Rising/I Walk The Line/Orange Blossom Special.

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Special Lottery Disclosure Report Astounds Experts

New York Man Uses Lottery Report To Hit \$13.7 Million Jackpot

His name: Manuel Garcete.

His address: Sunnyside, Queens, New York.

His age: 44

His family: Married to Marta with a daughter, Natasha, age 4.

The facts:

Manuel Garcete's luck changed forever overnight. When he went to bed the evening of August 21, 1985, he was just another factory employee working an assembly line. Struggling to make enough money to support his growing family. Wondering if they'd ever be able to escape a tiny cramped city apartment.

When he woke up the next morning, August 22, he learned his money problems were over. He had hit the New York State Lottery Jackpot. His number won and paid \$13.7 million.

What did a recent immigrant from South America know about playing and winning American lotteries?

Not a whole lot... until he made a discovery. It happened back in August. He'd grown tired of playing the lottery and never winning a dime. He finally gave up. Manuel Garcete would have to struggle for the rest of his life...

Then someone handed him a special Lottery Disclosure Report. Written by the most famous lottery expert in America, Gail Howard.

Wasn't the lottery all luck? Frankly, he was skeptical. How could anyone actually "make" you lucky? But he had nothing to lose. He was already a loser! So he read the Report. Then he secretly picked a number as directed. Within hours of the deadline, he entered the New York State Lottery...

And he came away "Grand Prize Winner". His number worth an absolute fortune. Manuel Garcete told co-workers and members of the press that his winning six-digit combination, 14-17-22-23-30-47, was picked "out of thin air." Why take chances... He didn't want any problem collecting prize money from the State Lottery Commission because he had help in winning from Gail Howard and her "hot" Report.

Anyone reading this notice must realize something. Gail Howard was and is a controversial figure in every State Lottery office in the country. A consistent winner herself—with a reputation for helping people beat the government lottery system. One State Lottery Director, appearing with her on national radio, said outright that her Reports were bad for State Lotteries... because they helped create too many winners.

Gail Howard: Solving the Riddle of the State Lottery.



State Lottery Commissions have taken notice of Gail Howard. A consistent lottery winner herself... hitting the right combinations again and again... she's Lottery Editor of *Gambling Times* magazine and author of New York State's lottery handicapping guide, *Gail Howard's Lottery Advantage*. As a lottery winning expert, she has appeared on "Good Morning America" and other TV shows and written articles in national magazines like *Family Circle*. With this Special Lottery Disclosure Report here is your chance to win at the lottery.



NOTE: You can play any state lottery no matter where you live. This report explains how to win in any and every state lottery.

Here's what happened when recent Lottery Disclosure information was circulated among lottery players: Dr. J. R. T. of Hanover, Michigan, used the information and won \$2,609.00; R. C. of Chicago, Illinois, won \$3,247.00; Michael J. Merscher won \$2,662.00; Gene Lake, \$2,378.00; Greg Carson, \$2,459.00; C. K., Canada, \$4,550.00; E. R. Pawlowski, \$1,900.00; M. E. Ellis, \$1,128.00; Ronald Mueller, \$1,300.00. These are just the few lottery winners admitting Gail Howard's help.

How much money will YOU make?

If all these people win lottery money, so can you, if you get a copy of this special report.

Do you know that *The N.Y. Times*, *Newsweek* and other publications agree Gail Howard is a true lottery winning expert? **Special information from Gail Howard can increase your chances of winning any State Lottery by five hundred percent.**

Gail Howard has been besieged with interview requests from TV, radio and newspaper reporters. All hoping to get her to reveal everything. To "go public" with her special information on beating the government lottery system.

She's said NO—because that would spoil the lottery for everyone.

However, to help all the serious lottery players she can, Gail Howard has authorized release of the special Lottery Disclosure Report that **DOES REVEAL EVERYTHING, ONCE AND FOR ALL.**

If you are an adult preparing to enter your State Lottery, you may send for a copy of this Report. But you're urged to waste no time about it.

Will Government Officials ban this Report?

As of the date of this notice, State Lottery Officials have not banned circulation of this or any Lottery Disclosure Report. (And it is legal for you to obtain a copy.) Yet all those preparing to play the lottery should be aware of this: concern that Gail Howard's lottery-winning information could hurt lottery games has reached highest State Lottery levels!

For a copy of this Report send in the coupon at once. (Copies of the Report are only available through this Notice.)

Late Bulletin! Georgia Man Uses Report—Wins \$310,500.00!

After three years of playing the lottery K. W. Mathis of Georgia, an accounting expert, obtains Gail Howard's information...uses this information...and wins \$310,500.00. Claims that without this information, he would have been a "lottery-loser" all his life!

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If you want to play your official State Lottery—or any State Lottery you like (IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU LIVE—THIS REPORT EXPLAINS HOW TO PLAY AND WIN IN STATE LOTTERIES AROUND THE U.S.) you can come away with a lottery prize of up to thousands or more! This statement is guaranteed. If you are not satisfied with your winnings, simply return your copy of the Report and the entire purchase price will be refunded. There is no way you can lose by this offer. (You know how much you can win. Look at Manuel Garcete.)

Special Report Office
Suite 1003, 505 Fifth Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10017

LB-CMU-1

Yes, I'm preparing to play my official State Lottery—and maybe other State Lotteries too. Please rush me the special Lottery Disclosure Report for which I enclose \$10.00 plus \$2.00 FIRST CLASS postage & handling. (This is the same special Report that enabled Manuel Garcete to pick the \$13.7 million number.) Please send me:

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Attention...Canadians: This Lottery Disclosure Report is applicable for the Canadian lottery. Please remit \$20 for FIRST CLASS delivery to Canada.

N.Y. & N.J. residents please include appropriate sales tax.

Record Reviews

album like earlier Harris efforts—*Roses in the Snow* and *Evangeline* (two of the best of her career). It does, however, lean heavily back in that direction. The material included on *Thirteen* is slanted heavily toward earlier decades; and the arrangements are refreshingly sparse—lots of acoustic guitars, peppered here and there with occasional dobros, banjos, mandolins and fiddles.

Some years back, as an outsider to Music City (Emmylou broke into the business by way of Washington, D.C.'s thriving country/bluegrass scene and, until just a few years ago, recorded and kept her home on the West Coast), Harris noted how ironic it was that there were all these Nashville-based women country singers who were trying desperately to become pop stars (Dolly Parton, Barbara Mandrell and others). But here she was, as an outsider, with no ambitions other than to cross over *into* country. Everything about *Thirteen* seems to reaffirm these sentiments.

To begin with, Harris and Kennerley have co-written a couple of songs here, "Sweetheart of the Pines" and "When I Was Yours," that are nearly as old-timey-sounding in their style and content as the classic Carter Family ballads. Harris also includes versions of familiar classics like Jack Clement's "Just Someone I Used to Know" (a fine duet outing with Warner Brothers labelmate John Anderson), Don Robertson's "You're Free to Go," and Haggard's "Today I Started Loving You Again". I can think of only a few other singers who can be depended on to reawaken and revivify the intrinsic, timeless beauty of these songs as movingly as Harris does here.

There are other gems on *Thirteen*, as well. There's a hard-riding, echoey, slap-back-happy version of Sam Phillips' and Herman Parker's rockabilly classic, "Mystery Train." There's a rollicking



Cajun accordian/fiddle tune, Iry LeJeune's "Lacassine Special." And there's a riff-heavy Kennerley/Rodney Crowell composition called "I Had My Heart Set on You."

One of the most breathtaking songs of all, though, is Harris' faithful interpretation of "My Father's House," an obscure, countryish-sounding Bruce Springsteen ballad about the loss of childhood and the lost child in us all, which is off Springsteen's relatively obscure all-acoustic 1981 *Nebraska* album. Her hushed, but intense vocal reading, accompanied only by an acoustic guitar, a softly droning synthesizer and a few well-placed percussive flourishes, brings out the song's overwhelming sadness and spirituality.

While *Thirteen* may not be Emmylou Harris' all-time best album (it would be hard to ever top *Roses in the Snow*, or even *The Ballad of Sally Rose*), it is surely one of them. Somehow, I just wish that the Nashville plastic manufacturers would take the time and sit down to listen to *Thirteen*. They need to be reminded what good music is all about.

—BOB ALLEN

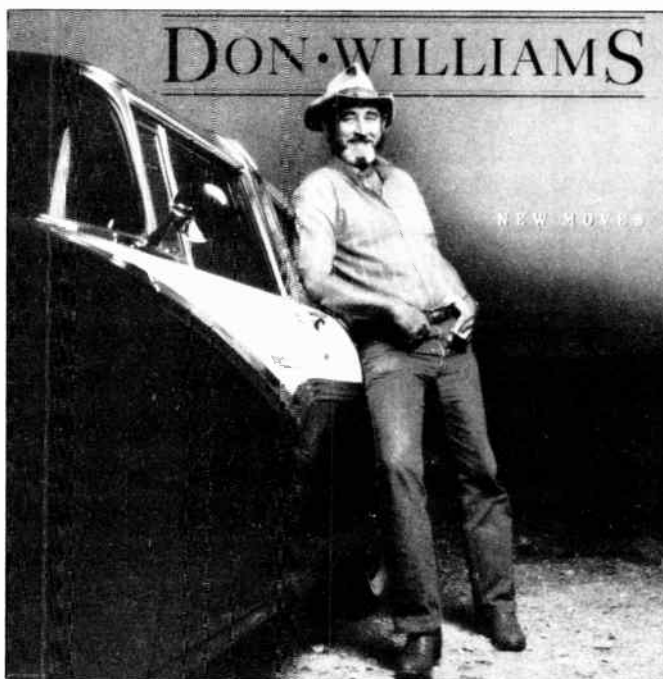
converted to Ramboism or contracted Boogie Fever or embraced the Church of the Grand High Tech, he hasn't given up blue denim or traded in his Mr. Friendly hat, he hasn't gone pop (or crack or fizzle); he's still just moving smoothly forward, tracking along that calm soft groove of his like a musical Mountie working long-term surveillance on The Mellow Bunch.

Which of course is perfectly right and proper. The Mellows need watching out there in these turbulent times, so somebody—preferably just one capable man, a strong silent fellow you can trust to keep on keeping on through the cold and lonely wilderness—should be staying on their trail, making sure they don't start acting frisky. And yes, Don is doing one hell of a job. Back here in the hectic warmth of radioland, I keep an ear out for him, and I really appreciate his periodic reports; it's nice to calm down, listen to those even tones delivering the latest tranquil message, drift for a few soft minutes on the steady wind blowing in from his quiet, cool field station.

Right now, however, I have

Don Williams *New Moves* EMI ST 12440

Fear not. The title of the Gentle Giant's latest album is *New Moves*, but it's okay, don't take that literally, nothing's changed. Don hasn't



Record Reviews

a problem. I just listened to all ten tracks of *New Moves* without a pause, and I'm losing it. Eyelids drooping, alpha waves taking over, I'm having difficulty typing, beginning to recognize a desperate biochemical craving for intravenous Gary Stewart, Bob Wills, ZZ Top, Jimi Hendrix, polka music—*anything* that moves, changes, has tension or excitement in it. I can really appreciate the sheer craftsmanship of *New Moves*—it's lovely, in fact, real smooth and clean and perfectly balanced, arranged and played with top-shelf tuneful taste every bit of the way—but metabolically, I just can't handle it.

It's a question of tolerance, I guess. Some people are set up to thrive on sustained exposure to Don's kind of pace—they come alive under his spell—but I'm just not one of them. Brief communiqués are fine, but not these long reports.

In fact, they even irritate me a little before they close me down: I begin to have unkind thoughts about a man who can take a dramatic song like Bob McDill's "Shot Full of Love"—previously done to a T by Juice Newton—and make it sound like the Official Lullaby of Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, a man who can sing about *anything*—new love, old love, love grown cold, even spurned and violated and exploded love—with the same mild and easy detachment, the same steady commitment to the slow-lolloping "sensitivity" of The Don Williams Sound. *He's not a human being! I'm snarling. He's furniture! Good stout wood, nicely turned and smoothly finished, not a rough edge anywhere! Impervious to lust, anger, adrenalin, electric current, grizzly bears!*

Fortunately the coma arrives quickly, and then balance returns. Don has created and built a unique and pleasant attraction in the world of country music (Quiet Craftsmanship Corners? Ter-

rific Taste in Tunes Town), and he runs it perfectly, with great consistency and attention to detail. *New Moves* is an exquisite example of his work; it's the sleeper album of the season.

—PATRICK CARR

Dwight Yoakam *Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc. Etc.* Warner/Reprise 1-25372

Dwight Yoakam's debut album has Attitude, the way Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers had Attitude in the 1920's when they taunted revenooers in "A Corn Likker Still in Georgia," the way Jerry Lee Lewis has Attitude when he plays piano with the heel of his boot, the way Stonewall Jackson had Attitude when he parked his truck in front of the Opry and marched inside demanding to be heard even though he had no records out. Yoakam's music, which weaves the bluegrass of his native Kentucky and southern Ohio into a fierce, bottom-heavy variation on Buck Owens' classic California honky tonk sound, is full of raw energy and jangly nerve endings. There is nothing polite about it, and you won't hear anything like it in what passes for country music these days even if you flip the dials of your radio all week.

Still, consider this scenario. A double-stop fiddle kicks off the ballad and a voice that breaks all over the room declares, with double-edged fervor, "It won't hurt when I fall down from this barstool/ It won't hurt when I stumble in the street/ It won't hurt because the whiskey eases misery/ Even whiskey cannot ease your hurtin' me." A swooning steel falls over those words like a net being thrown over a raging, wounded animal. Next to Yoakam's "It Won't Hurt," new-style honky tonkers like George Strait sound posi-

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- Howdy** **Grinders Switch**

- How-dee!** indoor/outdoor welcome mats, 18 x 26", red or grey \$11.95

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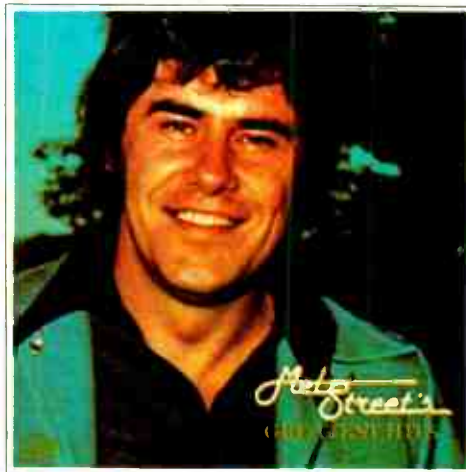
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The Man that Turned My Mama On • You Are So Beautiful • Would You Lay with Me in a Field of Stone • Spring • Blood Red & Goin' Down • Bed of Roses • What's Your Mama's Name • How Can I Tell Him • The Happiest Girl in the Whole U.S.A. • The Jamestown Ferry • Delta Dawn • Almost Persuaded • Greener than the Grass • Love's the Answer • I Believe the South's Gonna Rise Again • Teddy Bear Song • Guess I'll Have To Love Him More • Let Me Be There • and MORE!



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MEL STREET

Borrowed Angel • The Town Where You Live • Bad Bad Leroy Brown • I've Hurt Her More Than She Loves Me • Last Affair • I Met A Friend Of Yours Today • Big Blue Diamond • Forbidden Angel • Country Pride • Don't Lead Me On • Smokey Mountain Memories • Rub It In • Virginia's Song • Don't Be Angry • Even If I Have To Steal • You Make Me Feel More Like A Man • Today I Started Lovin' You Again • Love Me Tender • and MORE!

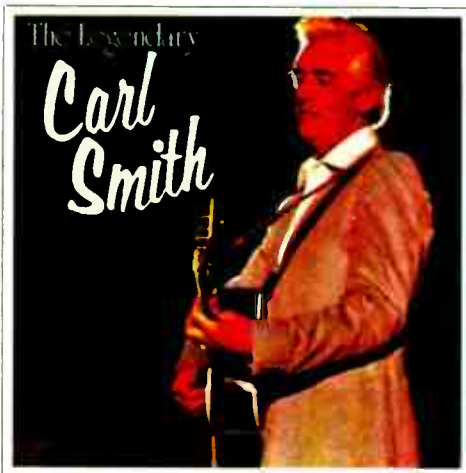
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George and Tammy

GEORGE & TAMMY

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North to Alaska • Battle of New Orleans • When It's Springtime in Alaska (It's 40 below) • Johnny Reb • I'm Coming Home • Honky Tonk Man • Sink the Bismarck • All for the Love of a Girl • The Mansion You Stole • Comanche • Jim Bridger • I'm a One Woman Man • Sleeps Evad John • They'll Never Take Her Love from Me • Old Slewfoot • All Grown Up • Sal's Got a Sugar Lip • Whispering Pines • Johnny Freedom (Freedom Land) • I'm Ready If You're Willing



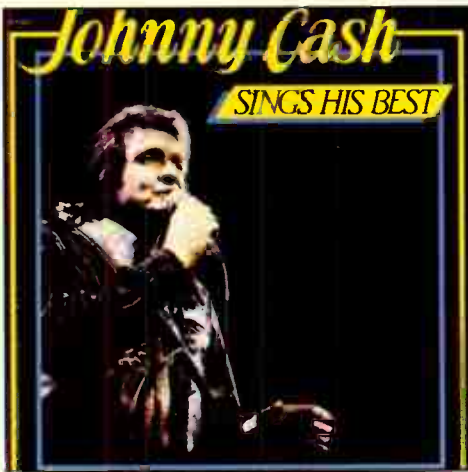
ROY ACUFF

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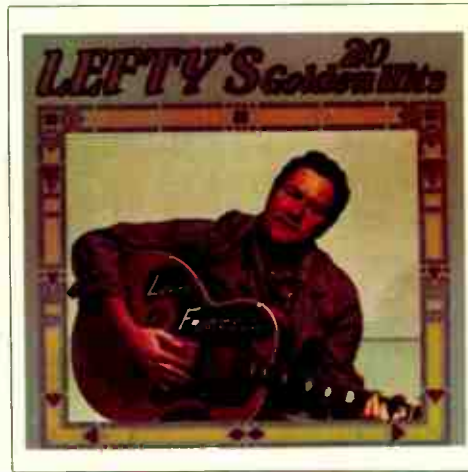
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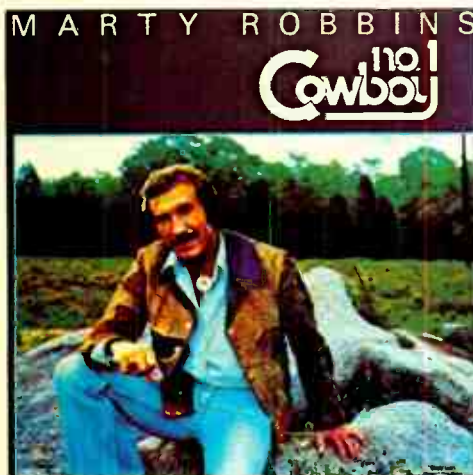
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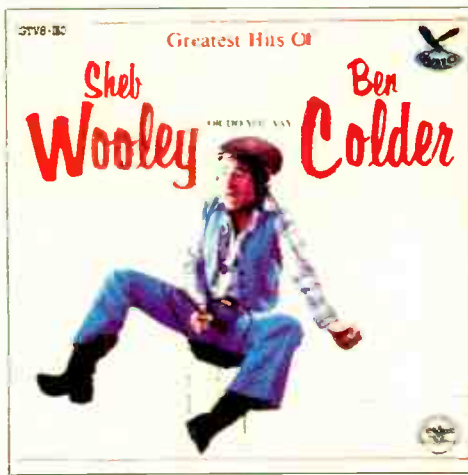
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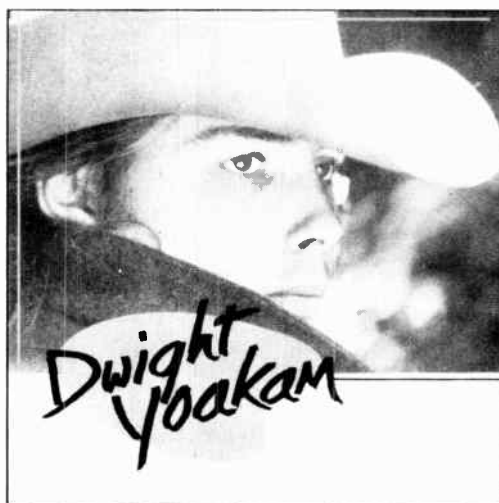
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Record Reviews

tively prissy. And if you think it's a throwback, you simply haven't been hit in the chest by this music as it jumps out of the speakers. Yoakam is so traditional he's the most exciting *new* development in country in many a moon. I hope he's given a fair shake by an industry so caught up in surface glitz that it's usually embarrassed to face its own heritage.

He has made his name, so far, opening for roots-rock Los Angeles bands like the Blasters and Los Lobos, but Yoakam, who was born in Kentucky and raised in Ohio, comes by his honky tonk honestly. Songs like "South of Cincinnati," a waltz to faded love, and "Guitars and Cadillac," in which a displaced country boy takes his lumps but stays true to himself in the wilds of Hollywood, speak to the experiences of the disenfranchised generation that left mountain hollows to find work in drab cities like Columbus and Gary. Yoakam writes gospel hand-clappers like "Bury Me," too, and prison ballads like "Twenty Years." His choice of covers is also exemplary: Johnny Horton's "Honky Tonk Man," Ray Price's "Heartaches by the Number," and Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire," which Yoakam revs up with a countrified Bo Diddley beat that helps paint a real vision of purgatory. Yoakam will be shouting one moment and moaning the next, his voice full of defiance and resignation and pain and despair all at once. He's backed by a four-piece band that rides an insistent, rocking beat which still couldn't be mistaken for anything but country. They're augmented on record by piano, mandolin and dobro, but the sound remains lean and hungry.

Fiddles and steels instead of violins and synthesizers. High harmony voices instead of choruses and glorified barbershop quartets. Songs about stuporous drinking and cheating, loving and losing and running, coal mines and



prison, heaven and hell. You know, this stuff is really contagious—why didn't somebody think of it sooner?

—JOHN MORTHLAND

Anne Murray
Something to Talk About
Capitol SJ 12466

Anne Murray's thick, rich contralto is in exceedingly fine form on this album, and it's a good thing, too—because for the most part, her material leaves a lot to be desired this time out.

A major problem is sameness. Every last one of these songs is about "finding love" or "losing love." Some of the "losing love" songs—"Who's Leaving Who" and "Reach-Out" in particular—express, for a three-minute pop song, fairly complex thoughts on the subject, and bring out the unsettling and less cheery side of this woman, which is a must. Something is needed to balance out her more Pollyanna tendencies. But the "finding love" songs—every last one of 'em—make up an anonymous and easily forgettable lot, even if Anne is able to salvage something like "Now and Forever (You and Me)" strictly through her own wiles, dramatically building the song with her own savvy and seductive phrasing. *This*, I still believe, is what Anne

Murray shares with great country singers, this is what country fans pick up on and what makes Anne rank several cuts above her fellow middle-of-the-road artists—she sings, even dull songs, guilelessly, without contrivance or affectation, every line registering direct sincerity. And to her credit, it works more often than not. But even that knack can't disguise a retread like "On and On," with its cheap, easy hook so overused already in so many other songs, and even that knack can only pump a limited amount of fresh life into wishy-washy sentiments like those behind "When You're Gone" and "You Never Know."

You'll not hear any fiddles or steel on this album, but it's been a long time since anyone listened to Anne Murray for that anyhow. Suffice it to say, this is smart, sophisticated pop musicmaking, built around a variety of special keyboard effects, and even at its most elegant, it usually remains surprisingly down-to-earth. I still wish there were a cut or two to shake things up a bit—the reason "A Little Good News" was so effective for her, I think, is that it was so unexpected, and *Something to Talk About* is clearly a holding action, an album that takes no chances and delivers no revelations. But it should hold a lot of people

over until she comes up with an album that does.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

Skeeter Davis & NRBQ
She Sings—They Play
Rounder 3092

I normally hate anything whimsical. Cabbage Patch Dolls, smile buttons, the comic strip *Cathy*—you name it, it drives me crazy. Yet this thoroughly whimsical record is among the most enjoyable I've heard in years. When did Skeeter Davis, one of the most underrated vocalists in the business, last cut a record that really mattered? When she and Betty Jack Davis hit (as the Davis Sisters) with "I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know" in 1953? When her recording of "The End of the World" hit Number-Two on the country charts and Number One on the pop charts in 1962? In any case, it's been a long time.

This eccentric, off-the-wall creation came out of the minds of collectors. The members of NRBQ, whose initials stand for New Rhythm & Blues Quartet, particularly keyboard player Terry Adams, have long been fans of the Davis Sisters' music. And, this is not the band's first record with a 1950's star. They recorded an album titled *Boppin' the Blues* with



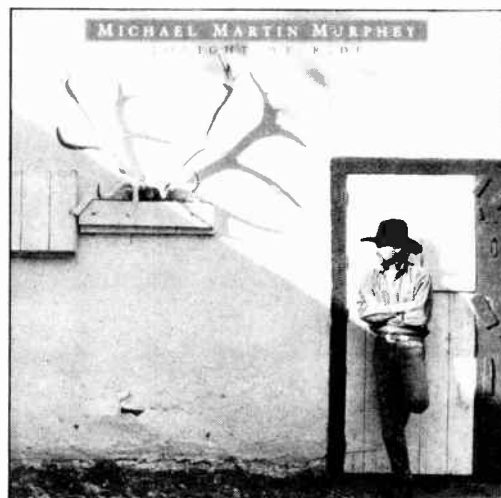
Record Reviews

Carl Perkins in 1969, long before anyone thought of doing an HBO special with the man. Perkins, however, was a legend; Skeeter has kept a low profile for years.

Does the collaboration work? Absolutely. Considering how often these legend-meets-fan collaborations fail, this one succeeds so well it must be heard to be believed. For one thing, Skeeter's pure, unaccented voice helped her succeed in both country and pop music, though she faded when trends changed in the mid-1960's. The four members of NRBQ know her style so well that everyone is thinking out of the same brain.

Most tracks are originals, three of them duets with NRBQ members. "Things to You," "Heart to Heart" and "I Can't Stop Loving You Now" are effective ballads; "Everybody Wants a Cowboy," a now-dated satire on the Urban Cowboy craze, works in part because her satirical monologue in the voice of the average aspiring performer is a gem. Their combined treatment of "Ain't Nice to Talk Like That," a 1950's Carlisles number, evokes both the sound and the sassy spirit of the original.

A few surprises crop up along the way, most notably the amazing hillbilly version of "Someday My Prince Will Come." Even the straightforward tunes like "You Don't Know What You Got Til You Lose It" and "How Many Tears" have a quirky individuality about them. Skeeter manages to pull off the strange, fallen woman of "Roses on My Shoulder" and turn the song into honest drama. And she remains one of the few performers who can do a mid-song recitation without evoking laughter. She turns Hank Sr.'s "May You Never Be Alone" into an uncanny reproduction of the old Davis Sisters sound with overdubbed harmony. (As a matter of fact, she did a whole RCA album this way in 1960). This number, more than any other, is a reminder of just



how special the Davis Sisters' old records were.

I doubt that an album this screwy would ever get made in the corporate Nashville of the mid-1980's, but it is so sparkling, so thoroughly musical, that it qualifies as the sleeper of 1986.

—RICH KIENZLE

Michael Martin Murphey
Tonight We Ride
Warner Bros.
WB1-25369

Michael Martin Murphey makes light, pretty music that is more or less ideal for the contemporary country market which has been shaped of late by the combined forces of the all-powerful modern country radio industry and the record companies.

For the last 13 years or so, ever since his huge pop hit, "Wild Fire," Murphey has been specializing in his own brand of West Coast-style, country-flavored pop music that is often very reminiscent of John Denver—an occasional duet partner of his—and the early Eagles—from their "Tequila Sunrise," "Lying Eyes" period. His music is full of plaintive, airy vocals; fresh, clean harmonies; and abundant naturalistic imagery in which

symbols of the Old West and the great outdoors become metaphors for personal freedom. His style is solidly, middle-of-the road and impeccably smooth, smooth enough to please almost everybody, but seldom slick enough to be actually cloying. Ultimately, it is music that is as hard to actively dislike as it is to get overly excited about.

On *Tonight We Ride*, Murphey is once more united with Jim Ed Norman, who produced *Michael Martin Murphey*, his debut "country" album released back in 1982. The two of them also co-wrote three of the songs on *Tonight We Ride*, including the title song, which is the first single from the album.

Both Norman, who is also the executive head of Warner Brothers' Nashville operations, and Murphey are obviously savvy to the capriciousness of country radio programmers who can seal their fate by choosing either to play or not to play their records. And that's probably why *Tonight We Ride* has such a sweet, no-risks-taken smoothness about it. There are simply no rough edges or undue outbursts of musical excitement here, such as would give anyone an excuse not to put it on the turntable.

On the up side, there are a couple of great new Murphey originals here. Songs like

"Innocent Hearts" and "The One That Got Away" (cowritten with Sonny Throckmorton and David Hoffner) are reminiscent of his heyday in the 1970's, when Murphey was routinely turning out memorable hits like "Wild Fire," "Carolina in the Pines" and "Geronimo's Cadillac"—great outbursts of originality, sung with heart, which easily transcended facile musical categories. And I must say, he also turns in a remarkably noteworthy rendition of Whitey Shaffer's and Doodle Owens' elegantly down-home prison ballad, "I'll Break Out Again Tonight."

But then there are other originals on here, like "Rollin' Nowhere" and "Close To My Heart," where Murphey seems to stretch too hard for a Haggard-like hard country vocal stance. And—like Marie Osmond singing rock'n' roll—he ends up just a little out of his depth.

All these criticisms aside, *Tonight We Ride* is, when it's all said and done, an eminently likeable album—one that obviously wants very much and struggles very hard to be liked. It is a good, solid, journeyman effort that satisfies, but seldom thrills. In the long run, it may just be more chart fodder for the country radio industry's ever-rotating playlist/gristmill. But, admittedly, it's damn good chart fodder. —BOB ALLEN

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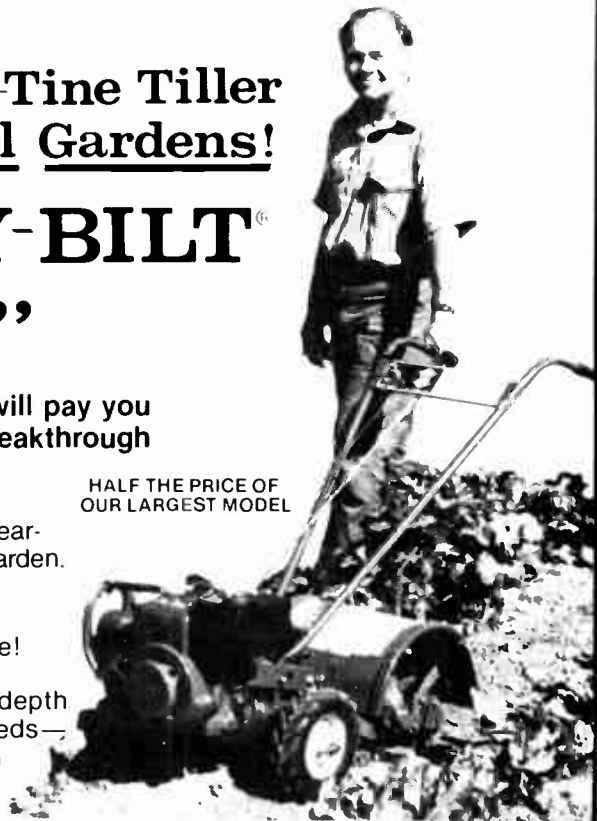
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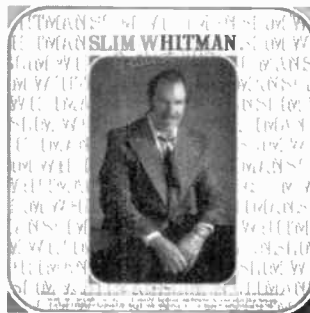
Merle Haggard Branded Man (Extended 20 Song Collection): The Bottle Let Me Down/Strangers/Here Comes The Freedom Train/Swinging Doors/Mama Tried/Work'n' Man Blues/Okie From Muskogee/Hungry Eyes, more! LP No. EG2605291/Cass. No. EG2605294 (X)*



The Best of Hank Snow (Extended 20 Song Collection): I'm Movin' On/The Golden Rocket/Rhumba Boogie-I Don't Hurt Anymore/I've Been Everywhere/The Gold Rush Is Over/Let Me Go Lover/Spansh Fireball/Beggar To King, more! LP No. NL89422 Cass. No. NK89422 (O)*



The Best of Bobby Bare (Extended 20 Song Collection): All American Boy/It's Alright-Have I Stayed Away Too Long/I Hate Good-byes/The Winner Millers Cave/Detroit City/500 Miles Away From Home/Four Strong Winds/Shame On Me, more! LP No. NL89332 Cass. No. NK89332 (O)*



Slim Whitman Greatest Hits (Extended 18 Song Collection): Indian Love Call/Keep It A Secret/I'll Take You Home Again/Kathleen/Rose Marie/Happy Anniversary/Tumbling Tumbleweeds, plus many more of his greatest hits! LP No. LBR2600531/Cass. No. TCLBR00534 (O)*



The Best of Porter Wagoner (Extended 20 Song Collection): A Satisfied Mind/Your Old Love Letters/Green Green Grass of Home/Everything I've Always Wanted/Old Slew Foot, Eat, Dnkn And Be Merry (Tomorrow You'll Cry), more! LP No. NL89094 Cass. No. NK89094-(O)*



Marty Robbins In The Wild West Part 2: Strawberry Roon—Saddle Tramp—Of Laredo—Little Joe, The Wrangler—I've Got No Use For The Women—Billy Venero—This Peaceful Sod—Five Brothers—Sam Angelo—Song Of The Bandit—Wind—Prairie Fire—My Love—more! LP No. BFX15146 (No Tapes) (X)*



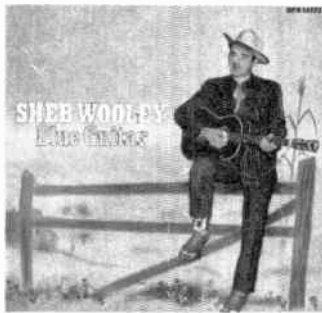
Marty Robbins In The Wild West Part 3: The Bend In The River—Ballad Of The Alamo—Abilene Rose—Dusty Winds—Doggone Cowboy—The Red Hills Of Utah—Tall Handsome Stranger—The Fastest Gun Around—San Angelo—Old Red—Johnny Fedavo—Man Walks Among Us. LP No. BFX15147 (No Tapes) (X)*



Marty Robbins In The Wild West Part 4: When The Work's All Done This Fall—Old Red—I'm Gonna Be A Cowboy—Rich Man, Rich Man—I've Got A Woman's Love—Night Time On The Desert—Yours (Quiereme Mucho)—Adios Marquita Linda—The Hanging Tree—And One More. LP No. BFX15183 (No Tapes) (X)*



Marty Robbins In The Wild West Part 5: The Wind Goes—The Cowboy In The Continental Suit—Cry Stampede—Oh, Virginia—Meet Me In Laredo—Take Me Back To The Prairie—Never Tie Me Down—Cottonwood Tree—Mister Sharty—Chant Of The Wanderer. LP no. BFX*5213 (No Tapes) (X)*



Sheb Wooley Blue Guitar (Extended 16 Song Collection): What, Cha Gonna Do/A Fool About You/Blue Guitar/It Takes A Heap Of Livin'/Humdinger/(Now You're) Changing Your Name/Don't Stop Kissing Me Goodnight/Hill Billy Mamba/Aircastles, and more! LP No. BFX15175 (No Tapes) (X)*

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MEMBERS POLL/MARCH 1986

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Your opinions can help influence record companies, radio stations, record stores, concert promoters, managers and performers. As a CMSA member, you have an organized way of making your opinion known, by filling out the Members Poll. We forward the results of the Polls to those involved in the business of country music who are interested in what fans are thinking and doing, and we publish the results.

Bought Any Good Records Lately?

1. Did you buy any albums (records or tapes) in the last month?
 Yes No

How many records? _____ How many cassettes? _____

2. Which ones did you like best? List performer and album title.

- a. _____
 b. _____
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 d. _____
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Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

3. To vote, list the numbers of your top 5 favorites from the Top 25, page 76.

Albums (list 5 numbers) Singles (list 5 numbers)

Want a Free Fan Club Membership?

4. If you could get free membership in *one* country music performer's fan club, whose would you choose?

Been to Any Good Concerts Lately?

5. How many concerts, stage shows, fairs, featuring major country stars, have you attended in the last 12 months? _____

Who were the stars you saw?

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Fill out poll and mail to: March Poll, *Country Music*, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016.



Stetson Records Originals

A new company from England, Stetson Records, has released a series of reproductions of Decca albums from the 1950's and 1960's which have been long out of print. Even the jackets are reproductions of the originals. Four of these are reviewed in Buried Treasures on page 74. The rest will be covered in later issues. CMSA members can buy these albums at \$6.98. The regular price is \$9.98. Add \$.95 for postage and handling for each album. Specify records or cassettes. Send check to *Country Music Society of America*, Dept. 34, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. Here is the complete list:

- Red Foley & Ernest Tubb**
Red and Ernie (HAT 3000)
- Rex Allen**
Under Western Skies (HAT 3001)
- Bill Monroe**
Knee Deep In Blue Grass (HAT 3002)
- The Osborne Brothers**
Voices in Bluegrass (HAT 3003)
- Webb Pierce**
Cross Country (HAT 3004)
- Bill Anderson**
Bright Lights and Country Music (HAT 3005)
- Ernest Tubb**
The Importance of Being Ernest (HAT 3006)
- The Wilburn Brothers**
Country Gold (HAT 3007)
- Patsy Cline**
A Tribute to Patsy Cline (HAT 3008)

- Kitty Wells**
Sings Songs Made Famous by Jim Reeves (HAT 3009)
- Various Artists**
On Stage at the Grand Ole Opry (HAT 3010)
- Ernest Tubb**
Ernest Tubb Favourites (HAT 3011)

British Bulldog

Another British label, Bulldog Records, also has a series of goldie-oldies. These don't feature original jackets and the *Twenty Golden Nugget* series have 20 songs on each album—the originals usually had only 12. But, this series does present top notch examples of major country performers whose records are difficult, if not impossible to find. Like the Stetson albums, these are available to CMSA members at \$6.98, or 30% off the regular \$9.98, plus \$.95 each for postage and handling:

- Gene Autry**
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- Tex Ritter**
Streets of Laredo (BDL 1022)
- Gene Autry**
Live From Madison Square Garden (BDL 1024)
- Kitty Wells**
The Original Queen of Country Music (BDL 1025)
- Webb Pierce**
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In the Beginning (BDL 1052)
- Patsy Cline**
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20 Golden Pieces (BDL 2013)
- Hank Thompson**
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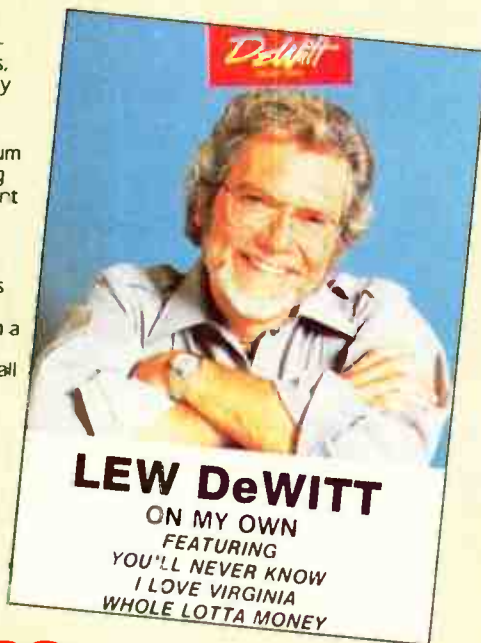
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Buried Treasures / Re-issues, Rarities and the Hard-to-Find

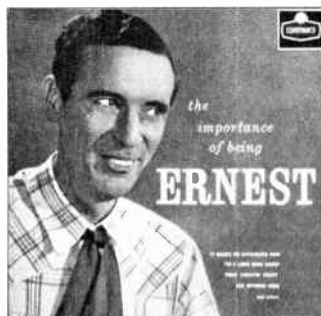
England's new *Stetson* label is undertaking an ambitious reissue series of original, long-unavailable Decca albums from the 1950's and 1960's complete with original covers. Here are the first four *Stetson* releases; we'll look at some more titles in our next issue.

Red Foley & Ernest Tubb:

If the Waylon and Willie Moe and Joe concept of pairing two stars for duet albums had a beginning, it was with Red Foley and Ernest Tubb's *Red and Ernie* (HATC 3000), first released by Decca in 1957. And as you might expect, it's mostly goodnatured fun. Foley and Tubb kid each other, laugh, add their own lyrics and generally goof off on "Too Old to Cut the Mustard" and "Hillbilly Fever #2," with a serious performance of "Goodnight, Irene" to break things up a bit.

Webb Pierce: Want to get a handle on how neglected the stars of the 1950's really are? Between 1952 and 1971 Webb Pierce had 81 songs on the charts, and eight of them went to Number One. Try finding even a couple of Pierce records in stores today. If you're lucky, you might find a copy of his MCA *Greatest Hits, Cross Country* (HATC 3004), originally released in 1963, includes three Top Ten songs from that period: "Crazy Wild Desire," "Alla My Love" and "Take Time." The sole problem is that some of the music was mistakenly transferred to disc at too fast a speed, and "Heartaches By the Number" sounds like the record's on the wrong speed. The other songs are okay.

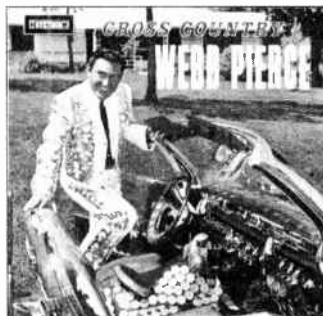
Bill Anderson: Fans won't find Bill Anderson's albums—even his MCA *Greatest Hits*—in most record stores, either. That's why *Bright Lights and Country Music* (HATC 3005) is such an important addition to current



record rosters. This 1965 collection mixes Anderson's hits such as "Bright Lights" and "Golden Guitar" with country standards like "Mountain Dew" and "Truck Driving Man." Except for his gameshow activities on *The Nashville Network*, Anderson hasn't been musically active lately, and it's easy to forget just how unique a stylist he was.

Ernest Tubb: I can't figure out why so little Ernest Tubb material has been reissued since he died nearly two years ago. There's been plenty of talk, but nothing solid except some old 1940's radio transcriptions. Right now his 1958 *The Importance of Being Ernest* (HATC 3006), is the only older album available, though hopefully *Stetson* will come up with others. As with most Tubb albums, this one has some engaging versions of Hank Williams songs—"Your Cheatin' Heart," "I'm a Long Gone Daddy"—plus Bob Wills' "San Antonio Rose" and several lesser known numbers like Eddie Noack's moralistic "Don't Trade Your Old Fashioned Sweetheart (For a Honky Tonk Queen)."

George Jones: George Jones' first live album wasn't the one he did last year. Twenty years ago Pappy Dailey recorded him in stereo at a Texas honky tonk. Dissatisfied with the results, he let the tapes gather dust until



Britain's Ace Records found them, cleaned them up and released them as *Live at Dancetown, USA* (Ace/Del Rio CH 156).

George, playing for a boozy, animated crowd, admits at the outset that he's "in a little better shape" than he was during his last gig there, when he had the "flu." On his best behavior this time, he tears through "White Lightning," "Who Shot Sam," "Ragged But Right," "The Race Is On" and the rock standard "Bony Moronie." "Window Up Above," "Aching, Breaking Heart," "She's Lonesome Again," "Poor Man's Riches" and the other ballads are also handled masterfully. They sound much like the studio versions. Steel player Buddy Emmons (not Herb Remington, as the liner notes state) and fiddler Rufus Thibadeaux each get tantalizing solo spots, though Emmons' first solo is actually Bob Wills' "B. Bowman Hop," not "Rose City Chimes" as George introduces it.

Given the scarcity of great live honky tonk albums from the 1950's and 1960's, this is a welcome find, but good luck reading the liner notes. A graphic artist who must have been color-blind printed them in black on dark blue background.

Blue Ribbon Boogie: Country boogie, rockabilly's predecessor, started in the late 1930's when the boogie-woogie

music of black piano players filtered through, first to the big bands, then to hillbilly singers. It came into its own in the early 1950's when Red Foley, Tennessee Ernie Ford and Moon Mullican had major hits in the style. *Blue Ribbon Boogie* (Charly CR30244) examines country boogie from the Decca label's second and third level stars from 1949 to 1956.

Some artists fared better with this music than others, and a few simply couldn't make it work. The mediocre Texas Bill Strength is true to form on "Paper Boy Boogie" and Jimmie Davis' cover of his pal Moon Mullican's "Cherokee Boogie" is pitiful. However, many are outstanding, among them Tommy Sosebee's easygoing "Barbershop Boogie," Chuck Murphy's remake of his earlier recording of "Blue Ribbon Boogie," Jimmy Atkins' hot "I'm a Ding Dong Daddy (From Dumas)," Grady Martin's rhythm-and-blues flavored "Long John Boogie" and Hank Penny's 1954 remake of "Bloodshot Eyes," far superior to his 1949 original. The juicy guitar playing on Jimmy Atkins' exhilarating version of the jazz tune "I'm a Ding Dong Daddy (From Dumas)" alone is worth the album's price.

This promises to be a banner year for reissues, as their popularity, especially those presented as boxed sets, grows. In fact, the entire movement has gained credibility through articles on Bear Family in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. In the next twelve months, we can look for any or all of the following, from various producers: more rereleased Decca albums from *Stetson*, a boxed set of Jerry Lee Lewis' complete Mercury/Smash output, a box of country recordings from Sun Records and albums by Don Gibson, Skeets McDonald, Jimmy Work and the Davis Sisters. We'll be keeping you posted.

—RICH KIENZLE

Essential Collector

Bill Monroe,
Lester Flatt,
Earl Scruggs

Country music's debt to the contributions of Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs was acknowledged by their recent induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame. So this is a good time for us to review the unprecedented series of historic bluegrass recordings which has been reissued over the last few years.

Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs quit Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys early in 1948. Within a couple of months, they had organized a band and by fall were recording for Mercury Records, where they stayed until they signed with Columbia in 1950. The original versions of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" and "Old Salty Dog Blues" date from their time at Mercury. Rounder's new *The Mercury Sessions, Vols. 1 and 2* (Rounder SS18 and SS19) is the first complete repackage of this important material.

These two albums reaffirm that though Monroe was indeed the father of bluegrass, Lester and Earl not only did much to popularize it but forged two of its most seminal instrumental styles. Scruggs' banjo style may be old hat today but was downright revolutionary in the late 1940's, and Flatt influenced generations of bluegrass singers with his marvelously expressive vocals and punchy rhythm guitar. Nor was he the group's only fine guitarist. Scruggs regularly played fine fingerstyle guitar on gospel numbers like "God Loves His Children."

The team's vitality and freshness was apparent from the outset as they endeavored to establish an identity separate from Monroe's by featuring less solo mandolin and more vocal harmonies and banjo. Occasional oddities pop up, like Scruggs' version of the old jazz standard "Farewell Blues." "Cabin in



Caroline." from their first session, almost rocks. Their original versions of the now-overdone "Roll in My Sweet Baby's Arms" (a tune first recorded by Preston Young and Buster Carter in 1931) and the 1949 "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" are also included.

Anyone truly interested in the evolution of bluegrass needs both volumes, which dovetail with the reissues of the Bill Monroe/Flatt & Scruggs and early Flatt & Scruggs Columbia material discussed below. Taken on their own, these two volumes demonstrate bluegrass moving from a parochial string-band music championed mainly by Monroe and his followers to a music that achieved diversity and mass popularity far from its Kentucky roots.

Twenty-four of Monroe's 1945-49 recordings make up *The Classic Bluegrass Recordings, Volumes 1 and 2* (County CCS 104 and CCS 105). Flatt and Scruggs appear on most (but not all) numbers. Along with classic tunes like "Blue Moon of Kentucky," "Footprints in the Snow," "Kentucky Waltz"—recorded just before Flatt and Scruggs joined the group—and "Blue Grass Special" are lesser known gems like "True Life Blues" and "Blue Grass Stomp." The pristine sound on these packages makes listening totally pleasurable.

Rounder's *The Original Bluegrass Band* (Special Series 06) concentrates solely on the Monroe/Flatt/Scruggs triumvirate. One problem that often occurs when different labels reissue the same material is overlapping of

selections. However, the Rounder package avoids this pitfall. It duplicates none of the selections on the County albums, but includes other Monroe chestnuts, such as "Molly and Tenbrooks," "Wicked Path of Sin" and "My Rose of Old Kentucky."

County also has two fine albums of Flatt and Scruggs' Columbia material recorded after they had gone out on their own. *The Golden Years* (CCS 101) features some of the songs most associated with them, from "Over the Hills to the Poorhouse," "Dear Old Dixie" and "Earl's Breakdown" to the previously unissued "That Old Book of Mine." *Blue Ridge Cabin Home* (P 14370) features Josh Graves' dobro spotlight "Shuckin' the Corn" along with Flatt and Scruggs' version of "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down."

Rounder's *Don't Get Above Your Raisin'* (SS 08) delves even deeper into the duos' early material. It spotlights the original version of "Raisin'," the song Ricky Skaggs revitalized in recent years, along with "Foggy Mountain Special," the always-haunting "Tis Sweet to Be Remembered" and the stirring gospel tune "Get in Line, Brother (If You Want to Go Home)."

Taken together, these albums, plus the Flatt & Scruggs Mercury material, provide not only immensely satisfying listening, but also a substantial insight into just how bluegrass developed into what it is today and how three of its greatest practitioners helped it make an indelible mark on American music. Even those hard-core country music collectors who don't embrace bluegrass should study these albums and discover the powerful influence these three men have had on mainstream country music.

—RICH KIENZLE

How to Order These Albums

Buried Treasures: Red Foley and Ernest Tubb, Webb Pierce, Bill Anderson and Ernest Tubb albums are all \$9.98 on records or cassettes. George Jones and *Blue Ribbon Boogie* are \$11.98, records only.

Essential Collector: All albums are \$9.98. All Rounder albums are on records or cassettes. Country albums are on records only.

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TOP 25

Albums

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2. Exile *Hang on to Your Heart*
3. Lee Greenwood *Streamline*
4. Kenny Rogers *The Heart of the Matter*
5. The Judds *Rockin' with the Rhythm*
6. Soundtrack *Sweet Dreams—The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*
7. Sawyer Brown *Shakin'*
8. Earl Thomas Conley *Greatest Hits*
9. Dan Seals *Won't Be Blue Anymore*
10. Ray Stevens *I Have Returned*
11. Ricky Skaggs *Live in London*
12. George Strait *Something Special*
13. Willie Nelson *Half Nelson*
14. The Forester Sisters *The Forester Sisters*
15. Juice Newton *Old Flame*
16. George Jones *Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes*
17. Ronnie Milsap *Greatest Hits Vol. 2*
18. George Strait *George Strait's Greatest Hits*
19. W. Jennings, W. Nelson, J. Cash, K. Kristofferson *Highwayman*
20. Gary Morris *Anything Goes*
21. Alabama *40 Hour Week*
22. Rosanne Cash *Rhythm and Romance*
23. The Statlers *Pardners in Rhyme*
24. Lee Greenwood *Greatest Hits*
25. Merle Haggard *Amber Waves of Grain*

Singles

1. Juice Newton *Hurt*
2. Crystal Gayle and Gary Morris *Makin' Up For Lost Time*
3. Marie Osmond *There's No Stopping Your Heart*
4. The Oak Ridge Boys *Come On In (You Did the Best You Could)*
5. Steve Wariner *You Can Dream of Me*
6. George Jones *The One I Loved Back Then (The Corvette Song)*
7. The Forester Sisters *Just in Case*
8. Dolly Parton *Think About Love*
9. Glen Campbell *It's Just a Matter of Time*
10. Sylvia & Michael Johnson *I Love You by Heart*
11. Exile *I Could Get Used to You*
12. Charly McClain (with Wayne Massey) *You Are My Music, You Are My Song*
13. Barbara Mandrell *Fast Lanes & Country Roads*
14. John Anderson *Down in Tennessee*
15. Mark Gray *Please Be Love*
16. Vince Gill *Oklahoma Borderline*
17. John Schneider *What's a Memory Like You (Doing in a Love Like This)*
18. Southern Pacific *Perfect Stranger*
19. Eddy Raven *You Should Have Been Gone by Now*
20. T. Graham Brown *I Tell It Like It Used to Be*
21. John Conlee *Old School*
22. John Denver *Dreamland Express*
23. Billy Joe Royal *Burned Like a Rocket*
24. Lee Greenwood *Don't Underestimate My Love For You*
25. Waylon Jennings *The Devil's on the Loose*

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