



RICKY VAN SHELTON Pull-Out Poster





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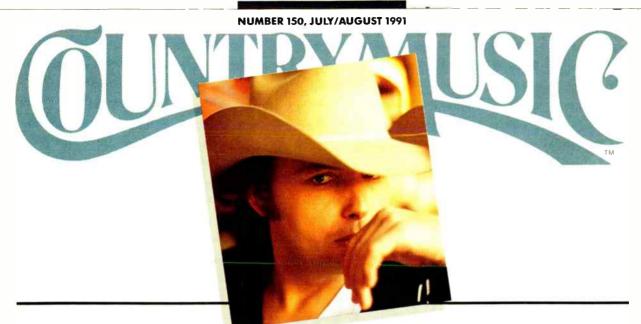
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of America. TODAY'S TRUCK IS CHEVROLET."

Chevy S-10 Tahoe. More V6 power than 4-cylinder Ford Ranger XLT – for less than ten grand. The idea alone can drive you wild. This 1991 Chevy S-10 Tahoe, with uplevel trim and V6 power, is priced less than \$10,000.* You can't get this kind of power in a Ford Ranger XLT for less than ten Gs. No wonder more truck owners switched to Chevy last year than

to any other truck!

More People Are Winning With



by Hazel Smith

Randy Travis spills the beans, Reba goes platinum, Harlan writes another hit and newcomer Martin Delray gets rhythm. George Strait celebrates his tenth anniversary, while Dolly Parton and Ricky Van Shelton meet with success through the rockin' years. Plus some farewells to country pioneers, and more.

21 **Record Reviews**

Superstars Johnny Cash and Hank Williams Jr. come up with winners. Watch for a few surprises from Kathy Mattea, Ronnie Milsap and Lorrie Morgan. Don Henry, Mike Reid and Martin Delray debut, and more.

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by Michael Bane He's a country singer who loves the Old West. He talks to Michael about being a cowboy and singing his songs.

28 **Tune In to Dwight Yoakam**

Patrick Carr takes us on a journey into Dwight Yoakam's mind. You'll find that what goes on there isn't only music and dreams. Country's ultra-cool hillbilly is a thinker.

36 **Ricky Van Shelton Pull-Out Centerfold**

Get the current data on Ricky Van Shelton, lyrics to his current single, the photos and the facts.

39 Kelly Willis: A Little Girl With a Great Big Voice

When you speak to Kelly Willis, you find a shy, unassuming 22-year-old. But get her on stage, and it's a whole other story. Audiences and the industry are listening.

42 Alan Jackson Steps Into the Music World

As a kid he never even dreamed of being in the music business. But once he entered it, success came fast. Now he calls people like George Jones and Randy Travis his friends.

46 Letters

Readers rave about Clint Black and Randy Travis, Narvel Felts answers the call, Hank Jr. responds to his centerfold. Servicemen in the Gulf write in, and Record Reviews draw all kinds of fire.

68 **Buried Treasures**

An Ernest Tubb boxed set, Bill Monroe's Decca career, 138 previously unreleased Hank Snow recordings, a definitive Flatt and Scruggs collection and the second volume of Guitar Player Magazine's series, Legends of Guitar-Country, are among the highlights of this month's section.

70 **Essential Collector**

Rich Kienzle comes up with a video biography on Loretta Lynn, cassettes on Loretta, Loretta and Conway, Western swing, Webb Pierce and Tubb & Foley-plus an investigative look at Elvis' death, a book-length report, The Death of Elvis.

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by Patrick Carr

by Bob Allen

by Bob Allen

by Rich Kienzle

by Rich Kienzle

COUNTRY MUSIC 1

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BOX THE RICHER ULTRA

RANDY TRAVIS-NO MORE LIES

"I read a story in the National Examiner that really made me mad," said Randy Travis between songs at Nashville's Country Radio Seminar. That got the attention of the assembled radio execs. "I guess it could have been worse," Randy added. "They could have said I wasn't country...someone here in Nashville is quoted as saying, 'If Randy Travis isn't gay, then my grandmother is Willie Nelson.' If that person is in this room, then you better tell your grandma to buy a red wig, get a bandana and learn to sing through her nose. And my advice to you is pray that I don't find out who you are."

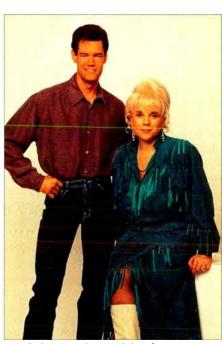
Later Randy admitted to the *Washing*ton Post that his long relationship with his manager, **Lib Hatcher**, was more than just business, as those of us close to the business have known for years. "In the beginning, with Lib definitely older than me, I just didn't know how to handle that in the press," Randy explained. "We've always denied it because it seemed like the easiest way out at the time. But it turned around on us. When you lie, it usually comes back to you, and I guess that's just proof of it."

GRAMMY IN THE SCHOOLS

Superstars **Garth Brooks, Bill Monroe** and jazz/gospel group **Take 6**, in cahoots with the Nashville chapter of NARAS (National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences), visited Hillsboro High School here in town. Some 600 students from the Nashville area congregated in the school and listened as the stars and several business associates provided them with information on how to go about preparing for a career in the recording industry. I think this is a wonderful program.

GOOD-HEARTED WOMAN

Good-hearted woman **Kathy Mattea** busies herself helping others. First she was in Los Angeles along with many other stars as part of the "Voices That Care" project doing a video for our servicefolks on duty in the Persian Gulf. Next, she and **Garth Brooks** performed a special Yellow Rib-



Randy brings Lib out of the closet and, as we go to press, into the marriage bureau.

bon Concert for military families in Norfolk, Virginia. This free concert presented by the USO and Anheuser-Busch welcomed home many of the troops.

Back home in Music Ĉity, Kathy and her band performed at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center to benefit the W.O. Smith-Nashville Community Music School. The school provides music lessons for gifted children whose parents can't afford it. On the gig with Kathy were **Mark O'Connor** and **The New Nashville Cats**.

LET'S TALK ABOUT WILLIE

Sixteen-and-a-half million dollars, the IRS claims **Willie Nelson** owes them. Let's talk about it, fans. First off, Willie had a business manager in Texas and he had a lawyer. These two people, who must have made a blooming fortune on Willie's payroll, advised him to invest in a company called Price Waterhouse. At that time it was okay advice. But I am mad as a hornet that Willie is in dire straits now, financially, because it isn't his fault. The people involved don't know "Sweet Dreams" from "Crazy." They don't know that **Faron** Young had the hit on "Hello Walls," and you know what, they don't give a flit about the plight of the farmers. Willie got caught up in a corporate crunch, and the IRS don't have no mercy on nobody.

Willie has provided more hours of entertainment with less ego than anybody who ever sung a song. Willie was in it broke for years. He was in it rich for years. And now, he's in it owing more than God has in the bank, and he will stay in it. Fans and friends, music is not just Willie's living. It's his life. Please don't blame him or shame him. Just love him and say a prayer that someone with some power will look until they find the way out of this mess for Willie. In the meantime, go to his shows. Buy his records and go to his movies. He is the same man you called hero yesterday.

FINALLY INVINCIBLE VINCE

Given Vince Gill's movie star looks and golden voice—to say nothing of his multiinstrumentalist talent, one must ask, "Why, for so long was he known only as the guy who is married to the **Sweetheart of the Rodeo** that stands on the right?" Once Opry manager **Hal Durham** and I were discussing Vince Gill. At that time, "When I Call Your Name" had just been released. Hal loved the record and so did I. Both of us wondered if radio would pick up on this monster song. It did. That song was the bridge between being just Vince and Invincible Vince.

Up till then, Vince was cursed with falling between the cracks. As Hal Durham said, "Vince can go on the Grand Ole Opry stage with just an acoustic guitar and no band and bring the audience to its feet." Two folks helped a whole lot with Vince becoming invincible—**Tim DuBois**, who forced Vince to write "When I Call Your Name" instead of playing golf on that rainy day way back when, and **Tony** (wow) **Brown**, who produced the record.

WE VISIT HARLAN

One of our favorite folks, the most famous country songwriter on the planet, the great **Harlan Howard**, simply amazes us. **Billy and Terry Smith** and mama (me) went out to Harlan's home the other morning. It was a lovely place to be.

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman



Hosts Alabama greeted Bobby Allison, K.T. Oslin, Ricky Van Shelton and Patty Loveless. Couldn't ask for more stars on one show.

HOSTS WITH THE MOST

When Alabama hosted Nashville Now recently, it was an event to be seen. For not only was the foursome from Ft. Payne on the show, but the boys visited with fellow Alabaman and stock car driver, Bobby Allison, as well as Patty Loveless and Ricky Van Shelton. To add to that, K.T. Oslin showed up as a surprise guest wearing the same gloves she wore when she started out singing country music. Folks, what a show. By the way, remember a while ago when Allison was seriously injured in an automobile crash while racing? Well, he looks good now. Also, did you know that an unbelievable 53 million $homes \, subscribe \, to \, TNN \, these \, days? \, Well,$ I hope that all 53 million got a chance to see this great show.

CMA MOVES

The Country Music Association has gone south-relocated to a brand new building at One Music Circle South. We naturally celebrated with the powers who be. There was food and drink, and Executive Director Jo Walker Meador visited with all who came to see and be seen. Some of the famous and near-famous schmoozing with me, and me with them, were the great Merle Kilgore, Captain Midnite, Marty Stuart, Bonnie Garner, Kathy Louvin, my dear friend Tony Conway with Buddy Lee Attractions, BMG/RCA/Nashville headman Mr. Jack Weston, Miss Brenna Davenport Leigh, Fletcher Foster, Jim Bessman, who is a Billboard writer based in New York City, Les Taylor, Harold Shedd, Sandy Neese and songwriter Kostas, whose eyes look like an angel's. I also spied Ms. Teresa George, who works at the CMA, and her co-worker, Ms. Helen Farmer, who tries to steal all my boyfriends. Also on hand meeting and greeting was CMA Associate Director, Ed Benson. The party was catered, and I've never had better cheesecake, not even in New York City. The new building is what it should be, first class, and Ms. Walker-Meador, who started working out of a cracker box on a chair facing a chair, has an office fit for the queen she is. I'd love to go to one party that served just ice water and celery sticks, though. All we think of (especially me) is eating and drinking. Each Music Row event "out foods" the last.

MR. ACUFF AILING

The King of Country Music, Mr. **Roy Acuff**, is recuperating at home following glaucoma surgery. There's no cure for this dreaded eye disease, however the surgery will relieve pain, which was the reason for doing it. Take care, Mr. Roy.

CONDOLENCES TO THE GREAT JOHNNY CASH AND FAMILY

Carrie C. Cash, 87-year-old matriarch of the Cash clan, passed away at her home in Hendersonville, Tennessee. Besides **Johnny Cash**, she is survived by two other sons, **Tommy** and **Roy**, and three daughters, **Reba Hancock**, **JoAnne Yates** and **Louise Garrett**, as well as several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Mrs. Cash's granddaughter, **Rosanne Cash**, and husband, **Rodney Crowell**, named the youngest of their four daughters Carrie for Mama Cash. Mrs. Cash will be missed by her family and everyone who knew her. Her husband, the late **Ray Cash**, died in the late 70's.

CONGRATS, REBA

With all of **Reba McEntire**'s sadness recently, I'd like to offer something on a lighter note—congratulations on her new platinum album, *Rumor Has It*. This is the second of her albums to reach that status. Her *Greatest Hits* album went platinum two years ago. This latest achievement gives Reba a grand total of six Gold and two platinum awards to hang up on her wall.

FERLIN HUSKY GIVES AWAY CHILD

(Great headline, huh?) Ferlin Husky was handsome and proud as he escorted his beautiful daughter, Julie Husky, when she married James Smith II at Holiday Heights Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee. The music was provided by Ricky Skaggs and Sharon White. Ferlin closed the service by singing the "Lord's Prayer" a capella. His performance was breathtaking. The reception was held at Twitty City. Famed and near-famed in attendance included Waylon Jennings, Sheb Wooley, Mae Axton, Billy Walker, Buck White, Billy Smith, Patsy Sledd and the great Dallas Frazier. I've never seen a prettier bride, and the bride's dad wasn't so bad either. Anyone who has ever heard the father of the bride sing "On the Wings of a Dove" knows why I've loved Ferlin's singing for years.

CRS SCORES BIG AGAIN

The 22nd annual Country Radio Seminar, held at the Opryland Hotel, was again a super event. Many highlights occurred during the week, which ran as smooth as silk, thanks to Country Radio Broadcasters Executive Director **Frank Mull** and the very capable **Jeff Walker** of Aristo Publicity. The show opened with **Randy Travis, Tammy Wynette** and **Vern Gosdin**. Travis really opened a can of worms by being all flared up and announcing he was not homosexual regardless of what some tabloid has said. For more on this, see our lead story above.

The Artist-Radio Tape Session (ARTS) was attended by big and small. Some who showed up were Marty Stuart, Reba McEntire, Lee Greenwood, Barbara Mandrell, Garth Brooks, Kathy Mattea,

Fans like you have given Ricky

Van Shelton three plantinum albums in a row (over 4 million sold) and twelve top-10 singles in 3 years...nine of them #1!

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Ricky Van Shelton's new album,

BACKROADS, was literally made for you. Every track was chosen and performed, with fans in mind including RVS's smash duet with Dolly Parton, 'Rockin Years,' and his great new hit, "I Am A Simple Man."

On Columbia Cassettes and Contract of the April Contract of the Ap CET LOST IN THE M

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Continued /

CASSETT



ON THE BRANDS YOU TRUST

Van

Alan Jackson, The Kentucky Head-Hunters, Billy Joe Royal, Aaron Tippin, Ricky Van Shelton and Marie Osmond. The big-time Super Faces show featured the best-looking face (and posterior) in country music, George Strait, and his Ace in the Hole Band. George's record company took the opportunity to give him a special citation in honor of his 10th anniversary as a recording artist. George wowed 'em with all his hits 'cause he ain't had no misses.

Prior to the Super Faces show, **Rosanne Cash** received the CRB's Humanitarian Award, presented at the discretion of the board of directors. She was chosen because of her outspoken support of environmental causes and her opposition to record labeling. By the way, the only other act to receive this award has been **Alabama** in 1990.

The finale was the New Faces Show with the stars of tomorrow—folks like Chris LeDoux, Shelby Lynne, Joe Diffie, Pirates of the Mississippi, Michelle Wright, Ray Kennedy, Corbin/Hanner, Billy Dean, Kevin Welch and Aaron Tippin. The great Merle Haggard delivered the closing address. Radio, the man wants you to play his current records. Listen real hard, for the good times. Merle can still sing.

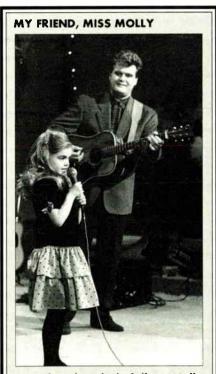
ROCKIN' YEARS

Once in a blue moon, when I am driving in my car, a song comes along on the radio that makes me pull off the road. Such a song is the "Rockin' Years" single by Dolly Parton and Ricky Van Shelton. I'venever heard Dolly sound better. Ricky Van wasn't singing as strong as I'd like him to sing. Maybe he was nervous being that close to a real star like Dolly. I could not help but notice how shy Ricky Van acted in the video with Dolly. There were moments you could almost see his face redden. I truly thought he was cute. Ricky Van was real happy about the duet. He said, "I was flattered and thrilled to have the opportunity to record with Dolly. We both came from the same kind of background, with many of the same musical influences, so it was really easy to find that mutual ground we could share as artists. I was surprised and pleased at how well our voices mixed together." As for Dolly, she views the entire album, Eagle When She Flies, as a personal statement. She says, "This is the most creative and thorough album I have ever done, and I hope it is accepted in the spirit in which it is given."

Just so you will know, Dolly's little brother, Floyd Parton, penned "Rockin' Years." The song is on the Eagle When She



Ray Kennedy, Shelby Lynne, Aaron Tippin and Joe Diffie were stars at the New Faces Show during this year's Country Radio Seminar in Nashville.



One of my best little folks is Molly Kate Skaggs. She is beautiful, kind and nice. Shown here with her proud papa, Ricky Skaggs—once again we see those hillbilly genes in action. Molly Kate's mama is Sharon White. Molly is a great little singer. She is also a straight-A student. Flies CD/cassette and on Ricky Van's album, Between the Lines, as well. Floyd, the youngest of the Parton boys, may just make a bundle of money on this. Course, Dolly will have one less mouth to feed, I suspect.

SPREADS HIS WINGS

Fletcher Foster, my longtime friend at CBS/Sony, has accepted a position as Senior Director Artist Development and Media, with Arista in Los Angeles. He departed his employ with CBS/Sony in April. Fletcher will be missed on Music Row, but one must spread one's wings when the eagles call. The eagle in this case was the inimitable Clive Davis, who is the Master Eagle at Arista.

FESTIVAL AT FORD

They called it the "Festival at Ford." They also called it "A Celebration of Country: The Stars Salute the President." What it amounted to was a bunch of hillbillies went up to Washington and did a benefit for the Ford Theater. The show was broadcast over ABC-TV in April, and may be repeated July 4th. Performers included **Ricky Skaggs, The Whites, K.T. Oslin, The Statlers, Tammy Wynette, Lorrie Morgan, Alan Jackson, Randy Travis, Clint Black, Mary Chapin Carpenter and Alabama. All the entertainers were invited to the White House to visit President** and **Mrs. George Bush** and were

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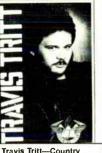
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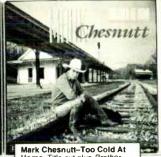
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COLUMBIA HOUSE

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New artist Martin Delray got some help from Johnny Cash during the shooting of Delray's debut music video, "Get Rhythm." Cash didn't have to practice too much he wrote the classic song. Delray's version is the title track of his current album.

allowed to bring a guest. I want to thank Clint Black for asking my friend, the very capable Brenna Davenport Leigh, to be his White House guest. Brenna, who does press and publicity for BMG/RCA and was just promoted to Head of Artist Development, doesn't miss crossing t's or dotting i's. She deserves to meet the Prez and Lady Babs. Also, I'm happy that Mike "Cuz" Warren, hubby of Cheryl White of The Whites, had the chance to meet the First Lady and her old man. It ain't every day that a poor mountain boy from East Tennessee who moves to Nashville and marries a pretty hillbilly singer gets to go to the White House. My invitation got lost in the mail, I reckon.

EYE SAW

Eye saw Larry Gatlin at the LongHorn. Texan that he is, he was dining on steak. I'd had a cheddar burger with my friends Renee Bell, the new A&R person at MCA; the Godfather of country songwriters (and new father), Larry Cordle; and Billy and Terry Smith. We were a motley crew.

Eye saw both Jimmy Dean and Kathy Baillie of Baillie and The Boys at the Vanderbilt Plaza, where they announced the nominees for the country Songwriters Awards to be held on TNN. The breakfast buffet was just too-too, with country ham, biscuits, eggs, gravy, grits and fried potatoes. I'll have you know I sat beside the most eligible bachelor in this hillbilly town, Mr. Harold Shedd, who made the group Alabama a household word. He went on to make K.T. Oslin a household word. If that isn't enough, after Harold took the A&R VP gig with Polygram Records, the first act he signed was a bunch of long-haired hillbillies who'd been around the block for 20 years or more called The Kentucky HeadHunters. After they won this year's Grammy for Country Album of the Year, everybody who is anybody knows these talented characters.

Eye saw **Pam Tillis** driving her red car down South Street.

LET'S TALK SPONSORS

Anytime anyone speaks up for country music, I am behind them, be it candy bars or manure spreaders. There's no flour or cornmeal for us Smiths but Martha White. Why? Well, in my opinion, not only is it the best, but Martha White has been sponsoring country music for many years. They sponsor 30 minutes every week on the Grand Ole Opry and were sponsors of Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs and The Foggy Mountain Boys for 20 years. Pet Milk, Coca Cola, Goo Goos...you name it, if they sponsor our music, I buy their products.

Well, in keeping with sponsorship, something wonderful has happened between the Grand Ole Opry and True Value Hardware. Just like back in the 40's, True Value is sponsoring the Opry road shows. By the time you read this, some of you may have had the chance to see stars like Ricky Skaggs, Minnie Pearl, Bill Monroe, Holly Dunn, Garth Brooks, Riders in the Sky, Patty Loveless and Mike Snider. All these great Opry stars will be touring with the Grand Ole Opry road show, doing shows just like they do on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. There will be four stars at each stop, and each artist will perform for 30 minutes. It should be great fun for the artists, great entertainment for the fans, and True Value Hardware will be getting my money this year whenever I need tools, garden and lawn equipment and supplies and paint. Thanks, True Value. Thanks, Hal Durham and the Opry.

NASHVILLE HAD A TEXAS TORNADO

Those crazy **Texas Tornados** came to town with their Tex/Mex brand of country music. **Freddy Fender, Flaco Jimenez, Doug Sahm** and **Augie Meyers** are the gruesome foursome that make **The Kentucky HeadHunters** look like Sunday School teachers down South. The music is powerful enough that they garnered a Grammy. Nashville survived the Tornados and here's hoping you do, too.

ANOTHER FORESTER

Pretty Christy Forester and her everso-good-looking hubby, Gary Smith, announced the birth of their first child, a girl, Madeleine Grace. Weighing in at 8 lbs. 2 1/2 oz., it was said the baby was larger than mommy. Congrats, Gary and family. Gary Smith is one sweet boy. His latest claim to fame is he produced Dolly's Christmas album—Home for Christmas—as well as her current one, Eagle When She Flies. Gary is also Dolly's keyboard player.

HELLO, DOLLY

The woman with many wigs (instead of hats) and wearer of all of them, movie star Dolly Parton, is as busy as ever. First she's doing a made-for-TV movie titled T. She and Ray Benson, leader of Asleep at the Wheel, penned the music for this one, and in it, Ray makes his acting debut. Dolly plays a singer named T, and Benson plays a bandleader named Ben Rayson. Members of Asleep at the Wheel will appear in the film. Later, Miss Dolly will don her made-for-the-movie wig and star in a movie for the theatergoers. Grass does not grow under Dolly's feet as she changes wigs again and again. T is a Sandollar Production, Sandollar being the company owned by Sandy Gallin and Dolly.

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MORE APPLAUSE FOR MOE MOE MOE

All my people (you know, country music people) have their favorite ways of serving those less fortunate. **Moe Bandy**'s is the World Children's Transplant Fund. Isn't that a wonderful cause to be involved in? Moe's been involved with the organization for five years. His annual Pro Celebrity golf tournament garnered \$60,000 for the organization this year. Moe's efforts were recognized recently at a banquet in Los Angeles when his friend **Dwight Yoakam** presented him with the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the organization. Let's give Moe a hand. Moe! Moe! Moe!

AND APPLAUSE FOR T GRAHAM

T Graham Brown, hot off the plane from Los Angeles and another Taco Bell commercial, this time with the flamboyant Little Richard, rushed up to the Stouffer Hotel to host the Dream Maker's Lucheon. This annual event makes dreams come true for terminally ill youngsters. Fans, be proud of his T-Ness. Anybody famed or not who takes time for a sick child is somebody we should all applaud and be proud to know. T! T!

HARLAN KNOWS

Harlan Howard is like a bird dog when hunting season opens. He has a nose to know who is ready to hit, what song will take them and when to play it. Such was the case with **Pam Tillis**. Harlan penned

FINAL BOW FOR COUNTRY GREATS

SHOT JACKSON: 1921-1991

Harold "Shot" Jackson, co-inventor of the Sho-Bud pedal steel guitar, died January 24, 1991, of a heart attack. A musician of note, Shot and steel guitarist Buddy Emmons built the first Sho-Bud pedal steel in 1957; it soon became *the* country steel guitar.

ROY LANHAM: 1923-1991

Country-jazz guitarist Roy Lanham, best known for his work with The Sons of the Pioneers, died of cancer February 14, 1991, in California. Lanham began his career with Archie Campbell at station WNOX in Knoxville. He joined The Sons of the Pioneers in 1961 and worked with them until 1986.

Mel Tillis' first hit, "Life Turned Her That Way," which was also a Number One hit for Ricky Van Shelton. Mel's oldest child, Pam, has been writing/singing/recording/ performing for a dozen or more years. Pam sang some pop and some R&B. When the time was ripe for Pam to be Pam, Big Daddy H.H.—with a song he and song smith Max D. Barnes wrote—was at the door, tape box in hand, music on the tape and lyrics rubber-banded around the box. Title: "Don't Tell Me What to Do." Hit Number One. And you don't get better than that.

Now, I was home in Caswell County when Pam's single was released. My stone country brother, **Daniel Boone**, was raving about the Pam Tillis song, saying it was LEO FENDER: 1909-1991 Clarence Leo Fender, developer of the solidbody electric guitar, died March 21, 1991, at the age of 82. Fender was responsible for the legendary Telecaster and Stratocaster instruments that became standards in both the country and rock fields.

BILLY JACK WILLS: 1926-1991 Drummer, vocalist and songwriter Billy Jack Wills, brother of Bob Wills, died March 3, 1991, of a heart attack. Billy Jack first played in brother Johnnie Lee Wills' band, then joined The Texas Playboys on the West Coast. He had his own band in Sacramento in the 50's.

-RICH KIENZLE

a hit. A fan knows, huh? Pam's entire album is really special. Titled *Put Yourself in My Place*, it showcases Pam's own songwriting along with that of her peers. Recording for **Tim DuBois** and the good Arista folks, Pam has a brilliant career on the rise. And Harlan? Well, he's birddogging someplace else. Those who are looking to happen, if Harlan comes to your door, just know he has the nose that knows if you are ready.

As for Pam, her first public appearance was on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry when she was eight with her dad. Not a shabby way to embark upon a singing career.

GO WEST, MICHAEL MARTIN

Michael Martin Murphey's West Fest is coming to many of you this year. It's music and fun with a taste of the old frontier. Michael has always loved the American Indians and cowboys. Originally, this show was held once a year around Memorial Day in the West. Now Michael is taking the show on the road. It will feature trick riders, Indian dancers and cowboy poetry. Nashville artists joining Michael for West Fest are The Judds, Merle Haggard, Texas Tornados and Mark Chesnutt. Kids will love these festivals. The authentic Indian village will be a treat for them, and their dads and moms will want to see the art, clothing and jewelry. It'll be fun.

DOTTIE WEST IS BROKE

Longtime Opry stalwart **Dottie West** is in bankruptcy. She first filed Chapter 11 in the bankruptcy court, then switched to Chapter 7, where you list even more modest assests. A bankruptcy trustee was



Celebrating the Number One song "Don't Tell Me What to Do" are, from left, BMI's Roger Sovine, one of the song's writers Max D. Barnes, Sony/Tree's Donna Hilley, producer Paul Worley, Pam Tillis, the other writer Harlan Howard and BMI's Joyce Rice.

God Bless The U.S.A.!

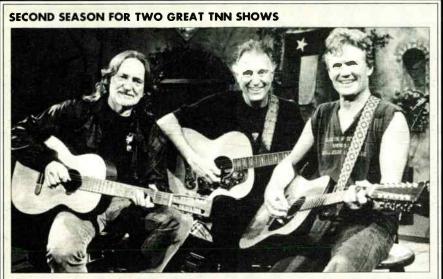
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The Texas Connection kicked off its second season on The Nashville Network with host Jerry Jeff Walker and fellow Texans, Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson. The special one-hour format featured many of their popular songs.



Chris Hillman, Emmylou Harris and Vern Gosdin were on hand for the season premiere of the American Music Shop on The Nashville Network. Other guests included Jim and Jesse and Tish Hinojosa. Desert Rose Band members John Jorgenson and Herb Pedersen also appeared on the show.

able to gain access to Ms. West's stored personal belongings, in order to sell them to cover some of the debts. Imagine, Dottie West penniless, after all these years. I am sorry for the whole mess. Dottie was a trailblazer as a singer and songwriter. I hope this all comes out in the wash.

PLEASE DON'T LABEL ME

This line, "Please don't label me," needs to be printed on the back of every piece of music coming out of Nashville. Censorship, in my opinion, is something Nashville cannot afford. Our music does not need to be stickered. Our people sing about life and how it is. Just like religion, politics, television and movies, music is by one's choice. It's up to the parents of children to take them to worship where they choose, teach them politics to the best of their ability and monitor their television, movies and music. That's all. Give your children vitamins and keep their music country, and you won't have problem children. That's how I raised my boys and it worked. Service is over, friends.

Anyway, I wrote this piece to let you

know that **Rosanne Cash** and other concerned music folks, including Atlantic Records' **Rick Blackburn** and a crowd more of us, are worried about the possibility of censorship of our music. You fans should be, too, and should vote against the issue should it appear on a ballot in your area.

Remember, this is not necessarily the opinion of this magazine or its owner. Solely my opinion. All others are welcome to join in, however.

AND HERE'S THE NEAL MCCOY

Meet Atlantic Records' newest act, **Neal McCoy** from East Texas. Neal has been pegged as being one of the most exciting acts to come down the Hillbilly Pike in many a day. His first single, "If I Built You a Fire," has started a blaze at radio and is burning up the charts here and there. McCoy, who's been an opening act for folks like **Charley Pride**, **Janie Fricke** and **Ronnie Milsap**, could be a headliner himself if all goes well. You know, after all, he is not a fake...he's the Neal McCoy.

LYNN ANDERSON LOSES CUSTODY

So how did it all end? Here's how. The court awarded custody of Lynn Anderson and Harold "Spook" Stream III's children to Spook, with generous visitation rights for the mother. As reported in the local press, Judge Muriel Robinson Rice made clear that she found "no one unfit." She counseled both Anderson and Stream to steer clear of drugs-an issue for both parentsand to limit their use of alcohol. The children will visit Anderson this summer and also the singer's parents, Clarence and Liz Anderson, who presently reside in California. Amen. Anderson reportedly will seek to recover her legal costs from Stream. She allows as how her career has been "destroyed" by the dispute.

KITTY HONORED THE GRAMMYS

When the Queen of Country Music, Miss **Kitty Wells**, was honored by the Grammy folks with the Lifetime Achievement Award, the plaque should have read, "Thank You for Sharing Your Enormous Talent With the World, Miss Wells." Personally, I feel it is an honor in anybody's book to be in the presence of the great Miss Kitty Wells. After all, it was she who wailed "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels" and set a precedent for all female singers of country music. Let me thank you, Kitty, for your years of entertaining. I'm sure the Grammy folks felt the same.

RECOMMENDED READING



Elvis: The Boy Who Would Be King

It was the centerpiece of a recent interview in Playboy Magazine. It's been the topic of numerous nationally syndicated newspaper columns. Earl Greenwood - Elvis' cousin, boyhood companion and lifelong confidant - is the single most qualified person to separate Elvis fact from fiction, and he becomes the first blood relative to tell the family's story. It's an honest, insightful picture of Elvis from his childhood in Tupelo, Mississippi right to his tragic passing. This big hardcover edition is also illustrated with many never-before-seen photos drawn from the family archives. It's must reading. Item No. B2A - Regularly \$19.95 - Now \$17.95

Ronnie Milsap: Almost Like A Song

(Autobiography) He was virtually blind at birth. Born into poverty in the Smokey Mountains, his mother abandoned him at the age of one. He was taken from his home and placed in the hands of strangers when he was six. And yet, despite it all, Ronnie Milsap went on to become one of the hottest singers in contemporary music - a performer who holds more music awards than any other male country singer alive today - with more numberone songs for RCA than even Elvis. This is his long-awaited and inspiring autobiography. Hardcover - 272 Pages - 52 Photos. Item No. B5D - Now 19.95

Jimmie Rodgers: The Life And Times Of America's Blue Yodeler

This recently re-released biography by Nolan Porterfield has long been considered a masterpiece by those in country music circles. Take for example the critique by Bill Malone, author and renowned country music expert in his own right, "Not only has Porterfield given us the most complete and accurate account of Rodgers that we are likely to get; he has also provided some of the most valuable insights about early country music, and the South, that can be found in any published work." That's a strong statement, but this book is everything Malone says, and more. Order now and save. Hardcover - 460 Pages - Illustrated. Item No. B4J - Regularly \$29.95 - Now \$27.95

Bill Anderson: Whisperin' Bill

(Autobiography) In 1984 Bill Anderson approached his twentyfifth anniversary in country music. He was a success at everything he tried...on top of the world. Then, in a single moment, his life turned upside down. A drunk driver hit his wife Becky's car and she suffered life threatening injuries. In this compelling account. Bill interweaves the dramatic story of his wife's accident, and its irrevocable imprint on their lives, with his recollections from almost thirty years in show business. Filled with rare honesty, warmth, compassion, and gratitude, Bill's book both entertains and inspires. Hardcover -468 Pages - Illustrated. Item No. B1B - Önly \$14.95

Bob Wills: San Antonio Rose

For more than fifty years Bob Wills entertained the nation with western swing classics such as his San Antonio Rose, Faded Love and Steel Guitar Rag. This Charles Townsend biography from the prestigious University of IIlinois Press has become the absolute authority on this legendary performer and the brand of music he played. As Publishers Weekly said in their original 1976 review, "Townsend's affection for the music and the man is infectious...a fine, engaging, and valuable biography." Softcover - 7" x 10" - 390 Pages - 200 Illustrations. Item B3B - Only \$12.50

Hank Williams: Sing A Sad Song

Nich Tosches of Country Music called it, "A must-read for anyone interested in the man and his songs." Author Roger Williams has resisted the impulse to sensationalize and delivered an accurate and dispassionate perspective of Hank's childhood, his spectacular rise to fame, and the physical and emotional deterioration which finally killed him. This incredibly well-researched edition also contains perhaps the most comprehensive discography you will find anywhere. Softcover - 6" x 9" - 318 Pages. Item No. B1F - Only \$10.95

Roy Acuff: The Smoky Mountain Boy

From humble roots as the son of a Baptist preacher to the "dean" of the Grand Ole Opry, this is Roy Acuff's heartwarming biography, as told by author and long-time fan Elizabeth Schlappi. She draws upon hundreds of personal interviews with Roy's friends, family, associates, and with the star himself. It's a fascinating living portrait. Hardcover - 289 Pages - Discography - Illustrated From The Private Acuff Family Allbum. Item No. B2P - Only \$14.95

B. Mandrell: Get To The Heart

(Autobiography) This poignant autobiography, written with George Vecsey, made a meteoric climb up the New York Times Bestseller list. And why not ... this is both a fascinating and inspiring book. In style, it resembles Bill Anderson's autobiography, the thread tying it together being her near-fatal 1984 automobile accident. Although some critics have described her image as sticky sweet, you will find Barbara blunt, gossipy and outspoken here. She holds nothing back. The feistiness and determination she demostrated back in her youth is reflected on every page. The anecdotes are honest, revealing and funny at times. The story is one that must be read. Hardcover - Pages - Illustrated. Item No. B1G - Now \$19.95

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RENEE, **RENEE**

Good-looking and smart Renee Bell has been named Director of A&R, MCA Records, by Tony (wow) Brown, Executive Vice President of A&R, MCA/Nashville. Let me tell you something, there ain't enough men like Tony who have the brains to put females into positions of authority and give them a title. Most of them let the women work their fool heads off and send them home a secretary, which isn't necessarily bad, if a secretary is what she wants to be. But when a woman works hard and tries to climb the corporate ladder and can't because of a male boss who won't let her, that's when I get mad. There's other females who, like Renee, are very deserving. One of these columns soon, I will start naming names.

MILSAP

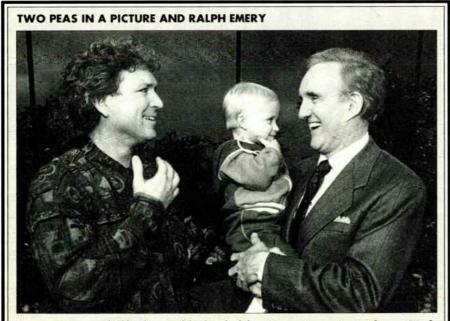
Ronnie Milsap looks like a matinee idol these days. Never one to accept help or pity because of his blindness, Ronnie recently named some of his musical influences as **Mozart, Bach, Lefty Frizzell** and **Little Richard**. Pretty diverse choices, I'd say. Well, Ronnie has been a musical influence himself for a lot of people. His life has given me reasons not to feel sorry for myself. So there, I've said it and I'm not ashamed. With a handicap, Ronnie prevails ever smiling. I strive for this.



MCA Prez Bruce Hinton and Strait's manager, Erv Woolsey, helped George celebrate his 10th Anniversary in the music business.

SET HIM STRAIT, GEORGE

George Strait's son, **George Jr.**, smiled when his dad pointed him out at the American Music Awards, after George Sr. won the Top Male Country Vocalist award. The nine-year-old said he was glad his dad won, but he was really excited to see **Vanilla Ice** and **M.C. Hammer**.



I've never seen a kid look more like his dad than Acme Brown. Isn't it far out? Left to right are T Graham Brown, son Acme and TV host Ralph Emery. I just knew you fans would love this foto, as I do.

MORE SETTING IT STRAIT

Some 111,478 fans crowded the Astrodome for the two-day Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. And **Strait** broke his own attendance record by selling out both shows with this record number.

By the way, I suppose all you fans know that Billboard, the trade mag, ran a 10th Anniversary special really setting the record Strait on George. Yep, George's first single, the Frank Dycus/Dean Dillon penned "Unwound," was released a decade ago. George and wine improve with age. By the way, the new Strait CD/cassette, Chill of an Early Fall, could very well be his best. It's a car length better than the last one, and the last one was a killer. The last, Living It Up, just reached the platinum mark and is still selling like hotcakes. And if you don't like George Strait, I'm glad. That just means there's more for me to like!!

CONDOLENCES TO THE KENNEDY BOYS

Sympathy to my three favorite brothers, **Brian, Shelby** and **Gordon Kennedy**, on the death of their mother, **Linda Kennedy**. The brothers' father, **Jerry Kennedy**, is a well-known record producer who has worked with **The Statlers**, **Jerry Lee Lewis, Tom T. Hall** and numerous other acts. Linda was a wonderful lady, and she raised three wonderful sons. The brothers were there in Shreveport, with their mother, when she died.



530

2

Doll shown smaller than actual seated height of approximately 15"

IT'S ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE THE NEW ALBUM

THE FOLLOW UP TO COUNTRY CLUB INCLUDES THE HIT "HERE'S A QUARTER (CALL SOMEONE WHO CARES)"

PRODUCED BY GREGG BROWN AVAILABLE ON WARNER BROS, CASSETTES AND COMPACT DISCS ALSO AVAILABLE: "IT'S ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE" THE NEW HOME VIDEO

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Record Reviews

Johnny Cash The Mystery of Life Mercury/Polygram 848 051-2

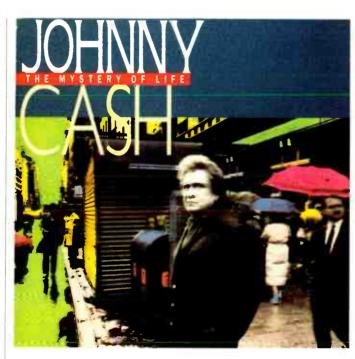
Johnny Cash, as an artist, will forever be inseparable from that long-gone golden era in country music when he was king of the hill and one of the nation's most courageous musical pace-setters.

Now in his twilight years as a recording artist, Cash can never escape that past. (I doubt that he wants to.) He's just too damn old and set in his ways to go and cut a duet with Madonna, or make an aerobics record, or record with the London Philharmonic. What he can do is, from time to time, seek renewed vigor and inspiration by revisiting the well of his own past strengths and glories.

On *The Mystery of Life*, Cash's latest, he has once again gone to the well, and done a splendid job of it, at that. For starters, he's revived a couple of his own musical high-water marks from previous decades: "Hey Porter," a mid-1950's hit on Sun Records, and "Wanted Man," co-written with Bob Dylan and released as an album cut a couple of decades ago.

Cash has also teamed up again with renegade producer Jack Clement with whom he's been making records off and on since his Sun Records days—also in the mid-1950's. Clement somehow always seems to bring out the best in Cash, and here he's done so once more.

Additional assistance—and, no doubt, encouragement and inspiration—comes this time from Marty Stuart, Cash's friend, protege, former band member and former son-inlaw. Stuart, who brings a



bundle of enthusiasm to whatever he's doing, not only sings background and plays mandolin and acoustic and electric guitar on various cuts; he also did some of the arranging on *The Mystery of Life*.

The legendary Tom T. Hall—another dinosaur from an earlier, more memorable era—also joins Cash in a duet on Hall's own hit of yesteryear, "I'll Go Somewhere and Sing My Songs Again." And way in the background you can just barely hear John Prine pitching in on the chorus in Cash's moving rendition of Prine's "The Hobo Song."

All in all, it's like a lighthearted family reunion of sorts: like a bunch of scarred veterans vividly re-enacting Bull Run. There is just enough new material on here to save *Mystery* from being a total nostalgia binge. There are a couple of fine new Cash originals—a trucker's song called "I'm an Easy Rider" and a hilariously self-pitying lament of a lonely man called "Beans for Breakfast"—on which Cash does some of his best singing in years. Cash's recent hit, the haunting "Goin' by the Book" (written by the always timely and eloquent Chester Lester), puts a partly Biblical, partly fatalistic spin on recent world events.

The end result of all this is an album that is both heartwarming and vibrant, and which echoes with the glory of the days when "The Man in Black" reigned supreme. With The Mystery of Life—if only for the moment—Cash is king again. —BOB ALLEN

Hank Williams Jr. Pure Hank Warner/Curb 26536-2

Now that the war's over, after Saddam Hussein gave Bocephus (and Stormin' Norman) a Reason, Hank's dropping (at least for the moment) his politics and getting back to business as usual with a tried and true combination of top-notch material and insignificant barroom sing-alongs. That combination has sustained him well over the years, and he has it down to a science.

The opener, Hank's own "If It Will, It Will" (the first single release), fits the singalong category exactly. Even if the lyrics aren't much, it's catchy as hell. You can sing along in the car, at home or wherever. The ballad, "Angels Are Hard to Find," another Hank original, runs along some old, road-tested, lostlove ground. So does the Edna Humphrey-Jerry Crutchfield tune. "(I've Got My) Future on Ice."

And once you get past the boogie throwaways like the macho "Memphis Belle," "Honky Tonk Train" and "Hollywood Honeys," there is much here that's worthwhile. Frankly, I have never been nuts about Hank's over-reliance on these types of songs. They seldom hold a candle to the stronger material on his records. However, I will say this: at least they don't try to be (and he doesn't try to make them) anything more than what they are: good-time background music for guzzling one's choice of refreshment.

Politics dominate "Kiss Mother Nature Goodbye," an angry, pro-environment song by Roger Murrah and J.B. Rudd that zaps anyone who pollutes or otherwise casts catastrophes upon the land, air and sea. Nobody in their right mind is in favor of oil spills, but those who enjoy Hank's flag-waving numbers and think all environmentalists are a bunch of naive airheads are in for a rude awakening with this one.

The showpiece is Harlan

Record Reviews

Howard's "Be Careful Who You Love (Arthur's Song)," the true story of the late Knoxville songwriter, Arthur Q. Smith. A brilliant composer, Smith's alcoholism and relative indifference to his own talents caused him to sell his songs outright to some of Nashville's greatest singers and songwriters, including Hank Sr. Smith never got a fraction of the royalties he could have made had he kept the songs and just had others record them. The line, Paper is cheap/ They're just tunes, what the hell, effectively sums up Smith's attitude. And Howard, a master composer, has angrily summed the tragic waste of a talent nearly as formidable as Hank Sr. himself.

Two songs provide a connection to Hank's own musical roots. The revival of the 26vear-old Waylon Jennings-Don Bowman number, "Just to Satisfy You" (a 1965 hit for Bobby Bare, as well as a 1982 Number One for Waylon and Willie), was a perfect choice, for it gives the album a sense of continuity with the nowdistant Outlaw days. Even more appropriate is Hank's moving version of the Southern rock standard, "Simple Man" (penned by the late Ronnie Van Zant and Gary Rossington); it symbolizes the Dixierock sound and style that's influenced Hank's music for over 15 years now.

I'd like to see Hank try

some different things in the future. He could cut one hell of a blues album, pop album, whatever. Meanwhile, even if it never becomes a hit, "Be Careful Who You Love" is already *my* choice for song of the year. —RICH KIENZLE

P.S. To illustrate the song, "Angels Are Hard to Find," there's a photo of a very scantily-clad woman included in the CD and cassette booklet which is already causing some talk in Music City. The credits imply that it's the new Mrs. Hank Jr. Guess you've got to expect the unexpected from ole Hank.

Kathy Mattea

Time Passes By Mercury/Polygram 846 975-2

K athy Mattea, the Country Music Association's reigning Female Vocalist and recent Grammy winner, did a considerable amount of advance publicity to pave the way for *Time Passes By*, her new album.

Mattea knew that, musically, *Time Passes By* was a bit of a departure from the past. It's an album in which she chose to follow her heart far more closely than the everpresent demands of the charts. "I don't know if I'll ever feel this way with this kind of innocence again about a project," she said in one recent interview.

Clearly, with the major awards and her first Gold album behind her, Mattea is on a more secure professional footing than ever before. But having achieved that, she's chosen to break the predictable mold, take new risks, map out fresh musical directions and perhaps even subtly re-define herself as an artist.

Thus, Time Passes By is a much more introspective, moody and mature work than any of her earlier albums. As a song collection it lacks overtly commercial chart-toppers like "Eighteen Wheels and a Dozen Roses." For that matter, it has very few up-tempo songs on it at all. Rather, the material tends to be folkish and acoustic-flavored, the performances far more personalized and subjective. The songs, as a rule, dwell more in the realm of inner experience and subjective states of mind than in the emotional drama of the external world.

"Ready for the Storm" (written by Scottish folk singer Dougie MacLean, who also lends vocal and instrumental assistance herein) is a statement of spiritual struggle and affirmation. "Summer of My Dreams" (written by New England folkie David Mallet) illustrates just what a powerful part memory plays in shaping our lives and our values.

The low-key, soul-searching

material on *Time Passes By* also reminds us that Matteamuch like Mary Chapin Carpenter, Nanci Griffith and a handful of others-is very much of a new generation of country singers. Like the aforementioned women, Mattea never grew up in the shadow of a coal mine like Loretta Lynn. And she never worked in a beauty parlor, as did Tammy Wynette. Like Carpenter and Griffith, she's largely the product of a suburban, middle class, white-collar sort of upbringing. She actually put in a year or two at a university before turning to music full time. Thus her roots and musical sensibilities-as Time Passes By so clearly demonstrates-are as heavily rooted in folk/acoustic music, and even pop music, as they are in mainstream country. Which, by and large, is good for the music and good for its listeners.

On Time Passes By, the humor and sympathetic feelings of songwriter Don Henry ("Where've You Been") are in abundance, enhancing the album's unusual flavor. Henry's "Harley," the goofy, sentimental fable of a biker couple and their long lost son, is one of the lighter moments on here. "Whole Lotta Holes," co-written by Henry and husband. Jon Mattea's Vezner, invokes an unusual metaphor to draw a portrait of devastating personal loss. It's also a fine vocal performance from Mattea.

There are other quiet highlights here. (And keep in mind this is the kind of understated album that requires a few more listenings than usual to really "get inside" the interior emotions of the songs.) "What Could Have Been," written by star songwriter Beth Nielsen Chapman (and featuring vocal accompaniment from Emmylou Harris) is a tender, stoic statement that reminds us that even the most disastrous affairs of the heart somehow seem to work out for the best in the final mix.

Mattea's rendition of Julie



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Record Reviews

Gold's "From a Distance" (recorded in Scotland with Dougie MacLean) is splendid, save for the overly-melodramatic finale. It's superior even to Bette Midler's recent hit version. It's kind of a shame that Mattea, who actually recorded this quite a while before the Midler release, couldn't have gotten her version out on the street first.

It's doubtful that *Time Passes By* will be one of Mattea's most commercially successful albums. And artistically, it's not a complete success either. As a song collection, it has an odd lopsidedness to it. And as delightfully eccentric as some of the song choices are, I fear they may fly right out into left field, and over the heads of a lot of listeners.

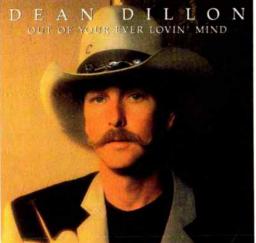
Yet this is no doubt Mattea's most courageous, heartfelt and sincere effort so far—one which she herself surely sensed involved some risk. By the same token, for an artist of Mattea's unusual perceptiveness and emotional commitment to her music, *Time Passes By* also seems an unavoidable step: part of the inevitable process of charting new spiritual and creative territory for the future climb.

-BOB ALLEN

Lorrie Morgan Something in Red RCA 3021-4-R

ome people are calling S Lorrie Morgan Nashville's answer to Madonna. That's the first-and only-time I shall mention that name in this publication. Really, comparing Morgan with you-know-who is a pretty weak comparison, except for the look of the cover photos. There aren't many other similarities. For one thing, Morgan's been around the music business a lot longer (and I mean music-not that thirdrate disco sludge you-knowwho turns out). Secondly, Morgan has always paid attention to her music, unlike you-know-





who. So far, Morgan has also refrained from trying to gross out the media or parading around in her underwear or whatever. Finally, Morgan has had talent all along. She didn't just get it when some press agent came up with a publicity campaign that hit at the right time.

Still, Something in Red is clearly a Woman's Album. I don't say that with a bit of chauvinism or contempt. Let's face it. there are different focuses any artist can take. But if they're as gifted as Morgan, they can make it appeal to evervone, and she's done that this time. Most songs-and her performances-are excellent; Richard Landis has done a conscientious and consistently fine job, and the arrangements are tightly focused and witty. Only a couple of times do they slide into overkill.

Morgan soars on "We Both Walk," the witty "Hand Over Your Heart" and Reid Nielsen's "Except for Monday"-all three combine a 90's consciousness with admirable musical simplicity. Even Dolly Parton shows up, as she appears to be doing more and more on other artists' records. Here she sings along with Morgan on "Best Woman Wins," a Dolly original that unfortunately ranks below even her most mediocre work. Nice as it is to hear the two of them together, the song itself is such a throwaway that hearing it once is about enough.

Strangely enough, the low point is the first song, the stuffy "Autumn's Not That Cold." co-written by Skip Ewing. Here he gives us another doleful ballad that sounds like at least 20 or 25 others. She sings it with minimal passion and enthusiasm. and its artificial, gloomy outlook is totally out of place among so many other fine numbers. From there it's all uphill, though. The high point is the title track, an Angela Kaset number that provides a uniquely female chronicle of clothes shopping as a metaphor for the plateaus of life. Only the overblown, overdone arrangement gets in the way. A song this good, sung this well, can be twice as effective if it's understated.

Two of the strongest performances are magnificent remakes of others' hits. One is George Jones' 1972 hit, "A Picture of Me (Without You)," a number for which Morgan clearly feels great affinity. She also makes Little Anthony and The Imperials' 1958 pop classic, "Tears on My Pillow," her own, without losing the spirit of the original number.

It's hard to tell what directions Morgan's career will take in the future. Something, however, tells me she has captured a level of maturity with Something in Red that, if she follows up on it, should make her next effort even more interesting and give her career even greater depth. And that kind of depth and punch is the sort that you-know-who (refer back to the first paragraph) will never have, even when she's fighting middle age spread and hawking her greatest hits on late-night TV. —RICH KIENZLE

Dean Dillon Out of Your Ever Lovin' Mind Atlantic 82183-4

This album supports the notion that Dean Dillon is a fine writer, but it also lays bare a fair number of deficiencies as an artist. It's all a matter of

style, really. Dillon co-wrote all the songs here, with a variety of partners. And I think that on the more upbeat, uptempo tracks, he sounds great. His voicewhich suggests unfettered spirits like Gary Stewart, David Allan Coe and Merle Haggard without aping any of them-is pleasingly grainy on a track like the thumping "Holed Up in Some Honky Tonk." Even more important, it's commanding. He rides out a wonderful, kinetic guitar line on "Don't You Even (Think About Leaving)." And so far as filler goes, "A Country Boy (Who Rolled the Rock

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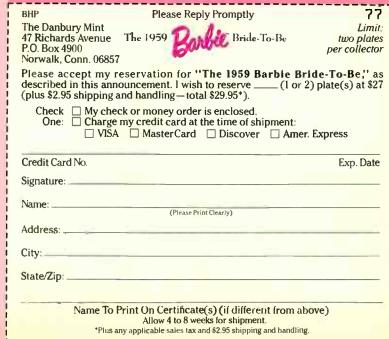
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Away)," his tribute to fallen heroes Hank Williams, Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley, is darn classy. On tracks like these, he integrates a taste of Southern rock harmonics into the basic Nashville format, and both he and the songs benefit immensely.

But on the ballad material. he turns so casual, so unassuming, that he tends to disappear from the arrangements almost entirely. The songs still have personality; it's the performances that don't. This is apparent starting with the very first song, "Friday Night's Woman," and it's not a good sign that he's chosen to title the album after another at modern such stab countrypolitan, "You Must Be Out of Your Ever Lovin' Mind." "The Umbrella Song" and "Her Thinkin' I'm Doing Her Wrong (Ain't Doin' Me Right)" don't bring out the worst in Dillon so much as they fail to bring out much of anything. The fault doesn't lie in the songs.

Which I think is a shame. Because when he cuts loose, Dean Dillon has all the style a singer needs. If only he'd do it a little more often.

-JOHN MORTHLAND

Martin Delray Get Rhythm Atlantic 82176-4

Singer-composer Martin Delray, an Arkansas native, is Atlantic Records' entry in the New Traditionalist competition, and a bit different than most of what the major labels are introducing to us these days. The cover photo alone establishes that. For one thing, his hat's brown, not black or white, and his voice is a dark, smoky baritone with its own character. For another, his look is not so much the handsome, cleanshaven Ricky/Garth/Strait/ Clint look as it is that of Willie. But his debut album reveals a feisty individuality, both as vocalist and writer (The Kendalls' "Old Fashioned Love" was his).



The least effective number here is the opener, a remake of J.R. Cash's 1956 Sun Records anthem, "Get Rhythm," with Cash himself singing backup. The musicianship is excellent, and chugs along in obvious homage to the Tennessee Two. Still, these sorts of songs aren't really Delray's strong point. And frankly, I don't see the big deal about having the original artist sing along. Seldom, if ever, does it improve the performance. One can't blame Delray, however, for seeking the honor.

Delray's formidable side is. without question, his ballads. Not many New Trads could come up with a credible. solidly country version of "The Very Thought of You," the 1930's pop ballad that Rick Nelson revived in the 50's. Delray did, preserving all its pop imagery while making it work as a raw, non-crossover country tune. "If the Wind Blows Sand" likewise manages to be sensitive and intelligent without becoming sappy, which some of Delray's peers haven't been able to do on recent albums either. "Lillie's White Lies," "Someone to Love You" and "Silence Says It All" are also highly effective. In several places, one of Delray's special skills is revealed, a turn that not many singers can pull off without inducing giggles: the mid-song recitation. Twitty could do it, Red Sovine could (though he usually overdid it) and Delray accomplishes it with nary a hint of self-consciousness or campiness.

Delray's potential is clear. If there is a weak spot overall, it's in the production. Producers Blake Mevis and Nelson Larkin would do well to spark up their end a bit. At times the musicians seem to be knocking off their parts with just a little too much cut and dried-ness. Delray himself never lets up, but the pickers seem to be just going through the motions. Aside from that, Delray's staked out some ground that could truly be his own. —RICH KIENZLE



Paul Overstreet Heroes BMG/RCA 2459-4-R

To better understand Paul Overstreet's musical slant on this album and its effect on the listener, you have to take a look at the man himself. To begin with, Overstreet is one of Nashville's most decorated songwriters, and definitely a S.N.A.G. ("Sensitive New Age Guy") in a cowboy hat. He's won a Grammy and the CMA's Song of the Year award, as well as BMI's Songwriter of the Year award for four years running. He's written a slew of Number Ones for Randy Travis ("Diggin' Up Bones," "Forever and Ever, Amen," and "On the Other Hand," among others), as well as hits for George Jones ("Same Ole Me"), Keith Whitley ("When You Say Nothing at All"), Kathy Mattea ("Battle Hymn of Love") and Michael Martin Murphey ("A Long Line of Love").

Overstreet is also the product of a broken home, a reformed alcoholic and coke head, a born-again Christian, former gospel artist. devoted husband and father of four, and—above all—a man with a message. In fact, in the course of his half-dozen or so hit singles and his well-received debut RCA album, Sowin' Love, Overstreet has managed to pass through that slender keyhole that has trapped so many before him: He's beginning to find success in country's secular mainstream with the sort of inspirational music usually associated with the gospel field.

Somebody once put forth the notion-I believe it was Bruce Springsteen in one of his songs-that it's spare parts and broken hearts/keep the world turning 'round and around. Overstreet, whose songs often fly in the face of country convention, would no doubt argue with this. His songs are strenuously devoid of the mixed feelings, dreary R-rated realism and moral complexity at the heart of so many great neo-honky tonk songs. Instead, they reflect easygoing optimism and affirmation (like Don Williams' music taken a step or two further). They are unpretentious, and occasionally even hokey, in their sincerity and emotional directness

A case in point is the fellow in "Daddy's Come Around," written by Overstreet and his frequent collaborator, Don Schlitz. This character used to go out with the guys every night and get whacked and leave the little lady at home, but now he's seen the light and discovered a new way of living: He comes straight home when the workday's through/ He's even done the dishes a time or two/Late last night when the lights were low/ Daddy told Mama, "I love you so"/Early this morning. Mama said to him,/"You might just get to be a daddy again.

"Til the Mountains Disappear," also written with Schlitz, is a lovely reaffirmation of marital devotion based on Overstreet's own "remarriage" to his wife Julie atop a Colorado mountain on their third anniversary. Time in

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this song, as well as in others like it (such as "Love Lives On" written with Taylor Dunn), is always seen as a force that builds and strengthens rather than erodes and destroys.

Such cynicism-proof sentiments echo through every song on *Heroes*. Sometimes Overstreet creeps up behind you with a velvet hammer to get his point across; sometimes he meets you head on and clobbers you over the head with it.

Despite such a strenuous measure of moralizing, his music's quite bearable, hardly ever self-righteous, often enjoyable. Sometimes it's even downright lovely.

-BOB ALLEN

Don Henry Wild in the Backyard Epic 46034

P or a man who writes such funny, eccentric, satiric and socially informed songs as those on his debut album, *Wild in the Backyard*, Don Henry has been in the belly of the Nashville songwriting beast for a surprisingly long time. Most of Nashville's successful writers seemed to have had this sort of originality and eccentricity whipped and ironed out of them long ago by the strict rules of thumb of the business.

After all, writing country songs for a big Nashville publishing company is really not much different from writing generic greetings for Hallmark Cards—even though the pay can be somewhat better. Cranking the tunes out for the big bad radio and record machine, you learn early on not to buck convention: to spin out concise little two-and-a-halfminute gems of sadness, sentimentality or joy that cater to the prevailing tastes.

Oh sure, every once in a while you can slip in a little social commentary. (Songs on the environment are hot right now.) But the prevailing attitude is, keep it generic. If you



wanta be a social critic, then write poetry. If you wanta talk about apartheid or Martin Luther King, then be a folk singer; the thing being—country folks don't care about that kind of stuff.

But Don Henry, judging from the songs on his first album, is a fly in the ointment, for he obviously does care. Henry, a longtime staff writer for the mighty Tree International publishing company, now Sony/Tree, has no doubt turned out his share of greeting cards over the past few years—writing songs for The Oaks, Conway Twitty, Highway 101 and others. He hit his first really big lick last year with "Where've You Been," a blockbuster hit for Kathy Mattea, which he co-wrote with Mattea's husband, John Vezner. The song has since earned Henry (and Vezner) what equals the songwriters' Triple Crown: a Grammy, as well as both the Country Music Association's and the Academy of Country Music's Song of the Year awards.

"Where've You Been" (which is not on Wild in the Backyard), unconventional vet emotionally show-stopping song that it is, gives you a tipof-the-iceberg notion of Henry's skewed but vivid musical perspective. "Harley," an even odder song about a biker couple's tearful reunion with their long lost child, gives you an even clearer idea of how Henry so brilliantly uses comic absurdity to score big points of emotion and perception. Mattea has included "Harley" on her new album as well, as mentioned above.

"Into a Mall," a song based



on Henry's recent visit to his old stomping grounds in Monterey Bay, California, is another good example. It's a whimsical—and somewhat sad—commentary on the leveling effect of the modern consumer culture and how it has a way of erasing history, tradition, pastoral beauty and just about everything else that preceded it.

"Mr. God," written in a similar vein, is a lighthearted but biting observation on the hypocrisy that is rampant in America's mainstream religious practices—about the people God never hears from until their wife leaves or the IRS is closing in. "White House Keys" is a zany fantasy caper in which, in a moment of harmless anarchy, the Oval Office is commandeered by a brigade of street people.

Wild in the Backyard also has its deadly serious moments. "Heart Cut in Half" is a lovely portrait of a woman caught in the never-ending tug of war between the unfulfilled dreams of her youth and the emotional obligations of holding her family together. It makes the timely point that it's perfectly natural to have ended up where you wanted to be in life, yet still mourn for what you may have missed. "Beautiful Fool" is a tender tribute to Martin Luther King, in which Henry laments: Mahatma Gandhi, Jesus Christ/History repeats itself so nice/Consistently we are resistant/...To love.

The brand of humor and social philosophy practiced by Henry has always had a place in the pop music world. He must have spent some time listening to singer/writers like Randy Newman and Weird Al Yankovich. But as the checkered recording career of brilliant country humorists Pinkard & Bowden shows, it's never quite found the same kind of acceptance with country audiences.

Thus, it's unclear just where and when Don Henry will find his following. But the intelligence, persuasiveness and appeal of the music on *Wild in the Backyard* is so undeniable that I feel certain he eventually will.

-BOB ALLEN

Ronnie Milsap

Back to the Grindstone RCA 2375-4-R

T o paraphrase Will Rogers, I haven't heard a Ronnie Milsapalbum I'veliked in years. Lost in the Fifties wasn't bad, but the bloated pomposity of the arrangements and the overwhelming pop and schlock sensibilities that have characterized so much of his work over the past several years haven't been easy to take.

So, I was pleasantly surprised to find myself generally delighted with this album. For one thing, it seems that Milsap has remembered his rhythm and blues roots more than usual, because this entire set has a lean, muscular feeling, studded with grit. It's still polished, it's still slick, it isn't New Traditional. That style simply isn't Milsap's, and he deserves credit for not jumping on a bandwagon he doesn't belong on anyway. This album might not appeal to everyone-if you really like fiddles and steel, you'll not find them here.

Milsap has obviously found an enduring source of fresh material in the rock oldies vaults, and with the right songs, he can still shine. With the opening number, an elegant interpretation of Jimmy Beaumont and The Skyliners' 1959 ballad, "Since I Don't Have You," he continues in

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the slow-dance mood of "Lost in the Fifties." "All Is Fair in Love and War" has a raw punch that's enhanced all the more by a screaming guitar solo from Mark Knopfler.

Dave Loggins, normally known for syrupy ballads laden with self-conscious earnestness, penned the title track, yet another screaming rocker that Milsap transforms into an autobiographical statement about his career. It wouldn't be Loggins, however, without at least one awful lapse. Imagine a song with a line about "fan appreciation." Gimme a break.

Anyone who read Milsap's compelling autobiography can understand his strong stance against child abuse. Random beatings by some sadistic mutants at the school for blind children he attended, one of which destroyed the remaining sight he had in one eve, are reason enough for those feelings. The problem is that the sermon-like "Spare the Rod (Love the Child)" is simply a mediocre song that can't overcome the heavy-handed way it makes its point.

On the other hand, Milsap's gutsy, swampy version of the John Hiatt-Marshall Chapman tune, "Old Habits Are Hard to Break" (with Hiatt himself guesting on guitar), is one of Milsap's best performances ever. In fact, if he could stop aiming at the string and synthesizer crowd—something he's still doing too much for my taste—he could easily get himself a small, roaring band and cut an entire album of Hiatt songs.

I do have one gripe about this album, and co-producers Milsap and Rob Galbraith share the blame. There are only nine songs on this set, yet every one of them runs over four minutes. None of them needed to be that long. They're stretched out with extended fadeouts that become tedious pretty quick, dragging some numbers to utterly unnecessary lengths. Quite respectable songs like "Are You Lovin' Me Like I'm Lovin'



You² and "Love Certified," his respectable duet with rhythm and blues *diva* Patti LaBelle, are dragged down by this musical Hamburger Helper. Better to just add another song or two than make the listener long to fast-forward to the next track.

Those complaints, however, don't negate the overall quality of Milsap's efforts here. I don't really consider this a country album per se, but I think it stands on its own merits. With a bit more attention to the loose ends and the bolder steps that he hints he could take here, his next one could take him in an even more interesting direction.

-RICH KIENZLE

Mike Reid Turning for Home Columbia 46141

I'll readily admit that when I first heard Mike Reid, I didn't get it. I was one of maybe half a thousand people sandwiched into a Nashville nightclub that had the ambiance of a deserted K-mart. Like everyone else, I was there to drink some beer and hear Joe Diffie sing some honky tonk music. The opener that night was Reid,

a celebrated Nashville songwriter recently turned recording artist: a yuppyish-looking, middle-aged guy who sat at the piano and sang songs that had a suspiciously "inspirational" ring to them.

And that evening, being in the mood for beer and loud conversation, and hungry for some good old honky tonk music about drunkeness, infidelity and the general squalor of life, Reid and his "inspirational" sound just went right by me.

When I saw Reid a second time, the setting was equally improbable. He was performing a lunchtime concert at Opryland Hotel for a drowsy bunch of deejays whose general attitude was a cynical, "Are we *impressed* yet?"

But I'll never forget how Reid, at the end of his brief set, had the entire crowd on its feet. (Including Yours Truly, who, as a rule, seldom lets anything interrupt a free meal!) It was as if Reid were a preacher who'd just zapped an entire drowsy, listless congregation with a hundred-thousand-volt lightning bolt of emotion and...inspiration.

A little history is in order here, since Mike Reid didn't exactly appear out of nowhere. Way back when, he played pro football. He was voted Rookie of the Year back in 1972, his first year with the Cincinnati Bengals; and in both '72 and '73, he was voted All Pro. (Which I'm sure means something to those of you out there who watch football.)

But at age 28, Reid opted for a musical career over the gridiron. After a slow start in Nashville, his songs began to catch on. He won Grammys for two he wrote for Ronnie Milsap: "Stranger in My House" and "Lost in the Fifties." A duet he did with Milsap, "Old Folks," went Top Five. Other artists, like The Judds ("Born to Be Blue"), Willie Nelson ("There You Are") and Lorrie Morgan have gotten mileage from Reid's songs. He was voted ASCAP's Songwriter of the Year in 1985.

Now, in his mid-40's, Reid has embarked on a solo career. Based on the sheer power and confidence of both the writing and the performances on *Turning for Home*, there's every indication that it will be a successful one.

The essential edge to Reid's songs, besides a disarming

emotional directness propelled by a raw but thoroughly commanding baritone, is a quality I'd call (for want of a better word) humanism.

Sure, there are a few darkly compelling downers herein. "I'll Stop Loving You" is the testimonial of a long-suffering man who swears that only death will cure his aching heart. "As Simple as That" is the lament of a lovelorn of' boy who wishes love was all so cut and dried that he could go check some sort of instruction manual out of the library and read up on how to get his woman back.

But the songs on Turning for Home that really have an afterbite-like the title song. or "I Got a Life" (co-written with Rory Bourke), or "This Road" (co-written with Tim DuBois and Larry Stewart)are affirmations of love, family and the bedrock ties that bind. They implicitly remind us of how little we'd have in this life without each other; and how without our hearts as a compass, we really have little direction at all. In fact, there's a line in "Walk on Faith" (cowritten with Allen Shamblin) that practically leaps out at you and burns itself into your consciousness while seeming to underline Reid's central theme: Walk on faith/Trust in love/Just keep on putting one foot down/In front of the other.

The key to Reid's persuasiveness and credibility is crystallized in these lines that kick off side A of T urning for Home. His messages are never veiled in clever wordplay or couched in far-out symbolism. Reid says what he means, means what he says, and keeps it all fundamental and to the point. He's part preacher and part therapist, and recently made the public statement that, "I'm not a metaphorical or a symbolic writer. I am a songwriter who desires very much to be understood."

Well, Reid needn't worry: on *Turning for Home* he comes through loud and clear. —BOB ALLEN



p above downtown Hollywood, with those famous streets of movie dreams and everyday nightmares in full spate seven floors below us, we're peering into Dwight Yoakam's psyche. Or at least we're getting a good close look at his art, which might be the same thing: We're sitting in the darkened conference room of his office-Dwight slouched hatless with his long, famously Levihugged legs stretched out on his cool, gray carpet and his long, semi-secretly thinning hair draped down over his big black leather biker's jacket (he's in his everyday look today; you probably wouldn't recognize him)-and we're watching what he calls the "long form" versions of his videos for "Turn It On, Turn It Up, Turn Me Loose" and "Takes a Lot to Rock You."

There are things you need to know about the videos, which aren't exactly standard country fare: no back porches in these clips, no long slow walks down tree-shaded lanes, no sensuous slomo stallions, no '57 Chevys.

The clips' lead character, Daryl Remington (Dwight), lives in a sad, savage, sleazy world much like ours but more so, combining the atmosphere of, say, Berlin in the 1930's, postnuclear-holocaust Bakersfield, this evening on Hollywood Boulevard and closing time in the meanest dive you can imagine wherever you happen to live. The atmosphere has been created for a reason, of course: As Dwight explains, there's a tale behind the tale on the screen.

In moviespeak we're talking "the back story," and that's the term Dwight uses, sounding as coolly casual as any other down-dressed, multimillionaire media player in town.

It's quite an elaborate story, so I'll paraphrase rather than quote directly. Basically, several of the bad things currently looming over our world have come to pass, and what's left of America is ruled without conscience or compassion by U.S. Oil. Pockets of democratic resistance remain, however, so the bosses are stamping out these vestiges by attacking their roots in the family unit, which means destroying romantic love. In practice this involves secretly kidnapping the loved ones of resistant individuals to re-education camps, leaving notes saying the likes of *It's over*. *I don't love you anymore*. *Don't try to find me*.

Thus it is that in the opening moment of the long-form videodrama of "Turn It On, Turn It Up, Turn Me Loose" we find young Daryl twisting in the wind, heartbreak-wise, and willing to do anything just to avoid spending his nights alone....

If you've seen any of this material, from the short-form "Turn It On..." video played on The Nashville Network to the long form of "Takes a Lot to Rock You" on teenvid, you know the essence of the rest: Dwight/Daryl doing his bitter, bleak-hearted numbers in some weirdly nasty postindustrial, psycho-honky tonk performance space, observed by wall-eyed strangers and teased, tempted and taunted by strange, wild, cold, dangerous women.

Ugh. Chilly. What has our boy been reading?

Dwight laughs. "Right!" he says. "Yeah. Too much Pete Dexter. He wrote *Paris Trout*, that stuff."

An excited look flicks into his eyes (the real Dwight, unlike the frosty video Dwight or the hip figure hanging so ultracool on the CD sleeves, warms quickly).

"Man. he's got this other book, *Deadwood*, which is just great, all about the real Wild West; all the filthy ethos of the real pioneer America. Like, there's a bit where this guy rides into Deadwood with this renegade outlaw Indian's head in a gunnysack, and he goes all around town trying to sell it. He's heard there's a big reward waiting in Cheyenne, see, but he doesn't have the gumption to get there, so he's going in the saloons and stuff, saying, 'In Cheyenne this

After spending an afternoon with Dwight Yoakam, country's own ultra-cool hillbilly artist, Patrick Carr establishes what's been suspected all along. This is not your average, everyday, standard-issue country boy. ■ By Patrick Carr

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here head is worth *three times* as much as I'm asking! All you gotta do is take it there!' But nobody will buy it, you know, and it's gettin' *real* ripe...."

Right, Dwight: cool. Welcome to Club Apocalypse, a place in the mind where many of us boys hang our imaginations, sometimes for keeps, more often temporarily. It's an awful dive, rancid with gloom and anger and far from cheap, but it sure gets you going, and in some ways its mirrors reflect reality quite clearly.

Take for instance one of the Club's more popular topics of casual conversation, the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Dwight, like many a Club member, can discourse at length on the meaning of that item, and he does so now. The Founding Fathers, he says, guaranteed American citizens the right to keep and bear arms because they'd just created the country's first standing army, and they wanted to counter that power; the armed citizen, they knew from experience, is better able to resist an armed government's efforts to tyrannize him. So gun control laws are anti-democratic in a very real, direct way. Kings, Fascists, Communists and bureaucrats love 'em.

I tell him I agree with his interpretation, and add that the way things are going, we haven't a prayer. By the time he and I shuffle off to meet our Maker, we'll be lucky if kitchen knives and voting, let alone freedom of speech and the

kind of heat *we* prefer are still legal. He agrees, and we exchange the glum looks and weary sighs which, along with angry

and weary sighs which, along with angry snorts and the occasional outright scream, are Club A commonplaces. Then we get going on subjects like war and racism and environmental pillage and industrial decay and the problems accompanying a testosteronedriven White House and an incumbency-dependent Congress, and we're winding up to a crescendo on the overall decline of American civilization when I glance at my watch and, gee, it's time to straighten up, get to the usual questions.

Dwight perceives the shift. "Sorry, man. You know me, I do like to take off on tangents. I'm worse than usual today, too; I'm so tired, I'm all over the place. I was up half the night catching The BoDeans at the Whiskey. They were *great*."

They usually are. The BoDeans, like almost everyone in their roots-rocking, L. A.-sponsored class-Los Lobos, The Lonesome Strangers, The Spanic Boys, now-defunct bands like X and Lone Justice and The Blasters, cowpunks and Bakersfield revivalists like Dwight himself—have always justified the price of admission more than adequately. Dwight himself is getting better, too: His fourth and current album, If There Was a Way, is as wonderfully non-countrypolitan, kick-ass classic as ever, and even more intelligent, vivid and precise than his previous work. It sounds as if he's really powering up, really finding his groove and focusing his vision.

But what a vision! With the exception of one bitterly accurate song about politicians ("Dangerous Man"), one rousing anthem of communal hope (the old Wilbert Harrison/ "How can a writer, a person who's articulating human emotions, express his views when he's disconnected from himself?"



Canned Heat number, "Let's Work Together") and the relaxed, rollicking "Don't Need It Done" about turning down an opportunity for casual sex, he's given us the most eloquent collection of antilove songs I've ever heard on one album, eleven of them in all. There are no crimes of terminal passion, as there were on *Buenas Noches From a Lonely Room*, no lover's gunshots in the Hollywood night, but the violences of the heart in this work are more wicked than bullets. The songs are really great—original, elegant of form, so cleverly written that sometimes they bring a smile despite their implications, as the very best honky tonk songs often do—but again, you have to wonder: What *has* our boy been feeling?

That question proves difficult to answer. When I point out to Dwight that *If There Was a Way* begins with three relationship-in-trouble songs and moves straight into eight she's-gone songs, he seems surprised. "The sequencing was purely musical," he says. "I was going for a natural kind of rhythm. Now you mention it, though...."

He falls silent a moment, thinking.

"This is weird. Wow. You know, when I was writing 'If There Was a Way'—I was just standing/alone in this room/surrounded by memories/ we stopped making too soon—I remember I thought to myself, 'Why are you writing this song? Where is this song coming from? What aren't you telling yourself? What ominous

piece of knowledge are you repressing?" If this article were a movie script, Dwight would now cast a significant glance to his right—he's sitting at his typically tasteful Art Deco desk—and lock eyes with a silverframed photograph of Tracy, his very attractive Significant Other of some four-and-ahalf years. This however isn't a script, and Dwight's eyes are in fact gazing unfocused to his left, towards his splendid view of the Hollywood hills.

He balks at further revelation. "I'm pretty private," he says. "I don't really want to talk about events in my private life that are current."

"Okay," I say, "but just one thing: Are you and Tracy still together?"

"Yeah, we are, but, ah...Well, you see, it was last summer when I wrote most of the songs for *If There Was a Way*, and let's say this: Given some events in the last couple of months in my life, it's kind of, ah, interesting material I came up with back then."

Okay. The man is very plainly entitled to his privacy in this area, which is obviously somewhat turbulent, so I press no further. Our exchange does however beg an observation or two. For one thing, it makes it plain that Dwight isn't as emotionally insulated from his material as he might like to be, or as some critics have accused him of being. He's an avid miner of the honky tonk mother lode, for sure-in his songwriting he very consciously echoes and elaborates on classic themes he's learned from his and his daddy's heroes, the past masters of the form-but he's no cool, calm prospector (or, to ruin the metaphor but emphasize the point, he's no cynical carpetbagger). His tongue, in other words, is not really in his cheek; the honky tonk themes of anger, jealously, loneliness, despair and love as it's lost, betrayed and unrequited are close to his personal heart, not just his professional position.

He's obviously drawn to that stuff, in fact; it and other depressing or outright apocalyptic matters seem to occupy a relatively large, active quadrant of his consciousness. So it's probably a good thing he doesn't drink, or he might start acting like Hank (who's still the manic depressive to beat in his line of work) instead of just thinking like him. For a rich, healthy, creatively active, macrobiotic modern hillbilly hero, thinking like Hank is bad enough. Or good enough.

e have some catching up to do. It's been about three years since Dwight graced our cover, so we need to know where he's at these days, and where he's not.

Where he's at is, well, established. No

longer the latest sensation or the loudest mouth, he's found his niche—out there on the hard-country/hip-sophisticate edge of the marketplace where an awful lot of dedicated fans and disposable income are located—and he's settling in for the long haul.

Where he's not at is the circuit, either the road or the social merry-go-round of the country music business. He continues to live and record on the West Coast, which automatically disqualifies him from informed-gossip celebrity and CMA Awards nominations, and he chooses to go about the busi-

ness of making and selling records his own way. Basically, that's the rock/ pop way rather than the country way: a carefully conceived, painstakingly constructed album released every year or so and promoted by a tour linked to the album, as opposed to two or even three albums recorded hastily each year between constant road dates. For Dwight's method to work, of course, the albums have to sell a bunch, and that they do. He can afford to take a whole year off the road, as he just did, and

spend two straight months in the studio (plus writing time) on *If There Was a Way*.

One big difference between now and a few years ago is that these days Dwight has nothing to prove. Anybody who cares about such things is now aware that, yes, he is genuinely country, roots-wise (his cosmopolitan credentials were added later, courtesy of 14 years in Hollywood) and that, no, *Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.* was not a flash in the pan. And stardom hasn't gone to his head. He's the same friendly, easily excited, gangly-looking normal dude he was three years ago: not frosty at all. Grateful Dead and Dwight at a party in honor of Deadicated, the new tribute album to The Grateful Dead. Dwight appears on the album.

Bob Weir of The

He seems happy with If There Was a Way. "I haven't derived as much pleasure from making a record since Guitars. *Cadillacs, Etc.,Etc.,*" he says, adding that perhaps his year off the road had something to do with that. "It was real relaxing and rejuvenating in terms of acting and behaving normally again. You know-eating in your own kitchen, reading the newspaper at your own table, not living in some kind of surreal fog of airports and tour buses and hotel lobbies. That leaves you feeling disconnected from your home, your family, your friends, your own world and yourself. How can a writer, a person who's articulating human emotions, express his views when he's disconnected from himself? It's not healthy-not for me, anyway."

There were some new creative steps taken on *If There Was a Way*. One was the involvement of David Leonard, who mixed the album. Leonard's credits include Prince's 1999 and John Cougar Mellencamp's *Lonesome Jubilee* albums,

which set new engineering standards when they were made and still sound wonderful today, and Dwight is well pleased with the man's first work on a real country record. "It sounds great on the radio," he says. He's right; it also sounds great cranked up house-shakingly high and lonesome on the ole CD player, which is something you can't say about many real country records.

Another first was the experience of writing songs with another person, or in Dwight's case two people, the much-in-demand Kostas,

Colorado's country Greek, and Mr. Roger Miller, whom Dwight hails with affection and admiration as "King of the Psychobillies."

"I have enormous re spect for both of these individuals, and I'm flattered that they had enough respect to engage in the process with me," he says, "and Roger—well, what can you say? It was like, wow! Here I am in a room writing a song with Roger Miller! And y'know, Roger told me he'd never written with anyone else. He said he'd

always equated songwriting with a cat going off underneath the house to have kittens; it was something you did alone. That's kind of how I felt, too.

"Really, though, it was a kick a minute. He's so fast. He wrote at hyperboil; his thoughts are clicking off a lap-and-a-half ahead of the other people in the room. I'm sure at times he's found that hard to deal with, and so have the other people, but, yeah: He's a *radically* talented man, and a real gentleman. Nice guy."

And while he's paying his respects (something he does almost religiously; Dwight is hot on cred-



Manuel, tailor to the stars, and Dwight mix business with friendship.

iting and promoting the musicians who inspired him), he wants to go on record for Joe Ely. Joe's name comes up in connection with the soundtrack for the movie *Souvenirs* on which Dwight worked recently with him and John Cougar Mellencamp.

"Joe Ely is one of the unsung heroes of youthful activity in country music," he says. "You wouldn't have had Maria McKee and Lone Justice, or Rank

and File, or The Knitters with Dave Alvin and Exene Cervenka and John Doe, or the whole L.A. scene, the whole cowpunk thing, if it hadn't been for Joe Ely. I remember when he came out to Long Beach in '78 and they wrote about him in the paper—Joe Ely, the magnificently energetic, charismatic writer/singer/performer who's doing country music in a way it's never been done before and cowpunk was born.

"I owe a great debt of gratitude to him, because if that hadn't happened, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do what I did, which was take hillbilly music to the audience that was hanging out in the clubs in Hollywood and L.A., the underground clubs on the peripheral rock scene in '83 and '84."

Now we're on rock-meets-country turf, I venture the observation that these days, the arty-urban hip set would rather eat beef in public, or even get a tan, than admit that country music might be worthy of their attention. What does Dwight think about that?

"Well, I think if you start saying names of country artists, rather than just 'country music'—if you say k.d. lang or Lyle Lovett or Emmylou Harris—some of those same terminally hip people will respond positively. But, yeah, overall there's a real prejudice. There always was, of course. There certainly was when *I* was growing up. If you liked country music in Ohio, automatically you were socially inferior."

Dwight himself doesn't discriminate. When I ask him what he's listening to these days, he says, "Ah, let's see: Concrete Blonde, The Alarm, The Black Crowes...Ah, there's this heavy metal trio from Sacramento I'm managing and Pete Anderson is gonna produce...What else? Oh, yeah, a bunch of old bluegrass tapes."

He yawns. "Sorry, Patrick, really. Today's tough."

I glance down at my list: nothing important except Dwight's folks back in Ohio and Kentucky (they're very well, he says) and the progress of his recreational flying (it's on hold; no time to spare). "We're done."

"All right. Great. Wanna come see the house?"

ver the next few hours we describe a wide circle beginning and ending at Dwight's office on Sunset Boulevard, our transport a bright red '73 Corvette propelled in a series of impatient idlings and the kind of lurching, stomach-dropping accelerations of which only a Vette is capable (Dwight's driving betrays a strong competitive streak; Porches annoy him especially, but he's an equal-opportunity road hog). As we hurtle, we listen to Guns N' Roses and Van Halen on the radio and Dwight's version of The Grateful Dead's "Truckin'," all on tape, and all extremely loud.

The house is our first stop. It's in the Hollywood hills, where you don't get a lot of square footage for your million, so it's *compactly* wonderful: built in the 1920's, Spanish-style, totally renovated, cool, white, minimal, Western.

Like anywhere else the location has its tradeoffs: On a clear day in the room Dwight uses as his

office, you can see 38 miles across Los Angeles all the way to Catalina, and that's very nice, but on the other hand, parking is a problem. Space is so tight on the curving little road outside that if someone has parked across the street, Dwight can't turn the Vette into his garage next to his '84 Jaguar XJ6 and his '79 Harley Davidson Sportster. He has to keep his '87 El Camino outside and his Cadillacs, a '64 Coupe De Ville and the red '39 convertible Buck Owens gave him, in another location entirely. And now the county has distributed huge new garbage containers which take up even more space.

It's like Dwight to fret about such problems, and it's also like him to worry about what people will think of his material good fortune. He has to stand there on the street and tell himself, "I'm 34, and it's okay. I've earned it. I worked for *years* without having a pot to pee in." It's also like him, though, to have shown off his house and his cars and his guns—all his toys—with real glee: a kid after Christmas.

We wriggle into the Vette and roar towards our next stop: the workshop of Manuel, veteran tailor to the brightest stars in the Western firmament.

It's very pleasant at Manuel's, and Manuel himself, a courtly, comfortably bohemian gentleman in his late middle age, is the soul of easily mannered hospitality. Dwight settles in and exchanges pleasantries, and then begins enthusing about the latest progress of his two race horses (more littleboy dreams come true) while Manuel, a real expert on this subject, offers quiet advice gently barbed with good-humored teasing.

There's a father-and-son feeling to the

scene; Manuel's could be a kind of second home for Dwight. And of course it's also a shrine of sorts, which makes it just Dwight's kind of place. He stands beneath a wall of 8x10's signed by country music stars—all the greats, going back decades—and brushes his fingers very lightly against a pair of ornate, heavily sequined trousers hung across a chair back. "Gram Parsons' britches," he says, and beneath his nonchalance you can see how thrilled he is to be where he is.

One more stop after Manuel's. I want a souvenir T-shirt, so Dwight zooms us back to Hollywood Boulevard to a store he likes. I don't find a shirt for myself, but he gets lucky. He sees a design that would, he thinks, make the perfect tattoo for a character in the video he's planning. On an olive drab background, a snake twines around a death's head in a G.I. helmet, its body entering and exiting various orifices and its head emerging, eyes diamond bright and fangs yawning straight at you, from the front center of the helmet.

"That's great," Dwight says, his creative juices flowing. "That's just *perfect.*"



private. I don't really want to talk about events in my private life that are current."

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RICKY VAN SHELTON

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE JULY/AUGUST 1991

RICKY VAN SHELTON Hits the Road

Current Events

Current album, Backroads. The performance music video of Ricky's current single, "I Am a Simple Man," can be seen on CMT and TNN. Ricky was recently part of the Jolie Jones "Yakity Yak" music video promoting recycling, which can be seen on TV and in movie theaters. Ricky says, "Walking on stage is still the best. I love the music, I love the people velling and screaming. That's where I'm happiest."

Current Single

I AM A SIMPLE MAN by Walt Aldridge

I don't know why you always start with me I ain't done nothin' far as I can see And I'm worn out from working too hard

Why don't you give me a break

I know that lately things ain't been so good I'll make it up just like I told you I would But I'm tired and I want to sit down Till my back don't ache

Chorus

You say you're havin' trouble figuring me I don't believe I'm such a mystery Baby what you get is what you see I am a simple man Want a job and a piece of land Three squares in my fryin' pan Don't seem so hard for me to understand I am a simple man

You say we got some things to talk about | SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA A lot of problems that we need to work out But we'd just end up fighting again Why don't we give it a rest

I don't know what else I can say to you I'm doin' everything I know to do And I can't give you anything more When I'm givin' my best

Repeat Chorus



Just a place I can lay my head A little time off before I'm dead A soft woman and a warm bed I am a simple man Don't seem so hard for me to understand I am a simple man

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Tour Dates

ARLINGTON, TEXAS Six Flags Over Texas, July 4 214-825-6957

EUREKA, MISSOURI Six Flags Over Mid-America, July 6 314-938-5300

California Expo Amphitheatre, July 12 916-924-2022

MOUNTAINVIEW, CALIFORNIA Shoreline Amphitheatre, July 13 415-967-3000

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA Concord Pavillon, July 14 415-798-3318

UNIVERSAL CITY, CALIFORNIA Universal Amphitheatre, July 17 818-980-9421

LAGUNA HILLS, CALIFORNIA Irvine Meadows Amphitheatre, July 18 714-855-8095

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA Maderia District Raceway, July 19 805-366-5711

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA Mesa Marin Raceway, July 20 209-674-8511

BRANSON, MISSOURI Ozark Mountain Amphitheatre, July 26 417-334-0650

HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA Von Braun Civic Center, July 28 205-985-4900

PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA California Mid-State Fair, August 1 714-693-9300

LUCASVILLE, OHIO Scioto Fair, August 5 614-353-3698

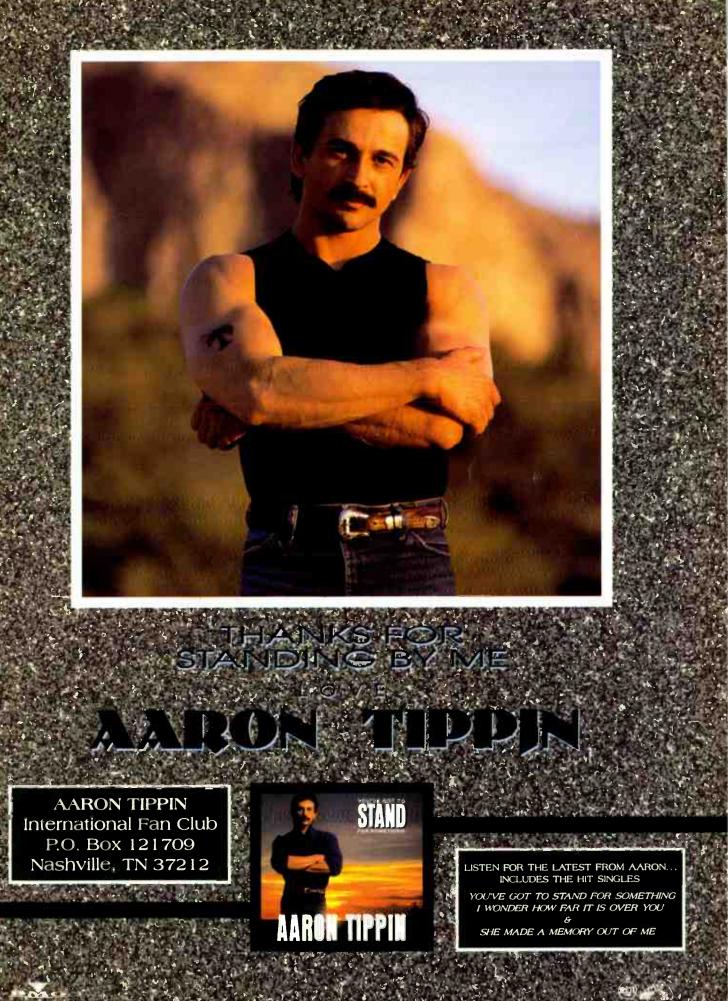
NORTH TONAWANDA, NEW YORK Melody Fair Theatre, August 8 715-692-6601

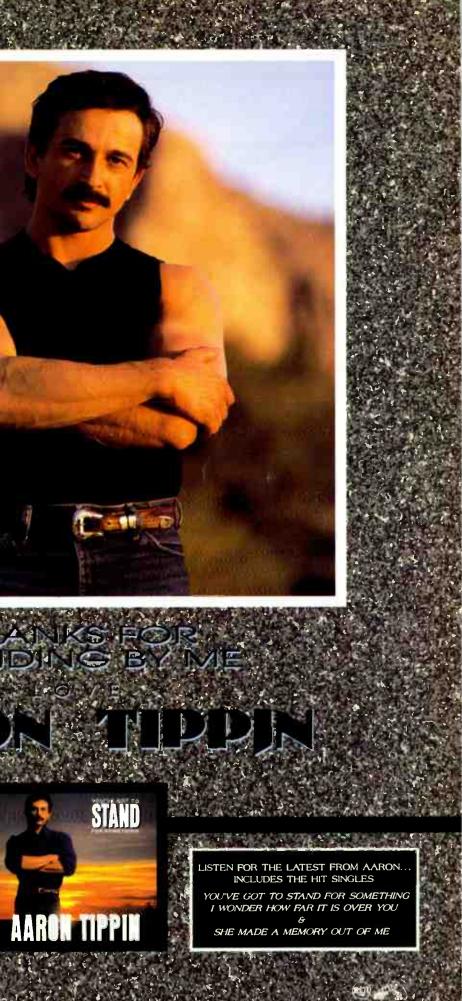
HAMPTON BEACH, NEW HAMPSHIRE Hampton Beach Casino, August 9 603-434-3516

FAIR HILL, MARYLAND Fair Hill Country Bluegrass, August 10 301-333-4793

GROTON, CONNECTICUT Groton Submarine Base, August 11 203-399-4233

WALLINGFORD, CONNECTICUT Oakdale Theatre, August 13 203 269-8721





by Bob Allen

t seems like there's a real serious case of deceptive appearances at work here. Something that's real hard to square.

On the one hand, *here's* Kelly Willis, the voice of Austin: a 22-year-old singer who, on stage and on record (to wit, her new album, *Bang Bang*—her second for MCA) is a daunting presence: a Pandora's box of passion and emotion. A maelstrom of desire, hurt, jealousy and betrayal, sometimes almost frightening in intensity. Raw, gutsy, sensual, urgent, even furious at times, hers is the kind of voice that not only threatens to shatter the champagne glass--it may splinter the control room window along with it.

As such, Willis' vocal prowess has conjured up a flurry of praise from the music press in the past year or so. "Kelly Willis sings sweetly, powerfully and wildly, like an angel with hell-scorched wings," wrote veteran music writer Nick Tosches in *Texas Monthly*. "A rich, libidinal delivery," added Rob Tannenbaum of *Rolling Stone*. "...Closer than most to Patsy Cline's true spirit."

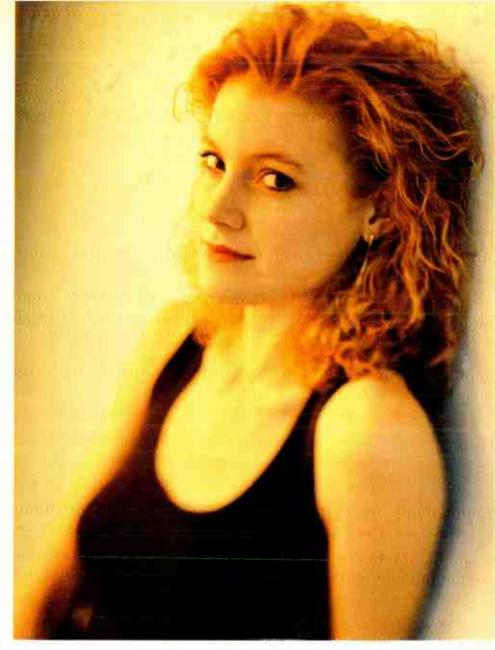
But then on the other side of the coin, here's Kelly Willis in person, doing a midmorning interview at MCA Records' Music Row office. Now that she's checked that larger-than-life voice of hers at the studio door, she appears slight, demure, almost fragile—like maybe a strong wind could blow her away. She's shy, retiring and emotionally self-contained almost to the point of being wallflower-ish. It's almost like that voice belongs to someone else who seizes the reins every time Willis hits the footlights.

"Yeah, I get on stage, I'm a wild woman," Willis giggles softly and rolls her eyes. "But, really, I get off stage, I'm just this scared little person...."

Indeed, in person, this no-holds-barred country-rock wailer is almost urbane she is, after all, the product of Northern Virginia's staid white collar suburbs and an Army brat to boot. When gently pressed on the point, Willis can't even seem to recall getting any positive reinforcement as a child to cultivate that powerful vocal force that lurked within her.

"At school I never sang at parties, or even around my friends that much," she remembers, her reed-thin speaking voice trailing off at times to a barely audible murmur. "I had a lot of friends who maybe had more perfect voices and could sing softer and get it right. But I couldn't. If I sang the way I did, it sounded real rough and ugly next to them.

"No, my parents never picked up on my interest in music, not really." She shrugs. "In grade school I was in choruses, but I was never a big part of them. My mother acted and sang in local playhouses and



Kelly Willis **A Little Girl with a Great Big Voice**

From the suburbs of Virginia via Austin, Texas, Kelly Willis is making waves in Nashville. With her second album out, she's making her mark while honing her craft.

theaters, but she had more of a show-tune voice. And after she and my father divorced when I was nine, I didn't see much of her, except for maybe once a year...."

Unlikely beginnings, it would seem, for a singer who, in the late 1980's, emerged, along with her band, Radio Ranch (which includes her husband, Mas Palermo, on drums), as one of the hottest live acts on the bustling, talent-laden club scene in Austin, Texas. And from there, Willis, with the mid-1990 release of her MCA debut album, *Well Travelled Love* (produced by that hottest of hot young Nashville producers, MCA executive Vice President Tony Brown), emerged as one of the closely watched new female recording artists on the progressive ("left of center" is Willis' term) country landscape.

To date, Willis' single releases have not exactly made big sparks with country radio—perhaps they're just a bit too highdecibel, hard-driving and frenetic for some station programmers' tastes. Still, her music does seem to be seeping out to that potentially wider, more youthful country-rock audience that grooves more to artists like Los Lobos, k.d. lang, Rosanne Cash and Lyle Lovett than to mainstream country kings and queens like the Straits and McEntires.

For a debut effort, Well Travelled Love did indeed generate considerable notice from sources far afield from the standard Music Row beat. Such as: The New York Times ("classic country singing"), The Village Voice ("a walloping voice") and People ("a hearty, kinetic style").

Perhaps no one summed up the whole Kelly Willis phenomenon better than David Murray, a former musical protege of the late guitar legend, Stevie Ray Vaughn. Murray was Willis' guitar instructor in Austin just a couple of years ago; more recently he's played guitar in Radio Ranch. "I couldn't believe," Murray recalled, thinking back to the time in Austin when Willis shyly left him a tape of her singing, "that such a big voice could come out of such a little girl."

Willis laughs knowingly when this last quote is read to her. She explains that she's been hearing such comments for years—ever since, as a 16-year-old schoolgirl back in the suburbs, she became lead singer in then-boyfriend Mas Palermo's rock 'n' roll band.

"I think I felt there was something great about it right off, because, you know, I'm such a soft-spoken person," she remembers. "And singing, people would look twice, because they wouldn't expect it from me." She laughs and shakes her head. "I don't know if they looked twice because they thought it was great. But I just had a bigger voice than anyone ever imagined. Or louder, or something. And I liked that right away, felt good about it. It was a good feeling to be looked at twice, no matter what the reason was."



"Yeah, I get on stage, I'm a wild woman. But, really, I get off stage, I'm just this scared little person."

.......

Kelly Willis grew up in the shadow of the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex in Annandale, Virginia, a commuter suburb of Washington, D.C.

It was Mas Palermo, who today is also the principal songwriter in Radio Ranch, who proved to be the catalyst in her musical awakening. ("We have a great musical partnership," says Willis today.) During the early years, Willis and Palermo both attended the same high school. ("He was a senior when I was a freshman.") But they didn't meet until later. "After he'd graduated, he'd play at parties and things and we got to know each other. Then, later, he was playing in a rock 'n' roll band, and they broke up and reformed, and he asked me to try out as lead singer."

She recalls that, at first, fronting the band, which they named Kelly and The Fireballs, she was frightened as hell. But she also discovered a sense of confidence about her singing that she'd never known before.

"It wasn't like, 'Oh, no, not his *girl-friend*!" Willis points out with shy insistence on how she came to be part of the otherwise all-male Fireballs. "I earned their respect, and it turned out to be really great. Really fun. We were like a ga-

rage, thrashy, rockabilly band, and I discovered all kinds of music that I wasn't aware of before. We would play Wanda Jackson songs, Gene Vincent, Patsy Cline—not the pretty Patsy Cline songs, but the *rockin*' Patsy Cline songs. We'd do rootsy rockabilly stuff, like Los Lobos, The Tailgaters, The Blasters. That sort of thing."

The Fireballs played D.C. area clubs like the Twist and Shout in Bethesda, Maryland, and even won a nomination as "best new band" in the Washington area's annual "Whammy" music awards competition. "It was the same year that Mary Chapin Carpenter won five awards," Willis recalls. Carpenter is another "graduate" of the Washington, D.C., club scene, and even sings about the Twist and Shout in a cut on her latest album.

Ultimately, though, The Fireballs ran into the same sort of obstacles that confront any aspiring band working D.C. and the surrounding Maryland/Virginia suburban sprawl. Despite the abundance of local talent, the region has never been particularly closely watched by the national music industry. And there are relatively few places for a talented but unestablished band with original material to cut its teeth.

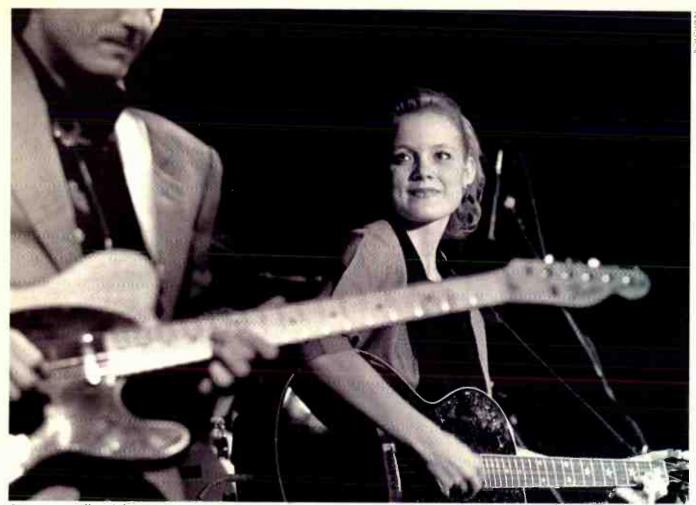
Thus, in late 1987, Willis, Palermo and the rest of The Fireballs set off for Austin, Texas, one of the world capitals of alternative music and the kind of place where they felt *their* sound might conceivably find a niche.

"I was real excited, because I was moving out of the house for the first time," says Kelly with wide-eyed wonderment. "My family, being from the military, was real conservative. When I told them I was going to become a musician, they just about died! I finally made a deal with them, where they would pay my rent in Austin if I went to college." She giggles slyly: "So I took two courses at a community college."

But after just six months or so of playing the Austin clubs, The Fireballs disbanded. ("Some of us wanted to take the music in a little different direction. I wanted to take it more country; some of the others wanted more rock 'n' roll.") Palermo concentrated on his songwriting, and Kelly used the free time to take guitar lessons.

It wasn't long before they began putting a new band together. Shortly after Kelly gave him the tape of her singing, David Murray agreed to come aboard as guitarist. Kelly's vocal talents also attracted other respected local musicians like steel player Michael Hardwick, formerly of Jerry Jeff Walker's band; and bass player Brad Fordham, who'd previously worked the road with Lori Yates.

By 1988, Radio Ranch, fronted by Willis, had become one of the most popular live bands in Austin with a large local



On stage, Willis' delivery is powerful. She's been performing in bands since her mid-teens.

following. That same year, Austin songwriter/recording artist Nanci Griffith happened to catch one of Willis' shows. The next time she was in Nashville, Griffith talked up Radio Ranch's lead singer to her then-producer, Tony Brown, at MCA. In 1989, when Willis and Radio Ranch did a live showcase at Nashville's tiny but famed Blue Bird Cafe, Brown was in attendance. "After the show," Willis laughs, "Tony was telling people, 'I not only want to sign her, I want to marry her." I was elated."

Well Travelled Love, the group's debut MCA album, was released in June 1990. In many ways, it seemed a tough act to follow. It was a powerhouse record, and also something of a gamble. With its raw, high-energy, high-decibel sound, it aimed not only to hit the country airwaves, but to fly past them, toward that elusive record-buying audience where off-themainstream Nashville and Austin artists like Lyle Lovett, Rosanne Cash, Steve Earle, Joe Ely, Robert Earle Keen and Nanci Griffith have found—or, in some cases, are still trying to find—a following.

Bang, Bang, their second album, seems to have risen to the challenge in a different way: overall a bit more subdued and radio-friendly, and perhaps just a little

less champagne glass-shattering than the debut. Granted, the title tune is an aggressive, hyper-kinetic remake of a 1958 record by female rockabilly/rock 'n' roll pioneer, Janice Martin. And there's a full-tilt country rocker or two (like Joe Ely's "Settle for Love"), featuring blazing guitars from Richard Bennett, Bernie Leadon, and Steuart Smith, the nouveau-guitar genius of Rosanne Cash and Rodney Crowell record/video/road band fame. But, there are also some semi-mellow, midtempo, Patsy Cline-flavored tracks ("I'll Try Again" and "Standing by the River") and a couple of soulful, bittersweet ballads Jim Lauderdale's lovely "I'm Not Afraid of the Dark" and the sad, contrite, Steve Farle/Robert Earle Keen goodbye song, "Sincerely, Too Late to Turn Back Now"). This time around, Willis and Brown seem determined to weigh in just a little heavier at country radio.

Yet even after two albums and extensive national club tours, some who've seen Willis on stage recently still wonder if *part* of her—maybe the shy, retiring wallflower part—has yet to catch up with the whirlwind of excitement and change that's been generated by her daunting vocal prowess these past couple of years. There is, after all, a persistent criticism that despite the audial/ emotional intensity she generates, Willis has the stage presence of a mannequin.

"Well...I still haven't broken into my dance number or anything," she grins again, obviously having had this pointed out to her numerous times before. "But yeah—I do have this tendency to just stand there. And I am a reserved sort of person...." She shrugs, adding quietly: "But if I moved around it would seem completely awkward, and they'd say, 'Oh, she's faking it up there.'

"But I really have come a long way," she insists with another shy, somewhat inscrutable smile, her voice once again tapering off to a feeble murmur, then picking up again. "When I first started in Austin, I had terrible stage fright. I would stand up there absolutely still and just shake the whole time. Now I do kind of look around, but it's still scary sometimes. But that nervousness can also give you a certain energy. So I hope I never lose it.

"Really, though, I'm having a lot more fun on stage now that I'm getting used to it," she insists with another shy smile. "I'm definitely getting a lot more comfortable up there....But don't expect me to break into my dance routine anytime soon!"

ALAN JACKSON Steps into the Music World

The real world of small town Georgia was enough for Alan Jackson until the music bug bit. Once struck, he and wife Denise packed up, moved to Nashville, and before they knew it, found success. • By Bob Allen

here is an air of confidence and expectation in the Nashville recording studio where Alan Jackson, his band, his manager and his producer, Keith Stegall, have convened at mid-morning to lay down some final overdubs for Jackson's anxiously awaited second album, Don't Rock the Jukebox: confidence based on a reassuring sense of upward momentum in the wake of the triumphant year and a half since the release of Jackson's debut single, "Blue-Blooded Woman," back in late 1989. Even though that very first single barely crawled up the charts, the next four-"Here in the Real World" (the title song from Jackson's impressive debut album), "Wanted (One Good-Hearted Woman)," "Chasin' That Neon Rainbow" and "I'd Love You All Over Again" (most of them written or co-written by Jackson himself)-all reached Number One. This rush of public acceptance catapulted Jackson, with his strong, confident baritone and his Marlboro Man good looks, into the leading ranks of today's country scene.

In the meantime. *Here in the Real World* surged past the platinum-album, million-sales mark, and "Don't Rock the Jukebox," the title song and kick-off single from the new album, is soaring up the "Hot Country Singles" charts.

For Jackson, 1990 was the kind of fantasy year that most unknown artists plugging away on the fringes of obscurity can only dream about. Overall, he garnered at least a dozen major awards nominations—from the Country Music Association; the Academy of Country Music, where he took home Top New Male Artist of the Year; and the American Music Awards. Additionally, he went home last year with The Nashville Network's TNN/Music City News Star of Tomorrow honor and was also chosen by the editors of R&R, the influential music trade magazine, as Best New Artist of 1990. Even his home video package, Here in the Real World, received a Gold citation for sales in excess of 25,000.

In the meantime, Jackson has been working the road tirelessly in the coveted position of opening act for such blue-chip performers as George Strait, The Judds, Reba McEntire and his good friend, Randy Travis (who recently recorded several songs that he and Jackson co-wrote).

All in all, it's a pretty damn impressive showing for a guy who, just ten years ago, was running a fork-lift in a K-mart warehouse back in his native Georgia. Pretty heady stuff for a fellow who claims he never even saw his first country concert until he was 20—it was The Kendalls, he recalls. Quite a turn-around for a singer who was turned down flat at least once (in some cases more than once!) by every major label when he first started making the rounds in Nashville back in the mid-1980's. Jackson can even laugh the last laugh now about the major-label A&R person who advised him to seek another profession. The label rep kissed Jackson off with the assur-





ance that he simply didn't have "star potential."

"Things like that were hard to swallow," he admits, with a matter-of-fact drawl, devoid of any noticeable bitterness. "But a lot of times you've just got to realize that it's only one man's opinion, and not let it stop you from keepin' right on trying."

There is, of late, one man whose opinion Jackson does put a lot of stock in, though: George Jones. In addition to all the other entries on the brilliant career resume he's assembled this past year or so, Jackson has earned "The Possum's" backing as one of his biggest fans and most loyal supporters. In fact, the two of them have a mutual admiration society going. Jackson's shiny new GMC pickup truck out in the studio parking lot sports an "I Love George Jones" sticker on it. Jones, it turns out, has a matching pickup same make and same model. Only his sports an "I Love Alan Jackson" plate.

Jackson's manager tells the story about how Jones, when he first saw Jackson's new GMC, tried to do a swap on the spot. He offered Jackson his Jaguar (worth considerably more than the GMC) for the new truck. When Jackson hesitated, Jones was undaunted. He quickly rushed out to the nearest GMC dealership and complemented his own extensive personal fleet of vehicles (which sport customized tags, "No Show One" through "No Show Six") with a mint GMC, same model as Jackson's.

"George is a fan of anybody who does traditional country music, which is what he likes and believes in so much," Jackson explains in his rich South Georgia drawl during a break from the overdub sessions. "He's been a good friend to me this year. We've had some good times together, and hopefully we're gonna get to do a duet together here before long."

A few minutes later, the band members enter the studio and pick up their instruments. Stegall commandeers the sound board as Jackson yawns, slides into the sound booth and adds a few playful embellishments to a recitation of a song he wrote called "Playin' Possum," dedicated to Jones.

For a man whose recent travel schedule has taken him halfway around the globe several times, Jackson makes it all seem effortless. But he explains (with a yawn) during a brief break over coffee and doughnuts that he's hardly had time for his feet to touch the ground between trips lately. He was in England not long ago, making several appearances on the BBC2's New West show to promote his first album (which reached Number Two on the British charts). Around the same time, he also did a quick, one-day turn-around to Germany to appear at a huge outdoor festival. Then he was off to Texas to tape an Austin City Limits appearance. The day after our interview in Nashville-a long whirlwind day of recording sessions, photo shoots and TV interviews-he would be off to Canada to open a string of dates for Randy Travis.

"We played just about every honky tonk between Miami and Missouri, all over the East Coast and even out west a little bit. We'd play five sets a night, five nights a week, and we always played real country."

All the same, he looks cool, calm, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed as he relaxes between overdubs. In person, he is tall, blue-eyed, blonde and ruggedly handsome. He is dressed casually in blue jeans, a red T-shirt and new white tennis shoes. He moves his athletic frame with slow. ambling deliberation and seems to be very much cut from the same strong, silent, self-contained cloth as slow-talking, no-nonsense, country-boy veterans like Don Williams or Vern Gosdin. His hobbies alone-bass fishing and fooling with cars-make him a sure-fire candidate for the title of blue collar musical hero of the 90's. And despite all the accolades and adulation, he humbly-and credibly-insists that he's really still the same "good ol' average guy" he's always been.

Given his looks, it's no wonder that at places like Billy Bob's in Fort Worth, Texas, and elsewhere, Jackson has created minor riots as hundreds of ardent female fans either surged around his tour bus or attempted to storm the stage during his show. "I remember the first time it happened, at Billy Bob's, the crowd reaction was so wild it scared me and my band half to death," the 32-year-old singer laughs, astonished and slightly embarrassed. "I was shocked to see just what a difference a hit record can make!

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"But I guess I've *sorta* gotten used to it," he shrugs. "I'm flattered to have people that interested in me and the music and everything. I'd sure rather have 'em be doing that than throwin' rocks at me!"

When one glances over his assembled biographical data, Alan Eugene Jackson seems an unlikely candidate for such adulation, and an even more unlikely candidate for his now almost certain future as the next country hunkster headed for that rare superstar status presently enjoyed by Strait, Travis, Black and Brooks. Jackson admits that singing country music was not something he really fantasized about much as a kid growing up in the South Georgia town of Newnan, about 40 miles southwest of Atlanta. The only thing his family listened to on the radio back then was gospel music, and he himself was far too busy buying and selling and tinkering with his various secondhand vehicles to get out and see much live music.

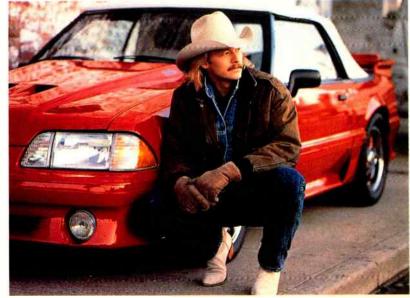
Although *Here in the Real World* is highlighted by nine moving original songs (most of them co-written with noted songwriters like Keith Stegall, Roger Murrah and Jerry McBride), Jackson claims he never even tried his hand at songwriting until five or six years ago, around the time he decided to move to Nashville. "No," he concedes with a hearty laugh, "it's not like I was born with a guitar in my hand. I was more interested in cars and girls for the whole rest of my life than I was in writing songs! I did start singing when I was a teenager. I did a little duet thing with a friend of mine. We later had a band and played on weekends. But I always had a day job.

"Ya see, in the small town where I come from, it was just expected that you'll do what everybody else does: go to school, go to college, get married and have a kid or two," adds Jackson who himself, at age 20, married his wife, Denise, whom he first met in high school when he was 17. "A music career was just something that seemed out of reach."

Jackson was born in 1958, the youngest of five children, all the rest of them girls. (By the time he came along, they'd run out of bedrooms in the small family house, so he ended up with the hallway as his room.) He admits that, on account of this, he was a trifle spoiled. "We never had that much money, but I sure did get a lot of attention," he grins. "My parents are great people. My father's just a real special guy—maybe the only truly good man I've ever known. He's as honest as they come. I'll be happy to turn out half as good."

On the road with Randy Travis—the two have collaborated on songs. At home, Jackson takes time for his first love, cars.

Growing up, Jackson held a variety of jobs. He built houses, drove the K-mart fork-lift, fixed shoes, sold janitorial supplies, worked in a shoe store, a furniture



store and a harbecue restaurant. But most of his employment revolved around sales, automobiles or-more often-both. "I'd buy and sell cars," recalls the singer, whose most recent purchase, along with the GMC truck, is a late-model, super-charged, customized Mustang GT convertible. "I've done that all my life. I worked in a Ford dealership and in a used car dealership and had my own wholesaler's license for Georgia. My daddy's a mechanic, and I kind of grew up in the garage, foolin' with carspaintin' 'em, fixin' 'em up. Cars, boats, motorcycles, vou name it. I know I've owned about 200 cars, boats and motorcycles since I was 15. And I'm still counting!"

Jackson and Denise were married in 1979, just shy of his 21st birthday. (Their first child, a daughter named Mattie, arrived last year.) He recalls that he sold his prize automobile the only one he ever kept for any length of time—a 1955 Thunderbird, to make the down payment on their house. He was well into his 20's before his characteristic instincts of caution, conven-

tion and practicality were overwhelmed by an undeniable urge to develop his musical talents and explore the career opportunities in that seemingly hopelessly competitive field. He remembers being particularly inspired by a friend of his who began flying small planes, hoping someday to become a jet pilot.

"That was a pretty big job to hope for in our little ol' town, and I laughed at him at first. But four or five years later, he ended up as a pilot for a major carrier, making big money. That really made me look at my own life and decide that I needed to get on up to Nashville and try and do what I really wanted to do. But it was still a big jump for me, because I'd lived in that little town all my life and had never really traveled much. Just moving away from family was a big step."

So, he dragged his feet until 1985, when he and Denise reluctantly sold the house and practically everything else they owned in preparation for the move.

Then 24, he realized that the key to any fledgling musical career is good original material. So he spent his last summer in Georgia working at a marina near Newnan, where he holed up alone in a trailer in his spare time and began writing. Denise temporarily relocated to



Alan Jackson with his idol, George Jones.

ALAN JACKSON'S TOP TEN FAVORITE SONGS

...................

"He Stopped Loving Her Today"	George Jones
"I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry"	Hank Williams
"Today I Started Loving You Again"	Merle Haggard
"Rose Colored Glasses"	John Conlee
"Farewell Party"	Gene Watson
"Big City"	Merle Haggard
"Together Again"	Buck Owens
"If You're Gonna Do Me Wrong, Do It Right"	Vern Gosdin
"Once You've Had the Best"	George Jones
"The Grand Tour"	George Jones

Greensboro, North Carolina, where she took a job as a flight attendant for US Air. Her work led to a chance meeting with singer Glen Campbell. Denise introduced herself to Campbell when she saw him in the Atlanta airport and told him about her husband and their plans. Campbell gave her a business card and told her to have Alan drop by his publishing company in Nashville once they got settled in.

Before leaving Georgia, the always prudent Jackson had lined up a day job in Nashville working in a boat factory. But, he says, "It was in this big metal building, about a hundred and thirty degrees in there, with all these fiberglass fumes. I just decided I didn't want to put up with that all day long and then have to come home at night and still concentrate on the music business."

Instead, he walked into the personnel office at The Nashville Network on his first day in town and was hired to work in TNN's mail room. "They were really good people there," he recalls. "They tried to help me as much as they could. And being around the shows and everything really gave me a feel for Nashville and really helped me learn about the business." During these early times in Nashville he became friends with Randy Travis, who was then a performer and short-order cook at the Nashville Palace, a nightclub just across the road from TNN's office. He remembers stopping by to congratulate Travis when his first records started to hit. wondering if the same thing could ever happen to him. (Ironically, Jackson's producer, Keith Stegall, a noted songwriter and former recording artist, produced Travis' first album back when Travis was still Traywick).

Jackson began playing solo gigs at local hotels and occasionally at the Nashville Palace. Eventually, as he continued putting hours and hours into polishing his songwriting, the folks at Campbell's publishing company signed him as a writer and put him on a \$100-a-week draw. It was not enough to live on, but it was enough to enable him to leave the mail room job and put his own band together. With the Campbell organization booking him, he was soon touring far and wide.

"We played just about every honky tonk between Miami and Missouri, all over the East Coast and even out west a little bit. We'd play five sets

a night, five nights a week, and we always played real country. A lot of places wouldn't hire you if you wouldn't play rock 'n' roll. But we wouldn't do that. But whenever we did play somewhere, they usually asked us back. We also had a chance to play a lot of original material out there, and it always seemed to go over well." Nevertheless, he failed to stir any interest at the major labels.

Then came another good turn from the folks at Glen Campbell's organization they put him in touch with Barry Coburn, an ambitious young manager from Australia intent upon making his start in the country music world. Coburn saw in Jackson the star quality few others had perceived. By a timely coincidence, Arista Records decided to open a Nashville office. Jackson was one of the first artists Arista signed, and his "Blue Blooded Woman," released in late 1989, was one of the first singles from the label's untested country division.

"I really didn't expect things to take off as fast as they did," Jackson muses. "Sometimes the whole thing just doesn't quite grab me. But then all of a sudden, I'll just be sittin' somewhere and it'll kinda sneak up on me, and I'll realize just how lucky I am."

Some stars you meet in offices, some in dressing rooms, some over lunch. We first spent time with Michael Martin Murphey of "Wildfire" and "Geronimo's Cadillac" and "What's Forever For" fame on the back of horses. It was at the end of a cattle drive in Montana. Michael could have left the cowboys and cowgirls to do their job and fled to air-conditioned safety, but somehow it never crossed his mind. So we plodded along a dusty road, keeping the cows in line and talking to the cowboys and cowgirls. Months later, we caught up with Michael again, this time in the spectacular Rocky Mountain scenery around Copper Mountain. Colorado, where he'd just finished another of his semilegendary WestFests, a threeday collection of cowboy music, Western arts and plain, hard-core fun. He finally consented to get off the horse and answer 20 Questions.

A few days in Colorado sure beats the heck out of Music City, doesn't it? Right. You know, I enjoy getting out in the wilderness, seeing wildlife, skiing. It's also soothing for your soul, good for your health. A few weeks of cross country skiing and I feel like a lion.

2 You almost singlehandedly rescued the "western" portion of "country and western" music. Why? I've collected cowboy music for years. It's kind of a hobby old sheet music, recordings. I just love it...I've attended more and more Western events, and where we live, we ride every day.

You must be a real trial for a record company.You never stopped moving. never allowed yourself to be pigeonholed.

I love change. I love finding out things. It's ironic that cowboy music would be considered something so revolutionary in our time, since it is at the oldest base of the tradition of country and western music. Some of this music has been around for 150 years, for God's sake! Much like old-time music and



- by Michael Bane

20 Questions with MICHAEL MARTIN MARTIN MURPHEY

bluegrass, which was hidden from country radio for so long, until people like Ricky Skaggs brought it back. Cowboy music needs a comeback, a renaissance.

Last year's album, Cowboy Songs, was a real revelation for me. I always thought of cowboy music like most people...like cowboy movie music. There's really a big difference.

It's because the only thing people have access to, mediawise, is the western movie. What you've got to do is give the people a way to hear this music, to let them be a part of it. Otherwise, the music's going to die. It's going to pass away if we don't let outsiders in. We can't be a clique. Like the *Cowboy Songs* record. It had some detractors, but I think the way you measure how something comes from the heart is by its detractors.

5 I think what you're doing to "save" cowboy music is really important.

Well, in some ways it forces us as Americans to confront a myth we've grown up with, whether we wanted to or not. We have two kinds of "Americas" that are identifiable anywhere in the world as American. We have jazz, people like Charlie Parker and Miles Davis—that's an American thing. We have the American black experience that's become uniquely us. And then we have the cowboy.

And that's also America. Every country has its folk music. Our folk heroes are those people, those character types. So it didn't surprise me when Clint Eastwood, a man who's probably done more with the cowboy image than any man alive, was fascinated with directing a movie about a person like Charlie Parker.

6 It's tapping the mythology. It seems to me that when a music reaches down and taps that baseline mythology, it takes on a power.... It does. Look at the similarities. A lot of these jazz guys were like the cowboy image. Lone guns. Outsiders. **7** Is that part and parcel of why you've been a loner in this business, tapping that same mythology?

I don't know. I really like people. I'm not a guy who spends a lot of time alone. I think I'm known as a loner in Nashville because I don't live there. I've just never chosen to live in a major music center. Because that's not my roots, my people. I want to be with the people I grew up with, in the region I've loved since boyhood. I don't want to leave.

You don't get off that easy. Your music has been relentlessly anti-trend, following its own path, even when that path was hard.

If you get out of your area of expertise, you're going to be real unhappy when the time comes and you don't have an audience for what you do. But if you're playing from the heart, when you play it, even if there's nobody else in the room, it feels good. That's the music you should play. You should play the music that when you're way up in the woods somewhere, and you get out your guitar, and you're alone and maybe feeling down...whatever you would play at that time for yourself, that's the music you should play for everybody else. One thing you can't compromise, can't do by committee, is art.

9 A lot of committees have tried...

And failed. But I'm not a lone gun. I just do a lot of things the Nashville people don't do. I like to go to Nevada on camping trips. I like to spend Sunday afternoon riding my horse in the wilderness. Not at a restaurant with a record company executive doing lunch.

10 It must be an incredible feeling to have your son in your band.

It's been really instructive. A young person in a band like that, half as old as you are, brings to a band—whether it's your son or not—a sense of energy, of change. Last year he took up the saxophone he's played country guitar since he was four or five—and he totally immersed himself in jazz. A young guy doesn't have all the responsibilities. All he has to do is play. It's real challenging to me—because of him, I have to practice a couple of hours a day on my instrument. Not practicing to get a hit or anything like that, just working the scales. And, of course, I'm very proud of him.

It has had its ups and downs, though?

Oh, yes. It hasn't been a Pollyanna thing. We have had our moments, and it's usually been over the fact that if he's going to be the lead guitar player in my band, he has to do exactly what everybody else in the rank-and-file band does. I couldn't ever give him any privileges because if I did. it would wreck the band. Then I would be disheartened for a while, because here's my son on tour, and I'm not talking to him, not spending a lot of time with him, because he's with the band! I added up all the problems I could be having. and that seemed like such a small problem. And he was there, and it was a shared experience.

12 Your son's 20. Is it very hard to believe you have a kid that old?

No. No, it's not. I don't know. I just go through life. I don't really think much about age or things...I was pretty good friends with Willie Nelson when I lived down in Texas, and I always thought Willie was a great handler of age. Is he supposed to crawl off in the dark because he's 51? He just got out there. He never believed he was over the hill. He's a real inspiration to me.

13 It isn't easy to get older, is it, when you're a performer...

It is tough for some of the older stars, especially now, because country music was always the music where you could be an olderstar, still have hit records. And now, California consciousness has crept into Nashville. It's the latest, the newest, this year's model, just like rock 'n' roll. If there's anybody in the music business that I feel sorry for, it's the brand-named, bright young stars who get to the top, sell a million overnight, and then, bang. It's rough.

14 It's moving that fast... Then you look at a guy like Johnny Cash—Johnny Cash is an incredible entertainer. Creative. Always looking for the new thing. It's one of the most disheartening things in the whole industry to me that radio has treated Cash the way it has, because the last two or three albums he's made have been really interesting, really good. A lot of the older stars are just as good as they ever were, and we shouldn't abandon them.

15 Is that element of longevity one of the things that attracted you yourself to country music?

Yes, yes, it was. I liked the idea of an audience sticking with you through your whole career. And they still do. They do! Radio's on a trend of getting the hottest thing, we've got to sell more soap. Well, isn't it odd that with all that philosophy going down, twothirds of what you hear on country radio is recurrent music? Oldies. Radio can't do without them, either.

16 You did one of my alltime favorite country songs, you know, the soundtrack title song to the movie Hard Country. It's the quintessential first line of any country song—"I've been galvanizing chain link fence..." (Laughter.) I got that because my dad used to work at a fence factory, and you talk about some hard-core, honky tonk country guys, well, the guys who worked out there at the plant were it.

I know you're into this...I've been reading a book recently that's a recasting of the myths of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table...

You know, my major in school was medieval history. I think the reason I did that was I was singing country music at the time, and I was fascinated with the troubadour, the old oral tradition, some of which got written down a couple of hundred years later. You go back and read classic history, most of it comes from recited history, poetry people memorized, the traveling minstrels. The closest thing we have in modern life is the wandering musician, the songwriter.

18 If you really want to reach, you can say the cowboy mythology was founded at the Round Table... Well, yes. It's even closer if you look at that historical period. The Spanish vaqueros were the original cowboys the Argentenian gauchos are the closest thing we have to the old Spanish cowboys. And Spain was very big on knighthood.

19 The cowboy mythology still surrounds us, even today.

And one thing that's good to look at is how much is real, how much is true? Separate fiction from fact. And a good deal of what really happened is more interesting than the facts that have been put together. What really got the cowboy myth off the track was the celebration of the outlaw. We became so fascinated with the bad guys that we forgot to look at the good guys.

20 Not to come down to earth, but before we leave, I wanted to ask you about WestFest, your cowboy music festival, which, by the way, is the single best music festival I've ever been to...

Thanks. This year, we're taking them on the road. We're taking cowboy music to eight cities, including Houston and Indianapolis, Lake of the Ozarks and, of course, Copper Mountain, Colorado. It's the same format you've seen, lots of music, some classic cowboy singers and poets, Western artists and artisans, ceremonial Indian dances, horse riding, you know all that stuff. This will be our fifth WestFest, and we just love doing it. It's taking the culture, the music, to the people. So the music and the culture will live forever. And that's worth doing.

FOR CASA MEMBERS ONL



Hank Thompson Special

The most essential of Hank Thompson's recordings are available on Capitol's Collector's Series (Capitol CDP 7-921242), a compact disc that includes his 20 biggest hits. They've been remastered so that the sound is even better than it was on the original recordings. The centerpiece is the booklet, which includes a color photograph of Hank's old LP's, 78's, 45's and sheet music. The 20 numbers encompass everything from "Humpty Dumpty Heart" through "Wild Side of Life" and "Rub-a-Dub-Dub," to "Rockin' in the Congo," "Oklahoma Hills" and "Hangover Tavern." The CD-only release is available for \$18.98.

One of Hank's classic Capitol albums, 1961's Live at the Golden Nugget, has been reissued by Longhorn Records (HAT 3076). It includes 13 cuts, all of them recorded at the famous Las Vegas casino. Songs here are "Honky Tonk Girl," "A Six Pack to Go," "Nine Pound Hammer," "I Guess I'm Getting Over You," "I'll Step Aside," "Just One Step Away, "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You" and Hank's take on the classic fonk song, "John Henry" as well as a version of Hank Williams' "Lost Highway." Live at the Golden Nugget is available on cassette or LP for \$12.98.

Both of these are worth having. Together they make up a nice chunk of Thompson's best work. CMSA members, as always, deduct \$2.00 off prices listed. Include membership number with your order. See instructions below for ordering.

Buried Treasures Special

Rich Kienzle has been hard at work uncovering some real treasures this time around. There are longawaited boxed sets on Ernest Tubb, Bill Monroe (a second volume). Hank Snow (the much talked about Thesaurus transcriptions) and Flatt and Scruggs. He also reviews Hightone's reissue of Gary Stewart's RCA debut album from 1975. More Gary Stewart reissues are on the way from

Hightone, so keep reading these pages. Also out now is the second volume of Rhino's *Legends of Guitar*—*Country*, the series they're doing with *Guitar Player Magazine*, and a Roy Acuff reissue from Rounder.

As a CMSA member, you're entitled to a discount on all items listed in this section. On the boxed sets, we've been forced to raise our prices due to increasing costs, but we've come up with a more generous member's discount. On 4-CD boxed sets (Bill Monroe and Flatt and Scruggs), while the regular price is increased to \$108, members pay just \$89.95! On the 5-CD sets (Tubb and Snow), regular price is \$135, but for CMSA members, the discount price is \$109.95. All other items, deduct \$2.00 off the listed price. Membership has its privileges-and pays for itself! For ordering instructions, see the How to Get These Treasures box on the Buried Treasures page. Don't forget to include membership number.



Essential Collector Special

CMSA members are also entitled to a discount on items listed in Essential Collector. You may deduct \$2.00 off the price of each item covered in this section. And Rich has some fine offerings this time around. Loretta Lynn figures heavily, with items to delight her fans-there's a new video biography on her, along with an MCA reissue of her own hits, and some of her hits with Conway Twitty, There's more, too. Be sure to include your membership number, and follow ordering instructions in the box on the Essential Collector page.

How to Order

To order any of the items listed on this page, send your check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 7891N. 329 Riverside Avenue. Westport, Connecticut 06880. Include \$1.95 postage and handling for first item ordered, \$.95 for each additional item.Members taking their discount must include membership number

MEMBERS POLL/JULY 1991



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, cassettes or compact discs) in the last month? Yes No
- How many records?_____cassettes?_____CD's?____
- 2. Which ones did you like best? List performers and album titles.

Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

3. List the numbers of your top five favorites from the Top 25 in this issue.

Singles (list 5 numbers)			Albu	ms (lis	t5nu	nbers))	
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What Do You Think of Country Music Magazine?

This month, we'd like to find out your thoughts on *Country Music Magazine*. For each of the following sections of the magazine and CMSA *Newsletter*, please indicate your readership of the section by checking the appropriate column.

I read this section:	Always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
Letters to the Editor				1000
People		1		
CMM Update				
20 Questions		i i		
Feature Articles		1		
Centerfold				
Record Reviews				
Essential Collector		1		
Buried Treasures				
CMSA Newsletter:				
Reviews and Features				
Collections				
Readers Create				
Legends				

Who Can Vote

Only CMSA members are eligible to vote. If you are a member, write your membership number here.

If you are not a member but would like to join and vote immediately, fill out the poll and enclose your check for \$16 for one-year CMSA membership (you get an extra year of *Country Music Mogazine*, too).

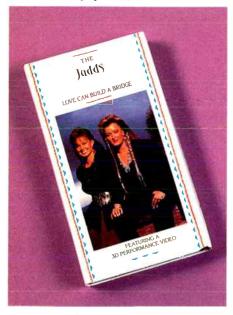
Fill out poll and mail to: July Poll, Country Music Magazine, 14th Floor, 380 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

Nashville Warehouse EDITOR'S CHOICE

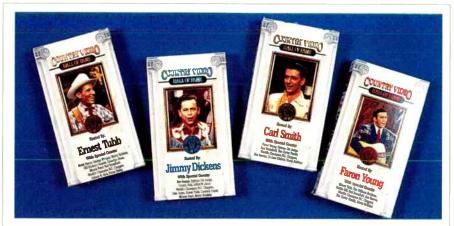
THE JUDDS: LOVE CAN BUILD A BRIDGE

We are all saddened that Naomi and Wynonna must split up because of health reasons. Everyone loves The Judds, particularly their dedication to their fans and their compassion as portrayed through their music. At this very moment, The Judds are traveling around the country to perform their farewell tour, Love Can Build a Bridge. I have seen this concert on two separate occasions, and they are fabulous!

Their song, "Love Can Build a Bridge," expresses the philosophy that has underlain Naomi's and Wynonna's lives and music for years. For their new video, *Love Can Build a Bridge*, The Judds and the film makers spent 16 months creating the world's first three-dimensional music video, with love and devotion to their audience and music in mind. Follow The Judds as they pack up their crew, equipment, friends and loved



ones, and set off to the beautiful desert of Sedona, Arizona, to shoot their 3D videothey had to ride a chopper up a mountain and sing on top of a cliff! The finished product also includes interviews and scenes from their last tour together and 3D glasses to make it all look right. Among the featured songs are the following: "This Country's Rockin'," "Born to be Blue," "Rompin' Stompin' Blues" and in 3D, "Love Can Build a Bridge." Furthermore, Naomi shares video moments from her recent weddingyou get to see her walking down the aisle! That's not all! You also see Wynonna sing her mother a special wedding song, observe dancing at the reception and are present for the good ole family photo session. Love Can Build a Bridge is 60 minutes long and costs only \$29.95, #V8V.



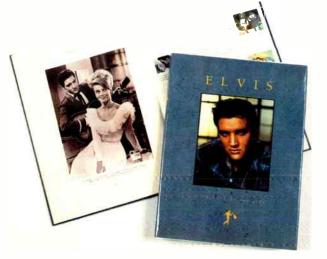
COUNTRY VIDEO HALL OF FAME

Imagine, four legendary stars host four different Hall of Fame videos. Ernest Tubb (#V3B) hosts Webb Pierce, George Morgan, Marty Robbins, Old Hickory Quartet, Grandpa Jones, Minnie Pearl, Rod Brasfield, North Carolina Cloggers, Johnny & Jack and Faron Young, and sings "Two Glasses, Joe" and "Letters Have No Arms." Next, Little Jimmy Dickens (#V4C) hosts Jim Reeves, Ernest Tubb, Cowboy Copas, Minnie Pearl, Marty Robbins, the Solemn Ole Judge, Cousin Jody, Lonzo & Oscar, North Carolina Cloggers and Okie Jones, plus performs "Hillbilly Fever." On the third video, Faron Young (#V5F) is host; his guests include: Ernest Tubb, The Wilburn Brothers, Goldie Hill, Rod Brasfield, Jim Reeves, Marty Robbins, The Carter Family and the World's Champion North Carolina Cloggers. You'll also see Faron doing "If You Ain't Lovin'." The fourth video, hosted by Carl Smith (#V6G), includes performances by Faron Young, Marty Robbins, Jim Reeves, The Carter Family, the Solemn Ole Judge, Rod Brasfield, World's Champion North Carolina Cloggers and Dr. Lew Childre, plus Smith on "Satisfaction Guaranteed" and "Darling, Am I the One." All these legends are in their prime. You can order each video separately for just \$9.99, or you can save \$4.00 and buy all four at only \$35.99. Now that's a deal! Please don't forget the product codes.

ELVIS: A TRIBUTE TO HIS LIFE

Elvis Presley was a phenomenally successful performer. He made it big in the recording industry, the movies, on television and in live concerts. Elvis' fans remember him in many different ways. However you remember him, you'll find something to please you in *Elvis: A Tribute to His Life*. Hundreds of full-color and black-and-white photographs of the King accompany an admiring commentary on his life—there are pictures on every page! Like an album filled with muchloved family photos, this book represents Elvis' extraordinary life and career. It is a tribute to the young Elvis and his electrifying peforming style; to Elvis the movie star, and to Elvis' explosive concerts in Vegas.

Elvis has become a legendary figure, and



while we honor him in every way, Elvis: A Tribute to His Life is also as straightforward as it can possibly be. This book tells the familiar stories, but it also explains contradictions and gets to the truth behind the Elvis legend. For only \$29.99, #B3F, you get his story plus a chronological listing of his films and single recordings, and 256 pages of fabulous photos, all in a hardcover, 11" x 14" book. Imagine the size of the enlarged picturesthey look great!

Nashville Warehouse

COUNTRY MUSIC BELT BUCKLES

Look at these gorgeous belt buckles made out of genuine pewter, and the vibrant enamel colors highlighting the words "Country Music." These buckles will wear handsomely on your belt—the publisher of *Country Music Magazine* loves his! The "I Love Country Music" buckle is nicely accented with a bronze fiddle and guitar; the "Country Music" buckle and guitar; the "Country Music" buckle shows off a banjo and fiddle. Each belt buckle only costs \$9.95, or save money and buy two for \$17.90. "I Love Country Music" belt buckle, #G6J; "Country Music" belt buckle, #G7L; both belt buckles, #G6J/G7L.





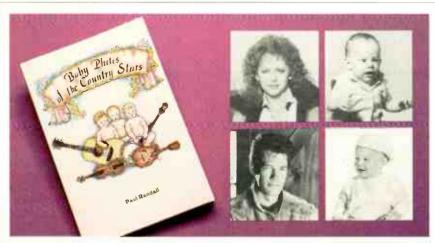
CHET ATKINS: GET STARTED ON GUITAR VIDEO

Just think, Chet Atkins teaching you how to play the guitar! Do you know how many people would die for that opportunity? With the *Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar* video course, beginners can have fun learning the basics, and advanced players will discover a goldmine of helpful hints and ideas. In his *Get Started on Guitar* video course, Chet is assisted by John Knowles. As Chet describes John, "Dr. John Knowles is a dear friend and one of the smartest and best

teachers I have seen work. There would be no book or video without him." Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar video course includes a one-hour videocassette, a 112-page instruction book and a 40-minute audio-cassette-all three components cross-referenced to each other and packaged in a handsome case for easy carrying and access.

The instruction book will guide you through the music Chet and John play in the video.

There are also special reference sections on "Playing Chords," "Finger-picking Chords," "Playing Melodies" and "Playing by Ear." The video shows split-screen close-ups so you can see exactly how the techniques are done. Also included are on-screen chord symbols that let you play along as you watch and an on-screen clock to help you locate specific places in the video. *Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar* video is a must for all guitar and music lovers. You receive the video, audio-cassette, the instruction booklet and the binder case all for only \$69.95, #B2G.



BABY PHOTOS OF THE COUNTRY STARS

If you ever wondered what Naomi and Wynonna Judd looked like when they were three years old, look no further. *Baby Photos of the Country Stars* shows baby or childhood photographs of each country music star included. It also gives stars' ages and factual information. The fun part is guessing who the adorable child is, then flipping to the designated page to see the child grown up into your favorite star. I got a charge out of Marty Stuart's baby photo—sticking his tongue out! Some of the big-name country artists you will see are George Jones. Reba McEntire, Keith Whitley, Patty Loveless, Randy Travis, Loretta Lynn, Johnny Cash and Tammy Wynette, to name a few. The baby photos and the current photos were provided by the artists, members of their families, close friends, personal managers, public relations firms and recording companies. Needless to say, these are invaluable photos you will treasure forever. In addition, there are blank autograph pages in the back of the book for your favorite country music star to sign, and don't forget to have them sign their picture too! This 190-page, paperback book features over 150 country music stars and sells for \$10.00, #B3O.

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE LOGO T-SHIRT

You're familiar with our Country Music Magazine trademark. Now you can get this famous logo on a comfortable, 100% cotton T-shirt. Made for us by Champion, these Tshirts are the same top quality they provide to most professional sports teams. The classy Country Music logo is printed in white across your favorite color: red or navy blue. Melissa models our red T-shirt, and that's me, Robin, wearing our "I Love Country Music" T-shirt. It comes in navy blue only. We are offering these T-shirts at a low price of \$10.00 each. Country Music logo Tshirt, #G2P-navy blue, #G2Q-red; "I Love Country Music" T-shirt, #G2O-navy blue. Please indicate shirt size (S,M,L,XL) and product code on order form.

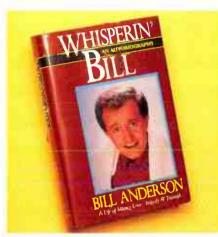


Nashville Warehouse

HANK WILLIAMS: THE ORIGINAL SINGLES COLLECTION

The intensity of Hank Williams Sr.'s singing and the longing expressed in his music made him an absolute idol to many. Hank is captured on a three-volume set in which you get to hear all his old classics, such as: "I'm Not Coming Home Anymore," "Never Again (Will I Knock On Your Door)," "I Don't Care (If Tomorrow Never Comes)," "I Heard You Crying in Your Sleep," "My Sweet Love Ain't Around," "Honky Tonkin'," "I'm a Long Gone Daddy," "Six More Miles (To the Graveyard)," "A Mansion on the Hill," "Mind Your Own Business," "There'll Be No Teardrops Tonight," "Lost Highway," "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," "May You Never Be Alone," "Long Gone Lone-some Blues," "A House Without Love," "Nobody's Lonesome for Me," "Hey, Good Lookin'," "Lonesome Whistle," "Crazy Heart," "Honky Tonk Blues," "Half as Much," "Let's Turn Back the Years," "Jambalaya," "You Win Again," "Your Cheatin' Heart," "House of Gold," "Fool about You," "I'm Free at Last," "Someday You'll Call My Name" and "There's a Tear in My Beer," to name only a few! The Original Singles Collection comes with a booklet featuring Hank's life and career from the 1920's through the 1950's. You get to see rare photos of Hank with other greats, in addition to photos of his marriage, his release from jail and his funeral. For only \$59.95 (#847-194C) on cassette or \$69.95 (#847-194CD) on CD, you get 84 of his greatest songs, plus the 20-page booklet! See Rich Kienzle's review in Buried Treasures (March/April 1991 issue, Country Music).



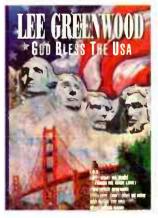


WHISPERIN' BILL: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Bill Anderson, singer, songwriter, record producer, businessman, soap-opera actor and game-show host, is one of the most honored men in show business. Bill was one of three people named Top Songwriter of All-Time and the holder of virtually every other award in his field. Bill was pretty close to being on top of the world. Then, in a single moment, his life turned upside down. A drunk driver hit his wife, Becky Anderson's car, and she suffered life-threatening injuries. This 464-page autobiography is filled with rare honesty, warmth. compassion and gratitude, as well as love and devotion towards his work and family. Rich Kienzle's review in Essential Collector (May/June 1990 issue, Country Music) rates Whisperin' Bill beside the great ones such as Loretta Lynn's Coal Miner's Daughter and Hank Jr.'s Living Proof. Miss Minnie Pearl says: "I've loved Bill Anderson since I've known him. You'll find this a warm, caring book about things that matter to Bill and therefore matter to me and the rest of the world." Whisperin' Bill is \$14.95, #B1B.

LEE GREENWOOD: GOD BLESS THE USA

We've been hearing over and over how Lee Greenwood dedicated his song. "God Bless the USA," to the troops over in Saudi Arabia. He also contributed his song to a mass-produced tape, specially made for our U.S. troops to help them pass the time. Everytime I hear "God Bless the USA," I get goose- bumps! This song definitely makes me stop and think of all the men and women who sacrificed their lives for our country, and of the men and women who are still over in Iraq and Saudi to keep the peace. "God Bless the USA" sounds great, but its sentiment is what makes it so special. The entire cassette, *God Bless the USA*, includes: "Look What We Made (When We Made Love)," "Two Heart Serenade," "Even Love Can't Save Us Now," "God Bless the USA," "Heartbreak Road," "Didn't We" and "From Now On." You can get this great cassette for only \$5.99, #C1W.



HOW TO PLAY HARMONICA COURSE

...And you never thought you could play a note of music. Now you can! With the *How* to Play Harmonica Course, you can learn to play the harmonica overnight, even if you can't read music or play a musical instrument. How to Play Harmonica Course was written by Marcos, a recognized virtuoso on harmonica, sought after by many harmonica lovers and students for instruction on his insights and techniques. Now, with this course, you can learn his great techniques, too. Your harmonica package includes an easy-to-follow, 57-page illustrated guide with over 30 songs, a step-by-step cassette

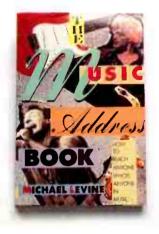


tape and your very own, world famous Hohner Harmonica. The instruction booklet ranges from the basics to the advanced techniques, and even includes history of the harmonica. The tunes in the instruction book are your old favorites-the type of familiar songs you have always associated with the harmonica. How to Play Harmonica Course is a big seller in Country Music Magazine -something you definitely don't want to miss out on! The course is only \$16.95, #G5Y.

Nashville Warehouse

THE MUSIC ADDRESS BOOK

At age 35, Michael Levine is regarded as the world's foremost address expert. He wrote The Address Book and The New Address Book, the latter receiving overwhelming praise. Joan Lunden of Good Morning America said, "I love the book ... and plan to use it!" USA Today remarked, "A gem ... remarkable, thorough, and accurate." Mr. Levine has gone one step further with his new creation, The Music Address Book. This book contains complete and up-to-date addresses for more than 3,000 singers, performers, managers, record companies and fan clubs. For all you Randy Travis fans, The Music Address Book will show you how to contact him. I'm a Clint Black fan, and



now I know where to send Clint a letter. For any songwriters trying to break into the music industry, this book is a great resource for contacting record labels and/or singers. *The Music Address Book* is alphabetized by name and organized into three sections: The Addresses, Record Labels and Music Business Glossary. *The Music Address Book* also informs you on "Getting Your Music Heard" and "Avoiding Ripoffs." This 228-page book sells for \$8.95, #B1C.

BUCK OWENS LIVE AT CARNEGIE HALL

All you Country Music Magazine readers made Buck Owens Live at Carnegie Hall our topselling record in 1989. Taped live at Carnegie Hall in 1966, Buck was backed up by his great band, The Buckaroos. Live at Carnegie Hall includes: "Act Naturally," "Together Again," "Love's Gonna Live Here," "In the Palm of Your Hand," "Cryin' Time," "My Heart Skips a Beat," "Waitin' in Your Welfare Line," "Buckaroo," "The Streets of Laredo,"

"I've Got a Tiger by the Tail," "Twist and Shout," "Under Your Spell Again," "Above and Beyond," "Excuse Me (I Think I've Got a Heartache)," "Truck Drivin' Man" and more. Rich Kienzle reviewed Buck Owens Live at Carnegie Hall in Buried Treasures



(May/June 1989 issue, *Country Music*) and says it was "recorded when Buck was at his absolute peak with his best-ever group of Buckaroos." *Buck Owens Live at Carneyie Hall* is available on LP or cassette, and costs \$9.98 each, #CMF 012.

EDDY ARNOLD ANYTIME

Eddy Arnold's explanation of his success is, "I sing from the heart, and I try to choose the best songs I can find." Eddy Arnold makes it sound simple, but it's hard to sing from the heart unless you're utterly sincere.



In addition, he has a knack for picking songs that suit him—maybe this is why he is acknowledged king of country balladeers. *Eddy Arnold Anytime* includes a slew of his 1940's and 1950's hits, such as: "Bouquet of Roses," "It's a Sin," "That's How Much I

Love You," "Don't Rob Another Man's Castle," "Rockin' Alone (In an Old Rocking Chair)," "Molly Darling," "I'll Hold You in My Heart (Till I Can Hold You in My Arms)." "A Heart Full of Love (For a Handful of Kisses)," "Anytime," "Texarkana Baby, "Will the Circle be Unbroken (My Family Circle)" and "Who at My Door is Standing." See Rich Kienzle's review in Buried Treasures (May/June 1989 issue, Country Music), Eddy Arnold Anytime costs \$11.98, #HAT3086. Available on LP or cassette

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Letters

A Clint Black High

Patrick Carr's insightful interview with Clint Black, in the May/June issue, came right in the middle of my "Clint Black high." I met him at the recent Academy of Country Music awards show, and then two weeks later I went to two of his Las Vegas shows. He seems to be a really nice person, and he puts on one heck of a show! After meeting him, he is definitely my "favorite short, dark, handsome hat hunk" (Mr. Carr's words). Cheryl Frey Irvine, California

Clint Black is Real

Whew! Be still my heart! The article on Clint Black in the May/June issue was fabulous! Hats off to writer Patrick Carr, and to Clint for telling it like he sees it. He is so real. That is what makes him outshine so many other artists. I imagine many women fell in love after reading your article, if not before—not with Clint Black the star, but with the man they've come to know because of the star! How proud his mom and dad must be! Sally Heatoon Silver Lake, Ohio

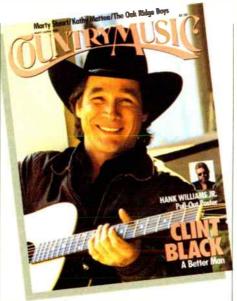
Kudos for Clint and Carr

Thank you for such a wonderful article on one of my most favorite men, Clint Black, in the May/June issue. Patrick Carr really knows how to write a terrific story. I have been a fan of country music for years, and haven't heard anyone come close to that sexy voice of Clint Black. Mr. Carr, no matter what people might say, I think that you're agreat writer. Hey, Clint, you wear your clothes well! Sandra Tillman Townsend, Georgia

Fantastic Travis Feature

Thank you, thank you, thank you for the absolutely fantastic cover story on Randy Travis, in the March/April issue. Randy always looks good, but the cover picture was gorgeous! Michael Bane's article was well written, informative, and a joy to read. This almost makes up for Bob Millard's record review of Randy's album, *Heroes and Friends*, which I find delightful. How about a centerfold of Randy (perhaps in skimpy running shorts)? I even volunteer to take the picture myself! Thanks again, I love your magazine.

Martha Carney Florissant, Missouri We'll speak to the art director immediately.—Ed.



Thrilled with Travis Cover

Thank you so much for the cover photo and story on Randy Travis in the March/April isue. I was thrilled to see his picture. Also, thank you to Michael Bane for the story. He said that Lib Hatcher is not spoken kindly of. Well, you have to be tough in the music industry to be heard, and look what she has done with Randy's career. I got the impression from your article that she has a good sense of humor. I think the tabloids should leave both Randy and Lib alone, and let them concentrate on his future.

Patricia Scaife

Redwood Valley, California For more on Randy and Lib, see People in this issue—Ed.

A Thanks From Hank

Thank you for the pull-out poster in the May/June 1991 issue of my favorite *Country Music Magazine*. It seems like country music and *Country Music Magazine* keep getting better and better. Would you please send me the address of Sgt. Leigh W. Cole, so I can thank this very talented Marine for the cartoon drawing of me.

My compliments to you and your staff. Hank Williams Jr. Paris, Tennessee

Sgt. Cole's drawing appeared in Readers Create in the May/June issue of the CMSA Newsletter.—Ed.

Hank's a Hit

Let me start off by saying I couldn't get along without my *Country Music Magazine*. Thank you so much for the pull-out centerfold of Hank Williams Jr. in the May/June issue. I am a member of Hank's fan club, and I have seen him many times in concert. Bocephus just keeps getting better and better. Hank Jr. has always and will always be my favorite performer. How about some more Hank Jr. in some future issues? Shea Thomas Laurens, South Carolina

See this issue's Record Reviews.—Ed.

Dolly Centerfold a Smash

Thank you very much for the pull-out poster and Facts of Life sheet on Dolly Parton in the March/April issue. In Facts of Life, you did not give Dolly credit for 9 to 5 and Odd Jobs, certified Gold, nor did you give her credit for the platinum certification of Once Upon a Christmas. I want this beautiful, talented entertainer to get all the credit she richly deserves!

> Leonard Armond Bunkie, Louisiana

You are correct. According to the Recording Industry Association of America, 9 to 5 is a Gold album and Once Upona Christmas is multi-platinum.—Ed.

Sincere Kathy Mattea

I just had to write and tell you how much I enjoyed Bob Millard's article on Kathy Mattea in the May/June issue. Having had the pleasure of knowing and representing Kathy for a number of years, I think he has captured her attitudes towards life and her music very well. She is as sincere about hermusicas any artist I have known, and it shows!

Best of luck to Bob in his songwriting career. Richard Howard William Morris Agency Beverly Hills, California

Hillbilly Rocker—Marty Stuart

Thank you, Country Music Magazine and Patrick Carr, for a quality article on the man who has transformed me into a rabid hillbilly music fan—Marty Stuart.

A radio friend tossed me a promo copy of Hillbilly Rock a year and a half ago, and there has been no turning back. It was love at first listen. Marty's newest album, Tempted, is even stronger, and like Hillbilly Rock, has been played several hundred times in my house and truck. George Strait's okay, but this is one cowboy-girl who has Marty Stuart blowing the doors offher pickup truck! Lani Hamilton Rockport, Indiana

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The Great Marty Stuart

Thanks so much to Country Music Magazine and Mr. Patrick Carr for the article on Marty Stuart in the May/June issue. Marty is a very talented, versatile and sincere performer, who I feel is worthy of all the kind words your article spoke of him. Marty has been associated with performers that have been my heroes, like Ernest Tubb, Lester Flatt and Mr. Johnny Cash. This article on Marty is a tribute to him for remembering these great stars.

Jerry Vandiver Emerson, Georgia

No Pay for Loveless Video

I'm writing in regards to your excellent article on Patty Loveless in the March/ April issue. However, I need to make a correction. Patrick Carr wrote that the "partying people" were all "paid extras" in the video, "The Night's Too Long." Well, Mr. Carr, I was one of those extras, and I, along with everyone else, wasn't paid a dime. We were told by Ice Entertainment that the video had been under-budgeted, and we should do it for the experience. It was one of the longest days of my life and Steve Slone definitely without pay. Antioch, Tennessee

Touched by Milsap Story

I just finished reading the book excerpt on Ronnie Milsap in the March/April issue of Country Music Magazine. I was so touched by the story that I had to write. I have been a fan of Ronnie's for many years, but I never realized the hardships he faced growing up. Fortunately, I'm not blind, but I know how it feels to be abandoned by your parents, and I hope that all the love and respect Ronnie's fans and fellow musicians feel for him can make up, in some small way, for the deprivation he has suffered in his life. Sharon Phillips Mobile, Alabama

Let the Thunder Roll

Thumbs down to the critics, to CMT and TNN!! They have done it again. This time by putting a ban on showing the video, "The Thunder Rolls," by Garth Brooks. It is a sensational video! It shows what happens around the United States and the world! What is so wrong about making a video that reflects real life? I love Garth's new song and video. Keep up the good work, Garth. And I'll keep buying your music and videos for years to come.

Larry Kubacki Oxnard, California

Let's Get This Radio Business Straight

Hey, Hazel! What's up? In your article on Alan Jackson in the People section in the May/June issue, you mentioned Alan (Daddy Long Legs) donated his father's radio that he won 30 years ago to the Country Music Hall of Fame. But his Number One hit song, "Here in the Real World," never mentions a radio. He does sing of a radio in "Chasing that Neon Rainbow." Please, Hazel, let's try to get this Strait...I mean straight. I'm also a big fan of yours. Samuel Brown Lovelady, Texas

Thanks, Sam, for the correction.—Ed.



DuWayne McDaniel with an F-15C Eagle and the January/February 1991 issue of Country Music Magazine.

A Touch of Home in Saudi

Howdy from a country music fan in Saudi! I've passed ya'll's magazine around to all my country music fans stationed down here with me, and every one of them had a great big smile when they saw I had the latest issue! All of us here with the 36th TFW from Germany would just like to say thanks to Country Music Magazine for giving us what we really needed-a touch of home! Sgt. DuWayne McDaniel APO, New York

Reba's Band—Like Friends

I would like to thank Hazel Smith for her heart-touching column on the funeral for Reba McEntire's band members in People in the May/June issue. My family and I had the pleasure of meeting and spending time with Jim Hammon, Kirk Cappello and Paula Kaye Evans. I can't recall such talented people who were so warm. With only a few meetings, we thought of them as friends. We'll miss all of these eight people so much. Kenny Beverly Rensselaer, Indiana

From Webb Pierce to Carl Smith and Carlene

I just received the May/June issue of Country Music, and I really enjoyed the article on the late Webb Pierce. Also really enjoyed the picture and article on Carlene Carter and her dad, Carl Smith in the People section. I've been a Carl Smith fan since the 1950's, and I think Carlene is great. Please do a story on Carlene soon. I would love to see her featured as the pullout centerfold. **Ruby Davis**

Louisville, Kentucky For more on Webb, see the cover story in the June 1991 issue of The Journal.—Ed..

Desert Song for Desert Storm

I understand from the article titled "Angels of Mercy Walk Among Us" in the People section in the March/April issue

that the group called Desert Song sent some 200,000 tapes over here to the troops in the desert, right? Well, what happened to them? For the most part, the only units to benefit from these items sent are the "Rear Support Units." Very little, if any, of the merchandise sent made its way to the front line units. These are the troops that actually did the fighting and are the ones who deserve to have some of the nice items. Hell, we're having trouble getting new boots for the boys that need them, so the "nice to have" items are out of the question. Infantry Soldier

APO, New York

Navy Man Mourns Band

I've been a very devoted Reba McEntire fan for about six years. I'm currently in the Navy onboard the USS Nimitz. I've just heard the news about Reba McEntire's band, and it hurts bad because to me they all were like friends. My mother got me listening to Reba, and then she died, and now when I hear her music, it reminds me of my mother. Now that the band is gone, it is like another piece of my life has been torn away. I listen to Reba's tapes now, and I hear a lot more than I heard before. Thomas Slack

FPO Seattle, Washington

Supports Lynn Anderson

As much as I enjoy reading *Country Music Magazine*, I was very disappointed in the way the newsbrief on Lynn Anderson was presented in the People section in the March/April issue. For those who think the custody battle between Lynn and her ex-husband has made the country music business look bad, may I remind them of how much enjoyment this legendary star has brought to countless fans over the years. If we start judging entertainers by their personal lives, rather than their ability to entertain, only a select few would pass the test. Hang in there, Lynn. Your fans support you!

> Michael Dempsey Charleston, South Carolina

Variety is the Spice of Life

I just had to write after watching the Academy of Country Music awards show. I like Garth Brooks and understand his nominations, but six awards is ridiculous. Alan Jackson, Doug Stone, Mark Chesnutt and Vince Gill were all underrated. The Academy should take off the blinders and remove their ear plugs, and realize variety is the spice of life. Phyllis Davis Sioux City, Iowa

Luke Wills News

Mr. Kienzle, I read your review on Luke Wills in Essential Collector in the May/ June issue, and, yes, he's still living in Las Vegas. Uncle Luke, his daughter Joyce, both sons, Luke and John, and I were in Texas for Bob Wills Day this spring. You mentioned the death of Billy Jack, and I find it hard to believe that there wasn't an article about him. He had quite a career in the 1950's and was in the process of writing some new music the year before he died.

I enjoyed the CMM Update on Johnny Gimble in the same issue. I hope that Ruidoso is still in New Mexico and not in Texas, as your Update states, or I'll be stranded at the wrong airport. I'm booked there with Johnny for the Second Annual Cowboy Symposium in October.

Dayna Wills

Stockton, Čalifornia Don't change your plane tickets. Billy Jack's death is noted in People in this issue, and is covered in more detail in the June 1991 issue of The Journal.—Ed.

Tony Booth Still Recording?

I was playing some of my old albums and found one of Tony Booth. The music and his voice were beautiful—he sounds a lot like Ray Price. Tony's record was recorded in Buck Owens' studio in California. I would like to know if he is still in the music business? Ruth Read Overton, Texas

Who knows? Send us the news.-Ed.

Yoo-Hoo, Joe South

I am a devoted fan of Joe South. He is a very talented singer, songwriter and guitar player. I received a personal letter from him years ago, and it meant a lot to me. The last I heard he lives in Nashville. Could you please tell me what has happened to Joe South?

Foxy Dimmitt Plymouth, Indiana Joe South friends, where are you—Ed.

Any Word on Little Troy Hess?

Whatever happened to Little Troy Hess? He was a child star in country music in the early 1970's. I have a *Country Music Magazine* from 1975 which featured him. Is he still singing? If so, where can I get some of his current and older releases?

Carla Shinall

Spring, Texas

Troy Hess fans, come in, please.—Ed.

Ricky Van Thrills Fan

Ricky Van Shelton is the absolute greatest! I just attended another one of his concerts in Little Rock, Arkansas, and still can't believe my dream has come true. I was able to go backstage and meet him! He was so sweet and nice and more than eager to please everyone. I hope all entertainers realize that this is an important part of what they do. I'll always remember this night. Having an 8x10 hanging in the living room doesn't hurt either.

Pam Walden Sherwood, Arkansas An 11x16 centerfold probably won't hurt either.—Ed.



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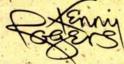
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Donna Fargo-Alive and Well

I've been asked (or told) by many wellmeaning fans that Donna Fargois again ill. This could not be further from the truth. Donna wrote just last week and she's in great shape, both physically and mentally and is keeping busy, both at home and on the road. Let's lay aside this idle talk and feature one beautiful person, entertainer and friend of country music. An article on Donna is long overdue. Bob Payne Georgetown, Illinois

Forever and Ever

Though it's been some time since Randy Travis released "Forever and Ever, Amen," I'dlike to say thanks, because that song has a special meaning to me. It was released shortly after I lost my husband of 25 years to a heart attack. He frequently told me (and signed all his cards), "I'll love you forever and ever, Amen." Thanks, Randy. Janic Pfeuffer

Colorado City, Texas

A Great Entertainer—K.T.

Thank you, Bob Millard, for the record review of K.T. Oslin's album, *Love in a Small Town*, in the March/April issue of *Country Music*. It was a great review. I saw K.T. in concert at the Bob Hope Cultural Center in Palm Desert, California. She's one great entertainer. She sure does have a "dramatic know-how" and a "high level of listener involvement." Keep the records coming, K.T.!

E.T. Partridge Van Nuys, California

Thanks, Suzy Bogguss

This letter may sound funny or stupid, but I thought what the hey. I'm a soldier in Operation Desert Storm. I'm a gunner on an M1A1 tank. In one of your magazines I found a picture of Suzy Bogguss, tore it out and put it on my ammo door. This woman was a lot of help in keeping us in grip with reality. I was wondering if you could let her know that all I want to say is, "Thanks." L.D. Morrison

APO, New York

More Coverage for the Coal Miner's Daughter

I want to refresh your memory about one of country music's most famous singer/ songwriters. She was the first female to be nominated and win Entertainer of the Year. She was the first female in country music to have a movic made of her life. She was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1988—announced by Johnny Cash. If you don't know who I'm talking about yet, it's Loretta Lynn! I would like to see more of her in your magazine.

Laurie Ann Smith Three Rivers, Michigan Rich Kienzle reviews a video-biography of Loretta's career in Essential Collector in this issue.—Ed.

Frieda Parton Heads for Nashville

I sure did enjoy getting to meet Frieda Parton, Dolly's sister, last summer in Dollywood. I hear she is going to Nashville for a new recording contract; I think that is just great. Best of luck to Frieda and her band. I'm looking forward to seeing an article on Frieda in my favorite magazine, *Country Music.* Jake Gilmore

Charlottesville, Virginia



Joke Gilmore met Dolly's sister, Friedo Porton, in Dollywood.

Marsha Thornton as Herself

Where does Rich Kienzle get off making remarks in such a horrible way in his review of Marsha Thornton's album, *Maybe* the Moon Will Shine, in the May/June issue of Country Music Magazine? He comments that Marsha's first album had a Patsy Cline flavor, and her latest album took to an Emmylou Harris style. I can see where she may remind you of them, but she is not them. On a scale from one to ten, Marsha rates a dynamic ten!

> Jimmy Howson New Marshfield, Ohio

Kienzle's Constructive Criticism

Although many readers may be exasperated with Rich Kienzle's comments about Marsha Thornton's album, *Maybethe Moon Will Shine*, in the May/June issue, I strongly believe in his "critical approach" since I am a member of Toastmasters International and find (from evaluating speeches) that a review which exercises one's opinion should, in fact, help the speaker (in this case, singer) know the points on which to improve. I think Rich did a good job and used good judgment in his review. Sandra Weltzin Chicago, Illinois

Allen on Strait Album

I would like to respond to Bob Allen's review of George Strait's *Chill of an Early Fall* in the May/June issue. Mr. Allen commented that "Milk Cow Blues" and "Lovesick Blues" gave anyone who has seen George's live show a sense of deja vu. That was intentional. We Strait fans tend to suffer from what we call "Strait Fever" between concerts. His fans have been requesting that George include these favorites because we need a little "medicine" now and then. In fact, it was nice of George and Mr. Bowen to put these gents back-toback so we can find them easily when we're having a "Strait Fit."

> Terri Klingman Zachary, Louisiana

Strait's Album Perfect

Bob Allen, what's wrong with you? Can't you tell perfection when you hearit? George Strait's album, *Chill of an Early Fall*, reviewed in the May/June issue of *Country Music*, is the best thing he's done yet. His albums just keep getting better—far from the "patchwork" job you claim. This album has the perfect mix of fast, slow, romantic and honky tonk swing—the kind of music that George is so good at. What more could you want? You need to move to Texas—we'll teach you to appreciate good music.

Houston, Texas

Bingo, Judds Review

I agree with Rich Kienzle about The Judds album, Love Can Build a Bridge, reviewed in the March/April issue. I've been a fan for many years and have seen them in concert several times. The most recent time was this past January as part of the farewell tour (with Garth Brooks and The Pirates of the Mississippi). They did not exploit the concert as such-it was much the same as always. Several portions brought tears to my eyes-mention of the troops, when Wynonna had a video camera on the crowd to capture some moments for her mom, and at the end, when I realized that this was probably the last time I would see them together on stage. A class act all the way! I'll miss The Judds. **Terrie Humo**

Waukegan, Illinois



Never sad for long—Wynonna and Naomi Judd caught recently by Denise Farrell.

Right on Gill

As a long-time Vince Gill enthusiast, I want to say a big, heartfelt thank you to Rich Kienzle for his review of Vince Gill's new album, *Pocket Full of Gold*, in the March/April issue. I think it is terrific and certainly agree with Mr. Kienzle's comment that "Vince's last album deserved the critical acclaim it got, and so does this one."

It is interesting, though, that Mr. Gill's

last album, When I Call Your Name, did not receive that "critical acelaim" when it was reviewed last year by Bob Millard in this magazine. That album went Gold, brought a Grammy and a CMA award to Vince Gill, and Mr. Millard called it "a great record of radio fodder." Of Vince Gill, he commented, "Vince Gill is really a nice guy, and like a baseball player who consistently singles to short left but somehow never scores, he underiably has talent." Mr. Millard got the talent part right, but as for the rest of his review. I would say he struck out! Karen Clemmer Perkasie, Pennsylvania

He's Hillbilly Rockin'

I saw Marty Štuart in concert in Victoria, Texas, recently. He was truly a joy to hear and watch. He's a talented musician who deserves more recognition than he gets. He puts his heart into every song, and even better than that was the time he took after the show to sign autographs, talk with his fans and let his gorgeous self be photographed with devoted fans such as myself. Thanks, Marty, for hillbilly rockin' us through 1990! Susette Ochoa Yoakum. Texas

Musicians' work is never done.-Ed.

The Year of Marty

Thanks for the record review on my favorite male artist, Marty Stuart, in the March/ April issue. I think 1991 is the year for Marty, and all of his fans should show him their support. I also have to agree with KaySmithat CBS—she's 100% right. Now let's see Marty on the cover of *Country Music Magazine* or in the centerfold.

Gail McCall

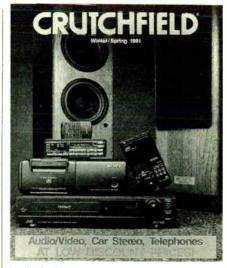
Abbeville, South Carolina Never satisfied.—Ed.

Tippin Stands for Something

I would like to commend Mr. Kienzle for his record review of Aaron Tippin's album, You've Got to Stand for Something, in the March/April issue. After waiting for what seemed like forever for the tape to be released, I must say it was well worth it. Aaron "stands" for everything I love about country music. He's a traditionalist with one-of-a-kind, pure country vocals. If his singing wasn't enough, he has a writing style all his own. But it doesn't stop there. His live performance has to be seen to be believed. He and his band will blow you Karen Young away. Bassett, Virginia

HeadHunters' Hot Album

Your review of The Kentucky HeadHunters' *Electric Barnyard* in the May/June issue was a fine review, and the album is filled with a lot of very good songs. However, you missed one..."Love Bug Crawl." It was a hit in 1957 for a new artist named Jimmy Edwards from Cardwell, Missouri. Jim was one of the



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As you know, Ricky Phelps is also a native of Cardwell. His father, a part-time preacher, worked for Jim's dad. The first song Ricky ever learned was "Love Bug Crawl." Jim was invited to the recording session last January. By the way, Jimmy Edwards (i.e. James Bullington) and me, Jack Foshee, are the co-writers of the soon-to-be-great song. Jack Foshee Spencerville, Ohio

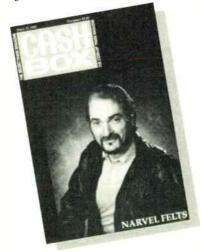
We also heard from co-writer Jimmy Edwards.—Ed.

Narvel Felts Found

Thank you for printing Tina Coley's note about me in your May/June issue. I'm alive and well, still touring the world, still recording. I just had a record, "I'm Just That Kind of Fool," go to Number 29 in the *Cashbox* Top 100. It was their Number One indie for four weeks. It went to Number Six in America's Country Radio Hot 150 and is getting good radio play in Europe. I'll be on the "legend show" at the Grand Ole Opry during Fan Fair and was honored to be back on *Nashville Now* in March. It's my fifth decade, 1959-1991, to make the national charts.

Narvel Felts Malden, Missouri

To reach Narvel, write 2005 Narvel Felts Avenue, Maldin, Missouri 63863. He also has a fan club: P.O. Box 65, Three Rivers, Michigan 49093.—Ed.



Narvel Felts on the cover of Cashbox Magazine in March.

Way Off on Chesnutt

I'm writing in response to Rich Kienzle's review of Mark Chesnutt's debut album, *Too Cold at Home*, in the March/April issue. Hey, wait a minute. You are way off beat. Plenty of us fans like his style. "Too Cold at Home" went to Number One, and "Brother Jukebox" went to Number Two. Also, Mark's album is in the Top 16 on the country music charts. I think someone like Milli Vanilli deserves Kienzle's reviews. Hey, Mark, country music fans love your style. Keep that great music coming. Hey, Rich Kienzle, go bark up another tree.

Janice Lynch Port Neches, Texas

Will a Black Hat Work?

I am furious with your review of Mark Chesnutt's album, *Too Cold at Home*, in the March/April issue. Mark is the best. If he wore a black hat, would he be better in your eyes? As far as "Brother Jukebox" is concerned, it wasn't until after Don Everly, Paul Craft and Keith Whitley recorded it that Mark made it a Number One hit that should tell you something. "Too Cold at Home" was Number Two for three weeks. He is not fake. I've been to 13 concerts, and Mark sings from the heart. "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes?" Look no further, because Mark does.

> Peggy McCarty Breaux Bridge, Louisiana

CMM Found on Campus

I was reading an older issue of *Country Music Magazine* and came across your request for readers to inform you of the interesting ways we found the magazine. I was attending a local vocational college (still attending) when I pulled out the "extra items" that the bookstore inserts into bookbags. One was for ordering discount-priced magazines—I located a *CMM* deal.

Being a big fan of country music, I quickly sentin my subscription for *CMM*. It turned out to be a fortunate thing. Where else can I find my favorite front-page pictures every other month? Nowhere! Matter of fact, I once read *CMM* the same day I received it despite having a major test the next day. Some things are more important than a test. And the picture from the latest issue with Clint Black on the cover is just one of them.

Keep up the great work!

David Franchek Wausau, Wisconsin

Repulsed by Brooks' Video

Is "The Thunder Rolls" the kind of entertainment we can expect from Garth Brooks as Entertainer of the Year? I'm 68 years old, and it repulses me. I can imagine what it would do to children. I want to thank the TV stations for not showing it.

E. M. Craig Zwolle, Louisiana

CMM Gets the Nod

I'm a new subscriber to your great magazine. (I got tired of trying to find it in stores and couldn't bear to miss a single issue!) Just want to tell you that I love it! It is the best! I love everything about it! I don't see any way you could improve it, except to make it monthly. (I'll bet you've heard that



MARTY ROBBINS Super Legend-120 mins.

This memorable video features 18 performances: El Pasol White Sport Coat/Devil Woman/Ribbon Of Darknessl Singing The Bluesll Couldn't Keep From Cryin'lDon't Worry Bout MelThis Time You Gave Me A Mountain, and many more, including Marty's Grammy winning song, My Woman, My Woman, My Wife. It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and the big screen, as well as exciting clips from his racing career. You'll also hear fitting rememberances from fellow stars like Roy Acuff, Faron Young and Barbara Mandrell.

MARTY ROBBINS A Man And His Music-55 mins.

This additional Marty Robbins video was recorded live at the Opry in 1980. "Funnin' around" was what he called it. And that's precisely what this video is all about. It includes his version of Elvis' That's All Right (Mama), plus these other great selections: Ribbon Of Darkness/A White Sport Coat/Devil Woman/Big Iron/My Woman, My Woman, My Wife/Among My Souvenirs/Don't Worry/El Paso.

HANK WILLIAMS JR. Full Access-80 mins.

In Montana, you'll get an insider's view of Hank's private refugee and see the side that only a privileged few have seen before. In Tennessee, join Hank as he relaxes with friends at his home, and meet some of the people closest to him. In concert, see, hear and feel Hank's hits as only he can perform them: Born To Boogiellf The South Woulda WonlFamily Tradition!A Country Boy Can SurvivelYoung CountrylMy Name Is Bocaphus • MORE!

ALAN JACKSON Here In The Real World

Here are Alan's three #1 smash hits, *Here In The Real* World and Wanted and Chasin' The Neon Rainbow. Plus, a pair of captivating live performances: Dog River Blues and Home. There's also his first big song Blue Blooded Woman. Here In The Real World clearly reveals Alan's humble, unpretentious manner combined with genuine talent and striking good looks-all the elements that have made him country's hottest new star. 25 minutes.

KEITH WHITLEY I Wonder Do You Think Of Me

On May 9, 1989, near the completion of the I Wonder Do You Think Of Me album, Keith Whitley passed away. One of his last conversations was of how much this record meant to him. He lives on in our hearts with this wonderful tribute featuring: Don't Close Your Eyes? I'm No Stranger To The Rain/Ain't Nothin'/Homecoming/Hard Livin'/When You Say Nothing At All... plus a tribute by Country Music Television's Stan Hitchcock. 30 mins.

THE JUDDS Across The Heartland-50 mins.

Here is a story of special camaraderic and extraordinary love between two friends who just happen to be mother and daughter. For the first time on video, the Judds reveal themselves and their music in an exciting collection of stage, TV and radio appearances. Included are all these great songs: Have Mercy/Dreamchaser/I Know Where I'm Going/Girl's Night Out/Why Not MeIA Mother's Smile/Grandpa/Old Pictures • PLUS 4 MORE!

ERNEST TUBB Thanks Troubadour Thanks-62 mins.

Here is the complete, true story of America's Troubadour. From his birth in depression-era Texas, the early influence of Jimmie Rodgers, the first recording sessions, early radio shows and Hollywood movies to the Grand Ole Opry, over 40 years on the road and sales of over 20 million records. This unique video biography features classic performances and Ernest's top hits. Listen to some of the biggest names in country music tell you the Ernest Tubb story.

LEGENDS OF COUNTRY MUSIC 28 Live Performances-60 mins.

Here is a grand old-time country music celebration featuring all the great legends. Ernest Tubb: Timorrow Never Comes/Ray Price: Crazy Arms/Marty Robbins: Mabeline/The Carter Family: That Ain' 1The Way I Heard It/Webb Pierce: I'm Walking The Dog/Iim Recves: Down In The Caribbean/Carl Smith: If You Feel Like You're In Love/Bill Monroc: I Hear A Voice Calling/ Cowboy Copas: Gone And Left Me Blues/Stringbean: Little Liza Jane/George Morgan: I Love You So Much It Hurts Me/Chet Atkins: Arkansas Traveler/Hawkshaw Hawkins: How Could Anyone So Pretty Be So Dog-Gone Mean • AND MORE!

DON WILLIAMS Live-30 mins.

Here, for the first time on video tape, is your chance to enjoy one of country music's most solid performers on stage. Included on this brand new video are: Good Ole' Boys Like MelTulsa TimelOne Good WellI've Been Loved By The Best/Just As Long As I Have Youll Believe In Youl AmandaiLord I Hope This Day Is Good. For fans of Don this tape should come as a blessing. Order your copy while our limited supply lasts.

GEORGE STRAIT LIVE! The Dallas Reunion Arena-52 mins.

Now, this platinum-selling country superstar is captured for the first time on video cassette. Backed by his famed <u>Ace In The Hole Band</u>, he whips up the audience performing all of his greatest hits, including: The Firemant The Cowboy Rides Away/Amarillo By Morning/All My Ex's Live In Texas/Any Old Time/Hot Burning Flames/ Dance Time In Texas/A Six Pack To Go/Marina Del Rey/ You Look So Good In Love • AND MORE!

CLINT BLACK Put Yourself In My Shoes-19 mins.

He's the hottest new star to hit the country music stage... winner of the 1989 Horizon Award and 1990 CMA Male Vocalist of the Year. Meet this newest country music phenomenon up close. Hear Clint's frank interview with Country Music Video Magazine. Listen to all his great hits, including: *Killin' TimelA Better ManlWalkin' Awayl Put Yourself In My Shoes.* If you are one of Clint's million plus fans, you won't want to miss this new video.

REBA

A Special Celebration-30 mins.

Entertainer of the Year in 1986... an unprecedented four Female Vocalist of the Year awards by the Country Music Association...five consecutive gold albums. There is only one Reba and here is her best on one video: Whoever's In New England/What Am I Gonna Do About You?/ The Last One To Know/Sunday Kind Of Lovell Know How He Feels/Cathy's Clown. It's more than a collection of video clips, it's an opportunity to know a great star.

PATSY CLINE The Real Patsy Cline–48 mins.

She had the voice of an angel, a career fraught with triumph and disaster and a private life that exceeds any scriptwriter's imagination. This is her complete story, from her brilliant rise to stardom to her tragic death at the pinnacle of her career. This unique video biography features rare, classic performances of such hit songs as *Cruzy* and *I Fall To Pieces*. Plus, there's hearfielt commentary by the people who were closest to Patsy and saw it all, including: Dottie West, Mel Tillis, Carl Perkins, Loretta Lynn, Charlie Dick (Patsy's husband), Patsy's two children and more!

LORETTA LYNN In Concert-61 mins.

Here is the "Coal Miner's Daughter" in living color onstage at Harrah's in Reno. It's a one of a kind performance featuring: You're Lookin' At Country/Take Me Home, Country Roads/Out Of My Head And Back In Bed/Pregnant Again/One's On The Way/I Saw The Light/Wine Women & Song/Foggy Mountain Breakdown/Don't Come Home A Drinkin' They Don't Make 'Em Like My Daddy/ Coal Miner's Daughter • 10 MORE!

MERLE HAGGARD The Best Of Merle Haggard-60 mins.

"I have selected some of my favorite songs for this video...and I hope they will be your favorites too."-Merle Haggard. You be the judge: My Favorite Memory/ Stay Here And Drink/Mama's Hungry Eyes/Today I Started Loving You Again/Old Man From The Mountains/ Kern Riverllf I Could Only Fly/When Times Were Good/ Honky Tonk Night Time Man/Ida Red/Big City/Okie From Muskogee/Footlights • 6 MORE!

HIGHWAYMEN LIVE Willie, Waylon, Cash, Kris-98 mins.

Here, captured on this memorable 98 minute video, is perhaps the most historic country music tour to ever take to the road. Four of the greatest talents of our time performing 26 great hits, including: Highwayman/Mamas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys/Trouble Man(Ring Of Firel Folsom Prison Blues/Always On My Mind/Silver Station/Last Cowboy Song/Desperados Waiting For A Train/Luckenbuch, Texas • AND MORE!

RICKY VAN SHELTON To Be Continued...

Ricky has topped the album chart in three out of three tries, and he's scored seven #1 singles-so far. To Be Continued...features every one of his videos plus two live performances and a fascinating interview. Included are: Crime Of Passion/Someone Lied/Life Turned Her That Way/I'll Leave This World Loving You/Hole In My Pocket (Live)/Living Proof (Live)/Statue Of A Fooll Meant Every Word He Said. 35 mins. • **REVIEW BELOW!**

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one before.) Well, as it is, it is well worth waiting for! I love the posters and the pen pal sections best.

I've heard that it's "cool" to like country music again. Well, "cool" or not, this hardcore country music lover has always loved country music and always will!

Dot M. Elrod

Dennis, Mississippi For those of you interested in pen pals, the column appears in the CMSA Newsletter.—Ed.

Good Taste Starts Young

I believe we have Clint Black's youngest fan. Kasey, my two-year-old granddaughter, can't talk yet, but she goes to the TV screen and pats on it, then climbs up to a shelf and gets the Clint Black video. She gives it to her mother, then she sits on the floor right in front of the TV. She loves him and watches the whole video.

La Voun Diel Arlington, Washington

Bangladeshi Boy Reads CMM

I am a Bangladeshi boy aged 17 seeking penfriends in the U.S.A. My hobbies are collecting posters of film stars, chatting, traveling, driving the car and many more. Please write me. I am a regular reader of your magazine. Javed Tanzim Dhaka, Bangladesh

We did well with our addresses for

servicepeople in the Gulf. Who wants to write Bangladesh? Javed'saddress is 761C Azimpur Colony, Dhaka 1205, Bangladesh. Ordinarily, penpals go in the Newsletter. We're making an exception here.--Ed.



Canadian yodeler Wilf Carter is still going strong at age 85.

What Info on Wilf Carter?

I have been reading *Country Music Magazine* as long as I can remember. I have been a country and western listener since the 1930's when I used to hear the *National Barn Dance* on the radio. Can you give me any information on what has happened to my favorite singer, Wilf Carter, the greatest yodeler I have ever heard?

> Joe Pucci Ponte Vedra, Florida

Wilf Carter, a member of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, is alive and well. He still concertizes occasionally. To reach his fan club, write P.O. Box 162, Derby Line, Vermont 05830.—Ed.

Mattea Cares About Fans

I have always known that country music folk are the best in the world, but recently I got to see first hand. We had attended Kathy Mattea's concert in Houston, and decided to wait afterwards to see if we could snap a picture or two. It wasn't long until we could step into the small waiting area. Kathy came out and acted as if we were all long lost family. Then a lady came in and asked if Kathy could sign a picture for two fans who couldn't come inside because they were in wheelchairs. Kathy asked us if we'd mind waiting a few minutes while she went outside, in the mistrain, to meet with these special fans.

I had always thought that Kathy seemed to really care about her fans, but that night I was totally convinced. Thank you, Kathy Mattea, for being a sensational entertainer and a truly caring person.

Laura J. Blackstock Tomball, Texas



You've enjoyed Waylon's music for years...now you can enjoy him on this beautiful limited edition silver proof coin. The first in a collectors' series, these coins are numbered for authenticity. This mintage is a guaranteed sell out, order yours today at our special price!



Bandy Is Dandy

Hooray for Moe Bandy! We live in a small, central Arizona town whose only claim to fame is cotton.

On a warm Saturday night, Moe and his Americana band entertained us royally. Good music, good wit—just super! Some couples danced. Others cuddled close. And all the shouting and applause let them all know we were having a great time. And the ticket to all this was free.

My husband and I are diehard Moe Bandy fans. It was our Spring Cotton Festival, and this superstar got off the freeway to play and sing to a piece of Americana.

Thanks, Moe, your band is very talented. Reba McEntire could take a good lesson from this. Mrs. Russell Sisney Coolidge, Arizona

Benefit for Reba's Band

Kenny Rogers has been my favorite singer since I was three years old. This April my family and I went to Nashville to see the benefit show for the members of Reba McEntire's band that were killed. The show was great and especially me meeting Kenny Rogers. It was great of all the stars to come out and give their time for such a good cause. This shows there are still some good people in the world today. I am 13 years old. Samantha Owens

Beechmont, Kentucky



Sherry Jo Christians meets Emmylou at a concert in Minneapolis.

More of Emmylou!

I have followed Emmylou Harris' music over the years. Not long ago I had the chance-with the help of my boyfriendto actually meet her, which was quite the honor. Emmylou played at the Mirage in Minneapolis. More of Emmylou!

Sherry Jo Christians Little Canada, Minnesota A woman after my own heart.-R.D.B.

Of HeadHunters and Hogs

I received my first copy of Country Music Mugazine (March/April)-enjoyed reading it very much. I would like to make a comment about The Kentucky HeadHunters. I don't think they should be allowed to perform in public until they clean themselves up. I'd like to know why they want to look like pigs who have playedin the mud all day?

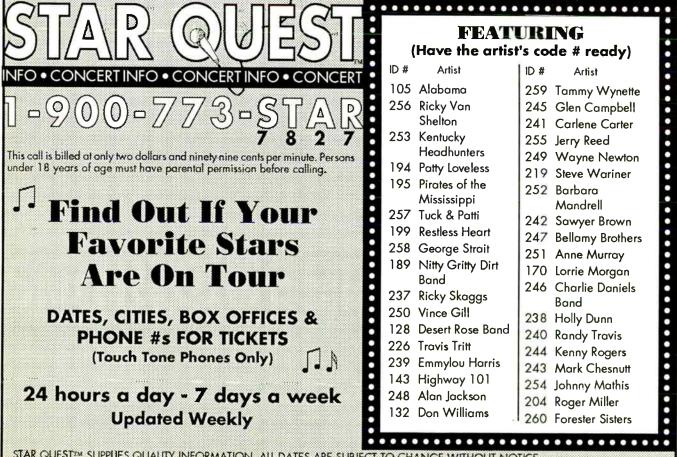
The late Jim Reeves, the late Marty Robbins and the late Patsy Cline are my favorite performers. I also love George Strait, Ricky Van Shelton, Alan Jackson and many more. My vote for Duo of the Year goes to Dolly and Ricky Van Shelton on "Rockin' Years."

Gayle Ashley

Yadkinville, North Carolina Hazel might agree on Dolly and Ricky. See People in this issue.—Ed.

ACM's a Fiasco

My comments on the ACM awards show what a fiasco! This country music fan will not watch next year. They did a disservice to the newcomers with those stupid, halfminute productions. Granted, Garth Brooks sings a good country song, but Entertainer of the Year is going too far. The only part of the show worth watching was Johnny Cash-a well-deserved award for the Man in Black. Darlene LeGarde Carson City, Nevada



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Journal Knocks 'Em Out

I thought you'd like to hear from a new Charter Member of the Academy who thinks *The Journal* is great. However, the reason I'm writing is your fantastic article on Hank Williams in the first issue.

I was born in 1948 into a musical family. My father is amusician, and he too played the *Louisiana Hayride* and small radio stations in East Texas. One of the earliest things I remember was hearing Hank Williams died. My dad was working on his automobile and had the radio on. Being Daddy's Little Girl, I was right there. I immediately started crying and ran up the hill to my mother, just nearly hysterical.

I never stopped loving Hank Williams. There's a quality of loneliness and needing love in his songs that somehow transcends time. I'm really pleased you chose him for your first issue. Glenda J. Lloyd Hockley, Texas

Hank Williams will appear again in The Journal in February 1992 to celebrate the Academy's first anniversary. Membership is up, and members like you are helping me decide what to cover.—R.D.B.



Webb Pierce graces the cover of the third issue of the Academy's Journal.

\$10,000 Sweepstakes Winner

You could have knocked me over with the proverbial feather when I received the letter informing me I was the 1990 \$10,000 Super Sweepstakes Prize Winner. The award couldn't have come at a more opportune time. My husband is recovering from a broken leg, complicated by the fact that he has muscular dystrophy. Now we can get the electric wheel chair he so needs. We also have a daughter attending college in Oregon; at least we can pay for all those long-distance phone calls!

When it comes to letter-writing, I am the number one procrastinator. One thing I don't procrastinate on is renewing my subscription. Boy, am I ever glad about that. Dorothy West

Greenwich, Connecticut



Strange but wonderful postcards department: this one of a violin created by Swedish sculptor—and Country Music Magazine reader—Lars Widenfalk out of diabase, a 1.6 million-year-old rock from the earth's interior. Lars says it will be played at the World Exhibition in Seville, Spain, in 1992, in the Swedish pavilion.

Sweepstakes Winner Can't Believe It

Thanks so much for the check for the \$1,000 Renewal Sweepstakes. I just couldn't believe I had won until I got it. You can be assured it will be put to good use. I'mtaking chemo-therapy treatments and drive about 25 miles weekly to and from the doctor. I also have bills to pay, and my wife and I will use it wisely.

Again, thanks. I never thought it could happen to me. We both love country music and *Country Music Magazine*.

Tommie Pearson Barlow, Kentucky

Need Back Issues?

Don't write, don't call. Send a check for \$2.50 per issue plus \$1.50 to cover postage and handling payable to *Country Music Magazine*, 329 Riverside Avenue, Suite 1, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Attention: Back Issues. Please note: We are out of March/April 1990 issue with George Strait on the cover.

Russ Barnard's ad for one year's worth of back issues—May/June1990 through March/April 1991—for just \$9.97 (that's \$8.03 off the regular back-issue price) that appeared on page 67 in the May/June issue is still good. Take advantage today!

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Ernest Tubb: A definitive Ernest Tubb boxed set is welcome any time, and the 5-CD Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello (Bear Family BCD 15498) covers ground that was in many ways E.T.'s most fertile: the years 1947 to 1953. This set actually covers only six years,

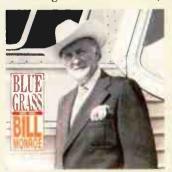


since virtually no recordings were made in 1948 due to a nationwide strike against the record companies by the Musicians' Union. Older Decca recordings, notorious for noisy sound, benefit enormously from Bear Family's remastered audio. The set encompasses all of Tubb's hits from this period: "You Hit the Nail Right on the Head," "Driftwood on the River," the definitive version of "Warm Red Wine," "Seaman's Blues" and "Slipping Around." "Have You Ever Been Lonely" from 1948 was the first-ever recording of that number as well as the hit version. Also among the hits are "Mean Mama Blues," "Blue Christmas," "Letters Have No Arms" and "You Don't Have to Be a Baby to Cry.'

All the duets with Red Foley from the 1956 album, Red 'N Ernie, are here, along with several unissued Foley-Tubb duets. After a while, the humor in these songs can grow tiresome. On the other side of the coin are several religious numbers and the Jimmie Rodgers songs released on the 1951 EP, Ernest Tubb Sings Jimmie Rodgers. Such newly-discovered, unreleased titles as "Don't Your Face Look Red" spice things up considerably along with other unissued versions of E.T.'s underrated ballads, "Watching My Past Go By," "Takin' It Easy Here," "I'm in a Crowd But So Alone" and "Yesterday's Winner Is a Loser Today." The booklet by Tubb authority Ronnie Pugh is among the finest looking books I've ever seen from Bear. And among the rare photos are some seldom-seen ones of Tubb and The Troubadours entertaining the troops in Korea in 1952.

Bill Monroe: Bear's Blue Grass: 1959-1969 (BCD 15529) covers the second decade of Monroe's Decca career, the years 1959 through 1969 on four CD's. Included here are all Monroe's brilliant creations from that era along with non-bluegrass material skillfully adapted to fit his sound. Among these numbers are Johnny Cash's "Big River," the big band swing number, "Bugle Call Rag"; and "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight." Monroe's interpretations of traditional tunes like "Shady Grove," "Paddy on the Turnpike" (previously unreleased) and "Turkey in the Straw" are every bit as effective and brilliantly arranged.

This period also contained some of Bill's finest instrumentals, among them the evocative, frontier-flavored number, "Crossing the Cumberlands,"



and "Kentucky Mandolin." Together with "Paddy" in the previously unissued category are a 1963 version of "Pike County Breakdown," "Walls of Time" (with Vic Jordan and Roland White) and "Legend of the Blue Ridge Mountains" with Del McCoury and banjoist Joe Drumright.

Some of today's greatest bluegrass musicians were cutting their teeth as members of the Blue Grass Boys on these numbers: fiddlers Buddy Spicher, Kenny Baker, Richard Greene, Byron Berline, Red Hayes and Vassar Clements, banjoists Vic Jordan, Rual Yarborough and Bill Keith (playing his incredible solo on "Sailor's Hornpipe") and singerguitarist Peter Rowan (who later became a pop-folk singer). Mandolinist Roland White played guitar with Monroe; only Bill played mandolin. Bill's son James pops up at various points, usually playing bass fiddle.

The entire box, its booklet by Neil Rosenberg and its packaging complement the music admirably.

Gary Stewart: A couple of years back, Hightone Records, a label in Oakland, California, known for recording contemporary blues, became the vehicle for a comeback by honky tonk wildman Gary Stewart. Minus his addictive problems, Stewart returned with his vocal intensity and rocking wildness largely intact. Judging by Hightone's two releases, his music lost none of its traditional feel or its on-the-edge, boogie woogie madness.

Now Hightone has taken another welcome step by reissuing Stewart's 1975 debut RCA album, Out of Hand (HCD 8026), with original notes and artwork. These songs put Stewart's newer material into a clearer, definable context. "She's Actin' Single"-to say nothing of "Drinkin' Thing," "Draggin' Shackles" and "Back Slider's Wine"-was refreshingly basic amid the pop-schlock country of the mid-1970's. Today, these numbers sound solidly in the mainstream but no less moving. Stewart's RCA producer, Roy Dea, who produces his Hightone recordings today, had a sound stylistic concept for Gary even back then. My historian side says this reissue could have benefited from new, updated liner notes in-

by Rich Kienzle

cluded along with the originals by then-RCA head, Jerry Bradley. That, however, is a minor point. Hightone isn't through with Stewart's past recordings; a Greatest Hits package of Stewart's RCA singles is coming later this year.

Hank Snow: From 1950 to 1956 Hank Snow made a series of prerecorded transcriptions for RCA's Thesaurus Music which were then leased out to NBCaffiliated radio stations around the nation. Those stations played them in whatever form



they wished. Bear Family is releasing the transcriptions now, as *The Complete Thesaurus Transcriptions* (BCD 15488); the set constitutes Volume 3 in Bear Family's comprehensive Hank Snow series.

These 138 recordings on five CD's have never been available to the public. Some numbers are different from the original RCA recordings. Snow was hardly a stiff performer; however, in places, the Thesaurus versions seem looser than those on record, more like Snow and The Rainbow Ranch Boys used to sound onstage. Most of the songs (66 in all) are numbers Hank never commercially recorded at all, among them his versions of Floyd Tillman's "This Cold War With You," Bob Wills' "I Wonder If You Feel the Way I Do," Bill Monroe's "Kentucky Waltz," a 1951 version of "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" and a beautiful version of "Among My Souvenirs."

An excellent set of non-pedal steel guitar solos by band member Joe Talbot is included here on "Wabash Blues" and "12th Street Rag." "Orange Blossom Special" features fiddler Tommy Vaden (Chubby Wise fiddles on the later tracks). Other instrumental duets showcase Hank's clean, acoustic guitar teamed with Chet Atkins' electric on a set of tunes that includes "Sentimental Journey" and "Birth of the Blues." Among the last Thesaurus sides, these duets followed in the wake of the hit Snow-Atkins instrumental, "Silver Bell." The oversized booklet includes brief notes by Charles Wolfe, rare photographs from Snow's own collection and a spoken-word script Hank used to introduce the Thesaurus recordings. Some of the photos depict an early Jimmie Rodgers Day celebration in Meridian, Mississippi, with Hank and Ernest Tubb as featured guests.

Flatt and Scruggs: The first volume of Bear Family's definitive collection of the complete Mercury and Columbia recordings of Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs is now available. The 112-song Flatt and Scruggs; 1948-1959 (BCD 15472) covers the complete 1948-1950 Mercury sessions (28 songs in all) and the 84 Columbia recordings made from 1950 through April 1959. The importance of the Flatt and Scruggs Mercury repertoire can't be overemphasized. Ask Marty Stuart, who cites the Flatt and Scruggs Mercury album, Country Music, released in 1958, as the album that turned him on to bluegrass music. (You'll find all the songs from that album on this set.)

Before Lester and Earl left Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys in 1948, they helped Monroe create his most important music, the definitive bluegrass titles. It wasn't a totally pleasant parting (Bill and Lester didn't resume their friendship until the 1970's). Working as a team, Lester and Earl developed their own sound quickly, as proven by the first four songs. recorded in Knoxville. By the time their fourth session rolled around in 1949, Earl was ready with the original version of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown."

Lester had perfected his vocal skills with Monroe, while Earl's influential banjo picking,



not always easily heard on his Columbia recordings with Monroe, became prominent here. Even other band members got off some fine performances, for example, mandolinist Curly Seckler's vocal on his own composition, "No Mother or Dad." The early sacred numbers, including "Preachin', Prayin', Singin'" and "Back to the Cross," remain songs of singular beauty.

The Columbia material speaks for itself: The Carter Family's "Jimmie Brown the Newsboy" and the classic Scruggs instrumentals, "Earl's Breakdown" and "Flint Hill Special." Also from this period are "Blue Ridge Cabin Home," "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down."the duo's version of "Six White Horses,"the Josh Graves dobro showpiece, "Shuckin' the Corn," and Flatt and Scruggs' hit recordings of "Tis Sweet to Be Remembered" and "Cabin on the Hill." Also nestled among all these jewels are original versions of "Don't Get Above Your Raisin" and "Cryin' My Heart Out Over You," songs that Ricky Skaggs later appropriated and took into the mainstream.

Nearly everything here has been released before; one exception is "I'll Take the Blame." The enclosed booklet by Neil Rosenberg and the discography are quite informative. We learn, for example, that Lester and Earl weren't above using Nashville studio pickers to fill out the sound at times, including Chet Atkins and Harold Bradley.

Legends of Guitar-Country: Rhino Records continues exploring various country guitar styles with Guitar Player Magazine Presents Legends of Guitar-Country, Volume 2 (Rhino R 70723). I annotated this one, so here are the facts without any attempt to review. The set includes guitar performances from 1928 to 1986. Among these are the original 1928 Carter Family version of "Wildwood Flower," featuring Maybelle Carter, and Tony Rice's 1986 number, "Me and My Guitar." Between those two poles fall Chet Atkins' 1953 "Chinatown, My Chinatown," Jerry Reed's "The Claw," Hawaiian steel guitar master Jerry Byrd's 1949 number, "Steelin' the Blues," and Roy Clark's "Dented Fender" from 1962. Johnny Bush's 1974 jam session version of "Home in San Antone" features two steel guitar masters, Curly Chalker and Buddy Emmons, jamming with guitarist Harold Bradley. The original single was mono; this is the unreleased stereo version.

MerleTravis'unaccompanied electric guitar solo, "Blue Smoke," covers that style of playing, while James Burton and Ralph Mooney provide a glimpse of the instrumental side of the Bakersfield sound with their 1968 tune, "Corn Pickin'." Hank Garland's swinging 1951 recording of "Seventh and Union" and Grady Martin's

How to Get These Treasures

Available in formats shown at prices shown: Ernest Tubb. Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello (BCD 15498) 5-CD boxed set, \$135.00/ Bill Monroe, Bluegrass: 1959-1969 (BCD 15529) 4-CD boxed set, \$108.00/Hank Snow. The Complete Thesaurus Transcriptions (BCD 15488) 5-CD boxed set, \$135.00/Flatt and Scruggs, 1948-1959 (BCD 15472) 4-CD boxed set, \$108.00/Legends of Guitar—Country. Volume 2 (R 70723) CD \$15.98, cassette \$10.98/Gary Stewart, Out of Hand (HCD 8026) CD \$19.98, cassette \$11.98/Roy Acuff, Fly Birdie Fly!: 1939-1941 (Rounder SS-24) LP or cassette \$11.98.

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"Pork Chop Stomp" capture the jazzier side of Nashville pickers. Clarence White's acoustic, flatpicked "Farewell Blues" with The Kentucky Colonels complements the electric track of "Nashville West" heard on *Volume 1* of this series.

Among the oddities are Dave Dudley's "Six Days on the Road," featuring guitarist Jimmy Colvard snapping the guitar strings. No less compelling is Bob Wills' raw, bluesy guitarist, Junior Barnard (no relation to our publisher), improvising "Barnard Blues." Roy Acuff Rounder Records' previous release of vintage Roy Acuff Columbia material, Steamboat Whistle Blues, was joined in 1988 by a second reissue, Fly Birdie Fly !: 1939-1941 (Rounder SS-24). The 1988 col-



lection covers the period in which Acuff and the group joined the Grand Ole Opry. By then, Oswald Kirby had joined Acuff, bringing his newly-purchased dobro to the band. These 12 numbers reflect Acuff's sound at a time when his Opry membership was making him both a household word and the show's first solo star. Several masterpieces from the group's 1939 Memphis session included here are "Walkin' in My Sleep," "Fly Birdie Fly!," the previously unreleased "Railroad Boomer,""Living on the Mountain, "Baby Mine" and "I'm Building a Home." Also cut at that session was "Old Age Pension Check," Roy's wry satire on the then-new Social Security system. From 1940 comes "The Broken Heart" and "Muleskinner Blues" and from 1941 "Lying Woman Blues" and "Stuck Up Blues." Acuff fan Lou Curtiss' notes are wellintentioned but not sufficiently detailed to illuminate such important material.

Essential Collector by Rich Kienzle

- Videos -

Loretta Lynn: Nashville's Hallway Productions is the only credible country music video biographer in the business today, bar none. Hallway takes the time and does the research, and the result can be seen in their truly compelling stories. If you're a regular reader, you've noticed enthusiastic reviews of their bios of George Jones, Patsy Cline and Waylon.

Loretta Lunn: Honky Tonk Girl was done with Loretta's cooperation. It's laced with frequent comments from both Loretta and her husband, Mooney. Others who provide insight include her Decca/MCA producer, Owen Bradley; manager David Skepner; Charlie Dick, husband of Loretta's friend and benefactor Patsy Cline; Justin Tubb; longtime duet partner Conway Twitty; The Oaks' Duane Allen, veteran WSM announcer Grant Turner and steel guitarist Don Helms, who co-owned the Wil-Helm booking agency with The Wilburn Brothers and knew Loretta well in the early days.

Given the success of the film, Coal Miner's Daughter, everyone knows the Loretta Webb story, which begins in Butcher Holler, Kentucky, and runs through Mooney Lynn's courtship, their moves around the nation and Loretta's early songwriting, performances and recording: one snapshot shows her with the band that accompanied her on "Honky Tonk Girl" for Zero Records; it included both the record's producer, Speedy West (the legendary steel guitarist), and the late country-jazz guitarist, Roy Lanham. Mooney's silent home movies, all in color, show this early Loretta wearing a fringed cowgirl outfit that seems to symbolize her newfound confidence as a performer.

Some surprises creep into the production's musical interludes, among them a vintage blackand-white film clip featuring Loretta's crisp, hard-country



rendition of the Connie Francis pop hit, "Everybody's Somebody's Fool," from an unnamed 1960's TV show. A number of other videotape clips from the syndicated Wilburn Brothers TV show (she was a regular cast member) provide long-unseen, outstanding live performances of "Don't Come Home A-Drinkin" and "Fist City." Even though the Wilburn shows are over 20 years old, the color reproduction is excellent.

Unlike other Hallway videos that are excellent throughout, this one has a major problem. Following its coverage of the 1970's portion of her career and some vague discussions of her "burnout" after nearly two decades on the road, the video suddenly ends. The burnout is obvious enough in the crummy material she's shown performing, but there's little said about what she's doing today, and in the end, the video just peters out. I would have thought there were two hours worth of material in Loretta's total career. Nothing, for example, is heard from her siblings who had varying success in the music business: Crystal Gayle; brother Jay Lee Webb, who recorded for Decca and had a couple of chart hits; or Peggy Sue Webb, who had a modestly successful recording career as a solo artist and with her husband, singer Sonny Wright. Don't misunderstand, what's here is great, but it could have gone much deeper.

- Recordings -

Loretta Lynn: If you're looking for an all-hits, no-fluff Loretta cassette, Blue-Eyed Kentucky Girl (MCAC-20261) is just the ticket. These eight songs are all classic Loretta, beginning with "Coal Miner's Daughter" and "Rated 'X'." The other classics speak for themselves: "You're Lookin' at Country," "The Pill," "When the Tingle Becomes a Chill" and her 1981 hit, "Some-body Led Me Away." What's odd about this package is the exclusion of her 1965 hit, "Blue Kentucky Girl." The title track is a different song altogether. Mind you, there's nothing wrong with "Blue Eyed Kentucky Girl,"but in a hits-oriented package, it doesn't fit as it never charted. Neither did "Another Man Loved Me Last Night." Nevertheless, given its price and quality, the cassette's a bargain. Loretta and Conway: Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn's Two's a Party (MCAC-20263) picks up several of their hit du-

CONWAY TWITTY AND LORETTA LYNN



TWO'S A PARTY .MCA

ets, together, including their first, "After the Fire Is Gone" from 1971, as well as 1973's "Louisiana Woman, Mississippi Man" (which was always a bit too frantic for my taste), the 1976 hit "The Letter," the hilarious 1978 hit "You're the Reason Our Kids Are Ugly," and four songs culled from their various Deck/MCA duet LP's.

These include "Barroom Habits," "Two's a Party," "I Changed My Mind" and "Just Lead the Way."

Conway Twitty: Conway's best material has always been available in some form ever since he began his massive string of country hits in the late 1960's. Hello Darlin' (MCAC-20268) covers the best from that period. "You've Never Been This Far Before," a Number One record for three weeks in 1973, earned the ire of some disc jockeys who found the song "too explicit" for airplay. The other seven songs include three more Number One records-"To See My Angel Cry" (1969), "Hello Darlin" (1970) and "I've Already Loved Youin My Mind" (1977)and four other songs: "Heavy Tears," "Slow Love- makin',' "That's All She Wrote" and a remake of his 1958 hit, "It's Only Make Believe."

All Star Western Swing: Though King Records was known primarily as a bluegrass and country label in the 1940's and 50's, they also recorded some incredible Western swing music in the mid- to late 40's, most of it in California. Some of it was good, some wasn't. The best stuff, by Hank Penny, has never been reissued. All Star Western Swing (Richmond N5 2277) is taken from a mid-50's King LP that long ago became a collector's item. One could easily do without Al Dexter's forgettable "Hi-De-Ho Boogie on a Saturday Night," Curt Barrett's corny "Hey Bar-tender," Carolina Cotten's "I Love to Yodel" and Jimmy Thomason's leaden ballad, "Spider and the Fly," which sounds like a Roy Acuff 78r.p.m. played on 33 1/3.

There are four performances that make this collection worth having, however. The information on them included here is from my own research—I doubt the reissue company knows who these artists are. The bluesy instrumental, "Jimmie's Jump" by Jimmie Widener (mistitled "Jennie's Jump" and miscredited to Spade Cooley), features some of the musicians who backed Merle Travis on his 1940's Capitol hits. Almost certainly among the players are trumpeter Virginia "Ginny" Cushman, accordionist Pedro DePaul, steel guitarist Joaquin Murphey and fiddler Harold Hensley. Almost certainly not among them is Cooley.

Kentucky fiddler Tex Atchison, who had relocated to California, does an excellent vocal on the ballad, "Somebody's Rose," which features the stand-out steel guitar of Noel Boggs. The delightful "Take Back Your Paper Heart" by Pee Wee King vocalist Redd (not "Red") Stewart is a track Stewart recorded for King in 1950, backed by The Golden West Cowboys with Bobby Koefer on steel guitar. The old fiddle tune, "Snow Deer," by Charlie Linville features Bob Wills' former twin lead guitarists, Jimmy Wyble and Cameron Hill; it swings like crazy. These four performances are worth the price of the cassette. If only International Marketing, who ownsthisstuff, could issue more and package it better.

Webb Pierce: The late Webb Pierce made his first recordings for the Four Star label, based in Los Angeles, in 1949 and 1950. These yielded a couple of regional hits that established him in the Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas regions covered by Shreveport's KWKH Louisiana Hayride, paving the way for his move to Decca. The Four Star material varied in quality, the best-known and best-selling item being his cover of Leon McAuliffe's 1949 hit steel guitar instrumental, "Panhandle Rag," with lyrics added by Webb himself. King Records acquired this material in the 1950's and in 1959 reissued the Four Star sides as The One & Only Webb Pierce (King KCD-648), recently reissued on CD.

It's clear Pierce was still in his formative period with these songs, which range from upbeat tuneslike "High Geared Daddy" and "Heebie Jeebie Blues" to "The Darkest Hour" and "I'm Happy That You Hurt Me." His voice hasn't yet developed the plaintive quality that served him so well on his Decca recordings a few years later.

Interesting as it is, however, this set has a serious problem that's shown up on other King reissues and can be heard on many of their albums from this period. Some fathead at the Cincinnati-based company overdubbed a mediocre drummer and vocal chorus on every song and reprocessed everything in fake stereo. This treatment doesn't obliterate Pierce's singing, but the extra musicians are annoving. It's sad the reissue didn't use the original, unadulterated, monaural Four Star masters. Instead, someone took the easy way out.



Ernest Tubb and Red Foley: In 1957, Decca Records released Red 'N Ernie, a compilation of some (not all) of the (largely) humorous hit duets the pair recorded from 1949 to 1953 (all the Foley-Tubb duets, including numerous unissued titles, are available on the Ernest Tubb boxed set reviewed in this issue's Buried Treasures). Red Foley and Ernest Tubb Together (MCAC-20514) distills this same material down to eight numbers that capture the essence, including nearly all their chart hits, on one cassette.

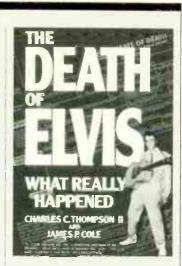
The collection includes their 1949 parody of the Jimmy Work

hit, "Tennessee Border," retitled "Tennessee Border No. 2," along with Bob Wills' "Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age" and "Goodnight, Irene" (a Number 10 hit on the pop charts as well) from 1950, "The Strange Little Girl" (1951) and "Too Old to Cut the Mustard" (1952). The numbers that never charted include "I'm in Love With Molly" and "You're a Real Good Friend." E.T. and Red's sly digs at each other and their enjoyment of working together are obvious, and though the humor is corny by today's standards, it's still entertaining.

- Books -

Elvis Presley: If you didn't read it in the papers or see it on the news, the County Commissioners in Shelby County, Tennessee (which includes Memphis). recently decided to reopen their investigation into the 1977 death of Elvis Presley. Most people long ago discounted the official autopsy report that Elvis died of an unprovoked "heart attack," though some diehard fans still refuse to believe he ever abused drugs. Ever since his death, news shows like ABC's 20/20 have pursued what they felt was the real story of Presley's death, as well as the cover-up that they believed went on among certain officials

Unlike so many Presley books, *The Death of Elvis* by Charles C. Thompson II and James P. Cole is neither pretty nor flaky. Both men are investigative reporters who have worked at Memphis newspapers, so they understand the Presley legend. They also coproduced the 20/20 segment on Elvis that aired in 1979. The book, a medical detective story of sorts, goes further with new



and well-documented research that details the alleged coverup of evidence (beginning in the Graceland bathroom moments after Elvis' body was found) that points to Elvis dying of the effects of multiple prescription drugs working together, a phenomenon known as "poly-pharmacy."

To prevent the public from seeing a tarnished image of a man who brought enormous amounts of tourism and prestige to their city, it appears certain elements of municipal government, certain members of the local medical profession and even segments of the local news media all perpetuated the conclusion that a coronary killed the singer. Some of the Presley inner circle, known as the Memphis Mafia, are seen in a decidedly unflattering light. A good deal of attention is devoted to analyzing the activities of various physicians who treated Presley, most notably his flamboyant personal physician, Dr. George Nichopoulos of Memphis. Thompson and Cole even managed to land an interview with the elusive Colonel Parker.

The tone is straightforward, not sensational. Unlike Albert Goldman's biography, Elvis, this one contains no underlying anti-Elvis sentiments. Fans may not like the book's conclusion, but nothing presented reflects on Presley's musical accomplishments. Instead, the book depicts the desperation of some to cover up Elvis' very human failings, such as an inability to deal maturely with his fame and increasing age. He was hardly the first great performer to have that problem.

How to Get These Collectibles

Available at prices shown. VHS Videos: Loretta Lynn. Honky Tonk Girl(V8A)\$29.98. Cassettes: Loretta Lynn. Blue Eyed Kentucky Girl (MCA 20261)\$8.99/Conway Twitty, Hello Darlin' (MCA 20268)\$8.99/ Loretta and Conway, Two's a Party (MCA 20263)\$8.99/Ernest Tubb and Red Foley, Red Foley and Ernest Tubb Together (MCA 20514) \$8.99/All-Star Western Swing (N5-2277)\$8.99. Books: Charles C, Thompson II and James P. Cole, The Death of Elvis (B8X)\$19.95. Other: Webb Pierce, The One and Only (K-648) available on cassette on LP for \$9.98, CD for \$12.98. Send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 7891EC, P.O. Box 290216, Nashville, TN 37229. Add \$1.95 postage and handling for first item, \$.95 each additional. CMSA members, see For CMSA Members Only page for discounts.

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2.	Doug Stone	In a Different Light
3.	George Strait	If I Know Me
4.	Paul Overstreet	Heroes
5.	Mark Chesnutt	Blame It on Texas
6.	Dwight Yoakam	You're the One
		If the Devil Danced in
		Empty Pockets
8.	Garth Brooks	The Thunder Rolls
9.	Oak Ridge Boys	Lucky Moon
10.	Clint Black	One More Payment
11.	Lorrie Morgan	We Both Walk
12.	Tanya Tucker	Oh What It Did to Me
13.	Ronnie Milsap	Are You Lovin' Me Like I'm
		Lovin' You
	Randy Travis	
		One Hundred and Two
16.	Alan Jackson	Don't Rock the Jukebox
17.	Pirates of the	
	Mississippi	
	Alabama	Down Home
19.	Dolly Parton and Ricky Van Shelton	If I Know Me
20	Ricky Van Shelton	
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10.	Alan Jackson Here in the Real World
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13.	Vince Gill Pocket Full of Gold
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	Mississippi Pirates of the Mississippi
15.	Doug Stone Doug Stone
16.	Dwight Yoakam If There Was a Way
17.	Kentucky
	HeadHunters Pickin' on Nashville
18.	Vince Gill When I Call Your Name
<mark>19</mark> .	Kathy Mattea Time Passes By
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