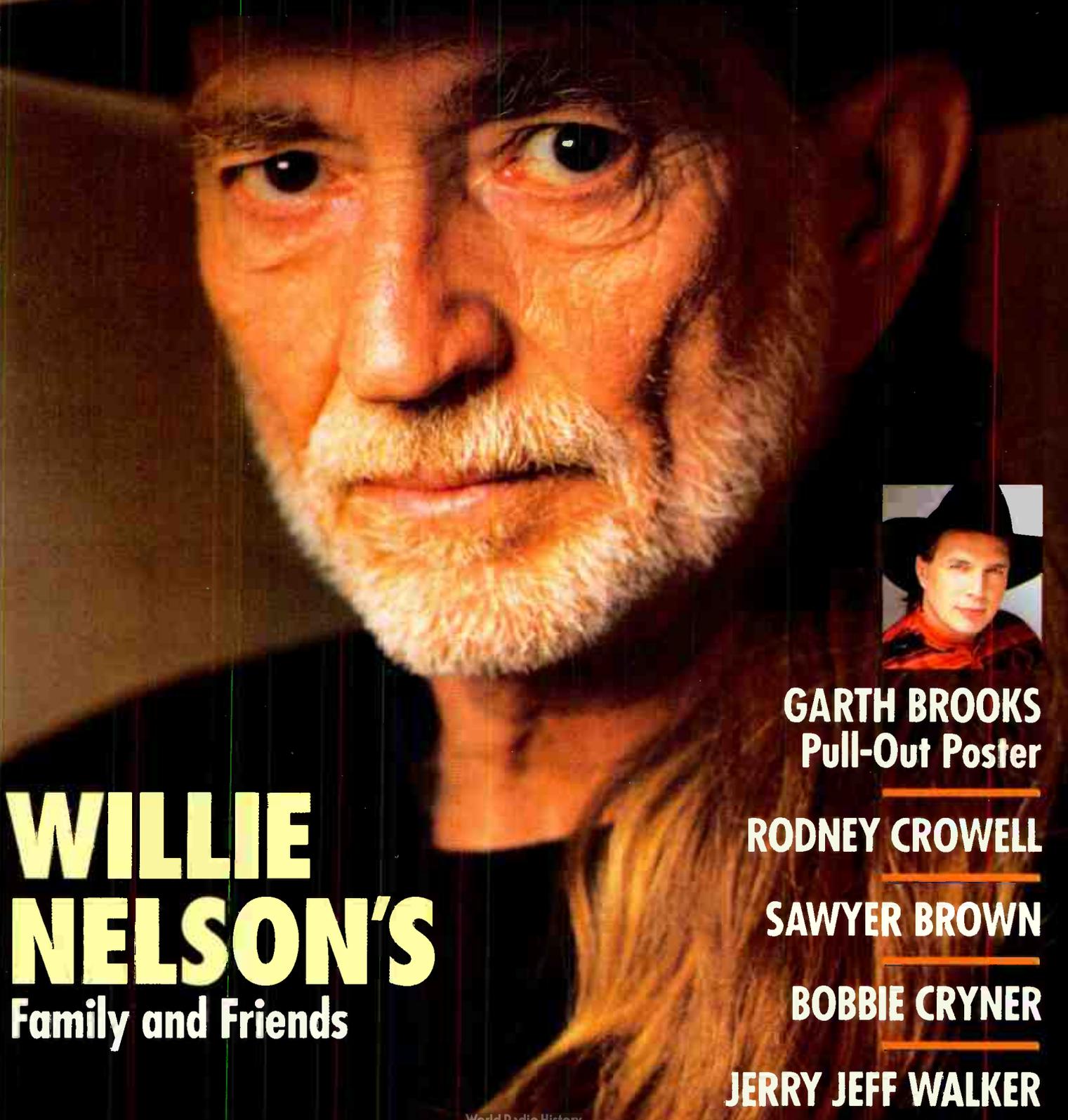


NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1994

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COUNTRY MUSIC



**WILLIE
NELSON'S**
Family and Friends



GARTH BROOKS
Pull-Out Poster

RODNEY CROWELL

SAWYER BROWN

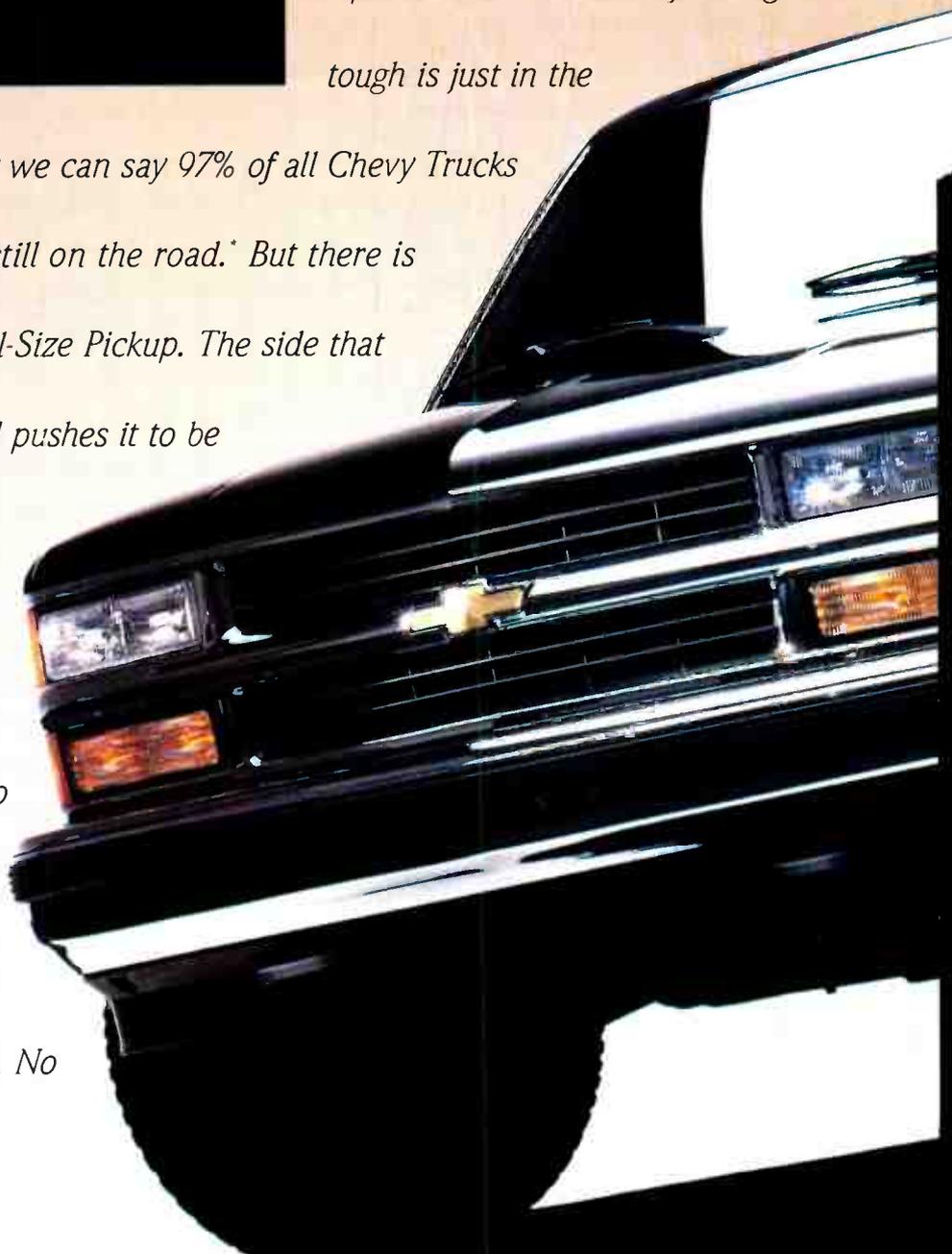
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for!"

Clark



Brooks & Dunn
"Waitin' On Sundown"
Arista



Tracy Lawrence
"I See It Now"
Atlantic



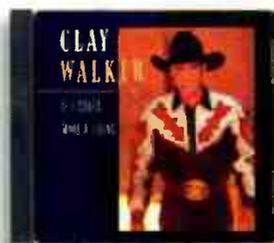
Little Texas
"Kick A Little"
Warner Bros.



Mark Chesnutt
"What A Way To Live"
MCA



George Strait
"Lead On"
MCA



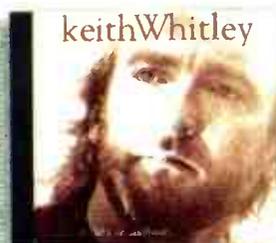
Clay Walker
"If I Could Make A Living"
Giant



Chris LeDoux
"Haywire"
Liberty Records



Blackhawk
"Blackhawk"
Arista



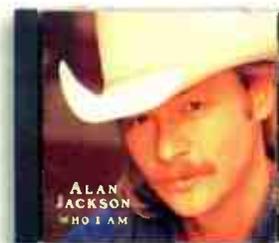
Various Artists
"Keith Whitley:
A Tribute Album"
BNA

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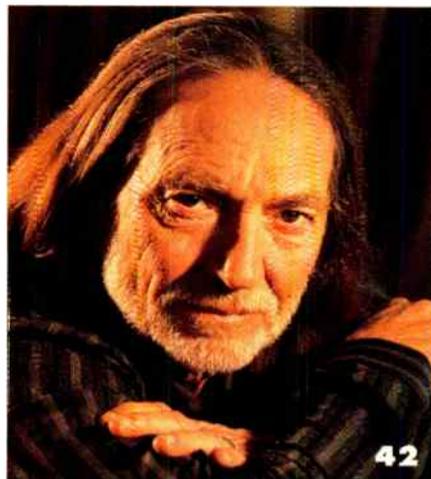


Alan Jackson
"Who I Am"
Arista

COUNTRY MUSIC

FEATURES

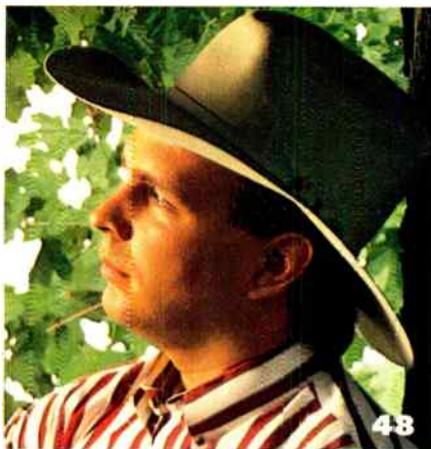
- 40 20 Questions with Jerry Jeff Walker** *by John Morthland*
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- 48 Garth Brooks Pull-Out Centerfold**
Get the photos and the updated facts on Garth's recording career.
- 52 Rodney Crowell: Letting the Picture Paint Itself** *by Bob Allen*
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- 60 Sawyer Brown: Waiting for Sawyer Brown** *by Bob Allen*
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EJ CAMP

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JAMES SCHNEFF/GAMMA LIAISON

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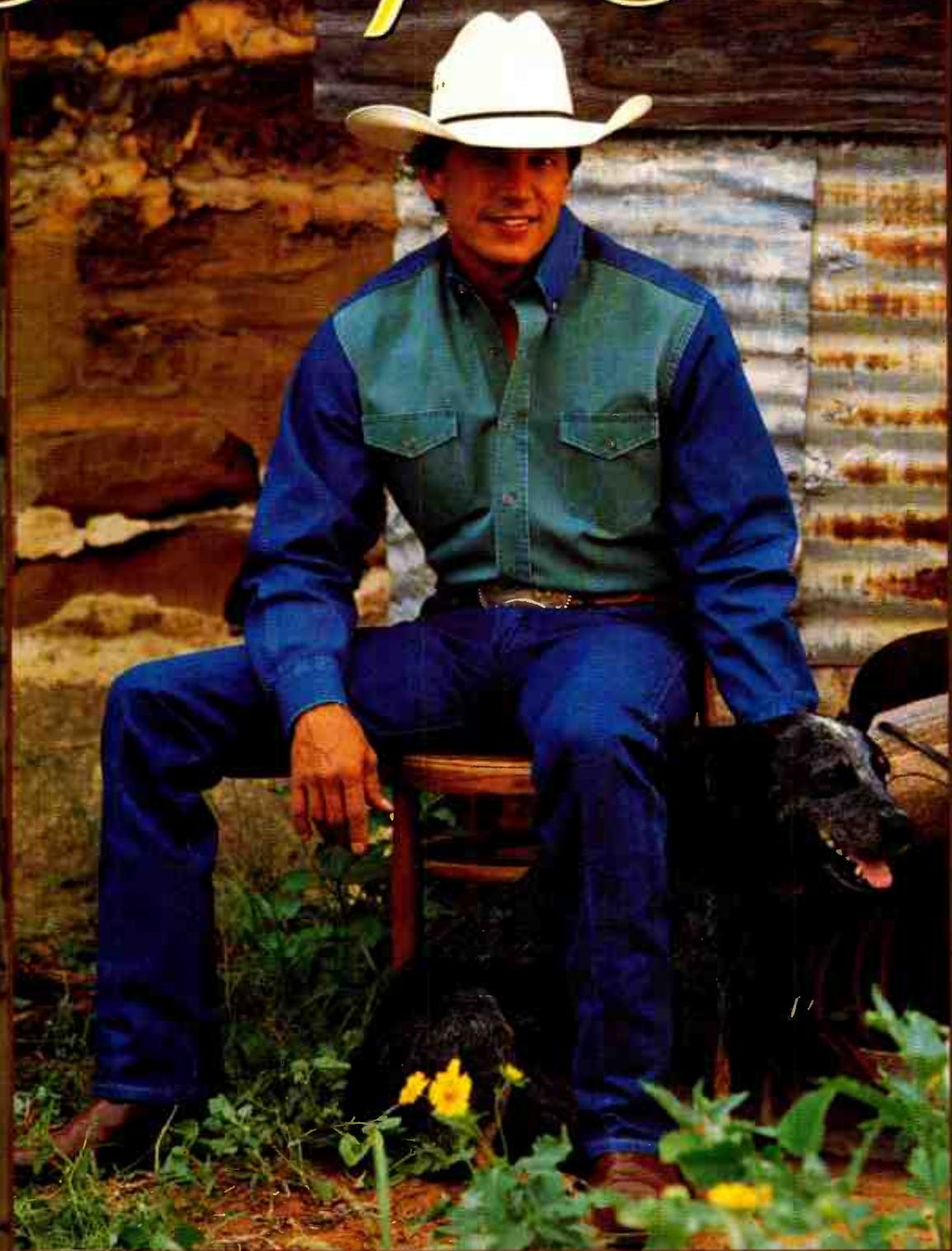


COVER PHOTO: E.J. CAMP; INSET: MARK TUCKER/OUTLINE

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NEW FROM

George Strait



LEAD ON

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BIG
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IN STORES NOVEMBER 8

It's Big.

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People

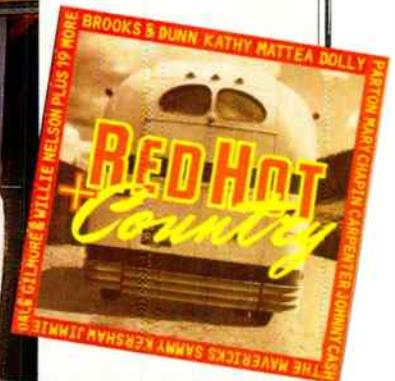
MORE BLUEGRASS AT THE RYMAN

I was able to go twice to the bluegrass series at the Ryman Auditorium and I want to share the thrill. First I saw **The Osborne Brothers** and **Lonesome Standard Time**. Both bands were as first class as they come. The Osbornes' repertoire, vast and wonderful, was served up by the finest band in bluegrass music. When the band members were given time to shine, my own wonderful son, bass player **Terry Smith**, sang his brother **Billy Smith's** song, "Hobo Blues," while the crowd went bananas. Tears rolled down Billy's face. He could not believe his song was being sung onstage at the great Ryman Auditorium. Course, **Larry Cordle's** songwriting expertise and **Glen Duncan's** fiddling make **Lonesome Standard Time** especially great. Then the last show of the season featured **Bill Monroe** and **Ralph Stanley**. This was a show to be remembered forever. Ralph, still on crutches after breaking his hip, did a really fine performance. However, when Bill hit those lonesome highs, it was mighty close to heaven on this earth. 'Twas a great performance by two great men of bluegrass. In the audience I saw former bluegrassers **Bobby Hicks**, who plays fiddle for **Ricky Skaggs**, and **Roland White**, who plays mandolin with the **Nashville Bluegrass Band**. **Porter Wagoner** joined Bill for a song, and **Bashful Brother Oswald** performed one of his big numbers. Me and **Karen Tolley** had a wonderful time.

CHUCK WAGON, RODEO AND GARTH

Garth Brooks invited his good friends, songwriters **Brian Kennedy** a/k/a "Chuck Wagon" and **Dan Roberson** a/k/a "Rodeo," to come to the Hollywood Bowl and sing with him around a campfire before 17,500 people. Garth and his two buddies sat down and sang "Unwound," honoring the threesome's hero, **George Strait**. Then Rodeo sang "I Sure Miss John Wayne" a Chuck/Rodeo composition. Well, the crowd went wild. After the show, the guys went to the party room where stars like **Danny DeVito** and **Gene Hackman** were. Soon Brian spotted Rodeo with this young lad embracing him...**John Wayne's**

RED HOT + COUNTRY



The all-star **Red Hot + Country AIDS** benefit album is out now on Mercury-Nashville. Featuring the talents of more than 30 different country artists, the album includes 17 songs. Memorable moments in the studio included **Graham Nash** vocalizing with project coordinator **Kathy Mattea** and **Suzy Bogguss** on "Teach Your Children" and album producer **Randy Scruggs** working with his father, **Earl**, along with **Vince Gill**, **Ricky Skaggs** and **Doc Watson** on The Carter Family classic, "Keep on the Sunny Side."

grandson, weeping. Then **John Wayne's** two daughters (Garth knew they were coming) talked about the song and went.

The next day, **Brian** and **Rodeo** ended up at the **Wayne** ranch for a barbecue where again they sang "I Sure Miss John Wayne," and all the kids cried again. This is an exclusive for my readers alone, all of us who love and still miss **John Wayne**.

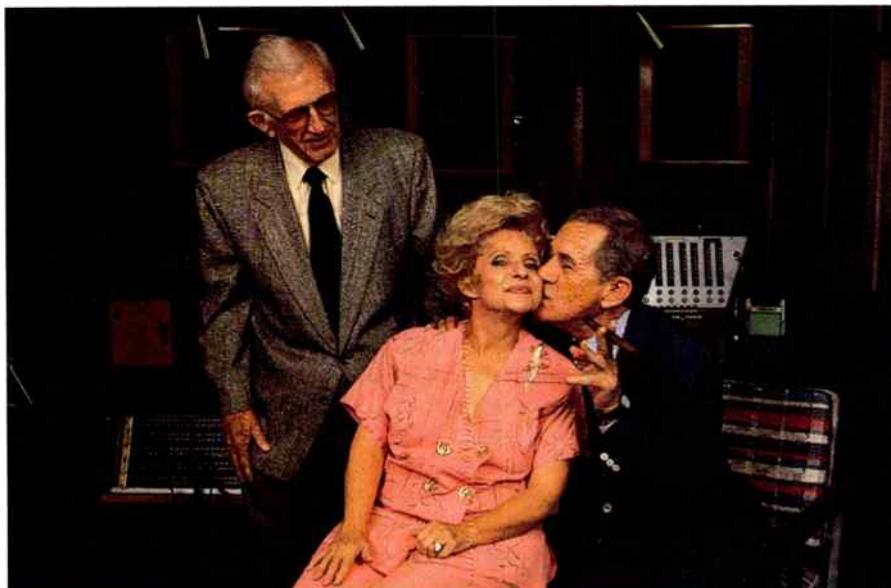
STRAIT SEZ

George Strait don't say much, but when he does speak, he usually says something worth hearing. Stuff he recently revealed: *Pure Country*, George's first movie, might not be his last. He is interested in doing a western because west-

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

People



Brenda Lee hosted the NARAS do honoring Owen Bradley and Chet Atkins.

erns are his favorite. He's always been a **Bob Wills** fan. He loves **Asleep at the Wheel**, and he loves **Frank Sinatra**. George is dismayed that radio won't play **Merle Haggard** and misses hearing Merle's music. And he, of course, misses me. So there.

CHET AND OWEN

The reasons there is Music Row, the Nashville Sound and country music as we know it today are, very simply, **Chet Atkins** and **Owen Bradley**. These two pioneers had the vision and talent to find artists and produce records that fit the taste of country music fans. Then they broadened the scope of country listeners. These two gentlemen, the Architects of the Nashville Sound, were honored at a black tie event held at Lowe's Vanderbilt Plaza Hotel. **Brenda Lee**, the hostess who is the mostest, hosted the event. Performing besides Brenda were **Bobby Bare**, **Loretta Lynn**, **Porter Wagoner**, **Floyd Cramer**, **Pete Fountain**, **Skeeter Davis**, **k.d. lang**, and, the highlight of the evening, **Kitty Wells**, whose rendition of "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels" brought the room to its feet. Many other famed and near famed were on hand to honor the duo including Gov. **Ned Ray McWherter** and his date **Kitty Moon**, **Jim Ed Brown** and **The Browns**, **John Anderson**, **Bill Anderson**, **Mark O'Connor**, **Nanci Griffith**, **Emmylou Harris**, **Wayne Halper**, Owen's daughter **Patsy Bradley**, his son and daughter-in-law **Jerry** and **Connie Bradley**, his grandson **Clay Bradley**, brother **Harold Bradley** and his bride **Katherine Bradley**. Chet's wife **Leona Atkins** was present as were **Tony (wow) Brown**, **Bruce Hinton**, **Scott Borchetta**, **Nelson Larkin**,

Janice and Bud Wendell, **Donna Hilley**, **Paul Corbin**, **Bill Ivey**, **Paul and Patty Kraft**, **Paul Worley**, **Tim DuBois**, **Jack Weston**, **Karen and David Conrad**, **Ree Guyer** and **Steve Buchanan**. The \$100 a plate do was a NARAS event to raise money for MusiCares, which provides for financial assistance and health care for those in the recording industry. The lovely **Katie Gillon** presented the NARAS Governors Award to the duo of the hour. And, the Queen of the Universe, our own **Frances Preston**, who heads up BMI worldwide, was down from the Big Apple in all her regalness.

ALWAYS PATSY CLINE

Fans, please come to Music City and see the wonderful *Always Patsy Cline* at the historic Ryman Auditorium. My friends **Bobby Heller**, **Sandy Neese** and **Kevin Hale** and I took in the show (after sushi at Goten), and we were blown away. As a fan you owe it to yourself to see this show, which was written by a fan. Also enjoying the show on the same night were **Reba McEntire** and hubby/manager **Narvel Blackstock**.

MATTEA LENDS ANOTHER HAND

Mercury's socially-conscious **Kathy Mattea** has just finished coordinating the all-star *Red Hot + Country AIDS* benefit album (see photos) and is already lending her talents to another important cause. *Women for Women*, a new album benefitting the National Alliance for Breast Cancer Organizations, includes music from 14 female artists, from all walks of music—**Mattea**, **Melissa Etheridge**, **Amy Grant**,

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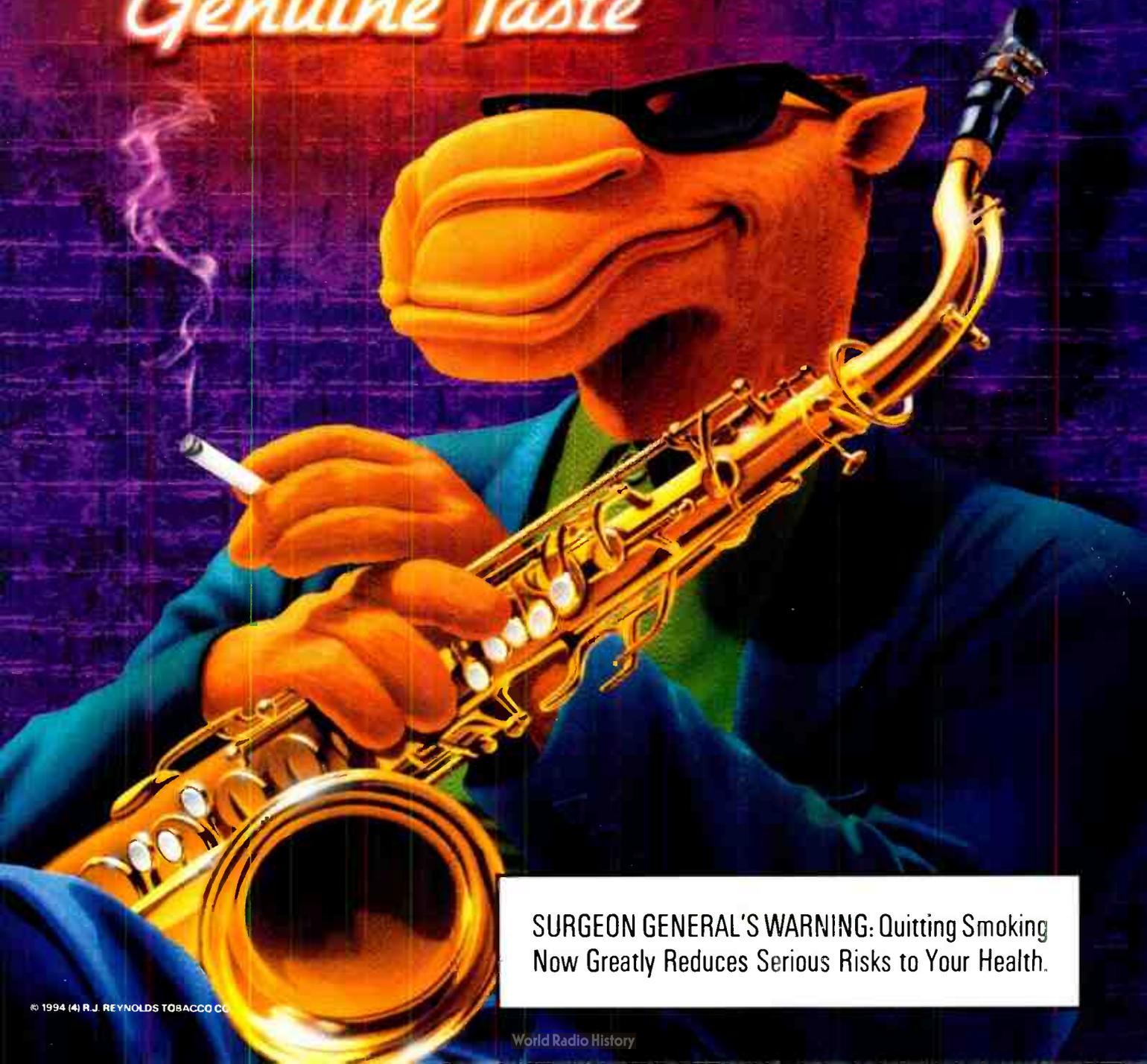
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People

A TOAST IF YOU PLEASE



People who don't even drink are pictured toasting **The Mavericks** following a showcase on ABC-TV's *Day One*. Left to right are: Mavs' manager **Frank Callari**, **Tony Brown** (MCA Prez), Mavericks **Jerry Dale McFadden**, **Nick Kane**, **Paul Deakin**, **Robert Reynolds** and **Raul Malo**, and **Bruce Hinton**, Chairman of MCA/Nashville.

MCA's **Tony** (wow) **Brown**, **Janet Rickman** and **Scott Borchetta**, Grand Ole Opry President **Hal Durham**, **Loretta Lynn**, **Donna** and **Patsy Stoneman**. "Mr. Monroe," as Bruce Hinton called Bill, "has been recording for MCA for an unheard of 45 years." Clap, fans. "And," said Bruce, "for the past dozen or so years we have worked without a contract, just a handshake." It was a great do for an unbelievable human being...my friend, Mr. Bill Monroe.

TRIBUTE ALBUMS ABOUND

Common Thread: The Songs of The Eagles, started the ball rolling. Now a bunch of tribute albums have been, or will soon be, released by the Nashville labels. Arista comes in with *Mama's Hungry Eyes*, a **Merle Haggard** tribute (naturally), featuring 13 different artists covering the new Hall of Famer's classic songs. BNA has a **Keith Whitley Tribute Album**, including covers of Keith's songs, some unreleased material and some songs written in honor of him. MCA has *Skyjagd Flyjds*, with ten country artists covering songs of the Southern rock pioneers. And Mercury and Liberty will battle it out with competing **Beatles** tribute albums.

MAVERICKS

MCA is smiling from here to yonder with **The Mavericks'** Gold album certification. Yep, *What a Cryin' Shame* has topped the 500,000 mark. Not bad for a bar band from Miami, huh.

Aretha Franklin and **Tina Turner** among them. The album's packaging will include information on what has become the most common form of cancer among women in the United States. Cheers to **Mattea** for her good works. She'll be playing at the White House at Christmas time.

MR. MONROE

One of God's finest creations, the inimitable **Bill Monroe**, was honored at the Country Music Hall of Fame for the release of his MCA boxed set containing 98 songs. The four-CD set, called *The Music of Bill Monroe: From 1936-1994* (a joint effort between MCA and the Country Music Foundation), historically traces Monroe's musical roots to his present day music. Recognized by MCA CEO **Bruce Hinton** for their efforts on the project were VP's **Katie Gillon** and **Alan Stoker**. CMF Executive Director **Bill Ivey** hosted the event, giving special notice to **John Rumble**, who spent six months researching for the liner notes, which, by the way, are worth the price of the package. Ivey also recognized **Kyle Young** and **Alan Stoker**, who helped on the project. "This is the happiest day of my life," said Bill when he took the podium. "The Lord has blessed me with great friends. I think you're supposed to be a friend and help people. And if any of you ever need my help, just ask. And I may ask you for help sometime," he added. Leaving the platform he

"eyeballed" the cameras on hand, shaking hands with all the working people, who are the people whose lives he understands, being a working man himself. E.W. "Bud" **Wendell**, CEO Opryland and everything associated with Gaylord on Planet Earth, was introduced from the roster as Bill Monroe's biggest fan. Other famed and near-famed in attendance included



Celebrating the release of the new **Bill Monroe** boxed set are: **Alan Stoker** and **John Rumble** of the Country Music Foundation, the Big Man, **Bill Ivey** and **Kyle Young** of the CMF and **Bruce Hinton**, Chairman MCA Records/Nashville.

Look for their latest CD and Cassette "Waitin' On Sundown" available in stores now!

Sometimes it's Better to be Seen and Heard.



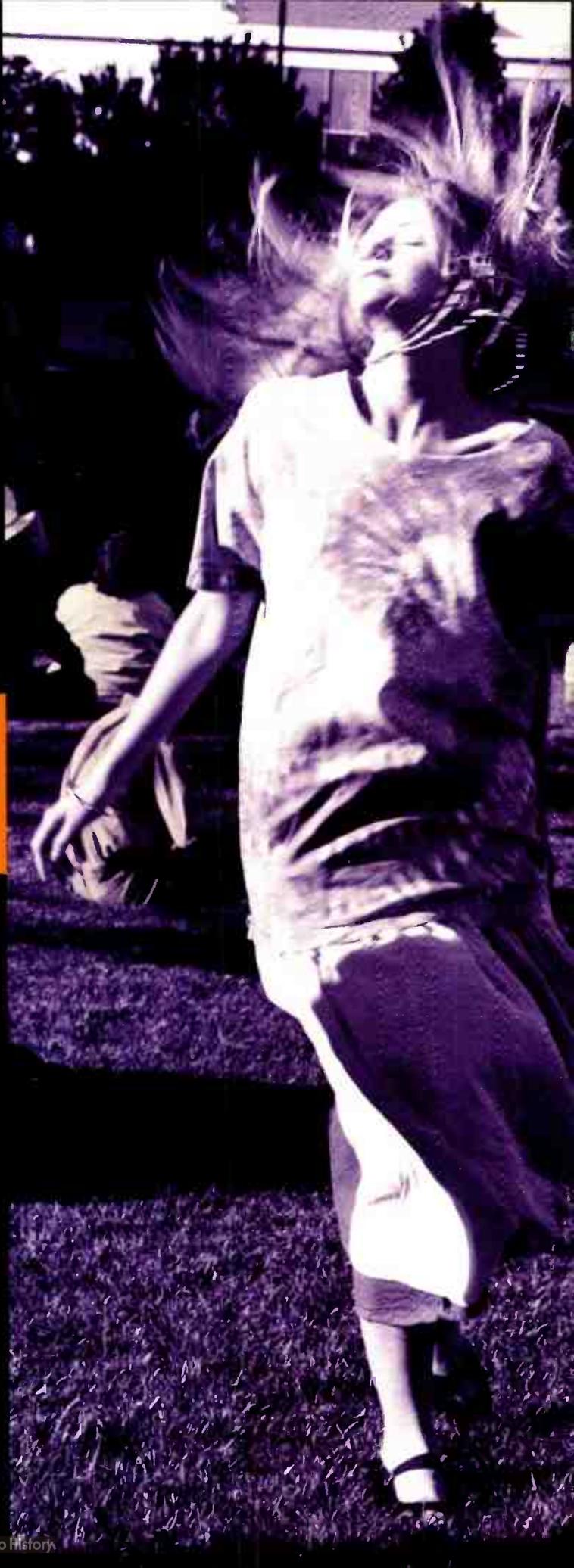
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People

Hill Lake east of Nashville. The lover of boats, boating, water, cars and hillbilly songs decided he wanted to do a concert for the boaters. The stage, built over the water, was in clear view for the incredible turnout. Facing the lake, Alan was in hillbilly heaven being that close to the water—remember the “Chattahoochee” video. And he called it “Alan Jackson’s Center Hillbilly Concert,” and everybody had a grand time. Opening act for the festivities was Giant Records’ **Rhonda Vincent**, who has the voice of an angel.



Pals Toby Keith and Doug Supernaw raise a glass at the Gold party for Supernaw’s successful debut album.

THERE’S GOLD AT THAT THAR BNA

Celebrating Gold albums for BNA are **John Anderson** and **Doug Supernaw**. *Solid Ground* is John’s second “Gold Kush” for the BNA folks, his first being *Seminole Wind*. I’ve never seen a happier recipient than John’s labelmate, Doug Supernaw, who struck Gold with his debut album, *Red & Rio Grande*. We partied at the trendy LaPaz Mexican Restaurant, where margaritas and tortillas were consumed to the tune of “I Don’t Call Him Daddy” by Mr. Supernaw, who was wearing a baseball cap. Great fun.

BUYING STUFF

It was 9:15 P.M. when I departed Kroger with my “stuff.” Besides bread, milk, fruit cereal, meat and veggies...there’s the necessities one buys at Kroger: Bit-O-Honey, *Country Music Magazine*, flashlight batteries, red color stick (that matches my hair for emergencies at the root of the matter), tabloids, etc. You get the picture. Flying out the automatic door I hear a familiar voice say, “Hazel.” Lo and behold, it’s **Marty Stuart** and **Connie**

GEORGIA GOVERNOR ZELL MILLER’S TOP TEN

Our Nashville guru, Cowboy Jack Clement, says Governor Zell Miller of Georgia is the world’s most expert politician when it comes to country music know-how. The following words from the Governor prove that Cowboy knows what he’s talking about...as usual. We don’t endorse politicians, but we do endorse country music experts. If you are like many people who think one politician is about the same as the next, think about this: Why not find out which one likes country music? Governor Miller is up for re-election. —R.D.B.

There are so many songs that are dear and meaningful to me, I can no more narrow down my favorite country music songs to a “most favorite” ten than pick my two most favorite grandchildren. But, here are ten that I would hate to die without hearing at least one more time.

She Thinks I Still Care, by Dickie Lee. This song, written more than 30 years ago, is the classic country song. Name me another song that has gone to Number One three different times by three different artists, George Jones, Elvis Presley and Anne Murray.

He Stopped Loving Her Today, by Bobby Braddock and Curley Putman. George Jones “owns” this song, and it is he who makes it one of the all-time greats. Two consecutive years as CMA Song of the year, what more can you say.

Just Someone I Used to Know, by Jack Clement. Another Jones hit, and also Porter and Dolly. Clement is a Nashville legend, a true genius who, with his writing and producing, helped make Jerry Lee Lewis, Charley Pride and dozens of others into superstars. Clement has written many great songs, but this is one of my favorites.

Hungry Eyes, by Merle Haggard. I could just as easily have included “Mama Tried,” “Today I Started Loving You Again” or any of a hundred that just “knock my hat in the creek.” Truly, “The Hag” is the greatest writer/singer/picker combination of all time.

I Can’t Help It If I’m Still in Love with You, by Hank Williams. Hank Sr., that is. And like Haggard, the writer of so many classics, it’s hard to choose the Top Ten of even just Hank Williams songs. Hank Sr. was without parallel at articulating what the inarticulate feeling was.

Sunday Morning Coming Down, by Kris Kristofferson. A Rhodes Scholar who stopped off in Nashville on his way to Hollywood, Kristofferson changed country music forever. Listening to the words of this “sil-

ver-tongued devil” is an education in itself, not to mention some of country music’s most memorable melodies.

Till I Gain Control Again, by Rodney Crowell. Like Kris, intelligent, deep and perceptive with something to say. Not just anyone can sing this song. Willie can, Crystal Gayle can, most others shouldn’t try. Just read the words...“Like a lighthouse.”

Detroit City, by Mel Tillis. Bobby Bare was the perfect artist to cut it: “By day I make the cars, by night I make the bars...” Could Faulkner or Hemingway, in 300 pages, have caught the pathos of a displaced person a long way from home any better? Because of his comedy and successful career as a singer, one often forgets Mel Tillis wrote some of the very best songs ever to come out of Nashville.

When I Call Your Name, by Vince Gill. The only recent song I have on the list by a great artist/writer/picker who paid his dues as one of the “boys on 16th Avenue” long before he became the superstar that he is today. Like Jones with some of his songs, Vince, with that high tenor, “owns” this one. No one else need ever try to sing it.

Rank Stranger, by Albert E. Brumley. I cannot leave this one out because no song, absolutely no song, makes the hair on the back of my neck stand on end and gives me goose bumps all over like this old bluegrass classic by The Stanley Brothers. Their harmony and Carter’s high, lonesome tenor is pure raw emotion. I want it sung at my funeral along with Emmylou’s “Going Up Home to Live in Green Pastures” by Jimmie Stanley and “Angel Band” by Ralph.

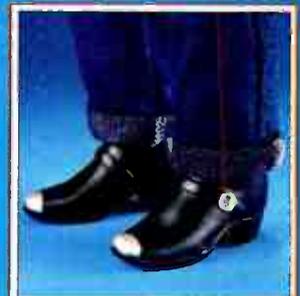
So, I’ve got ten here. I’ve completed my assignment, but I don’t feel good about it. I have not even included a Harlan Howard song (that is in itself blasphemy) or a Joe South song. “Rose Garden” is great to be sure, but “Walk a Mile in My Shoes” is a three-minute sermon better than most you’ll hear on Sunday morning. Or a tune by Bill Anderson, who wrote some great ones including “The Tips of My Fingers,” or the gifted John Prine’s “Paradise” and “Hello in There,” or Emmylou Harris’ beautiful and touching “Boulder to Birmingham,” her tribute to her friend and mentor, Gram Parsons, or Max Barnes’ “Chiseled in Stone,” or “Don Schlitz’s “The Gambler,” or Allen Shamblin’s “He Walked on Water,” or Sandy Mason’s “When I Dream” (as sung by Jack Clement on the single best country music album of all time, *All I Want to Do in Life*).

There are so many. That’s why I can’t narrow it to just ten. How about my favorite 100? —Governor Zell Miller

*A guitar pickin'
little cowboy
who's sure to win
your heart...*

DANNY

by Sandra Bilotto



Danny's smart-looking cowboy boots are fully sculpted and crafted of fine porcelain from heel to toe.



The handsome wide-brimmed hat is decorated with silvery stars. A matching star adorns the bolo-style tie.

Doll shown smaller than actual height of approximately 15".

People

Smith. For one hillbilly hour, we three had the grandest time telling **Bill Monroe** stories, **Grandpa Jones** stories, road stories, **Waylon Jennings** stories.... We could have been clubbing, at a concert, dining at the finest, schmoozing with politicians, or for better or worse, with the powers that be on Music Row. But, no, there we were in front of Kroger....it's raining like crazy, we are laughing our heads off, having a great time standing up. Music City is such a great place. It's so cool to run into folks like Marty and Connie at Kroger....I also see **Kitty Wells**, **Earl Scruggs**, **Keith Bilbrey**, **Carol Lee Cooper**...at Kroger. It don't matter how famous you are, you need your "stuff." So you go buy it. And sometimes you see me and read about it.

RAYE'S EXTREMES GOLD

Collin Raye went to Belmont Mansion for a do for "Little Rock," his Number One single penned by **Tom Douglas**. There his record label surprised him with a Gold plaque for his latest album, *extremes*.

SHENANDOAH NEWS

The award-winning band, **Shenandoah**, has moved again, this time from RCA to Liberty. Lead singer **Marty Raybon** expressed pride in working with **Jimmy Bowen**. What's more, the band's drummer,



TV-actress Teresa Blake and Shenandoah's Mike McGuire wed. They'll live in NYC.

Mike McGuire, recently married in Birmingham, Alabama. His bride is actress **Teresa Blake**, who plays Gloria Chandler on the ABC-TV soap, *All My Children*. McGuire and his beautiful bride both hail from Alabama and met in college. When Shenandoah's not on the road, the couple will live in New York, where Mrs. McGuire tapes her show.

WAYLON JENNINGS RETURNS

Waylon's record label, RCA, sent me a whole bunch of "stuff" on one of my very favorite human beings on Planet Earth. Just let me say this about him. Were it not for Waylon and the "chosen few," and we know who they are, Nashville would not be on the musical map like it is today. We are all better off that he passed our way. He made music a better place, spreading sounds of his heart, mixing and mingling until the hillbilly palate was satisfied and then some. He gave us all a sense of pride in what we were, pride but with humility, love and caring for the music and for the city of its birth, and lastly he gave us self esteem without conceit. His new album is *Waymore's Blues Part II*. If you give a flip about what Waylon did, is doing and will do, then you will have the good taste and good sense to buy and listen to his new music. I did, and I would never lead you wrong. The great Waylon Jennings' music has always surpassed the hype.

GEORGE JONES NEWS

As we all know, the Hall of Famer, Mr. **George Jones**, is currently recovering from triple-bypass surgery at Baptist Hospital in Nashville. We wish him a speedy recovery. Speaking of Jones, when Giant Recording artist **Rhonda Vincent** snuck into the Theater by the Lake at Opryland this summer and seated herself on the front row to get a good look and listen at her hero, she got the shock of her life. Rhonda couldn't believe her ears when George called her onstage. "I didn't realize he knew I existed," exclaimed the Missouri native, who has kicked around bluegrass for years. Another shock: the band broke into "I'm Not Over You," a song off her debut album. George then asked Rhonda to sing "I Don't Need Your Rocking Chair" with him. When the very nervous/happy/excited/flustered Rhonda left the stage, the great Mr. Jones allowed as how he was gonna do a duet with "that girl."

FILLED WITH GILL, HARRIS, CROWELL

The annual benefit for the W.O. Smith School of Music, held this year at the Ryman, featured the most incredible band...**Tony Brown** on piano, **Hank DeVito** on steel, **Glen D. Harding** on keyboards, **Michael Rhodes** on the bass, **Albert Lee** on guitar/mandolin, **Vince Gill** on guitar/mandolin, **Eddie Bayers** on drums, along with the golden-throated vocals of angelic **Emmylou Harris**, **Rodney Crowell** and **Vince Gill**. Some who turned out for the event

HEY, JOE



This "out of the world creature" greeted all the guests at Joe Diffie's *Third Rock From the Sun* record party that I wrote about last issue. I just wanted my wonderful readers to view some of the "stuff" label execs do to launch their artists' new product. This was a real doozy, don't you agree.

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THE CHASE	1268507	A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (DIRECTOR'S CUT)	1257302	JUDGMENT NIGHT	1193101	SON OF THE PINK PANTHER	1191907	THE COLDER PURPLE	0630103
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DANGEROUS GAME (THEATRICAL VERSION)	1255306			MANHATTAN MURDER MYSTERY	1189505	RETURN OF THE JEDI	0354704	HARD TARGET	1179605
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TOMBSTONE	1254200
DEMOLITION MAN	1198306
GETTYSBURG	1213305
THE GOOD SON	1193803
A PERFECT WORLD	1237205
WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT	1218007
THE BODYGUARD	1105907
SISTER ACT	1071208
A FEW GOOD MEN	1106301
CLIFFHANGER	1149301
THE WIZARD OF OZ	0901404
LIGHTNING JACK	1268705
MY LIFE	1246305
THE REF	1273200
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BEETHOVEN'S 2ND	1241504	THE FUGITIVE	1197705
BEVERLY HILLBILLIES	1208305	JOY LUCK CLUB	1218106
AGE OF INNOCENCE	1207307	ANOTHER STAKEOUT	1238203
BOXING HELENA	1190701	A BRONX TALE	1221506
CARLITO'S WAY	1229301	CONEHEADS	1174001
DAZED AND CONFUSED	1181606	FATAL INSTINCT	1213008
FEARLESS	1207109	FOR LOVE OR MONEY	1198506
INTO THE WEST	1239706	JOSH AND S.A.M.	1233808
MALICE	1226505	WE'RE BACK	1206403
FERN GULLY: THE LAST RAINFOREST	1100608		

HOLIDAY FAVORITES

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (1956)	D202606	KING OF KINGS	3257600
GOSPEL	3811901	MOSES	0061408
IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE	0392308	45TH ANNIVERSARY ED.	0207209
WHITE CHRISTMAS	0207209	THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY	0301803
MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET	0054700	RUOOLF THE RED-NOSED REINDEER	0801704
DR. SEUSS: HOW THE GRINCH STOLE CHRISTMAS	0271106	FROSTY THE SNOWMAN	0801902
MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS	0348201	THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS (1992)	1C71406
THE SECRET GARDEN (1993)	1188804	DANCES WITH WOLVES	0805200

MALCOLM X	1107903	POETIC JUSTICE	1183709
STRIKING DISTANCE	1200708	THE THING CALLED LOVE	1190600
UNDERCOVER BLUES	1207000	GHOST	0826008
THE GODFATHER	0000802	THE GODFATHER: PART II	0001800
THE GODFATHER: PART III	0842302	DIRTY DANCING	0495507
DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY	1150705	STEEL MAGNOLIAS	0597807
E.T.: THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL	0681106	UNFORGIVEN (1992)	1084003
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SUGAR HILL	1264506	THUMBELINA	1265909
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People



Gill co-manager Larry Fitzgerald, MCA prez and Gill producer Tony Brown, Mr. Six Million Vince Gill, MCA chairperson Bruce Hinton and Gill co-manager Mark Hartley.

were Wynonna Judd and Archie Kelly, Ashley Judd, Amy Grant, MCA's Bruce Hinton, Janet Rickman and Renee White, Harlan Howard, Bill Lloyd, producer Don Was, drummer Jim Keltner (who Tony Brown tells me is the greatest drummer on earth), Ed Cherney who engineers for Bonnie Raitt, Amy Grant, William Lee Golden, Bobby Heller, Kyle Lehning, Lucinda Williams and more.

THE INVINCIBLE ONE

Nashville's cutest "putter," MCA's **Vince Gill**, was honored to be honored at Grand Ole Golf on Music Valley Drive for the sale of six million records. And that ain't no almost "hole in one," it's an ace three-fold. First, *When Love Finds You* certified platinum (a mill), *Pocket Full of Gold* double platinum (two mill), and powerhouse *I Still Believe in You* achieved the prestigious triple platinum status proportions (three mill), for a grand total of six million albums. Cool. Dig we party? Has a cat got a tail? Under the tent were tables filled with foods from the exotic to the sublime, leaning toward South of the Border cuisine. I elbowed MCA prez **Tony Brown** and chairman **Bruce Hinton**. Hugged **Janet Rickman** and **Katie Gillon**, two working VP's with MCA, and schmoozed **Walt Wilson**, Senior VP/Sales and Marketing, and **Scott Borchetta**, VP National Promotion. Vince's golfing buddies, **Nick Hunter** and **Richard Landis** from Giant Records, along with **Barry Weinberger** (head coach of the Oakland A's) and **Ron Schueler** (VP Major League Operations for the Chicago

White Sox), showed up. Being the gentleman he is, Vince recognized songwriters, his band and road crew, and Brown and Hinton. Taking no credit, Vince gave credit to everyone else—pickers and the entire MCA staff. A flat out nice guy.

JOHN MICHAEL MENDS

Riding a four-wheeler exactly like the one my seven-year-old niece, **Emily Campbell**, flies around on, **John Michael Montgomery** turned over his "toy," injuring his body and hurting his pride. After taking off a few days, JMM was back on the road smiling those dimples good as new.

AIN'T NO HEADACHE HERE

Those preventers of headaches, the BC folks, are sponsoring a two-dozen-city tour across the Southeast starring **Mark Chesnutt** and **Aaron Tippin**. **James House** will open the shows. If you've got a headache, you can take BC. If you've got a hankering for country music, you can go see this trio. It don't get much better. These guys are worth the ticket cost.

WILLIE AND BILLY

Before his son **Billy's** death, **Willie Nelson** recorded a couple of songs with him. It took some time, but finally the gospel album has been released; titled *Peace in the Valley, The Gospel Truth*. Billy Nelson also sings one solo on this project. It's nice to have this father/son music preserved.

FINAL BOW

ZEKE CLEMENTS: 1911-1994

Zeke Clements, a veteran Grand Ole Opry artist who first worked the show in 1933, died June 4, 1994. The Alabama native, born in 1911, made his first impact on the WLS *National Barn Dance* at age 17, in 1928. Around 1933, he came to the Grand Ole Opry as part of The Bronco Busters, a group who helped pioneer Western outfits among Southeastern groups. Clements later worked in Hollywood, where he became the voice of the character "Bashful" in Walt Disney's animated *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. In 1939 he returned to the Opry and worked there several years. As a recording artist, Clements was never successful, though his smooth singing voice anticipated the success of Eddy Arnold. His impact as a songwriter was another matter. He penned the World War II anti-Axis anthem, "Smoke on the Water," a hit for both Bob Wills and Red Foley, as well as several early Eddy Arnold hits, including "Just a Little Lovin'," "Somebody's Been Beatin' My Time" and "Why Should I Cry." Clements left the Opry in 1948 for the *Louisiana Hayride* and later worked at other locales throughout the South. In later years, he became a favorite at Opry reunion shows.

WALLY FOWLER: 1917-1994

Wally Fowler, founder of The Oak Ridge Quartet, the group that evolved into the original Oak Ridge Boys, drowned in a boating accident near Nashville on June 3. Born John Wallace Fowler in Bartow County, Georgia, Fowler originally came to the Opry with the gospel group, The John Daniel Quartet. In 1944, he moved to Knoxville, where he founded The Georgia Clodhoppers and made his first recordings for Capitol. Back in Nashville by 1946, Fowler began recording secular material for Bullet records and joined the Opry as a solo artist. Like Zeke Clements, he also made an impact as a songwriter. He wrote "I'm Sending You Red Roses," a 1944 hit for Jimmy Wakely, and Eddy Arnold's 1946 hit, "That's How Much I Love You." Fowler also formed an early song publishing operation in Nashville. By 1948 he was organizing all-star, dusk-to-dawn gospel concerts known as All Night Sings. Over time, Fowler backed away from performing to focus on promoting gospel shows and producing sacred albums for King, Starday, Decca and other labels.

—RICH KIENZLE

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Answers: Charlie Daniels, Grand Ole Opry, 1961.



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World Radio History

Record Reviews

Waylon Jennings

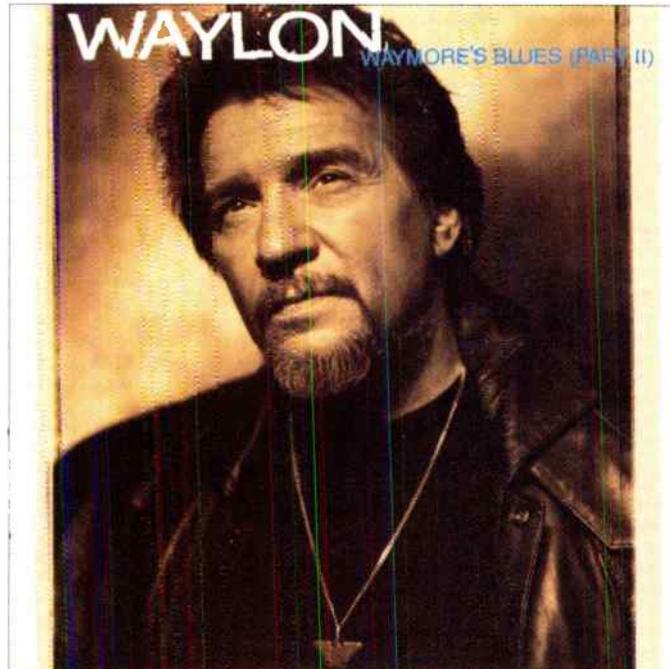
Waymore's Blues Part II
RCA 66409

Thirty years on records, over 20 years a pioneer of Outlaw, masterpiece albums, hell-raising, leather, lonesome, on'ry and mean, self-parody and substance abuse. Age, illness, introspection and recovery. The scene changes. Defiant Outlaw becomes elder statesman, recording uneven or occasionally awful records. Even as he avoided the Lost Highway that led Hank to oblivion, he seemed headed for that other Lost Highway of veteran artists who wind up playing small gigs or, even worse, Branson.

There's just one thing, hoss. We're talkin' about Waylon.

Sure, he could have drifted into the role of high-class oldies act, despite being in better physical shape than he's been in years. After his last disastrous album, a record that degenerated so far into self-parody that it hurt to laugh, Waylon is back. He and virtuoso producer Don Was, who helped Willie create *Across the Borderline* and produced Kelly Willis' final MCA album, hit the studio for all it was worth. They emerged with his greatest moment since either *Honky Tonk Heroes* or *Dreaming My Dreams*. On the cover he's older and wiser but no less deadly. And the same goes for the contents.

Don Was' method was ingenious and simple. A Waylon admirer, as his heartfelt liner notes make abundantly clear, he didn't recreate the old Waylors sound. Nor did he make the often fatal error of dragging in a slew of guest vocalists or musicians. He used a stripped-down, five-piece studio band including guitarist



Mark Goldenberg, keyboardist Benmont Tench and drummer Kenny Aronoff, along with pedal steel guitarist Robby Turner. Was himself played bass. This group gave Waylon a sleeker, smoother sound than before. Even synthesizers, which too often stick out like quiche at a rib joint, fit the sound in Tench's capable hands. Was' low-key approach (which will also be heard on the upcoming Highwaymen album) allows Waylon's voice, resilient beyond belief considering past abuse, to ride over it all. The sound is almost universal, connected to his past triumphs, but with a simplicity hearkening back to Waylon's own Southwestern roots, even back to his days with Buddy Holly.

All but one of the ten songs came from Waylon himself. And they reflect an eloquence and economy of language that places every one with his best work from the past. "Endangered Species," written with Tony Joe White, doesn't dwell

overlong on the displacement of feeling out of one's time, and the matter of fact way he sings it renders it all the more powerful. "Waymore's Blues (Part II)" is as strong a statement of mature rebelliousness as any veteran rebel could make. The self-confession of "Wild Ones" stresses a similar theme.

Yet everything here is not confessional. The lyrics of "Old Timer (The Song)" are poetic on their own, without the music. Both "No Good for Me" and "Come Back and See Me" close relationships without a hint of airy pretense. Tony Joe's "Up in Arkansas," co-written with Ricky Ray Rector (with Tony Joe on harmonica), captures an oasis of the old rural South amid a sea of Wal-Marts and strip shopping centers. White's genius at freezing these scenes in time, best epitomized by his classic, "Rainy Night in Georgia," is in full force.

The good-natured satire, "Nobody Knows (I'm Elvis)," pokes fun both at Waylon's own image, and the Presley-is-

alive scenarios. And in the end, if anyone dared deduce that Waylon was turning mellow, "You Don't Mess Around With Me," a smoldering song much in the style of his best earlier work, scotches that assumption PDQ. The delivery, straightforward and free of the overdone growls and bluster of his later recordings, conveys real, not forced, toughness.

If Johnny Cash made a career summary with *American Recordings*, then Waylon's done much the same this time. Just as Was worked similar magic on *Across the Borderline*, he has revived and reaffirmed the phenomenon that is, and always will be, Waylon Jennings. —RICH KIENZLE

Patty Loveless

When Fallen Angels Fly
Epic 64188

To describe Patty Loveless' impressive work of the last two years as a comeback might be overstating the case. After all, she never really fell from popularity, and she never quit creating consistently entertaining and wholly individual albums. But with *When Fallen Angels Fly* and the previous *Only What I Feel*, Loveless has taken full advantage of a new business arrangement with Epic Records by rekindling her creative juices and focusing her talent on some remarkable songs. In doing so, she has affirmed her position as one of the most dependable and forceful artists of the last decade.

Not too long ago, however, it looked like Loveless might follow Ricky Skaggs, Holly Dunn, The Forester Sisters and other mid-to-late 1980's hitmakers who lost their foothold in country radio once the young upstarts moved in. After seven years with MCA Records, she

Record Reviews

perceived that the company was relegating her to the back seat while lavishing attention on their other female stars—Reba, Wynonna and Trisha. So she jumped to Epic, which promised to get behind her career while agreeing to let her husband, Emory Gordy Jr., produce her albums. The moves have paid great dividends.

Some performers in the same situation might have played it safe, mimicking the same trends as the new country crop. But Loveless continues to stake her own ground, once again balancing boisterous, fun, uptempo tunes with tender, spiritual ballads. A look at the list of contributing writers provides several good signs: Loveless draws from a few of the best country writers, and she also tends to draw on songs that were written solo rather than by two or three or more co-conspirators.

Loveless draws on a diverse but proven crew here. The title song is from Billy Joe Shaver, and it's about how the most wretched of us can find redemption in the love and comfort of another. But that kind of love takes forgiveness, and a willingness to focus on the present and look to the future instead of harboring fears or jealousies about the other's past. It's a ruggedly beautiful song, and Loveless renders it with tender, understated poignancy.

Loveless opens the album with a similar song by Tony Arata, who wrote Garth Brooks' "The Dance." His "Handful of Dust" is about the power of love and how, in the end, no matter what we've gained or acquired in this world, we're nothing more than worthless minerals except for our ability to give and receive love. It's spiritual in the best sense of the word, and Loveless draws on her Kentucky mountain roots to give it a timeless touch. Arata provides another good song, "Here I Am," which is about a woman's voice haunting a man whose done her wrong.

Gretchen Peters is another quickly rising writer on Music Row—she wrote Martina McBride's "Independence Day" and "My Baby Loves Me" as well as Pam Tillis' "Let That Pony Run." Loveless dips twice into Peters' song bag, and the better of the two is "You Don't Even Know Who I Am," which portrays the end of a relationship from both points of view. Just as it seems as if the man is about to relent and chase after the woman who left him, he instead reveals that he, too, feels neglected and underappreciated by his wife. It ends with the gulf between them wider than ever, a gutsy finish for a country song, which more often than not tend to rely on happy endings.

If the ballads give the album

its strength, then the uptempo rockers provide the spunk. Loveless attacks her energetic songs with an exuberance and rawness rarely heard in country music. On "I Try to Think About Elvis," written by Gary Burr, Loveless torches the lyrics with more true fire than any of the dozens of revved-up novelty tunes that have filled the airwaves this year. And instead of copying the Southern boogie of current line dance hits, she opts for blustery rockabilly and lets it rip. She snaps the chorus of "Halfway Down," written by the great and underappreciated Jim Lauderdale, with so much enthusiasm that she almost seems to lose control—a great trick by an old pro. She also shows off a blues-tinged heat on "Feelin' Good About Feelin' Bad," which features the soul-deep harmonica of Jimmy Hall.

At a time when country music and the people who create it are becoming more disposable, Loveless endures by putting out remarkable songs that will last. At a time when it's hard to tell one country performer from another, Loveless sounds like no one else. She's getting ready to celebrate her 10-year anniversary as a recording artist. If her work remains as strong as it has been, then she will be among the few current country stars who will get more recognition in her second decade than in her first.

—MICHAEL McCALL

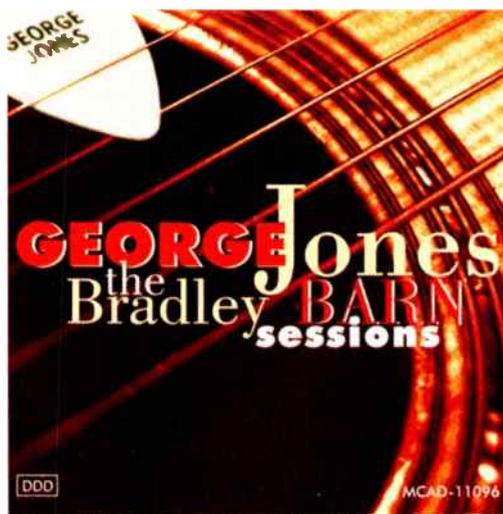
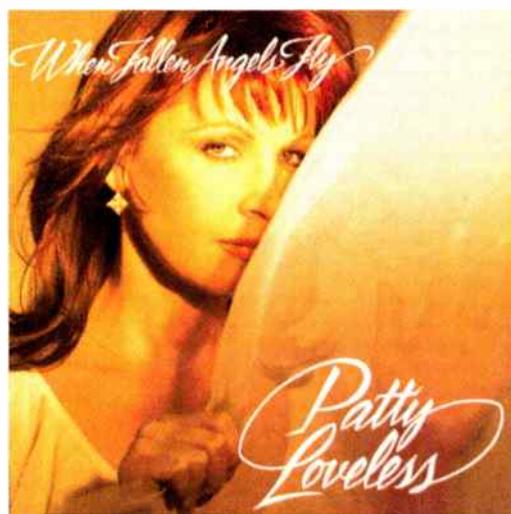
George Jones *The Bradley Barn Sessions* MCA 11096

Well, if you accept the pathetic premise that in the current climate of the music biz, the only way to sell The Greatest Country Singer Alive is with a gimmick, I've got to admit that this particular gimmick goes down a lot easier than the one of using embarrassing novelty songs like "High Tech Redneck."

The gimmick is to pair George with (primarily) the most popular of the young artists who have replaced him and his peers on the charts, and it's hard to knock the reasoning—if record companies won't promote anyone but their kazillion-selling stars, and radio won't play anyone else anyhow, why not have them sing with Jones? If radio is so hungry to get its hands on pretty much anything new by an Alan Jackson or a Vince Gill, maybe it'll give this stuff a fair hearing even if that old guy is singing part of the time. (And I don't mean this as an attack on any of the artists singing here with George, all of whom love his work as much as I do, and no doubt entered this project for just that reason.)

In addition to its main selling-point, this effort is the most acoustic-sounding album George has cut in a couple of decades; Marty Stuart was aptly referred to it as *George Jones Unplugged*. And as much as I usually dislike sets in which artists do new versions of their old songs, it's hard to knock the material in this case. After all, Jones has, literally, thousands of old songs to choose from.

So, this baby has all that going for it, marketing-angles-wise. The most important question remaining is, how's the music? I think most of it's pretty good. There are the occasional lapses, such as Travis Tritt badly oversinging his part on "The Race Is On," or a rather



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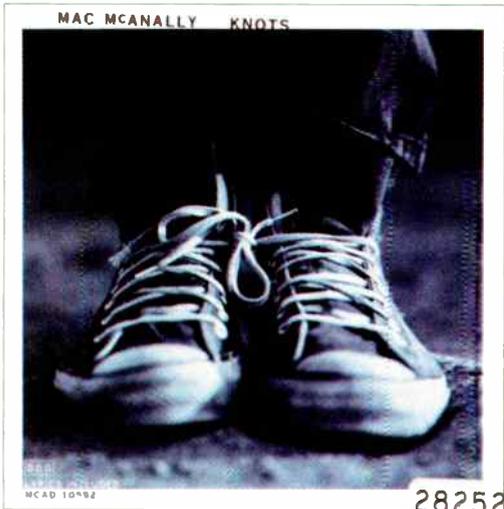
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Record Reviews



Mac McAnally *Knots* MCA 10992

unseemly encounter with Mark Knopfler on "White Lightnin'" (even in his youth, George wasn't very comfortable doing rocking country). There's also the anomaly of Trisha Yearwood dueting on "Bartender Blues," which is so out of keeping with her typical material that it almost gets by on the surprise element alone.

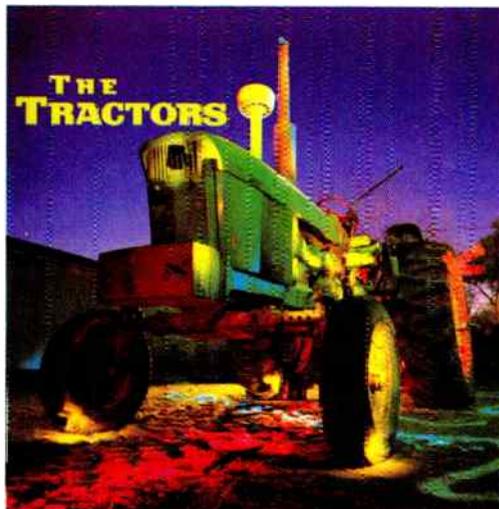
But mostly, there's some fine performances from George and friends, my favorites being "Why Baby Why," on which Ricky Skaggs demonstrates what a peerless harmony singer he is; "Say It's Not You," on which Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards's creaking vocals re-establish that even modern country has its roots in ancient Anglo-Scots folk styles; "Where Grass Won't Grow," with haunting support given George by Emmylou Harris, Dolly Parton and Yearwood; and "A Good Year for the Roses," on which Jackson is strangely invisible, but which George converts from a song about a pain that's slow healing into a song about a pain that's lasted a lifetime.

Fresh interpretations like that make the album work even when the material might seem at first to be too familiar. That's what happens when you've got the right singer doing the songs, and most of this set is George Jones doing what he does best.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

Mac McAnally's most heralded contributions to country music in recent years have been behind the scenes. A sought-after session vocalist and guitarist, he's co-produced albums for both Sawyer Brown and Ricky Skaggs. He's also written hits like Sawyer Brown's "Cafe on the Corner," Ricky Van Shelton's "Crime of Passion," Alabama's "Old Flame" and Shenandoah's "Two Dozen Roses."

Yet even though McAnally's own recording career now spans 17 years and eight albums, Nashville has always seemed indifferent to his solo efforts. However, McAnally is a marvelous singer, and an unusually versatile musician. *Knots*, his new album (which he co-produced with Tony Brown) features studio assists from guitarists Stuart Smith and Duncan Cameron (of Amazing Rhythm Aces and Sawyer Brown fame) and an all-star cast of background vocalists, including Andrew Gold, Karla Bonoff and Wendy Waldman-Parker. Even so, on some cuts, Mac functions as a virtual one-man band, overdubbing his own harmonies and acoustic and electric guitar parts, and even playing drums, bass, harmonica, organ



and accordion on occasion.

But the world is full of great singers and multi-talented instrumentalists. What sets McAnally apart in my book are his imaginative, often painfully wise original songs (as with most of his albums, he's written all the songs on *Knots*). There's the elderly couple in "No Sign of Weakness" who've simply forgotten how to share the love they still feel for each other. There are the characters in "Something of Myself" who waste away their days watching TV, talking on the phone and spinning their wheels while desperately yearning "to be somebody/be somebody happy." There is the man in "Miracle" caught in a devastating love triangle, seemingly with no way out.

MacAnally has a knack for writing lyrics that may seem straightforward at first, but when listened to more carefully, often hint at something mysterious, even unfathomable. "Wide Open Spaces" (co-written by Mac and Sawyer Brown's Mark Miller), with its soaring vocal and compelling minor chords, suggests the power of dreams, even when they outlive the dreamer. "Down the Road" takes a gentle look at how one generation intuitively—and for better or worse—often inherits the hopes and fears of its predecessors.

Yet *Knots* is not all soul-searching and small-town

angst. "Good for Nothing," which features a great, driving arrangement, courtesy of steel guitarist Paul Franklin and Mac's and Stuart Smith's intertwining electric lead work, is a fun-loving ode to everybody from the hound dog lying in the yard to government employees who manage to slide by in life while hardly hitting a lick. "Take It Easy (All I Know About Love)" takes a fun-loving poke at all the "Dr. Feel Good" talk show psychiatrists. "The Knot" is a John Prine-style ode about a man whose enduring heartbreak assumes psychosomatic dimensions.

As often as not, Mac's songs pull you in with their irresistible melodies and lyric hooks, then gradually insinuate their subtle layers of meaning. He's an artist who may end up enlightening you in some small way, but never at the expense of entertaining you. —BOB ALLEN

The Tractors *The Tractors* Arista 18728

"The Tulsa Shuffle," the first track on The Tractors' debut album, states their purpose to make earthy music combining the best of blues, country, Western swing and rockabilly. This Tulsa-based quintet—featuring guitarist Steve Ripley keyboard player Walt Richmond, guitarist Ron Gortman, bassist Casey Van Beek and former Eric Clapton drummer Jamie Oldaker—has the power to pull it off. They succeed with the twin-fiddle honky tonk of "I've Had Enough," the boogie-bop version of Chuck Berry's "Thirty Days" and the ingratiating original hillbilly tune, "Badly Bent."

That's the good news.

Unfortunately, the flaws aren't easily ignored. For a band placing such value on earthiness, the results are often too slick and flawless, so that what should roar like an Oklahoma gusher comes off

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Record Reviews

more like a well-designed, timed fountain. Each note's in place. Every funky overtone (including the studio chatter and other nonsense between songs) is so perfect that it rings false, seeming more calculated than spontaneous. Nice as it might have been to include Bonnie Raitt, J.J. Cale and Ry Cooder, as well as Oklahoma fiddler Curly Lewis and Texas Playboy rhythm guitar ace Eldon Shamblin, the band didn't really need 'em.

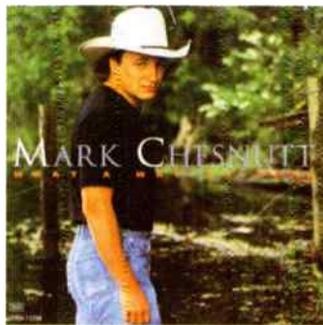
Many of the band's original songs, particularly those celebrating or protesting the lot of working people, likewise try too hard to make their point. Cash or Haggard made such social statements with cynical wit and humor. The Tractors give us the overly earnest "The Little Man," advocating that politicians should spend a night "out in the street" with the homeless or that "city-slick bankers" be placed on "John Deere tractors." Laudable theme, but it's been said better elsewhere. Self-consciousness similarly plagues "The Blue Collar Rock," "Doreen" and even Hank Sr.'s "Settin' the Woods on Fire" to the point where they come off smooth and lifeless.

I can think of few debuts I wanted to like more than this one. Sadly, in trying too hard to sound raw, The Tractors have submerged their true grit in studied, homogenized informality and exaggerated sincerity. They might have done better to record better quality material in a club setting, without the surplus hordes of superstar guest pickers. I hope they try again, and next time allow their considerable talents to speak for themselves.

—RICH KIENZLE

Mark Chesnutt *What a Way to Live* Decca 11094

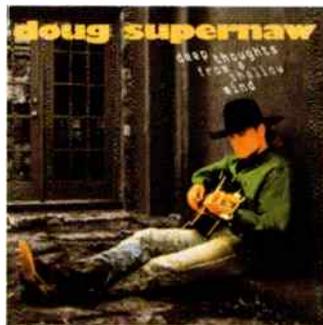
Because Mark Chesnutt knows exactly what kind of music he loves, fans know exactly what to expect: plenty



of solid honky tonk, a smidgen of swing, a couple of middle-of-the-road ballads and maybe an old-time cry-in-your-beer tear-jerker. That's not to say he's not capable of surprises; it's just that the new revelations from his albums will arrive in the form of a particularly memorable song or a pleasurable new twist on a familiar theme. In a country music world where new trends change faster than dresses on a female awards show co-host, Chesnutt's steady reliability grows more welcome with each album.

On his fourth album, Chesnutt immediately establishes his mission and his integrity with the opening song (and title cut), "What a Way to Live." A lazy, bluesy swing tune, it was a throwback to an older sound when Willie Nelson co-wrote it several years ago. Chesnutt's treatment would have passed muster in 1956, and it sounds just as fresh and satisfying today. It's a timeless tune done in timeless fashion.

"Live a Little," another tune steeped in Western swing, is just as enticing. Chesnutt lithely prances through the song's tongue-twisting wordplay and bouncing tempo with a casual, surehanded grace reminiscent of George Strait. The song reveals how loose and comfortable Chesnutt has become over the years. When he first surfaced, his talent was apparent in the steady warmth of his vocal tone, in his unforced but expressive phrasing and in his consistently good song selection. But he came off a little stiff, as if bashfulness or self-conscious-



ness held him back. That no longer exists, as Chesnutt now obviously enjoys slipping touches of his laid-back, slightly off-the-wall personality into a lyric.

Nonetheless, there are moments on *What a Way to Live* when it's evident that Chesnutt is not quite the equal of the giants he has idolized since his youth. On "Goin' Through the Big D," an enjoyable novelty song about a man whose whirlwind romance flies from courtship to divorce court in record time, the singer sounds great until he tries to mimic George Jones' lower register near the end of the song and comes up short. And Chesnutt's rendition of "Down in Tennessee" would probably sound exceptional if John Anderson's original didn't exist. As it is, Chesnutt reiterates that Wayland Holyfield wrote a truly outstanding song, and that Anderson is a uniquely talented balladeer who, when given a lyric as good as this, creates consummate country music. On "Rainy Day Woman," Chesnutt not only revives a Waylon Jennings song, he invites the originator to join him in a duet. Again, Jennings reveals himself as a completely distinctive talent who sounds like no one else; Chesnutt's tone is too close to too many other young country vocalists to stand out as prominently as his guest does.

But, in those cases, we're comparing Chesnutt to three country greats. Compare him to his peers, and Chesnutt fares much better. The album's highlights—the rollicking "Gonna Get a Life" and the

compassionate "She Dreams"—both rank among the best new country songs released this year, and there's not another young country performer who could have managed to put them across as well as this friendly East Texas honky tonker.

What a Way to Live is like a good 1994 American sedan. It's solid, reliable and, in its way, commendable. It will get you where you want to go, but it is just not as stylish or as individual as the classics that preceded it. —MICHAEL MCCALL

Doug Supernaw *Deep Thoughts from a Shallow Mind* BNA 66396

Doug Supernaw's debut album, *Red and Rio Grande*, got him off to a great start. His above-average voice and remarkable gift for delivering story-songs put everything on the right track. That's occasionally true here. On the best material, Supernaw is as fine as ever, particularly on the story-songs he excels at, like the reflective love song, "After the Storm." "Shut Her Down," the reflections of a son recalling an elderly father's deep-rooted values out of sync with modern urban life, strikes an equally sincere chord as Supernaw turns it into a morality play. "State Fair," a tale of an enjoyable youthful drive turned tragic in a second, becomes a miniature drama of youth and lost innocence.

Unfortunately all the material doesn't serve him that well. Supernaw strives like a trouper to deliver the overabundance of formulaic, gimmicky numbers that drag the album down. This generic filler, covering themes now expected to show up on current country albums, is empty and pointless. "What'll You Do About Me," first cut by Randy Travis a few years ago, is a punchy number tailored for radio airplay and little else. Mundane love and cheating songs

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Record Reviews

are represented by "Here's to Lyin'" and "Wishin' Her Well." "Twistin' Tops" covers working-class pride and beer. This kind of market research programming demeans any artist.

And despite his joyous, good-natured delivery of "You Never Even Call Me By My Name," the tongue-in-cheek Steve Goodman ballad that was a 1975 hit for David Allan Coe, the performance—with Coe—seems contrived. We media folk get press releases whenever artists make these cameo appearances on one another's records. It happens so often now that few of us pay it any mind. Besides Coe, the guests here are Waylon, Charley Pride and Merle Haggard. Supernaw doesn't need guest stars, nor do Hag and Waylon need cameos (as for Pride and Coe, decide for yourself).

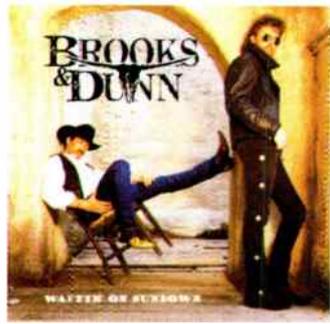
It's upsetting when a gifted artist carving his own niche can't follow a debut album with another winner. It makes you wonder if they were ever as good as you thought. I still think Supernaw is. I just hope that the next time out, as much quality material is allocated to a third album as was to the first. This is one singer who deserves better than the uneven ground he's forced to travel on this time.

—RICH KIENZLE

Brooks & Dunn *Waitin' on Sundown* Arista 18765

With the possible exception of Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Heart," Brooks & Dunn's 1992 mega-hit, "Boot Scootin' Boogie," did more to establish a big country audience for dance numbers than any other song. Today country fans often seem divided between an older crowd that likes to sit in its seats and listen to a heartbreaking ballad and a younger crowd that prefers to jump out of its seats and scoot their boots across the dance floor.

Brooks & Dunn may be pi-



neers of the country-dance movement, but they refuse to take sides in this debate. The duo's new album, *Waitin' on Sundown*, is diplomatically divided between uptempo rabble-rousers, kicked along by a loud snare drum, and slow, sentimental confessions, underscored by a pedal steel guitar. As a result, the popular twosome reflects the balance in contemporary mainstream country as well as anyone.

Brooks & Dunn (that's Kix and Ronnie, not Garth and Holly) aren't the world's greatest singers and songwriters (they're not about to make anyone forget The Everly Brothers or Guy Clark & Rodney Crowell). On the other hand, their rough-hewn, energetic vocals and bouncy, catchy songs are good enough that the duo's trump card—their undeniable charisma, especially on stage—puts them over the top every time.

The third Brooks & Dunn album is the duo's most diversified yet. It opens with Dunn's credible imitation of Lynyrd Skynyrd's power chords, pounding piano and galloping rhythms on "Little Miss Honky Tonk." The album shifts gears immediately for another Ronnie Dunn composition, "She's Not the Cheating Kind," a midtempo country-pop song with a sweet, twangy melody and a story about a jilted wife getting her revenge. The gears shift again for a third Dunn song, "I'll Never Forgive My Heart," an old-fashioned, honky tonk, tears-in-your-beer ballad that gets a great, note-stretching vocal by its Okie author. Those Oklahoma roots are in full



flower on "If That's the Way You Want It," a near-perfect Western swing tune.

Kix Brooks takes over on the second half of the album. He co-wrote and sings "My Kind of Crazy," a Southern-rock stomper pure and simple, except a fiddle takes the place of one of the lead guitars. Then he turns around and delivers a slow and sentimental story-song about a West Texas waitress saving her tips for a hundred-acre farm. Falling between these two extremes is "She's the Kind of Trouble," the quintessential country dance number, with the twangy guitars and vocals balanced by an emphatic bass-and-drum syncopation.

Brooks & Dunn cover all the bases: country-pop heartbreakers, country-rock dance numbers and traditional-country roots. Many artists are better than Brooks & Dunn in one of those categories, but few can match the duo's skill at all three. Brooks & Dunn will not figure prominently in the books about 20th Century country music to be written in another 20 years, but right now the duo represents mainstream country more capably and more enjoyably than any other act. —GEOFFREY HIMES

Joe Diffie *Third Rock from the Sun* Epic 64357

Joe Diffie impressed the hell out of nearly everybody with *A Thousand Winding Roads*, his 1990 debut album, which resulted in a string of

Number One singles. On *Roads*, Diffie emerged as an inspired Jones/Haggard disciple capable of writing and singing top notch original songs in a sterling honky tonk vein.

Diffie found similar inspirational fire on *Regular Joe* (1992), his second album. But by *Honky Tonk Attitude*, his third, he lost his focus somewhat as his songwriting went south, his Jones/Haggard inspiration turned to stagy mimicry and he made some half-baked forays into country-rock.

On *Third Rock from the Sun*, his latest album, and the first he's co-produced (along with Johnny Slate), Diffie has found a new and rather provocative groove. *Third Rock* is tethered to conventionality by some moving but less than unforgettable ballads including "That Road Not Taken," "From Here on Out" and the despairing "Wild Blue Yonder." Yet its real strength comes from Diffie's leaps into the unconventional. In this more adventurous vein, he tackles a collection of imaginative novelty and quasi-novelty songs which accentuate his irrepressible humor and the jittery, slightly manic delivery which enlivened earlier chart-toppers like "New Way (To Light Up an Old Flame)" and "John Deere Green."

The title tune and lead single from *Third Rock from the Sun* offers a delightful glimpse at the refreshing left field territory Diffie explores this time around. With its hilarious depiction of a bizarre chain of events that briefly engulf a small town in darkness and confusion, the song points to the general madness and helter-skelter quality of everyday life in the late 20th century, implying that we're all just dizzy from the earth spinning around the sun at about a million miles an hour. "Junior's in Love" is a similarly wry, light-hearted take on a potentially dark subject: a socially inept lout whose romantic fixation nearly transforms him

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Record Reviews

into a stalker. "Love with a Capital U" is another jovial commentary on how a man's (or a woman's) most heartfelt desires can so easily lead to both bliss and gullibility.

Other cuts in this vein, like "Pick Up Man," may not have similar depth, but they at least provide a belly laugh or two. "I'd Like to Have a Problem Like That" captures a universal middle-class lament that's been sung at one time or another by all of us not blessed with the curse of wealth. "The Cows Came Home" (the only song on here that Diffie had a hand in writing) turns an old cliché on its head with hilarious results. "Good Brown Gravy" is just pure, delightful, *hee-haw*-style comedy, heightened by a Diffie vocal outing that rises to the goofy occasion.

For Diffie to so brashly unleash his comic alter ego as he has done on *Third Rock from the Sun* is not only musically invigorating, it's probably a savvy career move, too. The market place has, after all, become top heavy with deadly earnest George Jones and Merle Haggard sound-alikes. But by advancing so boldly into such a musical battle of wits, Diffie enters an arena where most of his self-serious opponents are simply unarmed.

—BOB ALLEN

Robert Earl Keen *Gringo Honeymoon* Sugar Hill SH-CD 1034

Why is the Texas school of songwriting (an academy which includes such prized scholars as Willie Nelson, Townes Van Zandt, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Lyle Lovett and Nanci Griffith) so different from its Nashville counterpart? Could it be that the combination of unrelenting summer heat and enchilada hot sauce has so fried the brains of our Texas troubadours that they can't help but write the way they do?

Perhaps, but a more plausible explanation is the twin



influence of cowboy poetry and Mexican folk music. Most Nashville tune-pitchers are content with a single scene and a good pun for the chorus, but Texas songwriters, like the cowboy poets before them, love to tell stories with a beginning, middle and end—and often a detour along the way. And while most of Nashville is still clip-clopping along to stately Appalachian rhythms, Texas is slipping and sliding to Mexican syncopation.

No album better illustrates these influences than Robert Earl Keen's *Gringo Honeymoon*, a delightful collection of stories put to a Tex-Mex beat. The title song, for example, recounts every young Texan's rite of passage: crossing the Rio Grande, lover in hand, to escape from family, school and obligations and enjoy the music, intoxicants and wide-open spaces of Mexico. Keen delivers his tale in a deadpan baritone drawl as laid back and relaxed as the song's protagonists. Giving the song its litting bounce is a Tex-Mex guitar riff picked out by Lucinda Williams' producer Gurf Morlix.

Keen doesn't have much of a voice (he sounds like Jerry Jeff Walker with a head cold), but on this, his fifth album, Keen has learned to work within his limitations. He no longer reaches for notes he can't hit and relies on small shifts in the current of his thick, muddy vocals to do the work usually handled by melody. It takes some adjustment on the listener's part to appreciate this approach, but the effort is rewarded with some of the finest country-music storytelling in recent memory.



John Anderson *Country 'Til I Die* BNA 66477

Back when Tim McGraw was truly living down on the farm, and Billy Ray was baring his chest for a much different crowd, John Anderson was injecting raw-boned electric guitar into genuine country songs and finding a way to slip sly hillbilly humor into energized tunes. But, as he raised the stakes in the mid-1980's, he eventually created some distance between himself and the conservative folks who rule the airwaves, which is why Anderson is now considered a comeback artist even though he never stopped making interesting records.

But, unlike some other rockin' rebels, Anderson balanced his rowdy side with hard-country ballads and honky-tonk tunes that showed off his bona fide country credentials. His deep-country drawl and note-bending phrasing on such hits as "Wild and Blue," "Down in Tennessee" and "I Just Came Home to Count the Memories" connected him directly to the Lefty Frizzell school of jaw-clenching lyric slurrers.

Anderson won the Academy of Country Music's career achievement award earlier this year, so it seems both his comeback and his historic stature are secure. However, he's not ready to lay back and moan gently into the moonlight of his career; *Country 'Til I Die*, his third album for BNA and 17th of his career, features Anderson's most robustly rocking collection of songs since 1985's *Tokyo, Oklahoma*.

The veteran sounds formidable throughout. Still, once *Country 'Til I Die* finishes, it feels a tad too lightweight, which is not an adjective often adjoined to Anderson. Overall, despite a couple of emotionally powerful ballads, the collection feels like a carnival meal: It's sweet, colorful and good greasy fun, but short on the kind of

It helps, of course, that Keen is a terrific lyricist with a sharp eye for details. He doesn't merely say he crossed the Rio Grande, for example; he describes the two dollars in the weathered hands of the ferryman. He doesn't just confess he's lonely; he describes the faint lights in the car radio when he's driving alone across New Mexico at night. He doesn't simply say his ex-lover is coming home on the afternoon train; he describes how the screaming of the train's air brakes breaks his heart.

Sometimes Keen's stories are very funny, as when he trumpets the glories of barbecue or when he relates the trials of spending Christmas with the family. Others are sobering meditations on wasted years and broken hearts. Keen wrote or co-wrote all the songs but one, "Tom Ames' Prayer," a Keen-like outlaw tale penned by Steve Earle.

The album's most radio-ready song is "Think It Over One Time," an irresistibly bouncy and tuneful plea to a lover to reconsider "before you break in your walkin' shoes." The best song, though, is "Lonely Feelin'," the bleakest, truest evocation of loneliness in recent memory. As he does throughout the album, producer Garry Velletri keeps the arrangement sparse and allows Keen's words and understated vocals to work their magic. When he meets three homesick migrant workers and then realizes he can't even share his loneliness with them because his Spanish isn't good enough, Keen holds out the "o" in "lonely" until it breaks your heart.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

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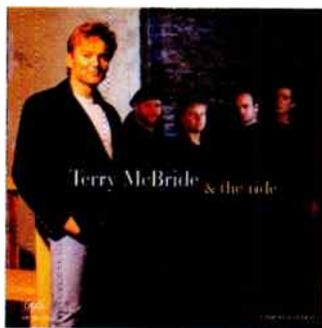
soul-nurturing substance Anderson usually delivers.

The title tune sets the tone: A country-to-the-bone fellow saunters into a high-society bash and, with his tongue firmly set where a plug of tobacco usually resides, turns up his nose at the music and the food. The closing "Hillbilly with a Heartache," a duet with Tracy Lawrence, boosts the inside joke to a level higher. It's sort of a rewrite of Sammy Kershaw's "Queen of My Double Wide Trailer" as told from the point of view of a friend of the jilted fellow.

In between, Anderson juices up a cover of his own "Swingin'," figuring the young fans either haven't heard it or, if they have, they don't know the oldie was done by someone who survived into the "New Country" generation. (Does this mean everyone who started before 1990 will rerecord their early hits for those who were dancing to Michael Jackson prior to the emergence of Garth Brooks?) Anderson's new take sounds like a pumped-up arena version, and since videos have replaced the need for live albums, perhaps it's OK for a veteran to go back and retool an old chestnut to show how it's evolved on stage over time.

A better choice, however, is the cover of The Georgia Satellites' great "Keep Your Hands to Yourself," a mid-1980's rock hit that always had a lot of rural red clay packed into its grooves. It's the outlandish dramatics of the vocals that put the song across, and Anderson is one of the few singers who could match Dan Baird's artful histrionics on this colorful tale.

Amid all this rocking and rolling, however, the most memorable song is an old-fashioned ballad. "The Good," written by Bobby Braddock, is about an average, struggling, working-class couple. The man grapples with his self-esteem when he's fired and cruelly humiliated at work, and the woman worries that she's losing her attractiveness as her



body spreads with age. It's a beautifully written song, and Anderson underscores its significance with effective tenderness.

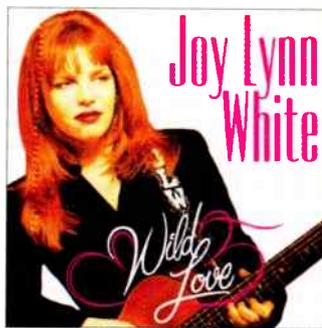
Sure Anderson deserves to have fun. But country radio has been overstuffed with precious novelty songs as of late, and Anderson piles on another heap. If this helps keep him afloat in the dangerous waters of country radio, then more power to him. But let's hope he doesn't drift so far out on this merrily rockin' boat that he loses sight of earthy soul that has always been his strong point.

—MICHAEL MCCALL

Terry McBride & The Ride *Terry McBride & The Ride* MCA 11049

In the course of three albums recorded between 1990 and 1992, the trio of McBride & The Ride did make it to the top of the charts a time or two. Yet the sort of clear cut musical definition that separates the "baby acts" from the superstars always eluded them. Ultimately, their music—even their Top Five hits like "Sacred Ground," "Just One Night" and "Love on the Loose, Heart on the Run"—failed to burn a lasting brand into listeners' imaginations.

With *Terry McBride & The Ride*, lead singer/songwriter Terry McBride, an alumnus of both Delbert McClinton's and Lee Roy Parnell's bands, has quietly repositioned himself as a solo artist. (Ray Herndon and



Billy Thomas, the other two original members of The Ride, departed last year.)

The results are impressive. McBride's power and persuasion as a singer (at times he can sound like fellow Texan Roy Orbison's long lost little cousin; at others, like a young Rodney Crowell) shines through with a clarity that was often missing when he shared billing with Herndon and Thomas.

On *Terry McBride & The Ride*, McBride has turned to producer Josh Leo, who has of late earned a reputation as a sort of "chart doctor," having resurrected the recording careers of artists like Alabama and Kathy Mattea by cutting hits on them after other producers had failed.

McBride's album (MCA should have been just a little bolder and simply called it Terry McBride) has its share of the requisite up-tempo songs that tend to open doors at radio these days. The worst of the lot is "I Can't Dance," a high-energy piece of fluff marred by trite lyrics and by Leo's contrived, overly-snazzy arrangements. Yet on "High Hopes," a similarly high-energy riff-derived dance tune, McBride manages to overcome Leo's annoyingly busy production with his compelling singing, which is buoyed by a sense of youthful earnestness and optimism that shines through again and again in this song collection. (With his stacked tracks and supersonic mixes, Leo seems determined to push country into the space age, while often trivializing it in the process.)

It's on the slow and mid-

tempo ballads that McBride consistently takes his best "rides." "Before I Fall in Love" evokes the tender anguish of Rodney Crowell at his best. On "Somebody Will," he turns in a tense vocal that gives the song's warning that much more power. Particularly moving is "Been There (Done That)." This irresistible love-lost ballad, co-written by Don Schlitz and Billy Livsey, has a chorus that grabs you, hook, line and sinker—especially with the despair and yearning McBride pours into it. Just as fine is "I'll See You Again Someday," a tribute co-written by McBride and Tim Mensy (one of several songs that McBride co-wrote for the album in collaboration with such notables as George Ducas, Rick Bowels, Walt Aldridge and Josh Leo) in memory of McBride's father, recording artist Dale McBride, who passed away last year.

Though *Terry McBride & The Ride* is a little less than a great album—I think Terry McBride's best is yet to come—it is still a solid and impressive step forward, and one which will hopefully win him the wider following he has long sought.

—BOB ALLEN

Joy Lynn White *Wild Love* Columbia 57444

Joy Lynn White (until recently known as Joy White) knocked quite a few people on their ears with *Between Midnight & Hindsight*, her impressive 1992 debut album. Marty Stuart was sufficiently enamored of White's sure-fire neo-hillbilly musical instincts and lusty quavering voice (which always seems a bit of a surprise emoting from such a young, cherubic-looking singer) to guest star in one of her videos.

Word has spread and the stars have flocked to lend their support on *Wild Love*, White's new album. Nanci Griffith, Hal Ketchum, Mike Henderson

john berry

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Wild Love

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and Dennis Robbins all pitch in on background vocals. And the songwriters' credits read like a Nashville Who's Who: Pam Tillis, Bill Lloyd, John Scott Sherrill (who wrote the lovely "Too Gone to Care"), Bill Anderson, Dennis Linde, Jim Rushing and Bob DiPiero.

Still, all this surfeit of talent on loan seldom gets in the way of the uncluttered, resolute musical vision that White and producers Blake Chancey and Paul Worley serve up on *Wild Love*. What's so refreshing about this album is that it's so unabashed—so unlike so many recent Nashville releases which do an anemic stylistic tap dance in an effort to second guess what's hot and what's not at country radio.

The Arkansas-born White wears her hard country roots on her sleeve; consequently, *Wild Love* is a bold, at times even brazen record, loaded with gutsy vocal performances, powerhouse electric guitar chords and weeping steel. White, at times, is even reminiscent of vintage Steve Earle, or Stuart at his hillbilly rokin' best. She holds nothing back, and is never afraid to sing "cain't" when "can't" would suffice.

In addition to reinstating her middle name, White also sets herself apart from the pack this time with a definite attitude—one that goes beyond the thick-licked, early Elvis pout of the jacket photo. On "I Am Just a Rebel" (co-written by Bob DiPiero and John Scott Sherrill), White indeed comes off as brazen and defiant as a young female Steve Earle. Nor is she a shrinking violet on "Wild Love" (a song written especially for her by Dennis Linde). With its booming power guitar chords and White's growling vocal, this is a raunchy ode to reckless teenage lust. For a change it's the woman making the barroom come-on, with a guy who she knows is probably bad news of some kind.

"Tonight the Heartache's On Me" and "Whiskey, Lies and Tears" (which White co-

wrote) are delightfully unadorned mid-tempo barroom ballads. At other times, White turns the flame down further and lets it smolder, with similar effectiveness. On "Burning Memories" (Pat McLaughlin and Duke Merrick) she conjures up the fragile sadness of Emmylou Harris. "You Were Right from Your Side" (Jim Rushing) echoes with similarly haunting introspection.

Ever so occasionally, White and her producers seem a bit overwhelmed by the sheer dimensions of her vocal prowess. A few of the arrangements, though tasteful, sound slightly wooden; and here and there, White's power as a singer overwhelms the nuances of the lyrics she delivers.

Yet for the most part, *Wild Love* is a raging success from a woman who, despite her youthfulness, seems to have a solid stylistic grasp of both where she comes from and where she wants to go.

—BOB ALLEN

Clint Black *One Emotion* RCA 66419

If I had to name one album that epitomizes everything that's gone wrong with country music of late, I'd go with this shimmering, pristine, shallow, state-of-the-art, made-for-radio piece of product. If you're a huge fan of current country who finds Conway and Porter and Loretta—let alone Hank and Lefty and Patsy and ET—to be simple and cornball, you will probably like this. I think it prizes technological manipulation over human feeling, and that it rehashes at every opportunity overused clichés that have worked in the past (usually for some pop hack) rather than trying to find a distinctive new way to say the same thing (as most of Clint's previous work did). It's a real waste that Black has so willfully turned himself into this.

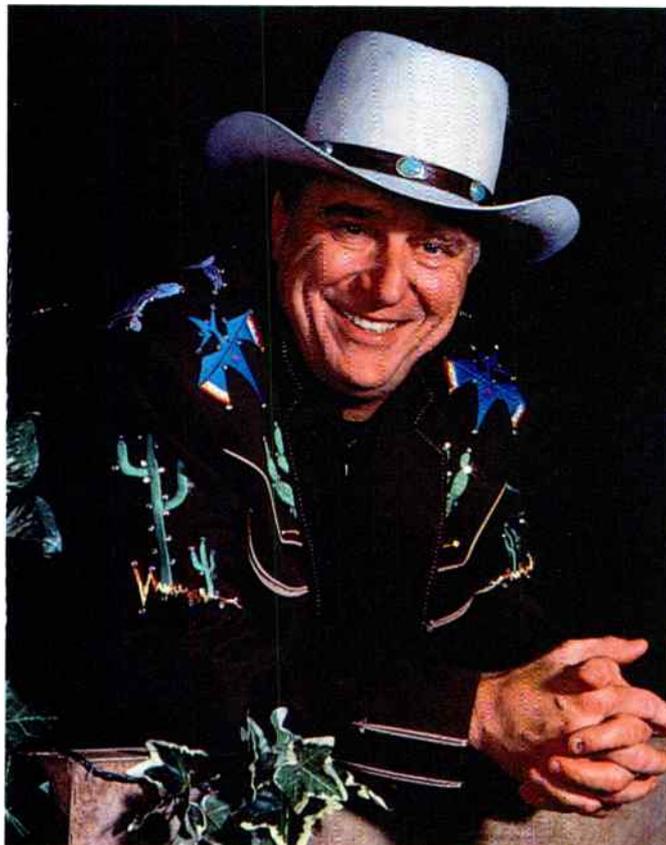
Take the title song, which is

Unless you're a diehard fan—and such people are both numerous and as remarkable in their devotion as the Deadheads who follow rock's Grateful Dead—you probably haven't heard much about Jerry Jeff Walker lately. For starters, it's been more than a decade since he was on a major label. And he's largely freed himself from the habits that made him so notorious in the 1970's, when "Jacky Jack" was one of those around whom the upstart Austin scene revolved.

But never you mind. The man has been quietly making his albums and playing his shows with more success than ever. Armed with a mailing list of fans that's huge and getting huger, he and his wife Susan now act as his management, booking agency and record company, and eliminating so many middle men has enabled him to work less and earn more. He and two sidemen fly to gigs on his private plane, and play his folksy music only in clubs and honky tonks which preserve the intimacy of the artist-audience relationship. Every March, hundreds of his fans fly into Austin for a four-day birthday celebration (he's now 52). Last year, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Viva Terlingua!, the free-wheeling album he cut in Luckenbach, he returned to the tiny town (just a dancehall and general store/beer joint) to cut a sequel, Viva Luckenbach! And this year, for the 25th album of his career, Jerry Jeff, the sentimental lug, done went and recorded Christmas Gonzo Style. When it was released in September, John Morthland visited Walker's home outside Austin—where, despite high heat and higher humidity, visions of sugar plums danced in their heads as they unwrapped 20 questions.

1 What possessed you to do a Christmas album?

People'd been asking if I was ever gonna do one, and I thought, well, what would I do? We got to laughing—I could do "The Twelve Days of Christmas" cowboy style, with six shooters shootin', and a buckin' horse and all that



20 Questions with JERRY JEFF WALKER

by John Morthland

stuff. But really, it was just something we decided to do. I go home every Christmas to Vernon, in the Texas Panhandle, where Susan's from, and we go out caroling, and I've sung a couple in their Christmas church services. So the idea was around, but the question was whether I could find 12 songs I'd like to do.

2 Your liner notes are very emphatic about using sleigh bells, but they don't say why.

Well, you could sing "Summertime Blues" and put sleigh bells on it and it would sound Christmasy. What I meant is

that the chord progressions don't make it Christmasy, but the attitude itself, and we wanted to get into a Christmas spirit, use some bells, do all songs that celebrate the fun aspects of Christmas. I didn't get into the religious aspect of it; I got into the wintery, snowy, family-type aspects, like "Walking in a Winter Wonderland," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "Jingle Bells."

3 Do you think it will surprise people in terms of your image?

I don't know. Image is something added on to you, and I

try not to pay attention. People would be surprised that I've been married 20 years to the same woman, too, or that I have two children going to school and my daughter's on the honor roll.

4 Being from upstate New York, do you miss those winters?

The only time I miss that is at Christmas. When you're a kid growing up, snow's a lot of fun; but when you own your first car and you gotta shovel it out all the time, or it's bitter freezing cold and you slip on the ice and fall on your ass coming out of the movies.... I've only been home a couple times during the winter, and it's been fun to take the kids tobogganing and sledding and ice-skating and the things I got to do when I was growing up. But if still lived up there, I probably wouldn't do much of that. Me and my son went bowling last night, and I'm still sore.

5 But how'd you do?

We bowled five games; last game, I got a 192.

6 That's not too shabby.

I came on and showed the boy I could do it! (Laughs.)

7 You've been without a major label for quite a while now, and yet you're thriving—what's the secret?

I think you need a major label to start with, and managers and agents. You need to pay some dues; you need to make some noise to get going, and those people are the only ones that can get you over at first. But pretty soon it's evident where you're popular and will be able to work, and who buys your records, all that. I mean, the booking agent was sending me back to the same places all the time, and your own office can book you into those places just as well, without giving away a large percentage of yourself.

This way we get a lot more money to our own people, too, and that's really a good feeling. Susan wanted to work—she was going to go to work somewhere—so it was good that she can work with us. It

really helps tie all the work and the vacations and the family life together.

8 *You pretty much live or die by your mailing list now, right?*

Without a label, we didn't know how to reach the people who liked us. So on the early records and tapes we put out ourselves, we put that address on for them to write to get further information. At clubs we put out sheets for people to sign up for the fan club newsletter. That's now at 40,000 names, and a lot of product sells right through that. That mailing list is the core of the whole business. The White House gets that newsletter—Al Gore gets it and reads it!

9 *And that list enabled you to go outside the mainstream record biz and build your own operation?*

No, not exactly. MCA stopped working with us after *Conjazz* in '82, and it got to be '85 or so, and the fans wanted to buy Jerry Jeff music. We made that first double-cassette, *Gypsy Songman*, that we could sell at the shows, and about 18 months later Rykodisc called us about doing CD's. So we told them they could do the CD's and we'd do the cassettes. That was our starting premise, and that's still how we do it.

10 *Is that mailing list also how you built your birthday party?*

Well, that's how they find out the dates, and anybody who wants to come to Texas, that weekend gives them a good reason. We always try to take them some place around here that's uniquely Texan. The first night—they come in on Friday—we do the Broken Spoke honky tonk here in Austin. Saturday night we do something at the Paramount Theater that has a theme—like one year it was cowboy poetry. Then on Sunday we did a rodeo in Johnson City for two years, and last year we took 'em down to Luckenbach, because we'd just done the 20th anniversary album there.

11 *You always return to Luckenbach...*

We'll probably do that again at the next birthday party, because it's such a nice feel to be in Luckenbach with just the right amount of people, two or three hundred. And I love making music out in the middle of nowhere.

Now, the other thing we're doing is we've started going to Belize every January. I'm building a house down there, and there's a 45-room resort, and so last year we went down there for a week as a group, me and Susan and 45 couples, do some scuba diving and snorkeling, reef-fishing and bonefishing. It went so well that this year we're gonna do it two weeks.

12 *As someone who was at the center of that 70's Austin Outlaw scene, what do you make of today's youth movement?*

Because I'm not involved with it, I don't have to think about it. I don't really know, except that it's more rock 'n' roll than anything else, I can't quite put my finger on it. The whole music scene is arena, stadium-oriented, and I just could never figure out why people would want to go with 40,000 other people to hear a band. It'd be like going to a movie and having to watch it in a football stadium; it's no fun to be that far away. I don't like it to perform, either. After about two or three thousand people, you stop playing music and you start performing music. That changes everything. It's just more fun to see someone when you've got your table and a waitress right there... about the biggest we get is Billy Bob's in Fort Worth, we get up to 4000 there, but still, it's a honky tonk, big dance floor and room to move around. It's got something like 42 bars so you're never far from a bar.

13 *During that period in the 70's, a lot got called country music just because it was happening in Austin. Did you consider what you were doing then to be country music? Our little joke among our-*

selves was to say we played country music, we just didn't know what country it was. But the fact is, I think it's country music because the character, the subject matter of what you're talking about, is rural. Willie didn't have a fiddle; Willie didn't have a steel. But nobody'd say Willie wasn't country.

14 *In retrospect, what do you think that Outlaw era proved, what did it do to country music?*

It had to do with taking the music to lots of other tangents. Right now, I think radio chases it all. I don't know, it's a financial game and I don't try to play that. That's another reason we started our own record company. I was gonna have to go to Nashville and talk to people about my music. They were gonna look at my music and tell me what they thought I needed to do to be in country music today.

15 *Thanks, but no cigar?*

I woulda followed what they said and probably still not gotten on country radio, and then I wouldn't have my music, either. (Laughs.)

16 *You've done so much of your recording live.*

In the studio, everybody knows they can overdub, everybody knows they can do it again later, so it's hard to get in sync. You're always aware you're recording, you're always thinking about that as much as you're thinking about music. Onstage, you gotta go do it now, and it puts everybody's center of attention right there. I forget about recording and get into playing for the audience. What we're gonna do next is go back to the Birchmere Club in D.C. and record all the big songs, "Jaded Lover," "Redneck Mother," "London Homesick," "L.A. Freeway," "Bojangles," because now they're spread over a bunch of albums; once we do that, we'll have everything we do in my shows in our own catalog.

17 *Any other conceptual projects in mind?*

I think we'll do an album just kinda sittin' around in a circle

doing all the songs by other people I've always wanted to do—"That'll Be the Day" by Buddy Holly, "I Still Miss Someone" by Johnny Cash; something by Freddie Neil, "Everybody's Talkin'" or "The Dolphin." I've always liked that Tim Hardin song, "Reason to Believe." I might even do a Roger Miller song, "Husbands and Wives," or something like that.

I might also wanna do something in Belize, maybe on the beach with congas and acoustic guitars; making music by the water is a different sound, the way it comes off the water. What does Buffet call that? Gulf and western music (laughs), because you're right there on the Caribbean.

18 *For you, what's replaced that roaring life, that '70s life you were so infamous for?*

Sometimes I wonder if we've replaced it or not. (Laughs.) The fringe element of drugs is gone, there's not any coke or speed anymore. I think the main thing that's replaced it is playing a lot longer. The worst thing that ever happened to us was when we opened for Willie and only got to play 45 minutes; he got to play three hours and we only got to get drunk and watch.

19 *So now, you play three hours yourselves...*

And we finish shows and we're tired. We might drink two beers, and then go back to the hotel and go to sleep. Not staying out too long helps too. In the 70's, we'd go out on the road for ten days, and the agency would keep tacking dates onto the end, and next thing we knew we were out there for three weeks. I'd lose perspective. We were partying every night, killing ourselves.

20 *You still use that word "gonzo" a lot; what does it mean to you now that the lifestyle it's associated with is largely gone?*

It's just a term for what you're doing. Hunter Thompson once told me it meant taking an unknown thing to an unknown place, for a known purpose. So that's it.



WILLIE NELSON'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS

He steps briskly to the microphone and lets it fly, "Whiskey River don't run dry!" Just as he has at the beginning and at the end of each show, about 200 nights a year, for the last 22 years. That's about 8,800 trips down "Whiskey River." This one is seemingly attacked with the same joyful, adolescent enthusiasm as all those past.

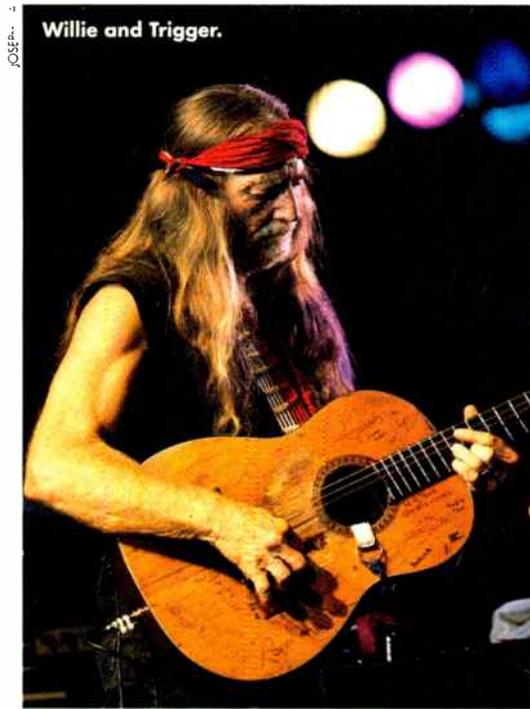
Willie Nelson is happy on stage. It's how he has fun.

How does this come to pass? A 61-year-old grown up man with a two-foot-long hair braid voluntarily riding around in a bus all day and playing music all night with a bunch of other grownups. That's the question I've been chewing on for the last 24 hours. The question is partly about Willie, but I'm beginning to think it's mainly about me. Why am I voluntarily going to see Willie Nelson do what I've seen him do dozens of times over the last 22 years since we started this magazine?

These were my thoughts as I crawled into the red Mustang this afternoon, heading for my umpteenth Willie Nelson Show. It's the kind of car I would have loved to have had growing up in West Texas in the late 50's. I bet Willie would have, too! Maybe I'll ask him that.

As I pulled onto the Interstate and kicked the ponies up to a steady 80, I popped my advance cassette of the soon-to-be released Brand New Willie Nelson Album into the slot. The idea for me to write this piece only came up yesterday, so I needed to hear this new album quick. The nearest copy was at Willie's manager Mark Rothbaum's house just a 15-mile drive from mine. So after work last night my wife Helen and I drove over to Mark's. We'd been working on a book, *The Illustrated History of Country Music*, which features some nostalgic pictures from Willie's early Fourth of July Picnics, so we took a few along to play "Remember This?" with Mark.

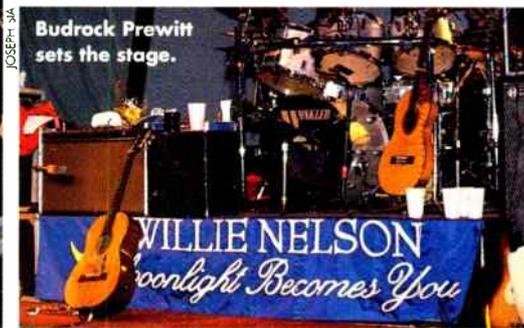
by Russ Barnard



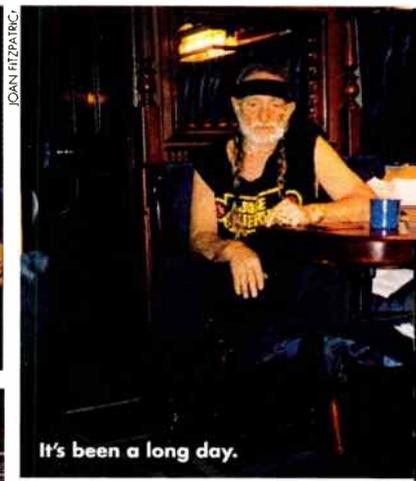
Willie and Trigger.



Willie, Bee and Mickey.



Budrock Prewitt sets the stage.



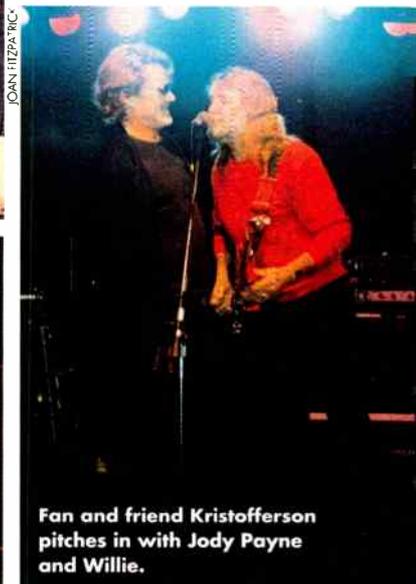
It's been a long day.



An hour of autographs.



Bobbie Nelson



Fan and friend Kristofferson pitches in with Jody Payne and Willie.

On our arrival, we found that Willie's longtime sidekick and drummer, Paul English, and harmonica player, Mickey Raphael, were at Mark's for supper. Mark's wife Carol asked us to stay for what was a very pleasant evening of reminiscing.

Now, here's the deal with Paul English. When I first saw Paul English 20 years ago, he was the scariest, most evil-looking man alive: wearing a shiny black beard (trimmed just like, uh, could it be, uh...*Satan?*), crowned with a flat-brimmed black hat, perched like some bird of prey behind his drums. Sometimes he even wore a cape! Women and children—and tough men, too—would have crossed the street to avoid Paul English. Now, with the beard a softened gray and without the hat, he looks like what he is: a soft-spoken, gentle man who has been Willie's closest friend for nearly 30 years.

Here's what Mark Rothbaum says about Paul English: "He's honest. He'll tell you where it's at, and he tells the truth. He gets the show from place to place, keeps the band happy, is everyone's sounding board. I would rather die than hurt Paul. He deserves nothing but good things. He's with Willie because they love each other." Paul English, however, will tell you there was a young Paul English who, before hooking up with Willie, was more adept at picking locks than playing drums.

Mickey and Mark, even though grownups, are considerably younger. They treat Paul with the fondness some nephews would have for a favorite uncle, and it's mutual. It's a nice feeling to see these guys so close after all those trips down the river together.

This family feeling glues the whole band together onstage. Willie's sister Bobbie on keyboards has been making music with her brother for more than 50 years! In addition to Paul on

drums and Mickey, whose harmonica coupled with Willie's guitar anchors the trademark sound, there is Bee (Daniel Spears) on bass and Billy English, Paul's brother, who beats on a variety of odd items with sticks.

Off the Interstate toward the town of Patterson, the big Ford V8 pulls strong in third gear, doing a nice dance down the twisty country two-lane. The throaty exhaust rumble provides a nice harmony to the album. I'm now on my third time through:

*They'll lead me safely through the night,
And I'll follow as though blind,
My future tightly clutched within
...those healing hands of time.*

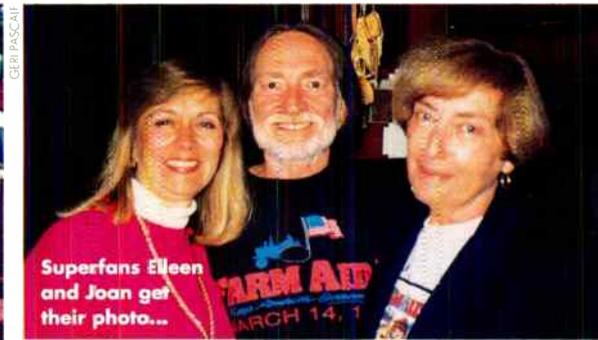
"The Healing Hands of Time" is the title song of the new album, the first on Willie's new record deal with Liberty/EMI. It's one of those songs that is so breathtakingly beautiful it could make you weep. Willie wrote it many years ago but never recorded it. That's testament to the songwriter: to write so many great songs that you can afford to leave one like that on the shelf.

But hold on, folks. This album ain't country. It actually opens with an oboe solo—hey, Willie, there was no oboe in Ray Price's Cherokee Cowboys—and an ocean of violins. At first I thought Mark had handed me a Mantovani album by mistake! This is sort of Willie Nelson and Nelson Riddle's Orchestra, produced by Jimmy Bowen. Well, don't forget, Bowen did produce Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin records before he landed in Nashville.

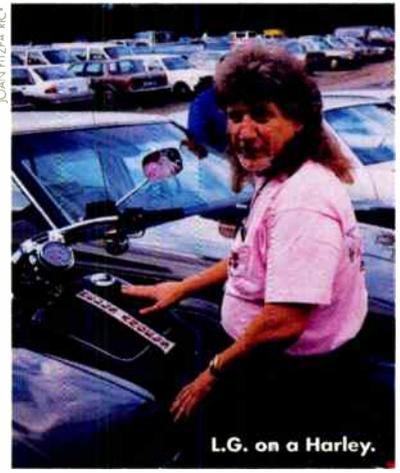
Don't get me wrong. I'm not reviewing this album. That's too



Poodie



Superfans Eileen and Joan get their photo...



L.G. on a Harley.



ILLIE night



...so does Nathalie Coté.



The crowd likes it.



Ben Dorsey

dangerous for me. I'll leave that to a critic in our next issue. But, I'll say this: if country radio programmers don't make "The Healing Hands of Time" a hit, they'll be guilty of what we frequently suspect. Stupidity!

This album reminds me of Willie's *Stardust*, a bunch of pop, definitely-not-country tunes released in 1978 on Columbia. Our review at the time said Willie was crazy to record "Stardust," "Moonlight in Vermont," "Sunny Side of the Street," stuff like that. Stick to "Luckenbach, Texas." Considering that the album sold several zillion copies and landed Willie the CMA Entertainer of the Year award, I was always a little embarrassed by that review, until I read in Willie's book that my friend Rick Blackburn, Columbia's boss at the time, had said, "Willie, you're crazy to record 'Stardust' and stuff like that. Stick to 'Luckenbach, Texas.'" Maybe I won't ask Willie about that.

Passing dairy farms with dilapidated barns and rusting equipment, boarded up farm equipment repair shops, out-of-business stores, I can see that this very rural community, like many throughout the country, has been in a recession a long time with no signs of coming out. It's beautiful: rolling hills, woods, corn fields, some alfalfa. It could be Middle Tennessee. But it's not. It's Putnam County, New York. Head straight south for an hour, and you'll be in Times Square, The Great White Way, The Big Apple. But here you'll find farmers, mechanics, carpenters and Willie Nelson's show.

As I pull in the backstage parking area after a nice one-hour run from my house, I realize that part of the answer to why I'm doing this is because the trip is so much fun. It's an hour and a

half till show time. Willie won't arrive for another hour. Three tour buses glisten in the late afternoon sun along with a couple of eighteen-wheelers. They carry the band, the crew, instruments, amplifiers, lights, sound control consoles and lots of other "stuff." When Willie shows up in about an hour in his personal bus, Honeysuckle Rose II, there will be well over a couple of million bucks worth of rolling stock parked backstage, not counting my Mustang. There's a lot of money tied up, but that's what it takes to keep an operation like Willie's on the road.

The crew has been here for hours, setting up the equipment, getting everything ready. There's last-minute details being tended, lots of activity. Paul English is responsible for knowing that all this is done right. He is calm and relaxed, gossiping with me and several other visitors. He seems to have nothing to do, but his eyes are alert. In fact, everyone is calm, very busy, but calm. After all, most of them have been doing this for 20 years. They should have it figured out by now. Once in a while a crew member says something quiet to Paul. He nods. I guess it's all getting done.

What I'm watching is no doubt a part of why Willie still does this. Many of the crew are wearing black t-shirts or satin baseball jackets that say "Willie Nelson and Family" on the back.

According to Poodie it wasn't always so smooth and calm. Poodie is Randy Locke. (I had to call Dandelion—who writes Willie's fan club newsletter and has her own late right show on a country station in Hershey, Pennsylvania—to find out how to spell Poodie. There's no doubt a story behind that nickname, but I don't know what it is. Maybe I'll ask Willie that.) In the early days, Poodie says they would do a show, drink all night, chase

women, get up at noon, drive for six hours and barely make it on time to the next show. "Here would come 13 Texas yahoos, piling out of buses and trucks at the last minute. We do things a lot different now. We're organized, calmer, saner, use tons more equipment, try to arrive at the gig with plenty of time to set up. But the spirit is the same. We're still a bunch of Texas yahoos."

*Like a band of gypsies
We go down the highway
We're the best of friends
Insisting that the world keep turnin' our way...*

There's still an hour to kill, so I check the crowd. The site in colder weather is a ski slope. Now it is set up with a large stage, seating for maybe 4,000, all covered by a canvas tent to keep off rain, but with all sides open to the unseasonable chilly evening air. It's like a giant revival setup.

Pickup trucks are heavily represented in the parking lot. There's a guy with a John Deere cap and another with a Harley Davidson t-shirt. The crowd is enthusiastic. You can feel their eagerness in the chatter. The age ranges from kids to grandparents, but it is generally an older, calmer, better-behaved crowd than you would have seen 20 years ago, but so are Willie and his crew. There is a sprinkling of people who look like they were outfitted at J. Crew. The area is a place where high-paid Wall St. and Madison Ave. execs bought up farms cheap years ago for weekend places to escape the tensions of New York City. That was in the days when the government helped people with high income tax bills buy up land that farm families couldn't afford to own anymore. But mainly these are working men and women and their families and friends, the kind of folks Willie and his band and his crew and I grew up with.

The distinctive note of a Detroit Diesel announces the arrival of Willie on Honeysuckle Rose II. The backstage crowd stirs into motion. Kris Kristofferson, who will do a set before Willie goes on, arrived a few minutes ago with Mark Rothbaum and now heads for the bus to greet his mentor and old road buddy. The plan is for me to say hello to Willie on the bus before the show and then "interview" him afterwards. I'm a little skeptical about that last part, for two reasons. First, if I know Willie, there will be gobs of fans lined up for autographs and pictures after the show, and he'll accommodate them. Then the bus will be jammed with people he knows well and will want to speak to. I'll be one of many. And I know there's a 10 or 12-hour drive ahead of them to get to tomorrow's show somewhere in Ohio. Second, I'm not going to "interview" Willie Nelson. What would I ask him that you and I don't already know? Where did you grow up? We already know: Abbot, Texas. What's Waylon like? We know what Waylon's like, and we know Willie loves him. We know he had a whole successful life as a songwriter, writing songs like "Four Walls" for Faron Young and "Crazy" for Patsy Cline, before he became a star. We know the IRS is happy, finally.

We know that if his Nashville house hadn't burned to the ground in 1970, he might never have moved to Austin and helped spawn the Austin sound. He might never have stirred together beer-soaked rednecks and dope-addled hippies into the same audience without serious bloodshed. And then there wouldn't have been any Outlaw movement.

And we know the story about how when he passed out drunk one night, his first wife, Martha, sewed him up in a bedsheet and beat him with a broom stick. We even know that story isn't

even true. As Martha says, "The truth is, I tied him up with the kids' jump ropes before I beat the hell out of him."

No, I don't have any interest in interviewing him. I want to *talk* to him, just like you would if you had the chance. And *that* I'll be able to do. But that may leave me a little short when it comes to writing a magazine cover story. But I'll enjoy it just the same. Meanwhile, Nathalie Coté, a French Canadian singer, from White River Junction, Vermont, has started the show, and it sounds like the crowd likes her:

Mark motions me to join him on the bus. Willie greets me, asks about the magazine and asks to be remembered to our editors, Michael Bane and Patrick Carr. As always, his eyes sparkle, he listens close to what I say and looks me right in the eye, as he does with anyone he's talking to. Kristofferson heads out to do his part of the show.

An hour later I'm standing in the wings with Rothbaum and Kristofferson watching Willie do his stuff. It's the middle of the show. Kristofferson, who hoots and whistles after every tune, is as genuinely excited as any fan in a paying seat. He's heard this man sing these songs a thousand times and he still loves it. It can only be because he loves the man like a brother.

After the closing "Whiskey River," L.G. (Larry Gorham, head of security and former Hell's Angel) whisks Willie to the bus where he is ushered in by Ben Dorsey. Ben was once John Wayne's valet and chauffeur and is sort of the butler on Honeysuckle Rose II, keeping the rolling home shipshape and maintaining a constant supply of Power Coffee. Ben is a man of many actions and few words.

In a flash Willie heads back to the stage and delivers his patented, all-out, half-hour long encore set. You always get your money's worth at Willie's show.

Now at 11 P.M. the show is really over, and the bus becomes the center of Willie's post-show activities,

which will run to about 2 A.M. Opening act Nathalie Coté gets her picture taken with Willie as do superfans Eileen Lange and Joan Fitzpatrick from Bronxville, New York, who attend every East Coast show. A long line of other photo and autograph seekers forms outside the bus. Willie excuses himself and spends close to an hour having fun by making these people happy.

In between these various activities, Willie and I talk with each other and with others who come and go. Willie is friendly, laid back, quick-witted, funny, interesting and interested. I love this, but it's no setting for an "interview." But it, and the rest of the evening, *are* a good setting for a story.

It's the story of why two grownups from Texas, Willie and me, did what we did today. For Willie, it's another day with family and friends: band, crew, colleagues in "the business" and the audience. What more could anyone want? For me, it reconnects my youth with my present, because the people in the audience and the crew and the band are all like the family and friends I grew up with, the people I work with and the people (like you) who are *my* audience. I expect that, without realizing it, the same is true for most people there. Maybe that's why a Willie Nelson show seems so satisfying. It's not just the music.

The band and crew buses and the trucks have been gone for hours. Goodbyes are said and Willie's driver, Gator Moore, heads Honeysuckle Rose II for Ohio and another day with family and friends. As I whip the Mustang back onto the moonlit Interstate and kick the ponies up to a steady 80, I pop the cassette in the slot and reflect, listening to Willie croon...

Ain't it funny...how time slips away. ■



Willie signs, fan waits, Russ talks.

Newsletter

REVIEWS & FEATURES

Catching Up With CMM

It was a busy summer—one trip to Alaska, two trips to the former Soviet Union, various long weekends, plus two books, all the regular issues of both magazines and two premium calendars. The two mallard ducks mentioned in a spring communique (in *CMM* Letters) moved further up the river in June, so we don't know if they raised a family or not. The resident woodchuck—spotted sunning on a rock with another resident woodchuck, also in June—survived the summer, but we have not spotted any progeny.

Fall came early with a lot of cold weather and early color in the leaves. It's lovely months brought two trips to Arizona and

one to London, plus more issues of the magazines and final details of the two books. CMSA orders for the two books, by the way, have been healthy indeed. We thank you for that vote of confidence, and we don't think you'll be disappointed.

During all this rush of activity, Associate Editor George Fletcher became Senior Editor George Fletcher and he moved into his own office with a view of railroad tracks that cross the river about a half-mile from our door. He is happy.

The best of Thanksgivings and Christmases—and other holidays relevant to our varied membership—to all of you.

—Helen Barnard, Executive Editor

Country Fun in Florida

CMSA members Kittra and Bob Moore (legendary Nashville bass player) have opened a country music club in Southern Florida, an area in need of a little fun.

The Florida Cowboy, our new nightclub, is up and running, and quite a rockin' little joint. We had no idea at the time we embarked upon this great adventure what a gift it would be to (very) Southern Florida. As you may recall, two years ago the evil eye of Hurricane Andrew passed dead through Florida City and Homestead. The results were devastating to the folks here: financially, emotionally and "socially," as there was no place left to party.

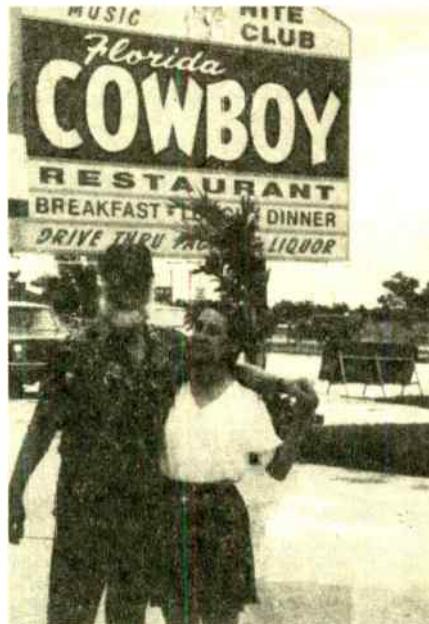
Needless to say, they are partying plenty now, and very thankful for a place to eat, drink and dance. This area, just north of the Florida Keys and south of Miami, is very agriculture-oriented, and there are many country music fans. Even though it's a small club, we're hoping to get some of the better-known country performers to play here. We are hoping to get some large posters of the stars to decorate the walls, but meantime, we took all of the centerfolds from our *Country Music Magazines*, and stuck them up with spray adhesive. If you make it down this way, stop in!

Kittra
Florida City, Florida

Bowling for the Stars

Cindy Wojtas of Romulus, Michigan, has involved stars in her bowling leagues.

In the past three years, I have been very



Bob Moore and Kittra at their new club.

fortunate to have country stars sponsor teams on my bowling leagues. Each star sent shirts for the team to wear, and some sent key chains, tapes and autographed pictures. Some even sent fan club memberships, too! We are really grateful to these stars for their support, faith and kindness. Not one of them expected anything in return, except hopes that we would win the state championship trophy. So far we've won three trophies, and two more stars are sponsoring teams on our summer league, so we'll see if we can add two more trophies to the list.

I'd like to thank the stars who sponsored my teams on various leagues over the past three years by listing their names, the team names, and some of the results.

Doug Stone—"The Bowling Stones." We won first place for Doug, and sent him the sponsor's trophy.

Lorrie Morgan—"The Water Mox'cans." Came in fourth out of 32 teams.

Tracy Lawrence—"Sticks and Stones." Fought like heck to bring him the trophy, but came in second.

Kentucky HeadHunters—"Headpin Hunters." Came in fourth on this league.

Alan Jackson—"The Chattahoochees." We won Alan the first place trophy! He'll receive it soon.

Aaron Tippin—"The Tip Pins." Dang, we came in tenth place out of 24 teams.

Mark Collie—"K-9 Dawg Pins." We were determined to win Mark the championship, and we did!

In This Issue

- Concert Reviews
- Bowling with the Stars
- Porter Wagoner in Legends
- Readers Create

Editor: George Fletcher

Executive Editor: Helen Barnard

Art Director: Kathryn Gray



Debby Goers (left), and Al and Cindy Wojtas were among those bowling for Mark Collie.

Clay Walker—"The Walker Hounds." We are still on the league bowling for Clay, and are currently in second place.

Michelle Wright—"The Wright Stuff." As with Clay, we are still bowling for Michelle, and are currently in first place.

Now, we appreciate all that each star did for us, but if we had to pick a favorite, it would be Mark Collie. Not only did he send us all shirts, his office kept in touch with us throughout the season to check on our progress. And when we called to let them know we won first place, they were really happy and enthusiastic. This made us feel great! Mark's office said he wants to do something for us. He had an upcoming show in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and would meet with us then. Before the show, he came to our bowling alley where we presented him with the trophy and took pictures. He invited all of us to a concert, and afterwards we got to meet with him again backstage. This man is the best! We already have our shirts from him for next year's league!

Cindy Wojtas
Romulus, Michigan

Family Tradition

Jeff Taylor, a CMSA member in Battle Ground, Washington, and also a member of a local band, sends in this note about his daughter, Samantha, and her up-and-coming musical talent.

My name is Jeff Taylor, and enclosed is a picture of my two-year-old daughter, Samantha Kay Taylor, and myself, playing in my band, The Revolvers. This day was at the famous Portland, Oregon,

"Rose Festival" this year. I get her up for a song I wrote called "Rock-a-Bye Baby," which is about her, and she entertains the crowd by doing the "Barney Song" and playing tamborine and dancing. While our band is receiving quite a bit of notoriety in the area, it's Samantha who always steals the show. Don't know if you have a "Proud Papa's Corner," but I thought I'd share this with you.

Jeff Taylor
Battle Ground, Washington
We do this time!—Ed.



Samantha and Dad.

Pontificating on Pen Pals

A couple of issues back, we ran a letter from a member who felt that Pen Pals had changed, and instead of being a forum for country fans to correspond with each other, it had become a "dating service." We open up the floor here to your responses.

OKAY AS IS

I answered several of the ads for Pen Pals and have made some very good friends. Yes, some of the people were looking for a personal relationship, but the majority of the responses just wanted to make new friends. So please keep Pen Pals as is. It's a great way to make friends who love country music.

Loretta Merricks
Lynchburg, Virginia

JUST FRIENDS

My name was in the July/August issues and my ad generated approximately 65+ warm, friendly letters. I have been writing to various people of all ages for over two months now, and have not seen any disrespect or otherwise in any of their letters. These are genuine country folks looking for a little friendship via letters and that's all. And, might I add, about 15 of them are jail inmates who write some of the most interesting and sincere letter. Thanks for printing my ad.

Jeanie Klinker
Menasha, Wisconsin

ANONYMOUS THOUGHTS

Additionally, three readers did not want to be identified by name or address, but here are their thoughts:

●"I do believe Pen Pals is used as a dating service, and wrongly so! When age, sex and availability are listed, romance enters the picture. Why are outside activities listed, when the focus should be on country music? Tell them to join a singles club or Parents Without Partners. Why not limit the listings to three specifics: name, address and favorite country stars."

●"I am a female, and I must say I've met some great Pen Pals through this section. However, for the past year, I, too, feel it has become a dating service section. I have written to at least 12 females around my age and have not received a reply from any of them. I don't knock romance, and if couples meet, that's great, but misuse of this column has hurt the people who just want to correspond with other country fans."

●"I agree with Kathleen Chaney's letter in the July/August issue—she is so right! I've wondered for years why you haven't had a personals column in your magazine. It's obviously what people want, since most of the letters written to Pen Pals

are seeking partners. Please add a personals column to your magazine. Then Pen Pals will be used for its original purpose, and your readers will have a mate-seeking column, too. Everyone will then have what they want."

Shelby Lynne in Michigan

Virgie Warren, a member in Flushing, Michigan, who told us about a Jean Shepard concert a few months back, fills us in on Shelby Lynne's latest tour.

The talented Shelby Lynne recently appeared in Michigan with Kenny Rogers. The 30-day tour also included stops in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania and New York. Her latest album, *Temptation*, is a collection of Western swing songs, two of which she co-wrote. It's a great album, reminiscent of Bob Wills' music, and in concert, she created a unique sound all her own. I saw her in Detroit. In the past, I saw her in Nashville, and in Clio, Michigan. The versatile songstress can convey so much emotion in a song, and sing the blues or a traditional country song with ease. She also picks rhythm guitar.



Virgie and Shelby in 1990.

Lynne has four albums to her credit: the current *Temptation*, plus *Sunrise*, *Things Are Tough All Over* and *Soft Talk*. She was named Best New Female Vocalist at the 1991 Academy of Country Music awards show, and has appeared on television programs like *The Tonight Show* and *Austin City Limits*, and co-starred in the TV movie, *Another Pair of Aces*, with Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson. Continued success to you, Shelby!

Virgie Warren
Flushing, Michigan

Wisconsin Country Fests

Frequent correspondent Roxanne Johnston of Hibbing, Minnesota, checks in with a report on two country festivals in Wisconsin last summer.

I travelled to Wisconsin twice this summer to see some of country music's best, past and present. The Chippewa Valley



Among the stars Roxanne Johnston saw this summer: Stonewall Jackson and Pam Tillis.



Country Fest in Cadott went on for four days. I was there for two, and one name on the list of performers was my main reason for the trip—Marty Stuart. There isn't another artist whose music I enjoy more. The others were just the icing on the cake. I love sitting outside and listening to live music, especially if the weather is cooperative.... Besides Marty, I saw The Gibson-Miller Band, Ricky Skaggs, Trisha Yearwood, Tanya Tucker, Clay Walker, Kathy Mattea and Rodney Foster.

The second trip was on July 8th, to Rhinelander, Wisconsin, for the Hodag Country Festival. We camped out for all three days of this one, where we saw Confederate Railroad, Lorrie Morgan, Joe Diffie, Pam Tillis, Mark Chesnutt, Aaron Tippin, Tracy Byrd, Brooks &

Dunn, Kitty Wells, Jimmy C. Newman, Neal McCoy, Merle Haggard, Becky Hobbs and, last but not least, Stonewall Jackson. A country music lover's paradise! I was able to meet Stonewall, which was really neat. (He was the very first country artist I'd ever seen. My mom took me to see him in Hibbing when I was 12.) Along with Ronnie Prophet, Williams & Ree kept us amused between shows. They are something else. Some, like Tanya, Pam Tillis, Sawyer Brown and Confederate Railroad, I had seen before. But that didn't lessen my enjoyment in the least! And others, such as Clay Walker and The Gibson-Miller Band, have gained a new fan.

Roxanne Johnston
Hibbing, Minnesota

July 1994 Poll Results

Alan Jackson	<i>A Lot About Livin'</i> (<i>And a Little 'Bout Love</i>)
Neal McCoy	"Wink"

Make it eight times in a row for Alan Jackson as your top album pick. Vince Gill's *I Still Believe in You* takes second, while Travis Tritt's latest, *Ten Feet Tall & Bulletproof*, moves into third. Fourth place goes to Randy Travis' *This Is Me*, and John Michael Montgomery's *Kickin' It Up* was your fifth favorite album in the July Poll.

Some new names show up in your singles picks, including first place finisher Neal McCoy with "Wink." Second place goes to stalwart Vince Gill and "Whenever You Come Around." In third is Collin Raye's "Little Rock," followed by Confederate Railroad's "Daddy Never Was the Cadillac Kind" in fourth. Rounding things out in fifth is Tim McGraw's "Don't Take the Girl."

September 1994 Poll Results

Alan Jackson	<i>Who I Am</i>
Alan Jackson	"Summertime Blues"

Surprise, surprise....another Alan Jackson sweep. His new album, and single, are coming on strong (as his new ones always do). As for the rest of your album picks, Alan's followed by himself as his *A Lot About Livin' (And a Little 'Bout Love)* lands in second. Third place goes to Dwight Yoakam's *This Time*, while Vince Gill's latest, *When Love Finds You*, moves into fourth place. And Mary-Chapin Carpenter's *Come On Come On* is planted in fifth.

In singles, Alan's followed by another stalwart Poll artist, George Strait, whose "The Man in Love with You" takes second. Following in third place is David Ball's "Thinkin' Problem," while Randy Travis takes fourth with "Whisper My Name." Tracy Byrd nabs fifth place with "Lifestyles of the Not So Rich and Famous."

Collecting the Magazine

Members help each other complete their magazine collections.

•For sale: *Country Music Magazine*, *Country Song Roundup*, *Country America*, *Country Fever*, *Music City News*, *American Country*. Also articles, photos, posters. Wanted: anything and everything on Alan Jackson and Troy Aikman of the Dallas Cowboys. Send SASE. Sarah Zahm, 4060 9 Mile Rd., Sparta, MI 49345.

•Country magazines for sale: *Country Music*, *MCN*, *Country Fever*, *Country Weekly*, etc. Send two stamps with names of who you collect. Four-page listing. Rick J. Cunningham, 134 Berwick St., Berwick, NJ 03901-2702.

•Wanted: November/December 1986 issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Dick/Vi Foerster, 1920 Berkshire Way, Pomona, CA 91767.

•For sale: large collection of *Country Music Magazine*. Sep 1972 (first issue) through June 1977 (except Oct 1974 and Jan 1976). April 1980 through Sep 1981. Nov 1984 through May/June 1994 (except Nov/Dec '91 and Jan/Feb '93). Here is your chance to get an almost complete set, including the rare Johnny Cash Volume 1, Number 1 issue! First \$100 takes it! (Includes shipping.) Don LaCross, 17 Hullcrest Rd., Shelburne, VT 05482.

•I have past issues of *Country Music Magazine* and *Country America* for sale. Ford Howard Willett, 9251 East Colby Rd., Crystal, MI 48818-9730.

•For sale: country music magazines—*Country America*, *Music City News*, *Modern Screen Country Music Special*. Send SASE for list. Kathy Rader, 400 E. Main AS, Hopkins, MI 49328.

Information, Please

Please write each other directly about information or items listed. When corresponding, include SASE. We reserve the right to edit for space and style.

•I ran an ad in the July/August issue selling country music radio shows. The wrong address was given. I know a lot of letters were returned. Sorry for the inconvenience. The correct address is Steve O'Leary, 8387 Farley, Overland Park, KS 66212.

•For sale: onstage photos of Billy Ray, Vince Gill, Tanya Tucker, Travis, Marty, etc. For list, send stamp. Roger Garza, P.O. Box 164, Nashville, IL 62263.

•Wanted: VHS copy of the *Dove Awards* (1992 and 1993) and the *25th Dove Awards Anniversary Show*, which aired prior to the awards show on 4/28/94 on the Family Channel. Linda Morby, 303 Ushers Rd., Ballston Lake, NY 12019.

•Wanted: VHS tapes of the 1991-92 CMA awards and the 1992-93 TNN/MCN awards. Will pay reasonable price. Shirley Olson, 9-7th Ave. So., Apt. #20, Hopkins, MN 55343.

•Wanted: uncut video cassettes taped or original of *Smokey and the Bandit* I and II. Plus any items, including posters, etc. of *Smokey and the Bandit* (like soundtrack and videos), also *B.J. and the Bear*, *Starsky & Hutch*, *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *Rhinestone*, and *9 to 5*. Karen Nowak, 366 Elm St., Stirling, NJ 07980-1107.

•Private collector has thousands of LP's for sale. Search service for 78's, 45's and

LP's. Send SASE and wants. All questions answered with SASE. K.O. Allen, Box 8535, Reno, NV 89507-8535.

•6-hr. VHS tape s/h \$25.00. Awards: CMA, ACM, TNN, Songwriters; No Hats Tour, *Nashville Now* anniversary program, Alan, Reba, Garth, Loretta, Grand Ole Opry anniversary. SASE. June Miner, 517 Edward Rd., W. Melbourne, FL 32904.

•Great photos from Fan Fair 1994: BRC, JMM, Hal Ketchum, Neal McCoy, Clint, Toby Keith and more. Very cheap! 4 x 6, \$1.00 plus postage. 8 x 10, \$3.00 plus postage. C.C. Ristau, 6901 SW 26 Ct., Miramar, FL 33023.

•Country album catalogue (5000+), six stamps. Dolly, Reba, promo CD's, country magazines and radio show lists. All one stamp each. Send want list with SASE. Rick J. Cunningham, 661-C/M Somersworth, NH 03878-0661.

•Wanted: anything on the following artists: Alan Jackson, Alabama, Little Texas, Tracy Lawrence, Billy Ray Cyrus, John M. Montgomery, Clay Walker. Especially concert photos and magazine stories. Amber Posey, Rt. 2, Box 210B, Buckhannon, WV 26201.

•For sale or trade: over 25 years worth of Dolly collecting—albums, singles, movies, TV specials, articles, talk shows and other TV appearances, magazines and more. Send a stamp for list. Also for sale: *Dukes of Hazzard* episodes. Wanted: copies of the *Dolly* show and the Dolly radio special from 1984 (80 songs) in mint condition. Lyle Grezaffi, 706 E. Main, New Roads, LA 70760.

•Looking for Emmylou Harris albums: *Gliding Bird* (1969), *Last Date* (1982) and *White Shoes* (1982). Don't believe any of these available on CD, so preferably cassette, but LP also acceptable. Will pay reasonable price. Rachel Lee, 205 Edgewood Dr., Lufkin, TX 75904.

•Wanted: Darrell McCall albums in good condition. Jim or Arlene Ziezler, 712 Park Ave, Deforest, WI 53532.

•Videotapes and merchandise for sale: Diffie, Ketchum, Restless Heart, Exile, BRC, Stone, Jackson and more! Send SASE and want list. Amy Carraway, Rt. 2, Box 210, Murray, KY 42071.

•Wanted: videotapes of the following with George Strait—CMA awards, *Entertainment Tonight*, *This Year in Country Music*, *Austin City Limits*, *Nashville Now*, *New Country*, *Strait from the Heart of Texas*, *Texas 150*, *American Music Awards*, *The Today Show*, Grammy Awards, ACM awards 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993, *George Strait Live from Tucson*, *CNN Show Biz Today*, *CBS Morning News* and *The Tonight Show*. Will send videotapes, money or both. Dick/Vi Foerster, 1920 Berkshire Wy., Pomona, CA 91767.

•Wanted: Loretta Lynn records, foreign LP's, EP's, audio, video, posters, candid close-up photos and fan club memorabilia. Patsy Cline EP's and other records. Terri Larabie, RR 22, Box 22, 738 Nebo Rd., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada LOR 1P0.

•For sale: close-up onstage/offstage photos of some of today's hottest country artists (Travis, Marty, Aaron, Neal, Doug, Naomi, Reba, Vince, Billy Dean just to name a few). Laura Messina, 405 Main Ave., Clifton, NJ 07014.

•Wanted: Reba fans interested in joining fan club. Send SASE to Juna Pena, 1635 S. 3rd Pl., St. Charles, IL 60174.

•For sale: country music albums, also 45's. Bob Wells, Kitty Wells, Charley Pride, Patsy Cline, Loretta, Dolly, Roy Drusky, Porter, Hank Sr. & Jr., Tammy Wynette, Tennessee Ernie and many other older artists. Send stamp for list. M. Barker, 306 Young St., Nocona, TX 76255.

•I wish to buy Gene Autry cassettes, LP's, books and sheet music to songs written by Autry. L. Smith, Route 1, Box 11A, Millwood, WV 25262.

For sale: country music trading cards. Selling sets and singles. SASE for complete list. List sent next day. Kris Mayeda, 5708 Fresno Ave., Richmond, CA 94804.

•I have a large variety of audio interviews and cassette singles for sale. I also have photos for sale. Please send a SASE and want list. Amy Carraway, Rt. 2, Box 210, Murray, KY 42071.

•Wanted: anything on Little Texas, especially Brady Seals, Desirée Van Setters, P.O. Box 2634, Ormond Beach, FL 32175.

•Looking for anything on John Michael Montgomery. Photos, concert, backstage etc., videos, anything. Will pay reasonable prices. Want to hear from JMM fans. I have photos, including the back of his beautiful Indian jacket (close up) with him in it. Terri Jennings, 20-C Airport Rd, Freedom, CA 95019.

•For sale/trade: large collection of actual photos of country stars, on and offstage. Send SASE for sample/list. Johnny Nixon, 1599 Dallas-Aeworth Hwy., Lot #3, Dallas, GA 30132.

•Wanted: 1970's song titled "Diamonds and Peanuts" by Whispering Bill Anderson, probably on 45 rpm. only. Ron Thompson, HCR 61, Box 229, West Plains, MO 65775.

•Help! Looking for any information on Paul Hale. Including magazine articles, tapes, CD's, records, anything. Will pay reasonable price. Rhonda Hale, c/o Don Hale, P.O. Box 696, Houlton, ME 04730-0696.

•For sale: close-up photos of many country artists: Neal McCoy, Reba, Carlene Carter, Lorie, Sammy Kershaw, Yoakam, Stuart, Chesnut and more. SASE for list. Richard D. Moore, 20 Maple St., Hopedale, MA 01747.

•Wanted: newsletters, photos, articles, magazines, promotional items etc. on George Strait, Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, Alan Jackson, Alabama and John M. Montgomery. Please send list of prices and condition to Torry Hansen, P.O. Box 594, Hayfork, CA 96041.

•Looking for the following CD's: The Judds, *Wynonna & Naomi*, The Judds, *Why Not Me* and The Judds, *Christmastime with The Judds*. Also looking for Michelle Wright Canadian recorded albums on CD or cassette (or LP last) such as *Do Right By Me* and other Canadian records. I have lots of CD's and cassettes for sale or trade. Also articles, magazines, etc. Kevin Abercrombie, 30345 Chualar Cyn. Rd., Chualar, CA 93925.

•My idol is Tammy Wynette. I'm interested in purchasing anything of hers or anything about her. Hope Ayers, 700

Biggs Hwy., Rising Sun, MD 21911

•For sale: on/offstage photos of your favorite country artist. Great close-ups, large selection. Magazines and posters. Please send SASE. Linda R. Weyandt, Greenfields Apt. C3, Rd. #1, Claysburg, PA 16625.

•For sale or trade: large collection of Reba, The Judds, Vince Gill memorabilia, records, tapes. Also need pre-1980 memorabilia of Reba. Kenny Teague, P.O. Box 1093, Madison, TN 37116.

•Elvis Presley: First publicity picture. In person signature. Best offer over \$1000.00. Serious inquiries only. Xerox copy for verification of signature if you send SASE. Signed on back along with Bob Neal (Elvis' first contracted manager), Bill Black (bass player) and Scotty Moore (guitar player). Has pin holes on the corners and a slight tear along the side that does not affect any of the signatures. Also have other Elvis memorabilia for sale. Signed pictures/albums/tapes of other stars available. No list but if interested send your preference and I'll advise. Enclose SASE. Have sold some pictures to dealers recently so am familiar with value. Would prefer to sell to fans who want items for their own collections instead of to a dealer for profit. Mrs. Billie Galbraith, 1919 Bluff Ave., Fort Smith, AR 72901.

•Looking for VHS copies of *Man from Left Field*, a movie which came on TV early this year starring Reba and Burt Reynolds. Reba on *Vicki*, which was on TV in June and Ralph Emery's *A Chat with Reba*, on TNN in June. Will pay reasonable price. Darlene Williamson, 5901 Claus Rd., Riverbank, CA 95367.

Pen Pals

Make new friends by mail. *Pen Pals* is a means of introducing CMSA members who wish to correspond. It is not a "personals" column. Physical descriptions and requests for romance will not be printed. We also reserve the right to edit for space and style. Parent's permission required for those 16 and under.

•Greetings! My name is Denise, and I'm 37. Currently going through divorce. Mom to two girls, three boys. Enjoy country music, horses and corresponding. Denise C. Gregoire-McGrath, 959 West Ave. (upper), Buffalo, NY 14213.

•Howdy! I am a single, 20-year-old, nursing student. Hobbies include fishing, camping, using CB radios and writing pen pals. I love great country music from the 1950's on up to present day. Favorites are Patsy Cline, Johnny Horton, Alabama, Tracy Byrd and Tanya. If you want a new friend, write to me. No inmates, please. Branda Dugan, 4010 Maxwell Pl., Colorado Springs, CO 80909.

•Lonely inmate soon to be released looking for friends for new and fresh start. Favorites are Reba, Judds, Loretta Lynn and Randy Travis. Interests are many. Photo appreciated; age unimportant. Will try to answer all. Kyle Ray Rimel #890688, Maximum Control Complex, P.O. Box 557, Westville, IN 46391-0557. •Hello! I am a 26-year-old country girl. I like Reba, George S., Lorie M., Tracy L., Patty L., Alan J., Billy D. and Clint B. Hobbies are chasing guys, going to team ropings, shopping and running around with friends. Would love to hear from

COUNTRYMUSIC



GARTH BROOKS

World Radio History

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1994

PULL-OUT
CENTERFOLD
OF-THE-MONTH

GARTH BROOKS

Facts of Life

Personal Data

Name: Troyal Garth Brooks
Birthdate: February 2, 1962
Birthplace: Tulsa, Oklahoma
Hometown: Yukon, Oklahoma
Education: Yukon High School; Oklahoma State University in Stillwater; Advertising major, graduated December 1984.
Family: Wife, Sandy Mahl; daughter, Taylor Mayne Pearl (born July 8, 1992); daughter, August Anna (born May 3, 1994); father, Troyal Raymond Brooks; mother, Colleen Carroll Brooks; siblings, Jim, Jerry, Mike, Betsy and Kelly.
Musical influences: James Taylor, KISS, Queen, George Strait, George Jones, Dan Fogelberg, Merle Haggard, Kansas, Journey, Billy Joel.
Band: Stillwater; Betsy Smittle (acoustic band bass guitar/background vocals); James Garver (lead guitar/background vocals); Steve McClure (steel and electric guitar); Mike Palmer (percussion); Dave Gant (keyboards/fiddle); Mark Greenwood (acoustic and bass guitar/background vocals).



DAVID WOOD/THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Discography

Record label: Liberty Records, 3322 West End Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

Garth Brooks Release date: 4/12/89

Sales: 5.4 million

Singles:

"Much Too Young to Feel This Damn Old" #10
 "If Tomorrow Never Comes" #1
 "Not Counting You" #1
 "The Dance" #1

No Fences Release date: 8/27/90

Sales: 10.9 million

Singles:

"Friends in Low Places" #1
 "Unanswered Prayers" #1
 "Two of a Kind, Workin' on a Full House" #1
 "The Thunder Rolls" #1

Ropin' the Wind Release date: 9/2/91

(First album to enter the *Billboard* Top

200 chart and the *Billboard* Country chart at Number One.)

Sales: 9.8 million

Singles:

"Rodeo" #1
 "Shameless" #1
 "What She's Doing Now" #1
 "Papa Loved Mama" #2
 "The River" #1

Beyond the Season Release date: 8/25/92

Sales 5.3 million

(*Beyond the Season* is a Christmas album which raised over 2 million dollars for Feed The Children.)

The Chase Release date: 9/22/92

Sales 2.5 million

Singles:

"We Shall Be Free" #7
 "Somewhere Other Than the Night" #1
 "Learning to Live Again" #1
 "That Summer" #1

In Pieces Release date: 8/31/93

Sales 4.5 million

Singles:

"Ain't Going Down (Til the Sun Comes Up)" #1
 "American Honky Tonk Bar Association" #1
 "Standing Outside the Fire" #1
 "One Night a Day" #4
 "Callin' Baton Rouge" (Current Single)

Selected Awards

3 World Music Awards for Best Selling Artist (1992-1994)
 1 Grammy
 6 American Music Awards
 9 Country Music Association Awards, including Entertainer of the Year
 12 Academy of Country Music Awards, including Entertainer of the Year
 5 People's Choice Awards
 16 *Billboard* Awards, including Top Pop and Country Artist of the Year
 2 TNN/*Music City News* Awards
 1 Juno Award (Canada)

Country's Biggest Videos Make The Perfect Stocking Stuffers...

...and yes, it's okay to stuff your own sock.

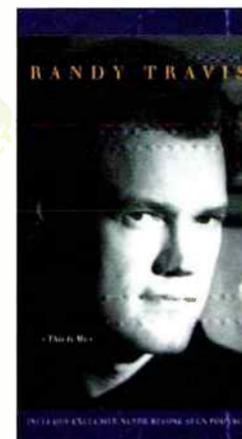


Little Texas

Kick A Little

The Academy Of Country Music's Vocal Group of The Year in their debut home video, featuring the hits "What Might Have Been," "God Blessed Texas" and six more, plus behind-the-scenes interview footage of the band members in the recording studio and on tour in Europe.

HEARING IS BELIEVING



Randy Travis

This Is Me

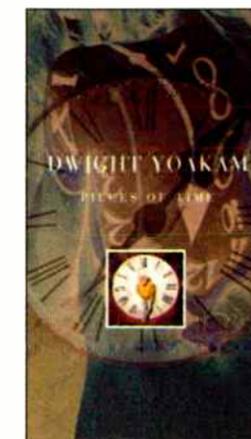
The new home video follows the release of Randy's latest hit album of the same name. Randy personally introduces each song on this video collection, which includes music from *This Is Me*, as well as selections from *Heroes And Friends*, *High Lonesome* and *Wind In The Wire*, plus exclusive new footage.



Travis Tritt

Ten Feet Tall And Bulletproof

Travis Tritt's new release also takes its title from his most recent hit album, and it brings together some of his finest video clips from the past two years, including exclusive footage and otherwise-unavailable performances. Of special note are the video for Travis's cover of "Take It Easy" and a special acoustic version of "Ten Feet Tall And Bulletproof."



Dwight Yoakam

Pieces Of Time

Dwight's latest home video collects clips from his last two platinum albums, *If There Was A Way* and *This Time*. Contains 11 videos, including "Ain't That Lonely Yet," "A Thousand Miles From Nowhere" and "Turn It On, Turn It Up, Turn Me Loose." Plus a special bonus: the video for "Suspicious Minds" from the *Honeymoon In Vegas* soundtrack.

SPECIALY PRICED AT ALL CAMELOT MUSIC LOCATIONS



CMSA COLLECTIONS

girls and guys 20-30 years of age. Please no prisoners. **Andrea Tittle, P.O. Box 991, Warner, PK 74469.**

•Hi, I'm a married 33-year-old who loves to make new friends and write letters. Favorites are Reba, Vince, Alan Dolly and many more. I love to read while listening to country music, use rubber stamps, bake, collect rag dolls and crafts. Will answer all letters. **Cindy J. Halverson, 1140 Lawrence Dr., Mundelein, IL 60060.**

•Hello, everyone. I'm a young 53 and love country music. Favorites are Vince Gill, Alan Jackson, Patty Loveless, Randy Travis and George Jones. I enjoy camping, writing, dancing, long walks, sports and more. Would love to hear from anyone with similar interests. No chain letters or people who are not sincere. **Betty Hogestyn, 154 Leisure Ln., Scottsville, KY 42164.**

•Hi! I'm 26 and a fan of Dolly Parton, Mary-Chapin, Deborah Allen, Pam Tillis, Kelly Willis, Shawn Camp, Joe Diffie and the list goes on. I love *Designing Women*, *Roseanne* and stand-up comedy. I also enjoy writing poetry and letters and watching CMT. I'm very open-minded. Hoping to make some new single friends. **R.L.M., 620 South Shore Ct., Vermilion, OH 44089.**

•Hello. 26-year-old country music fan looking for country music pen pals. Favorite is Patsy, but like all kinds. Hobbies include working out and playing basketball. Would like to hear from guys. 20-30. Please write! **John Schroeder, 500 Josephine #13, Billings, MT 59105.**

•Hi, I am 25, single and a college student who is a big country music fan. My favorites are Travis Tritt and Marty Stuart. My interests are walking outdoors, watching basketball and baseball. So come on men between 25-40, write me. **Linda Lewis, 8505 Linda Circle, Catlettsburg, KY 41229-8745.**

•Hi, I'm 34 and love country music. Some of my favorites are Randy Travis, George Jones, Conway Twitty and more. My interests are camping, horseback riding, being in the mountains and making new friends. No inmates, please. **Lori Bush, P.O. Box 1005, Torrance, CA 90505.**

•Howdy! I am a 20-year-old cowgirl from West Texas. Dancing, rodeoing, attending concerts and listening to country music are some of my favorites. I'd love to hear from any cowpokes interested in a spirited pen pal. No inmates, please. **Shaylene Farris, P.O. Box 60342, Midland, TX 79711.**

•Hello. I am a 19-year-old, single male incarcerated until May of '95. Favorites are Reba, Travis Tritt, Vince Gill, Alan Jackson and more. Hobbies are playing drums. I've been playing 21 years. I also like the outdoors, concerts and have done a few shows myself. Would like to hear from ladies 20 to 39. **Douglas James EF-31476, Bed 508, Muscogee County Correctional Inst., 3950 Schatula Rd., Columbus, GA 31907.**

•Hi! I'm 17 and love country music. Favorites are Tracy Byrd, Clay Walker, Travis Tritt, Little Texas and Tracy Lawrence. I enjoy line dancing, rodeos and roller skating. Would love to hear from country music lovers ages 16-20. **Kelli Wages, 4571 W. Reading Road, Reading, MI 49274.**

•Hi, I'm 22, born European, been in states for last seven years. Some favorites are Reba, Brooks & Dunn, Hank, Wynonna and Trisha Yearwood. I am incarcerated, but I would love to hear from girls with same interests. Age not a factor. Will write all. **Warren Phillips III #18892L C-O JHCC P.O. Box 548, Lexington, OK 73051.**

•Well, hi ya'll! This 37-year-old "country" girl, would love to correspond with fellow songwriters and musicians waiting for that "big break." Annual trips to Nashville sparked a strong desire in me to do a songwriter's CD. We can all help each other at a fraction of the cost of doing it alone. Hope to hear from serious and determined dream-chasers but, will answer all. No inmates, please. **Susan Burney, 21036 Pala Foxia Pl., Moreno Valley, CA 92557.**

•Hi, I'm a 19-year-old country girl. My favorites are Chris LeDoux, Hank Williams Jr., Alabama, Keith Whitley and many more. I am interested in writing all, so please fill my mailbox. No prisoners, please. **Shelia McKnight, P.O. Box 1185, Redway, CA 95560.**

•Hi, I am a single lady, over 50, and love all country music. Interests are: baseball, football, card collecting, camping and country music. I have a great collection of music on 8-tracks, tapes and old 78's and 45's. Like to hear from anyone who wants to write. **Barbara MacKenzie, 410 A. Street, Cayuga Village, Niagara Falls, NY 14304-1911.**

•Hi, I am a good-hearted man of 35 who has made a few mistakes and am presently incarcerated. I'm seeking women to correspond with. I enjoy the outdoors, sports, reading, movies and, of course, country music. **Jeff Terrell #196-477, London, OH 43140.**

•I'm 24, married with two boys. I am a big country music fan. Looking for sincere pen pals who love country music as much as I do. I'm a big Alan Jackson fan. I'd love to hear from anyone who would like to make a new friend. Will answer all. **Sheilah Easley, P.O. Box 164, Courland, KS 66939.**

•Hello! I'm 32 years old and single. Interested in making new friends who love country music. Enjoy movies, sports, concerts, fairs, reading and more. I'm also into collecting autographs/photos, articles, magazines and memorabilia of my favorite stars: Wynonna, Alan Jackson, Holly Dunn, Patty Loveless, Tracy Lawrence and more. **Donna Timm, P.O. Box 981, Lawrenceville, GA 30246.**

•Hi, I'm a single, 22-year-old female who loves country music. Favorites are George Strait, Ricky Lynn Gregg, Travis Tritt and Aaron Tippin. Would like to hear from other country music lovers. **Diana Ferry, Rd. 1, Box 361A, Alquippa, PA 15001.**

•Hi there. I'm 27 years old and love country music. My favorites are: Conway, Vince, Marty Stuart, Tim McGraw and Reba. Enjoy sports, camping, writing poetry and playing pool. Would love to hear from all who choose to write. **Gennifer Hartel, 919 W. Ross St., Belen, NM 87002.**

•Single male, 28 years old, presently incarcerated in Texas seeking country music pen pals. **J.C. Smith, 645042 Wynne Unit, Huntsville, TX 77349.**

•Greetings. I am a 60-year-old country music fan. My favorite is Ricky Van Shelton. Love concerts, reading, writing. Would like to hear from RVS fans. No prisoners, please. **Kay Neil, 1227 South New St., Springfield, MO 65807.**

•Hi! I'm a rowdy, 25-year-old fan of Bocephus. I also like Charlie Daniels, Dwight Yoakam and Tanya, to name a few. I enjoy scuba diving, fishing and listening to country and rock. I'll answer all letters, as long as you are 18 years or older. **Mike Grilz, 90 Taft Ave., Newburgh, NY 12550.**

•Howdy! In addition to listening to country music, my hobbies include: writing/receiving letters, watching NFL football (especially the Dallas Cowboys), collecting frogs and Precious Moments, reading, ceramics, camping, traveling. I'm 33, married with four children and four dogs! If you enjoy meeting people and making new friends, let me hear from you! (No inmates, please.) **Cindy Kuehler, Rt. 2, Box 364, Nowata, OK 74048.**

•Hi, I'm 21 years old. I love country music. My favorite artist is Ricky Lynn Gregg. Would love to hear from RLG fans, animal lovers, Native Americans and people who are interested in Native American culture. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Donna M. Fuller, 22301 Wyldwood Dr., Little Rock, AR 72210.**

•Hi, I'm a 55-year-old lady who loves country music, camping, fishing, the mountains and car races. Would enjoy hearing from people with same interests. My favorites are: Alan Jackson, George Strait, RVS, Clay Walker and Loretta Lynn, to name a few. **Patty Phillips, 113 W. Seneca St., Apt. 2, Oswego, NY 13126.**

•Hello. This 20-year-old, single country girl would like to correspond with country boys, 18-28. My interests are varied, but I love riding horses and reading the most. I enjoy many different artists: Randy Travis, Garth, Chris LeDoux, Reba, Trisha and Brooks & Dunn. **Jennifer Trusty, Julesburg, CO 80737.**

•Hi, I'm 28, single and a country girl. Looking for male pen pals, 28-35, who love country and Reba, Alan Jackson, Dolly, Vince Gill, Pam Tillis, K.T. Oslin, etc. Hobbies: gardening, bowling, reading, p.p. golf, painting, dogs and children. No prisoners please. **Barbara Joy Sage, 321 Cherry St., Madison, TN 37115.**

•Hello from the Golden Gate. I am a 34-year-old divorced mother of a son who is eight. I love sports, the outdoors, my family, animals and country music. I am a long-time country music fan who is just starting to learn to country-western dance. I would love to hear from people all over and will answer all letters. No inmates, please. **Suzanne Muth, 1455 Arnold Dr., #16, Martinez, CA 94553.**

•Hello. My friends call me Lucky. I would like to correspond with young or old country fans, especially those who like the old standard traditional artist. I've been a fan since the 40's. Favorites are George Jones, Hank Sr. and Merle Haggard. I do like some of the younger artists. Will try to answer all. **Charles Crawford, 3917 S. Magnolia, Oklahona City, OK 73129-6825.**

•Hi, I'm 23 and single. Would like to correspond with single guys (21-40) who enjoy country music and would like to make

a new friend. Some favorites are Tracy Lawrence, Tanya, Brooks & Dunn and Collin Raye. I also enjoy writing letters, dancing and Karaoke. Will answer all. **Sherrri Pelarski, 1356 Brown Rd., Manistee, MI 49660.**

•Hi, I'm a working mother of three. I'm married. Love country music—always have. I love reading, writing, cooking and gardening. Faves include Mark C., Alan J., Tanya, Confederate RR, Little Texas, etc. Write me today. No men, and no inmates, please. **Gertie Sternberg, 5184 Alcona Rd., Box #1, Casper, WY 82604.**

•Hello everyone! I'm 18, and a single country gal looking for some friends. I love animals and outdoors. I have two many favorite artists to name. I will answer all! Age doesn't matter. **Brita M. Scarborough, 106 Edgewood Ave., Prattville, AL 36066-5010.**

•Hello, I'm a single female, age 25, looking for pen pals in all 50 states. Country favorites are Tanya, Crystal Gayle, Alan Jackson, Vince and others. Interests are bowling, reading, pool, concerts, dancing, writing letters and short stories. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Carol Steele, 305-C Jaycee Manor, Martins Ferry, OH 43935.**

•Hi, I'm 24, married with no children. Would like to hear from Billy Ray Cyrus fans. Also like Aaron Tippin, Little Texas, Alabama and Dolly, to name a few. Billy Ray is my favorite. I love country music, crafts, writing and receiving letters. **Lynda Richburg, Route IA Box 212-AA, Hampton, SC 29924.**

•Hi, I'm a 28-year-old male, very open-minded. Would love to have pen pals ages 25-30, both guys and gals. Please write. Will answer all, especially Garth Brooks fans. **T.D. Norman, 3032 Chinook Ln., Lafayette, IN 47905.**

•Hi, I am a 74-year-old widow of 28 years. I love country music. I love Tritt, Chesnut, Tucker, Morgan, George Jones, Strait, Loretta Lynn and many more. All-time favorite was Conway. I really miss him. I enjoy traveling, sewing and crocheting. I have hobbies too numerous to mention. Would love to have pen pals from all states. No inmates, please. **Gertrude Wilson, 1208 St. Louis St., West Plains, MO 65775.**

•Correctional inmate: Non-violent offender. Release pending. Long-time fan of Merle Haggard, Marty Robbins, Ray Price, Roy Orbison and Patsy Cline. I like many of the newer stars, too. I'd like to correspond with females, 30 and up. Hobbies include leather craft, art and reading. **C.W. Graham 4159#8, Rt. 2, Box 4400, Hughes Unit, Gatesville, TX 76597.**

•Hi, I'm 47. I love country music, both old and new. Would like to hear from fans all over. Will answer all. **Beverly Griffith, P.O. Box 57, Sandersville, MS 39477.**

Send requests to Country Music Magazine, 329 Riverside Ave., Westport, CT 06880. Mark envelope, Attention: Collections. Entries sent without membership number will be discarded. Collections is printed as a service to readers, and Country Music Magazine assumes no liability for any losses or damages resulting from any Collections page correspondence. Parents, be aware of children's correspondence.

Porter Wagoner

The Grand Ole Opry and Opryland "Ambassador" has held fast to his rural, hard country roots in a career that spans 40 years.

By Rich Kienzle

Today, 37 years after joining, Porter Wagoner remains a fixture on the Grand Ole Opry, also holding the title of Opryland's "Ambassador." When not onstage, he can often be seen greeting visitors at the Nashville theme park, clad in the same type of flashy rhinestone stage outfits he's worn for the past several decades. Opryland visitors unfamiliar with the music's (or the Opry's) past may be unaware that Porter Wagoner has enjoyed a career of nearly 40 years, maintaining a sound, presence and personality so authentically rural that the very idea of "crossover" would be as unthinkable as a Bill Monroe disco album. Likewise, they may be equally unaware of his pivotal role in the stardom of his former "girl singer," Dolly Parton.

Porter Wayne Wagoner knew rural life from the day he was born on a farm near Lanton, Missouri, south of the larger town of West Plains, amid the Ozark Mountains, on August 12, 1927. The youngest of five children, Porter grew up on the farm, where the work was difficult and the hours long. He went to school in a one-room schoolhouse, and his family and neighbors taught him to play an inexpensive guitar. An Opry fan as a child, he dreamed of eventual stardom on the show, amusing family and neighbors in the process. He loved the music of The Monroe Brothers, and raw mountain singers like Roy Acuff as well.

Porter got some early experience singing gospel with his sisters-in-law. In 1942, a landmark year for him in many ways, he first met Roy Acuff when Acuff performed in West Plains with an Opry package show. That same year, his older brother Glenn, with whom he also sang and played, died, leaving Porter unhappy, but determined to continue with music. Finally, the farm failed, and had to be sold. Since his sisters and surviving older brothers had moved on, Porter and his parents relocated to West Plains. To help the family, he took jobs as a meat cutter and truck driver. An unsuccessful first

marriage in 1944 was followed by a more successful one in 1946, though the couple still lived with Porter's parents. Other odd jobs followed while Porter sang on the side at local programs throughout the 1940's.

He was 23 in 1950 when yet another day job ended his day jobs for good: Porter was hired to work at Sid Vaughan's Grocery in downtown West Plains. Owner Vaughan enjoyed hearing Porter sing and play guitar when no shoppers were around. When Vaughan decided to sponsor a 15-minute early morning radio show broadcast from the store over KWPM in West Plains, Porter found himself singing and reading commercials from 5:45 until 6:00 each morning, Vaughan's grocery business swelled, and soon KWTO radio in Springfield heard of the young singer and offered him a job. He moved there in the fall of 1951.

Hosting his own morning shows and performing on *Ozark Farm and Home Hour* with other artists, Porter saw his popularity swell. The station featured him more and more, and his personal appearance schedule grew. KWTO executive Si Siman who, in 1947, convinced RCA's Steve Sholes to sign Chet Atkins, tried to sell Sholes on Porter as an RCA artist in the summer of 1952. Siman would become as important to Porter as he was to Atkins, guiding and advising him about the music business. Porter's first RCA sessions yielded no success, but the second brought forth one Wagoner original, "Trademark," that would become a hit for Carl Smith. Porter's reputation grew, and his first real hit came in 1954 with "Company's Comin'." Still in Springfield, he started working with a trio that included steel guitarist Don Warden.

His first truly big hit, "A Satisfied Mind," came in 1955. Written by Red Hayes and Jack Rhodes, it went to Number One on *Billboard's* country charts and stayed there for four weeks. Early in 1956, his followup, "Eat, Drink and Be

Merry (Tomorrow You'll Cry)," went to Number Three. In the spring of 1956 the religious recitation, "What Would You Do? (If Jesus Came to Your House)," made it to Number Eight, establishing Porter's gift for recitations. His version of Bill Monroe's "Uncle Pen" made the Top 20 that summer. By then Porter was a full-fledged cast member of Si Siman's latest creation, the *Ozark Jubilee* TV show.

By the time Porter recorded "Tryin' to Forget the Blues" that summer, Steve Sholes had turned him over to Chet Atkins, who now managed all RCA's Nashville recording operations. In 1957 he joined the Opry and moved to Nashville. By 1958, after discussion with Jim Reeves, who led a band called The Wagonmasters, Reeves changed his band's name to The Blue Boys (after his hit that year) and Porter took the name Wagonmasters for his own band. He also began wearing the trademark Nudie outfits in the late 50's.

The years 1959 and 1960 yielded only modest hits, but in 1960 he began hosting a half-hour syndicated TV show. His band now featured Warden on steel and bass player-comedian Speck Rhodes, who grew up in West Plains and later worked with his musical family in Memphis. Porter's new female singer was Norma Jean Beasler, who'd previously worked on the *Ozark Jubilee*. In 1961, "Your Old Love Letters" returned him to the Top Ten, and Jerry Reed's song, "Misery Loves Company," gave him his first Number One in six years.

The 60's saw Porter and The Wagonmasters touring, taping TV shows and recording and performing on the Opry. The Top Ten hits were steady: "Cold Dark Waters" in 1962, followed by "I've Enjoyed as Much of This as I Can Stand" (1963), "Sorrow On the Rocks" (1964), his classic version of "Green, Green Grass of Home" (1965) and "Skid Row Joe" in 1966. The album carrying this song, *Down in the Alley*, featured a classic Les Leverett cover photo of Porter made up as a derelict. Early in

1967 he recorded one of his greatest ballads, "The Cold Hard Facts of Life," a Bill Anderson number.

In 1967, Norma Jean retired to start a family, and Porter sought a replacement. He found one in 21-year-old Dolly Parton from Sevierville, Tennessee, an up-and-coming singer who'd had two hits that year on the Monument label. Offering her his guidance, he emphasized her delicate, traditional mountain voice and encouraged her songwriting, which focused on evocative rural dramas based on her own poverty. The quality of her songs gained her considerable fame and some modest solo hits for RCA. Late in 1967 Porter and Dolly had their first hit duet with "The Last Thing on My Mind," followed by "Holdin' On to Nothin'" and "We'll Get Ahead Someday" in 1968. That same year, they were honored by the Country Music Association as Vocal Group of the Year. Late that year, RCA released another Porter solo single written by Bill Anderson: "The Carroll County Accident," another number that drew on Porter's skills at delivering story songs. It reached Number Two early in 1969, followed by "Big Wind," which peaked at Number Three.

In addition to recording, Porter and Dolly worked the Opry, toured and did the TV show together. The Wagonmasters evolved into an excellent group featuring Warden (who'd become Porter's right hand man and partner in a music publishing house), Rhodes and fiddler Maek Magaha. Dolly's own talents were becoming clear by the early 70's, and creative tensions between her and Porter caused inevitable problems in the relationship. Nevertheless, their hit duets continued in the early 70's, with "Tomorrow Is Forever" and "Daddy Was an Old Time Preacher Man" (1970) and "Better Move It On Home" (1971). In 1970 and 1971 the Country Music Association honored them as Vocal Duo of the Year.

Porter had his final solo Top Ten hit in 1972 with "What Ain't to Be, Just Might Happen." That led to an album of the same name that included the amazing number "The Rubber Room," a song about psychosis that featured bizarre (for Porter) electronic effects and a vocal unlike any other. Today the album is considered a cult classic.

Additional duets came with "Burning the Midnight Oil" (1972), "We Found It" (1973), and their only Number One duet, "Please Don't Stop Loving Me." But as time went on, Dolly began having significant solo hits, including her 1974 Number One single, "I Will Always Love You" (the Parton original that became a pop smash for Whitney Houston in 1992).



Though Porter remained enormously popular onstage and on TV, his solo recordings no longer made the Top Ten.

Dolly, who had initially promised to stay five years with Porter, actually stayed with him for seven. Nevertheless, when she left in 1974, the split was not totally pleasant. Charges, countercharges and legal wrangling lasted for years. Dolly went on to greater fame (though at the expense of her hard country musical sound), but she and Porter continued to record occasional duets until 1980, including "Say Forever You'll Be Mine," a Number Five record in 1975. RCA continued releasing Porter's albums, some good, some less impressive. In 1979 he raised eyebrows by inviting soul singer James Brown to appear on the Opry. In 1981 he left RCA,

and, after a brief stint with Warner Bros., his recording career ended. In the early 80's he worked with an all-female band, and also found himself dealing with substantial tax problems. Time healed many of the hard feelings with Dolly, who invited him to her short-lived 1987 ABC-TV variety show as a special guest to sing and reminisce. Porter published his autobiography in 1992, and though his great days are long gone, he still appears on the Opry, clad in the flashy suits of his past. The sentimental songs that were his specialty are dated, but Porter Wagoner remains an important link to country's past.

Albums Available

See For CMSA Members Only page.

Readers Create

Christmas Poem for Minnie

Anna M. Smith, a member in Antioch, Tennessee, wrote the following poem, based on an actual incident, in tribute to Minnie Pearl. With that sentiment, and its holiday theme, we're especially happy to share it with all of you. Anna sent a copy to Minnie, and hopes that she is feeling better. "We miss her," says Anna.

Minnie Pearl

The days were near their shortest,
Outside it was cloudy, damp and bleak;
While inside the family restaurant,
Cheerfulness was at its peak.

Christmas decorations were abundant,
It was nearing that "big day."
Our walls were covered with teddy bears,
For we were giving them away.

Most patrons were our local residents,
For our tourist trade was down,
But there was one beautiful family
That had just arrived in town.

I took the pride of this nice family
And placed him in his high-chair,
Then tied a bib 'round his sweet neck.
He was so precious! Blue-eyed and fair!

"Are you looking forward to seeing
Santa?,"

I asked this babe with a single curl.

"I don't want to see Santa," he

whispered,

"I dis 'ome 'ere to see Minnie Pearl."

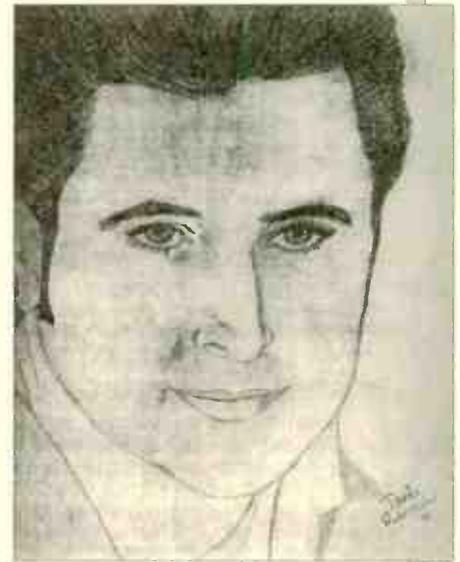
—Anna Marie Smith

One More for Minnie

Ida Lee Hansel is another fan of Minnie Pearl. She's a member in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and says that this poem is her way "of saying thanks for the memories" to a very special lady.

Minnie, You Are a Pearl

I can close my eyes and
I'm back in time, and
I see you and Rod, on
stage at the old Ryman.



Vince Gill a Favorite

Janice Robertson is another member we've heard from before. She hails from Lone Grove, Oklahoma, and shares this sketch of Vince with us. Janice says she has more luck drawing the men than she does the women.

I was very young then, but
those days are etched in my heart.
Saturday, I'd anxiously wait
for the Grand Ole Opry to start.

The old folks would light up their
pipes and smoke filled the air.
We lived in a world all our own
listening to the Opry there.

Brother, Rod and Grinder Switch
you made a part of our week,
and we'd gather 'round that old
radio, and wait for you to speak.

For we knew whatever troubled us
would be forgotten during that time,
for you and Rod sent out laughter
from the stage of the dear old Ryman.

Thanks for all the good times,
the laughter and the mirth.
You are one of the dearest ladies
that ever walked this earth.

We owe you so much, Minnie, a
debt we could never repay,
for the memories that to us
were the fondest along our way.

So, accept this little poem
written just for a special girl.
You are ever in our prayers,
for, Minnie, you are a Pearl.

—Ida Lee Hansell



Tanya Then and Now

Brandy Lane, a member in Wake Forest, North Carolina, is a big fan of Tanya Tucker. She's been following Tanya's career for quite some time, and has come up with these two sketches of Tanya, "then" and "now." Says Brandy, "Tanya's been in the country music business for 22 years now, and I'd like to see more of her in the magazine." How's this for starters?

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World Radio History



Ask Rodney to name his biggest accomplishment—he says it’s his children. Here’s one singer who has his priorities straight, and that’s reflected in his songs.



Rodney Crowell

Letting the Picture Paint Itself

By Bob Allen

When I listen to a Rodney Crowell album, I often feel like the guy’s gently ripping pages right out of my own past. I’m sure that’s why I can remember exactly where I was the first time I heard his last two albums.

It was in the middle of the hot, dry summer of 1992, and I was riding down a dusty country highway near New Windsor, Maryland, when I first beamed up *Life Is Messy*, Crowell’s darkly autobiographical “divorce” album, made around the time his 12-year marriage to recording artist Rosanne Cash was ending. It was in the depths of the savage winter of ’94, sitting in a bleak, snow-covered parking lot, that I first listened to an advance of *Let the Picture Paint Itself*, Crowell’s latest release, and suddenly felt the dark, oppressive mood of the season being temporarily lifted off my shoulders.

Regardless of how his music has gone over with country audiences at large (and his recent albums haven’t exactly chased Garth Brooks out of the *Billboard* Top Ten), Crowell and his music have always had a special place in my heart. His unimpeachable taste and daunting craft as a songwriter, in my book, make him a towering figure—a sort of Harlan Howard, Kris Kristofferson, Mickey Newbury and Billy Joe Shaver all rolled into one for the baby boomer generation. His best original songs, with their spare yet powerful lyrics and melodic eloquence, contain intimate kernels of emotion and familiarity that seem to speak directly to my own hopes, fears, regrets and frustrations.

Just listen, for instance, to some of the great

lines in “I Don’t Fall in Love So Easy,” a stand-out cut on *Let the Picture Paint Itself*, which Trisha Yearwood also covered on *The Song Remembers When*, her last album. Then there’s the homespun wisdom and maturity of “Stuff That Works,” which he co-wrote with Guy Clark. Somehow, Rodney Crowell always seems to be poking around for the truth that lurks behind the imagery, always managing to write about the things in life that matter.

That’s a big reason why it’s hard to find a significant country—or pop—star who hasn’t covered a Crowell song at one time or another—everyone from Willie Nelson, Vince Gill, Emmylou Harris and Johnny Cash, to Jimmy Buffett, Bob Seger, The Grateful Dead and Roger Daltrey. Crowell has also made his mark as a tasteful and timely record producer. Aside from his own recent albums, he produced most of his ex-wife Rosanne Cash’s hits, as well as more recent and much-acclaimed debut albums from Jim (*Planet of Love*) Lauderdale and Lari (*Lead Me On*) White.

At the same time, Crowell has, in recent years, almost found his own groove as a recording artist—something that has eluded him for years. Not only was his 1988 album, *Diamonds & Dirt*, a masterpiece, but, for a little while, it even threatened to get his foot in the door, commercially speaking. Crowell co-produced *Diamonds & Dirt* with his old bandmate-turned-record-magnate, Tony Brown, who also co-produced *Let the Picture Paint Itself*. Brown, besides being country’s hottest producer, seems to have a special knack for helping Crowell find his own elusive middle

ground between the commercial mainstream and country-rock eclecticism (which is why Crowell turned to him again for *Let the Picture Paint Itself*). Ultimately, *Diamonds & Dirt* resulted in five consecutive Number One singles, Gold certification and a Grammy.

Yet after *Diamonds & Dirt*, Crowell, never one to play it safe or plow the same field twice, artistically speaking, forged into new territory with his next two albums: the somewhat obscure *Keys to the Highway* (1989) and the murky but brilliant *Life Is Messy* (1991). *Life Is Messy* was inspired, at least in terms of spirit, mood and emotion, by such diverse and far flung influences as early Sinatra, the '50s jazz sounds of Miles Davis and the desert paintings of artist Georgia O'Keefe. Though it was one of the best records Crowell has ever made, a lot of the same folks who'd moved and grooved to the considerably more mainstream *Diamonds & Dirt* just didn't seem to get *Life Is Messy*, and sales and radio play were disappointing.

So why is it that Crowell, after ten or so albums (going all the way back to his impressive 1978 debut, *Ain't Livin' Long Like This*), is yet to have a million-seller, despite his willingness to balance his free-roaming, artistic ambitiousness with the narrower considerations of the contemporary country marketplace? Why is he still searching, 16 years after his major label debut, for that elusive "breakthrough" record and hoping maybe *Let the Picture Paint Itself* will be it?

The question of commercial success is one Crowell hesitantly admits he's often asked himself. "I'm only human," he shrugs, "and I did find myself asking the question of why there was not acceptance of what I do. I'm a committed member of the country music community—artistically, soulfully, musicologically committed to country music. And sometimes as a human being I've asked myself, why doesn't country music return that to me?"

"I often get told things like, I'm too cerebral, too much an artist—in fact, my ex-manager told me that," Crowell laughs, more with gentle exasperation than actual humor. "He told me, 'You need to stop being such an artist and be a personality.' I said, 'No, that don't make sense to me. It insults me. How can you be too much of an artist?'"

"Really," Crowell smiles and shakes his head. "I don't mean to sound like I'm whining. I'm too proud to whine. I'm too proud to beat on a washboard and say, 'Me! Me! Me!' So I'll just continue to let the art lead the way, even if that doesn't seem to be what leads the way these days."

"But whatever the reason is other artists sell millions and millions of records and I don't, I've decided I'd kinda like to find it out." Crowell pauses, then bursts into laughter. "I dunno, maybe it gets to be like the last guy standing.... Like, if you've ever seen Robert DeNiro as Jack LaMotta in *Raging Bull*, there's this great scene where Sugar Ray Robinson has just bloodied and beaten LaMotta to a pulp, but LaMotta's still on his feet. After the final bell LaMotta's all covered with blood and staggers over to Sugar Ray's corner and taunts him." (The Texas-born singer imitates the slurred speech of a punch-drunk Bronx-born prize fighter) "'But ya didn't knock me down, Ray! Ya didn't knock me down!'" Crowell laughs again at this bit of imagery. "Who knows? Ten years from now, maybe I'll be off, 'But ya didn't knock me down, ya didn't knock me down....'"

Crowell readily admits that a lot of his own blood, guts and personal turmoil went into the making of 1992's *Life Is Messy*.

Naturally, when the album went virtually unnoticed, even after he'd spent months and months touring behind it with his Dixie Pearls band while his personal life was falling apart back home, it was kind of like having the wind punched out of him in the tenth round of a prize fight.

And that's when Crowell, one of the most talented singers and performers on the scene, decided it was time to pack it in: to let go of his long-standing dreams of being a recording artist and stick to songwriting and producing, the well-paying behind-the-scenes things he does so well.

"At that point, I'd been on the road for about four years, and my band and I had worn each other out," Crowell recalls. "Around the same time I saw a whole new wave of artists come along, and it didn't seem like I was a part of that. Also, around that time, I was still getting over my father's death, Rose and I split, and one of my best friends, who was my age and I'd known a long time, killed himself. I just went into a real dark place and got really depressed and thought, 'It's done for me.' I dissolved my band, my management, my publicity, I started working at getting

out of my contract with my record label. I just felt a strong need to end everything. It was one of the most difficult periods of my life."

As he scratches his stubbly chin and ponders that chiaroscuro period of his life, Crowell is sitting in a small, unfinished office cubicle in his new manager's new Music Row digs. The office is still in the midst of a major renovation. The walls are bare and unpainted, boxes are stacked everywhere, and the only furniture in the cubicle is a couple of chairs and a desk sandwiched in amidst the clutter. Crowell, dressed in blue jeans with the requisite ripped-up knees, a loose-fitting blue shirt, and tan cowboy boots, has a day or two's growth of beard and that slightly drawn, five-o'clock-shadow look that sets in after a long day of interviews.

Yet, as always, he's strikingly handsome—tall, lithe-looking and youthful in an introspective sort of way. The touch of gray in his hair merely gives him an added air of credibility.

Sitting there amidst the chock-a-block stacks of boxes, Crowell throws

his feet up over a chair and talks about other considerations besides the lackluster sales of *Life Is Messy* and his various personal losses that made him reassess the way he was living.

"After the divorce, I suddenly realized that Rosanne had really been covering my ass, as far as being a parent to our four daughters, because I was gone so much. When we split, my two oldest daughters, who are 13 and 18 now, stayed with me. That's when I realized they were slipping away from me while I was continuing with the imagery of being an artist. Once I was off the road, I really picked up quick on getting into my daughters' lives—being a guide for a 13-year-old at a time when things like drugs and boys were starting to become an issue, and for my 17-year-old, who was about to go off to DePaul University to study theater. I surrendered to that, and it was a really rich choice. It gave me a purpose. Single parenting was tough, but I loved it, and my daughters and I ended up getting really close. Sure, I missed performing, but I was doing something that was more important. Now my conscience is clear. I'm proud I didn't crap out on my kids when they needed me, and that I helped heal what they had to go



"I'm a committed member of the country music community—artistically, soulfully, musicologically committed to country music. And sometimes as a human being I've asked myself, why doesn't country music return that to me?"



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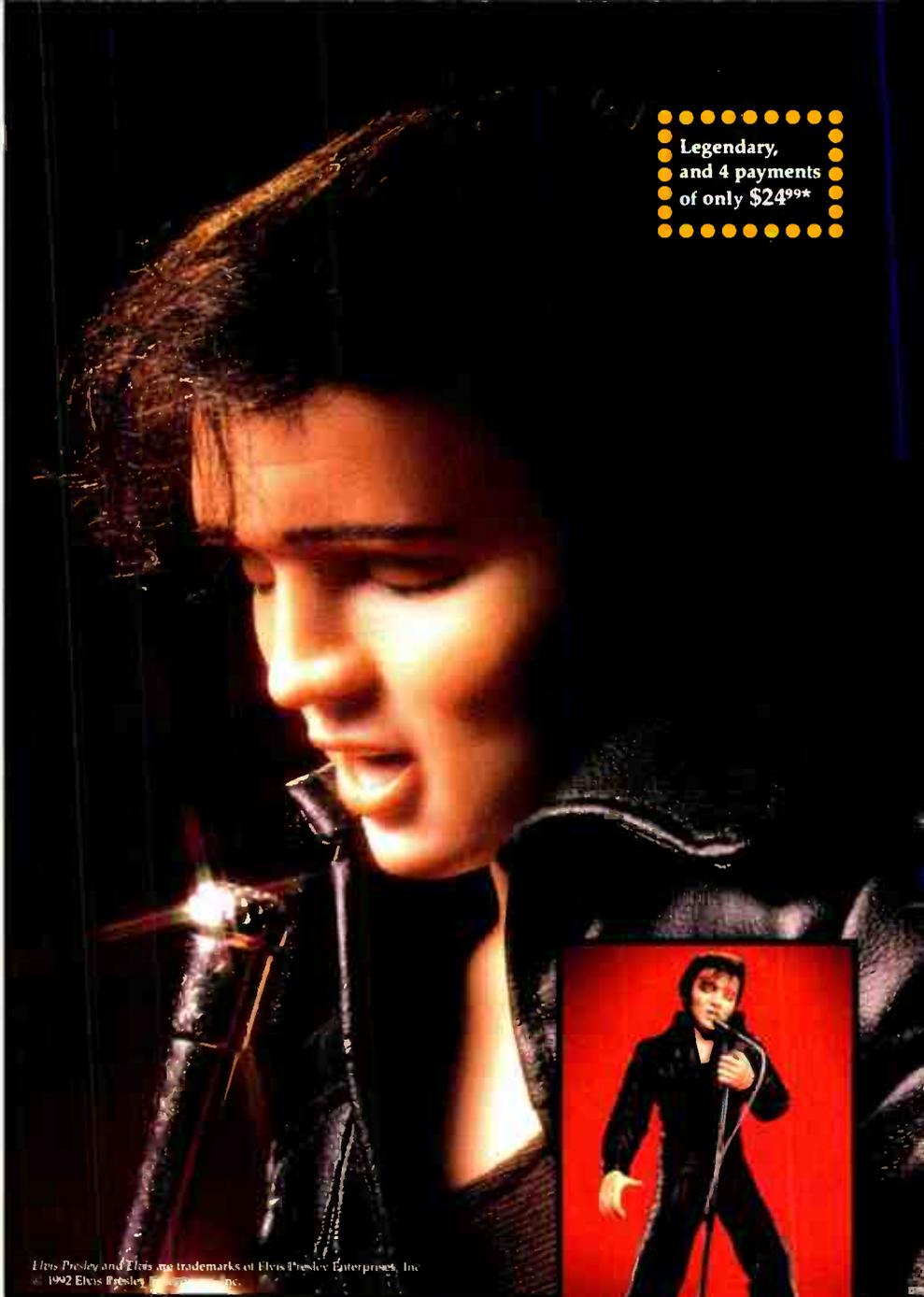
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through with the divorce.”

In the process, Crowell even made peace with Rosanne. “I don’t have any hard feelings or regrets about Rose,” he says softly. “I have the most wholehearted and utmost respect for her. She’s a great woman, and whatever it takes for her to be happy, I’m for it. I can sum it up by saying our relationship was very successful and it came to an end right when it was meant to come to an end, and I wish her well. My life is richer for having spent time with her. It was a good day, but that day is done. That day is over.”

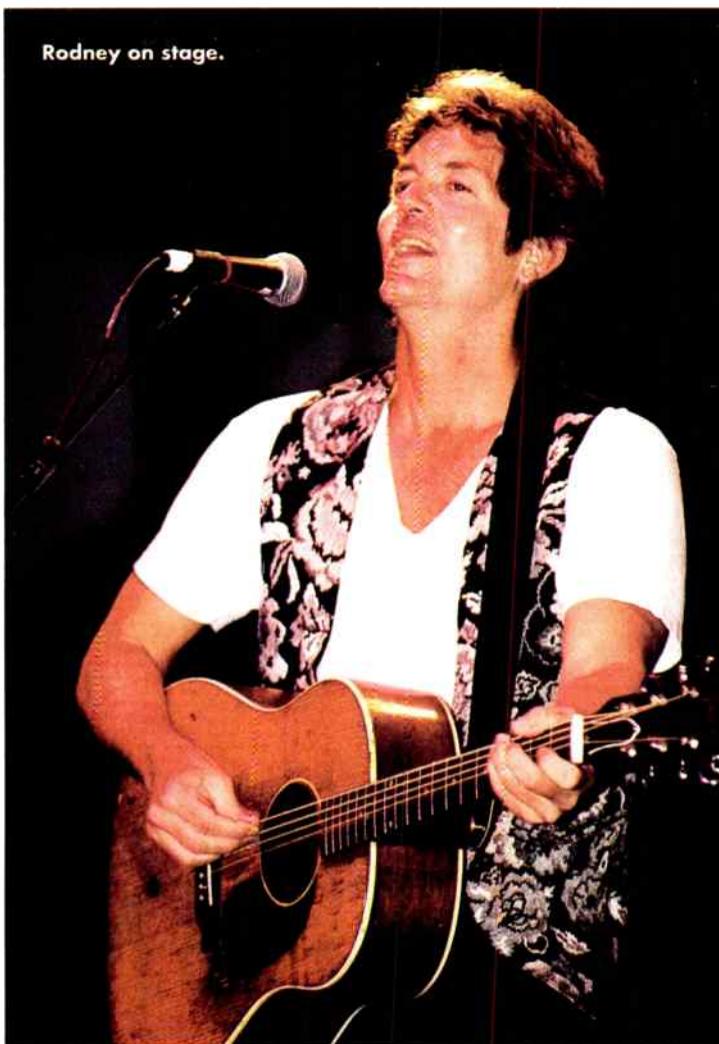
“I have a girlfriend now with whom I’ve been involved for a couple years,” Crowell adds. “It’s real healthy and I’ve got plenty of room. Ya know, I was married too long to be married, but I can have a committed relationship with somebody I care about and try to bring out the best in each other. I’ve been real careful not to get into those habits that led to divorce last time.”

Away from the road, looking after his two older girls, Crowell eventually settled into a comfortable routine.

Every morning, after he sent them off to school, he’d retreat to his home studio and write songs—songs which he figured somebody else would record. “But then one day Guy Clark comes around,” Crowell grins. “Well, Guy is one of my best and oldest friends and has always been a big influence on me as a writer. We wrote ‘Stuff That Works,’ and I said, ‘Hey, this is like on a new level or somethin’....’ And after Guy got me back on, I’d spend my days writing until the point where I felt like I had something to say, and I wanted to say it, as opposed to giving my songs to someone else to do.”

Matters came to a head when Hannah, Crowell’s oldest (from a marriage previous to his long-time union with Cash), headed off for DePaul. Around the same time, Caitlin, the 13-year-old, went north to live with Cash for a while. Thus Crowell found himself on temporary hiatus from parenting (at least until his two younger daughters, Chelsea and Carrie, who had been living with Rosanne, re-joined him in Nashville). Having resolved to plunge back into making records, he called the obvious person: Tony Brown, his former piano player who has, in recent years, risen to the presidency of MCA Records/Nashville and is generally considered the most savvy producer in modern country music.

“Ya know, Tony’s become this man of substance and prestige,” Crowell chuckles. “But my relationship with him started out years ago giggling. Just giggling together. Tony’s so funny. Goin’ back to when we were first hangin’ out together, he was just this piano player with this wacky sense of humor. Everything that came out of his mouth, I’d just fall over laughing. So I loved to have Tony around in my band, in our collaborations, because he always brought the joy of humor to it. And that’s still part of



Rodney on stage.

ROBIN LOVABARDO

the beauty of working with Tony, that I can rely on that humor. He cracks me up! He’s one of the funniest people I know, and he has this way of telling me I’m full of shit that makes me laugh! I’ll be trying to do something on a record, and he’ll say, ‘Rodney, this really embarrasses me for you....’

“Tony is like a Jerry Wexler-type producer,” Crowell adds. “He’s a song-and-artist type producer. Whereas the producers I worked with on *Life Is Messy* were musicians with computers who really helped me to get into the intricacies of the arrangements, like getting a certain backwash behind the vocals, Tony paints on a smaller canvas. He’s really good at just yanking me aside and saying, ‘F___ that! The only thing that’s important is you and the song. It doesn’t matter who the musicians are. What matters is you and what you’re saying.’

“I really don’t think there’s any difference in my songwriting,” Crowell says, comparing *Let the Picture Paint Itself* with *Life Is Messy*, “except that I was a

little different person then, when I was going through a divorce and finding a new way of living. But my songwriting is still the same, still done for the same reasons.”

Some of Crowell’s best songwriting, he points out, is done on sojourns to the Southwest—forays into the deserts of New Mexico and Arizona. “I just fly into Albuquerque, rent a convertible and take off. I stay in bed & breakfasts, dude ranches, motels, sleep in my car.... I travel alone and don’t make any plans in advance, and I write a lot.”

His passionate love and devotion for songwriting is one of the principal reasons he ultimately decided to throw his hat back in the ring with *Let the Picture Paint Itself*. Also, in retrospect, his couple of years off the road also proved to be a watershed period for him, a time of regeneration.

Above all, Crowell points out, his short-lived retirement and new-found bachelorhood ultimately helped him find a sense of place, a certain emotional solidarity and rootedness that was not always there in the past. “I’ve never felt better,” Crowell smiles and scratches his beard again. “I’m 43 years old, I love where I live, I feel young, I’m healthy—people who don’t know me don’t believe I have an 18-year-old daughter.”

“Of all the things I’ve done in my life, I think the thing that I’m most proud of is that I raised a child, my oldest daughter, from being a single parent living in Hollywood with a year-and-a-half-old little girl, to her graduating from high school and going off to college.” He grins and allows himself a momentary glow of pride. “She’s very well-adjusted, very intelligent. She’s a great woman. To me, that’s great. I do have a big head about that, because I did that, and nobody can take that way from me.” ■

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BOBBIE CRYNER

Catches Up



by John Morthland

Bobbie Cryner feels like she's always been just a little bit behind the curve. Because of her prohibitively religious growing years, she never sowed her wild oats until years after her friends. She didn't start writing songs—or at least secular songs—until later in the game. The first time she appeared onstage was not in a club or hall, but at Fan Fair: Behind the curve, right? But if you've heard her 1993 debut album, *Bobbie Cryner*, you know she's been doing a good job of catching up.

On it, she shows off a voice that's both husky and vulnerable, a voice of experience, and though she uses it in a naturally country way, there's an obvious, and welcome, soul music influence there, too. She's also a classic country songwriter, as a storyteller (“Daddy Laid the Blues on Me”), in terms of turning a phrase (“But if you have to think it over/Well I think it's over now”) or in terms of laying out an entire situation and implicitly conjuring up the complex emotions that go with it (“Leavin’ Houston Blues”). She speaks to and for women much the same way K.T. Oslin does, but in a more unequivocally country style. How many new artists get a Dwight Yoakam and an Emmylou Harris to sing with them on their first album?

How Cryner got there is not your everyday story. Sitting at a table in her publicist's office, the 33-year-old redhead laughs easily as she looks back, but she speaks with the authority of someone who's taken hard knocks and learned from it. She tells her tale in such a casual, straightforward manner, and her candor, in this day of the carefully-manicured image, is the kind that makes a publicist cringe. (“Mine's always telling me I'm too honest, but I went through a stage where I could not be honest, and was very hypocritical,” Bobbie smiles. “And then seeing everybody else being hypocritical, it was too much, and I said, I've got to be honest with myself; if I can't be honest with myself, I can't be honest with anybody. I can't help it anymore, because it's much easier to tell the truth than to cover tracks.”)

For starters, she was born and raised in northern California, in a small town just north of Sacramento; her father was a trucker and her mom worked in a bakery. When she was ten, she started going to the United Pentecostal Church with the woman who lived next door: “just as something to do.” She hadn't been raised in the church—her parents later tried it for a while at her behest, but quickly quit—but the experience wound up being much more than “just something to do,” and continues to have repercussions for her long after she quit.

It was, she sees in retrospect, “a very one-dimen-

sional church, we weren't allowed to do a lot of things.” It also made for a fairly tortured adolescence, for even while attending the church voluntarily, she began rebelling against strictures like not wearing jeans or getting a haircut; she left for school wearing her dress, for example, but changed into jeans when she got there. But there was also good music—great music, deeply emotional music—in the church, which helped, and when her family moved to Kansas while she was a teenager, she immediately sought out another United Pentecostal and attended four services a week. But the more she looked at what was going on around her, the more she matured emotionally and intellectually, the more she was sure something was not quite right.

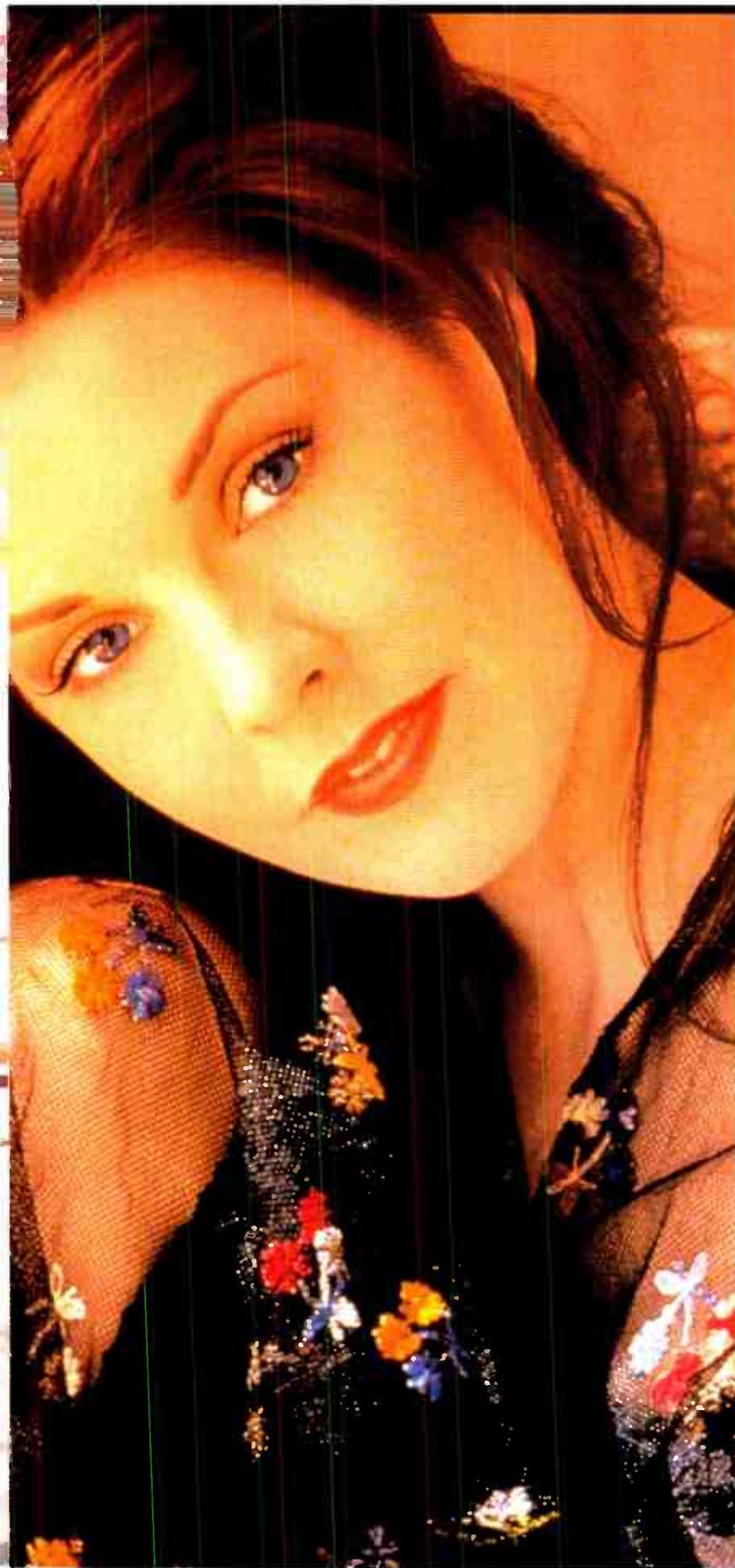
“It was really the people running the church,” she recalls. “They turned out to be more human than I had...I mean, I thought because they were pastors and had put themselves up on such a high pedestal—which they do in that church, it's very power-oriented—I looked at the church as, like, God, and the pastors as saints. When they failed in my eyes, it was very confusing for me. For a long time, I blamed them, but when I look back now I realize they were just people, and maybe bit off more than they could chew.”

For several years, she agonized over whether she could remain committed to the church or not, but made up her mind after a pastor left town with a married member of the congregation and with most of the church treasury to boot. “I no longer believe in religion so much as I do spirituality,” she declares, “though I do believe there's a place for religion, because I think you need ritual to a certain extent to help keep your life on track.”

She had been writing gospel music all along, but started writing more about relationships because hers was getting progressively worse. At 19, she had married a boy in the church named Bill; he left the church around the same time she did, and, as she sees it, “When we both left the church, we began being our real selves, and it wasn't who either of us had married.” Still, she stayed in the marriage ten years—“just like I stayed in that church a long time”—and for the sake of the marriage, her husband made the move to Nashville with her in 1989 when she tried to launch a career as a songwriter. A year later, they finally called it quits; he drove out of town on her 30th birthday. Today, he's farming 150 acres in Missouri; she refers to him as “my best friend,” and they talk at least weekly on the phone.

She had arrived in Nashville with only three or four songs she thought were good enough to be heard. She tried the traditional route of making the rounds on Music Row, hoping to interest a publisher,





but realized she couldn't do that and keep up with her fulltime job as a waitress (she wrote and sang "I'm Through Waiting on You" in honor of her co-workers who put in a full day at the restaurant and then went home and started in all over again with a fresh batch of duties). She figured if she was ever going to get anywhere, it would be through the back door, such as by catching the ear of an influential friend of a friend. And that's exactly how she finally broke through. But first, there was one more hole to dig herself out of. She'd begun drinking while in college in Kansas in '86, but in Music City it accelerated; she feels she was using booze to fill up the time in her life that used to go to her husband. She drank only alone, "which was a dead giveaway that I had a problem," but, she adds, "I didn't want to get out drinking with other people cuz I knew I'd be the one that wound up with the lampshade on my head, and I knew that would hurt me in the business."

"I know it's not the image, but I could see that anybody that's getting anywhere in this business is pretty straight," she continues. "There's always exceptions to the rule, but partying is just not a big thing in this business. People like to have fun, but if you're really serious about your trade, and your art, you've got to keep a clear head."

And it was time to get serious, because bluegrass/hard-country stalwart Carl Jackson had heard those three or four initial songs through a mutual friend. He immediately got her a publisher, who set out to get her a label. Cryner felt such empathy with Jackson that she made it a condition of her signing that he co-produce. As with quitting the church, it had been taking her a while to come to a firm decision about quitting, but somewhere in there, she wrote a song called "Bourbon County Line" which convinced her to sign up for rehab. She didn't tell anybody, so when her co-producer Doug Johnson called one day and gave her a date to come to the studio to cut "Bourbon County Line," he had no idea it was the very day she was entering rehab. Bobbie liked the irony and went to the studio the assigned morning; when she was finished there, she went to the rehab center.

The girl who came to Nashville to become a songwriter finally got her first cuts when she recorded her own album. Soon after that, she appeared in public for the first time, doing three tunes at Fan Fair 1993 and then heading to Las Vegas to open for George Strait at the Hotel International. None of the singles from the album were blockbusters, but they helped lay a solid foundation for her, and the critics were even kinder; nearly all the reviews marveled at how *real* she—and her songs—sounded alongside the other young new stars of the day. By then, Bobbie was already thinking about her next one.

"It'll definitely show a different side of me. It'll have to," she laughs. "That last album was pretty sad, and I think it reflected the times I was going through when the songs were written. This album is a lot more positive, not necessarily meaning uptempo music, but positive in the lyrics, a lot stronger. I thought that last album was strong as far as showing the strengths of a person going through hard times, but it's the coming out the other side that counts the most." ■

Editor's note: Since this interview Bobbie has left Epic. MCA is interested. Bruce Hinton, Chairman of MCA/Nashville, says, "We love her talent and are in serious discussion with her management."

Waiting for Sawyer Brown



COUNTRY'S PERENNIAL PARTY ANIMALS TRADE IN THEIR PINK TENNIS SHOES AND COME OF AGE.

BY BOB ALLEN

Sitting in a tiny office coffee room, I'm waiting for Mark Miller, flamboyant, outrageously extroverted singer/front man/aerobat for Sawyer Brown, the king of the country party bands.

As the minutes tick away, the appointed hour comes and goes, and another half-hour passes. I'm getting more and more antsy. I fidget and fret and recheck the batteries and volume level on my tape recorder. Any minute, I'm expecting this wise-cracking, boom-voiced, larger-than-life presence to come prancing through the doorway wearing pink tennis shoes, a goofy hat, goofier grin, a sport shirt so loud it blinds me, and maybe even (though it's only a little after noon) a cold 12-pack under his arm.

But boy, am I ever surprised when someone finally does poke his head shyly in the door. Standing in front of me is this tired, slightly withdrawn-looking but otherwise utterly normal looking human being who apologizes in a soft, almost whispery voice for being late. With a day's growth of beard, tinted spectacles, understated golf shirt, and a Nike baseball cap pulled low over his eyes, this impostor (surely it can't be the super-outrageous, over-adrenalized Mark Miller) even looks a little lost. Maybe it's just the guy who came to fix the copy machine.

Whoever this guy is, he's also sporting a terrific shiner under his right eye. (The handiwork of an over-zealous fan, a crazed celebrity stalker, or a jealous groupie? I wonder...)

But oddly enough, after a little small talk, it becomes clear this thoroughly understated and utterly serious-seeming individual who politely takes a seat across from me must be Miller—or if not, then someone who's done enough deep background into Sawyer Brown's history to pose as his non-identical twin.

Miller's glasses and hat, it turns out, are part of a casual disguise to help deflect unwanted attention when he's off the stage. Sawyer Brown's lead singer/principal songwriter also humbly explains why he's a half-hour late, and why he looks so drawn and exhausted. His wife is due to deliver their second child at any moment, and he's been reluctant to leave her side for any longer than he has to. He's even been commuting back and forth daily from tour stops as far away as Fresno and Kansas City.

A devoted dad, Miller, 35, was unfortunately on tour during the birth of his first child (an occupational hazard when you head a band that routinely plays more than 225 shows a year). But he's resolved not to miss the grand arrival of his second child, a son who will be named Aden, in honor of Miller's grandfather whom he celebrated in Sawyer Brown's hit song, "The Walk." (Not long after the interview, Aden was born and Daddy Mark was there to witness the event.) Thus, at the moment, Miller's somewhat on edge and has his fingers crossed that Aden will make his debut before he and the rest of the Sawyer boys have to head off on another tour in a day or two.





SB vintage 1994:
clockwise from lower
right, Mark Miller, Jim
Scholten, Joe Smyth,
Duncan Cameron and
Gregg Hubbard.

(But what about the black eye? I start to ask. But no, that could be touchy: Save it for the end of the interview.)

When I relate to Miller how well his disguise works, how completely he's shattered my expectations, he sips his iced tea and smiles knowingly. "For some people, fans who want me to be that partying element they see on stage, it's often kind of a let-down," he admits with an almost apologetic shrug. "I play golf a lot when I'm on the road, and I'm a pretty quiet guy off stage. Sometimes I'll give tickets to our show to the guys I golf with. After the show, they'll come back and say, 'I can't believe you're the same guy on stage that was swingin' a seven iron out on the range!'"

"There are always people who want to come party with Sawyer Brown after a show, because they see this very energetic, almost wild stage show," Miller smiles softly. "But really, all the guys in the band are pretty laid back, well-read and well-educated. We don't party at all these days. We're kinda beyond that."

Actually, anyone who's given a serious listen to Sawyer Brown's last two or three albums (which, unlike their previous records, really do warrant a serious listen) won't be terribly surprised to hear all this from the lead singer of the band which, for years, was the favorite whipping boy of music critics, a band long perceived as country's equivalent to New Kids on the Block: a classic study in artistic featherweightness and adolescent excess.

And really, when you look back and contrast the hard-boogeyin' fluff of early Sawyer Brown Number Ones like "Step That Step" and "Betty's Bein' Bad" with the band's more recent and far more thoughtful chart-toppers like "The Walk" (named by the influential *Radio & Records Magazine* as one of the Top Ten singles of 1991), "Cafe on the Corner," "The Dirt Road," "Thank God for You" and "Outskirts of Town," what you hear is a classic case of career and image rehabilitation. These once-goofy, relentlessly light-hearted country-boppers of the 80's have, in the 90's, traded in their pink tennis shoes and pacans to juvenile escapism for some genuinely grown-up, blue-collar social consciousness.

Miller is quick to point out that Sawyer Brown's stylistic sea change is no accident: What fits like a glove at age 23 does not wear so well at 35. "I'm not gonna tell you I don't laugh now at some of the things Sawyer Brown said and did," he owns up with a dry laugh. "But I wrote 'Step That Step' when I was 23 years old, and it was our first Number One record. And that's what worked for us at the time. And as time went on and

we got to where we were making real good money on the road and selling a lot of merchandise, we just leaned a little too heavy on that and went a little overboard with it."

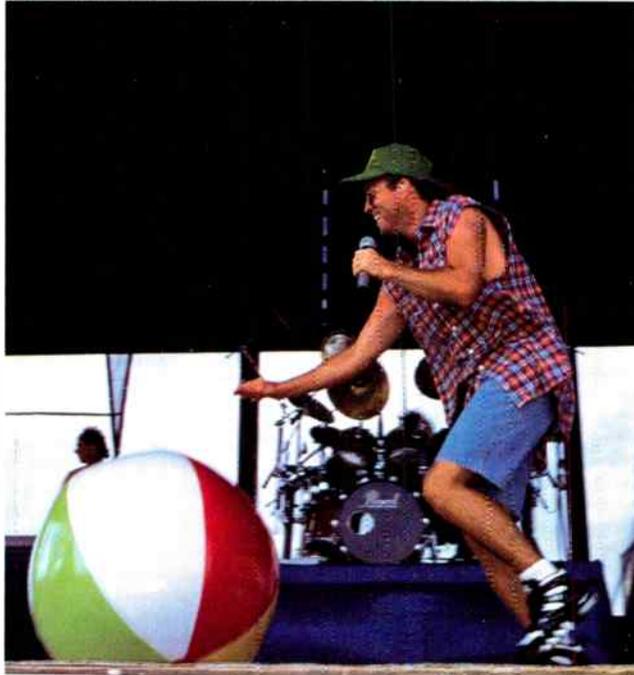
Yet Miller also admits that during the 80's, even as the band was raking in the gate receipts (last year, as in many previous years, Sawyer was among the Top Ten grossing country acts on the tour circuit), he read all the put-down reviews his band generated—enough of them, no doubt, to wallpaper his four-car garage.

"I've always had a pretty good grip on where Sawyer Brown was on the cool scale," Miller points out. "What would hurt more than anything, though, was when we'd be headlining a show—we've been headlining for quite a few years—and we'd have some hot 'new country' artist who was all the rage opening for us. Lots of times the reviewers would come out and give the opening act a great review, but I could tell from what they said about our show that they didn't really even stay to see us."

But in the past few years, Sawyer Brown has managed to redefine itself as a group of musicians with heart and some degree of finesse. (A major factor in this transformation was the addition of former Amazing Rhythm Aces guitarist Duncan Cameron to the band a few years ago.) Earlier this year, the boys (the first band to win the Country Music Association's Horizon Award, back in 1985) even earned a Grammy nomination and walked away with the TNN/*Music City News* Group of the Year award. *The Dallas Morning News* recently proclaimed them "One of the best acts in country music." It's just more proof positive that an old dog—or, in this case, a veteran band that's been taken for granted by both the press and the industry—can learn new tricks.

For Miller, the process of change has been a rather simple one. It's all about growing up, about getting back to the basics. "There was a period of time when we were surrounded by people who confused us about who we were and what we do—managers, producers, everybody," explains Miller, who has not only co-written much of SB's most memorable material, but also co-produced *Outskirts of Town*, Sawyer's latest studio album. "It finally came down to getting rid of those people and just reminding myself that I came to town as a songwriter. So, forget the wild clothes, forget all that, and concentrate on what's most important: the songs."

Nowadays, when Miller's working on a new record, he claims he gets so "jazzed up" he can't sleep nights, and often finds



Sawyer Brown's "wildman" Mark Miller onstage.

himself on the phone with co-producer Mac McAnally at midnight to suggest a lyric change or an idea for a mandolin break in the bridge of a particular song.

In retrospect, Sawyer Brown's turn toward semi-seriousness shouldn't come as that much of a shock for anyone who knows much about Miller's background. Extroversion was really something that never came easy for him. (Mind you, the stage show is still pretty over the top; Miller, a former University of Central Florida basketball star, has blown out his knee repeatedly and had four operations, mostly due to his rambunctious stage antics.)

An Ohio-born, Florida-raised farm boy, Miller recalls that as a child he suffered such terrible stage fright that he almost had a nervous breakdown when his mother made him sing in church. In high school, he never even considered trying out for a band; it was hard enough to summon the courage to read aloud in class. But at college (where he met SB's co-founder, Steve "Hobie" Hubbard), he got bitten badly by the songwriting bug. In 1981, during his junior year at UCF, he and Hubbard took a field trip to Nashville and ended up staying. "Unlike a lot of people, I never dreamed about it," Miller insists. "It was the last thing I dreamed about. As a kid, I just wanted to play basketball and be a basketball coach. But then I realized that as a basketball player, I'd never get beyond the college level. And I started writing songs."

(Miller, I now learn, still plays basketball regularly; which is how he got that big black eye: not from a crazed fan or jealous

paramour, but from an elbow he caught during a spirited one-on-one on the full court he has back home.)

So, in Nashville, in the very early 80's, Miller, the quintessential wallflower, found out that life is what happens while you're busy making other plans. He became a staff songwriter for Charley Pride's publishing company, then landed a job with a long-gone recording artist named Don King as sort of a glorified go-fer: staff songwriter, song plugger, bus driver and one-man road crew. King's backup band, who would later become the rest of Sawyer Brown, had heard Miller's homemade demo tapes, and they liked his voice a lot better than Miller himself did. They kept leaning on him to sing lead for them when they moonlighted in Nashville night spots. Terrified at the prospect of facing a live audience, Miller kept saying no. But finally, one night, scared out of his wits that the crowd would hate him, he relented. He was thunder-

struck when the audience, instead of pasting him with rotten tomatoes, showered him with applause. Thus Sawyer Brown was born.

"We decided to give the band a name, like Wet Willie or Jethro Tull," Miller remembers, "because it was hard back then to break bands in country music. And if they thought it was a person, instead of a band, it was easier to get played on the radio."

There is a part of Miller, the closet introvert, that, even after a dozen or so Number One records, several Gold albums, and millions in concert receipts, is still bemused by the whole Sawyer Brown phenomenon. Deep down, he insists, he still doesn't get it: doesn't understand the sort of fanaticism that impels some die-hard fans to follow the band around the country, waving signs in the audience that proclaim the number of SB shows they've attended.

"I never understood it," he muses. "Still don't, to be honest with you. I don't know why the people come out—I'm just sure glad they do. But I don't see it. I look at myself as probably a below-average-looking guy. I don't necessarily have a great voice. So I never really got caught up in an ego problem."

"But I also know Sawyer Brown is a great band to be in," he adds with a warm smile. "All of us except Hobie have kids, and we're a pretty settled and focused bunch of guys. Sure, we've had some rocky times in the past, but the only thing we bicker about anymore is pickin' a restaurant on the road. We're just really appreciative of where we are, and we're havin' a great time." ■

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Letters

Thrilling Marty Stuart

Thank you, thank you! What a thrill. My favorite country star on the cover and featured in my favorite country magazine ("Marty Stuart Shoots for the Stars" September/October 1994). I've been a passionate fan of Marty's for years, and *Country Music Magazine* has been my favorite magazine since I first discovered it. You always do better covers and stories than anyone else. And what great pictures!

Nancy Shope
Portsmouth, Ohio

A Satisfied Reader

This letter comes from a very satisfied reader. I have been a subscriber of *Country Music* for a couple of years and have always loved the great stories. I was thrilled when I received the September/October issue and saw Marty Stuart on the cover! I'm a huge fan of his and a member of his fan club. John Morthland did a delightful and heart-touching story. I agree with him that *Love and Luck* is Marty's best effort yet. I would also like to compliment Jeffrey Lowe for the wonderful photos. John Morthland and Jeffrey Lowe make a great team. Thanks a million.

DeAnna Roehike
Delano, Minnesota

About Time for Marty

Well, it's about time again! Thanks so very much for the cover of your September/October issue and the wonderful interview of my favorite artist, Marty Stuart. My hat is off to John Morthland. Well done! I've met Marty several times at Fan Fair and concerts, and he truly makes the fans feel great! What a great musician, picker and joker! Keep up your good work. I enjoy every issue.

Gundi Peterson
Fayetteville, North Carolina

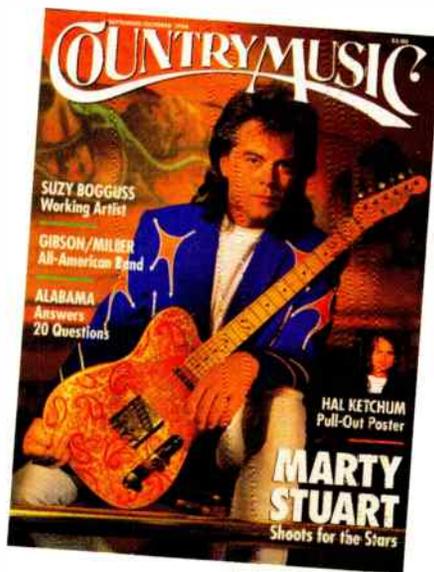
Gettin' on Her Good Side

Boy, oh boy, you sure know how to get on my good side: putting Marty Stuart on the cover. Yeah, that'll do it. What a great move. Leave it to *Country Music*!

Sue M. Wilson
Clear Lake, Iowa

Too Much Is Just Fine

In reply to the lady from Missouri who wrote in about Letters, saying "too much and not enough," I strongly disagree and was glad to see you had not shortened the



letters you publish. I very much enjoy reading these letters. I find it quite interesting to hear what other people think and who their favorites are. You do a fantastic job with the magazine. By the way, my favorite star is Marty Stuart. This gorgeous hunk has a stage show second to none. It was great to see him on the September/October cover. John Morthland did an excellent job on the story. I hope to read lots of subscriber letters on Marty.

Dianne Townley
Jasper, Alabama

The Coolness of Cash

First of all, I would like to thank you for doing a real story/interview on/with Johnny Cash in the July/August issue. In recent months all I've heard about him is the departure from his "usual repertoire" in making *American Recordings*. John Morthland knew something about Johnny Cash other than "he's the man who recorded 'Folsom Prison Blues' and countless other hits." Mr. Morthland should be commended for his interview and review. Patrick Carr's editorial in Final Note is the truth, if not close. Cash has always been cool. It is a shame that he was "forgotten" by the New Generation (even if they do claim him as an inspiration). I haven't been promoting Johnny's coolness for 20 years like Mr. Carr, but I will be for the next 20. I'm also considering the House of Cash for my Mecca.

Michael Sullivan
Huntington, West Virginia

Cash Is the Greatest

I just love your magazine! Thanks so much for your July/August issue. Johnny Cash is the greatest! I have been a fan of his from the time he started singing. Thanks you, *Country Music Magazine*, for your coverage over the years of this great entertainer.

Dolores Weyandt
Claysburg, Pennsylvania

Arresting Cash

You have done it again. Simply super! I took my July/August *Country Music* out of the mailbox, and lo and behold, the greatest of them all! What a magnificent picture of The Man in Black. I have old, old records of his and was comparing the baby-faced covers to this totally arresting picture. And then, as an added joy, the 20 Questions with Randy Travis. He's absolutely the best to grace country music in years (since Johnny at his heyday).

Betty Kolb
Lafayette, Indiana

Recognizing Cash

As one who has been a Johnny Cash fan for quite a few years, I just had to write and tell you how thrilled I am that he is receiving the recognition he is with his grand new album, *American Recordings*. It was great to pick up the July/August issue and see his picture on the front and read the superb article and record review on him inside. After a three-year hiatus from recording, it is nice to see Johnny once again getting this kind of recognition.

George Brohman
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Deserving Bogguss

I just got through reading the September/October issue, and I thought I would write and thank you for the article on Suzy Bogguss. I thought there for awhile you had forgotten about her. With all the talent that she has and all that she's accomplished, I think she deserves to be in more articles, if not on the cover! A couple of years ago she stole my heart, and I've been her biggest fan ever since.

Melissa Hollis
Winnsboro, South Carolina

Thanks for Faith Hill

I subscribe to your magazine, and I think it's great. I'd like to thank Bob Millard for the excellent article on Faith Hill in the

July/August issue. It was tops! I am a little upset that I haven't seen anything on The Sweethearts of the Rodeo. I remember the record review awhile back, but there needs to be more.

Jeremy Walter
Fairbury, Illinois

More Faith

I really enjoyed the article on Faith Hill in your July/August issue. I check all the country magazines for anything on Faith, and your magazine is one of the best I've seen. I also liked the comments on Clapton in the People section. Eric Clapton's blues might be the only thing better than Faith Hill. The interview with Cash was great, but please, more Faith. I enjoy the magazine tremendously.

Eric C. Hershey
Manheim, Pennsylvania

Finally, Lee Roy

I want to compliment Michael McCall on his article about Lee Roy Parnell in the July/August issue. I had searched every magazine, and if he was mentioned at all, it was in Hazel's column. Lee Roy is a sweet, lovable guy and a great musician, so I hope to hear more about him soon. Besides all that, he is my kinfolk.

Eva Norman
Wichita Falls, Texas

Ketchum Best Around

Thank you so much for your article on Hal Ketchum (September/October issue). Not only did I get a full poster of the sexiest man in country music today, but I also got a chance to learn more about him. In my eyes, he's the best around. Hopefully, a front cover soon?

Kathy Arndt
Howell, Michigan

"Dimples" Black

Oh, just look at the dimples! I cannot thank you enough for the pull-out poster of Clint Black in the July/August issue. It is really your best ever. You could not have had a better centerfold than Clint. (A 20 Questions with Clint would be just great.) Keep up the great work.

Jennifer Holmes
Benson, North Carolina

More Female Artists Wanted

I have collected ten posters from your magazine, but I have not seen one female artist. I would love to see Reba or Martina McBride, Faith Hill, Pam Tillis, Lisa Stewart, Kathy Mattea or Linda Davis. I love to get each new pull-out poster, but I would like to see more of a variety of stars.

Chris Pohts
Maywood, New Jersey

Randy an Asset to Country

I wanted to comment about your 20 Questions in the July/August issue. I enjoyed reading about Randy Travis. I

think he has added so much to country music and is the greatest since he came on board. I thought you did an excellent job with the interview. Most enjoyable. Hope you will have more news about many people's favorite singer, Randy Travis.

Kay Hamric
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Cover Older Artists

As mentioned by others in your May/June issue, I would appreciate reading and seeing more about other entertainers, those "older" real country ones, like Don Williams, Vern Gosdin, etc. I'm tired of the constant on-going reports and pictures of the same entertainers like Reba and Garth. I like pure country. What ever happened to Earl Thomas Conley, Janie Fricke and The Kendalls?

G. Long
Randolph, New York

Memories of Chet

Regarding the record review on Chet Atkins in the September/October issue: One of the best memories of my teenage years was going to Knoxville to see the *Mid-Day Merry-Go-Round*. I'm sure anyone who lived around the Knoxville area (Clinton, Powell, etc.) will remember Chet, the "heart throb" of the show. He was great even back then, and I've followed his career throughout the years. My kids and grandkids talk about how great he is, and I tell them I used to go see him on the show at least twice a week, 50-odd years ago—happy memories I've never forgotten.

Bettye Kruse
Dayton, Kentucky

Exception to Dean Review

I'm writing to take exception to what John Morthland said in his September/October review of Billy Dean's album, *Men'll Be Boys*. First, he says "voice and vocal techniques are smooth and agreeable," but then says "neither has much character." How can it be both? The album is "instantly pleasant," but not "instantly forgettable" as Morthland said.

Shelly Sheets
Glenville, West Virginia

Raven Underrated

As a subscriber to *Country Music*, I was happy to see a record review on Eddy Raven. To say he is "underrated" is quite an understatement! I never tire of Loretta Lynn, Rodney Crowell and George Strait. However, for us more mature country music listeners, why not feature more on Gene Watson, John Conlee and Johnny Rodriguez. Here in Quebec we are starved for more information on these established singers. I tend to tire of Hal Ketchum, Wynonna, Garth Brooks and Mark Collie.

M. Louise Forgues
Montreal, Canada



CHEVROLET presents the COUNTRY MUSIC QUIZ

Answers to these questions can be found by reading this issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Answers will be published in the January/February 1995 issue.

1. Name Willie Nelson's longtime sidekick and drummer.
2. Name Rodney Crowell's latest MCA album.
3. How many children does Mark Miller of Sawyer Brown have?
4. At what event did Bobbie Cryner make her first onstage appearance?
5. Waylon Jennings worked with which well-known producer on his new album?
6. Chevy's Full-Size Pickups are built to last. What percent of all Chevy Trucks built in the last 10 years are still on the road?

ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ:

1. The Rock and Roll Cowboys
2. Chet Atkins
3. "Dreaming My Dreams with You"
4. Five
5. "Summertime Blues"
6. Chevy's S-Series Extended Cab Pickup has triple-sealed doors.

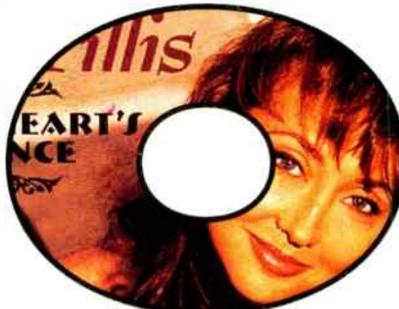
Chevy Trucks LIKE A ROCK



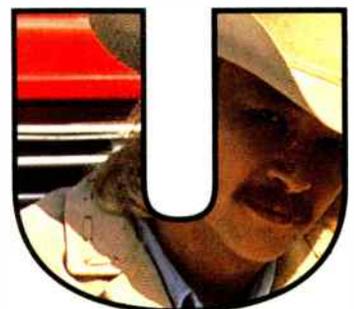
COLUMBIA HOUSE BRINGS YOU THE FACES OF



Vince Gill—When Love Finds You. Whenever You Come Around; You Better Think Twice; If There's Anything I Can Do; plus many others. (MCA) **486•308**



Pam Tillis—Sweetheart's Dance. Her latest album includes songs like Spiked Perfume; Calico Plains; the title cut and many more. (Arista) **479•683**



Alan Jackson—Who I Am. Livin' On Love; Summertime Blues; If I Had You; Thank God For The Radio; Gone Country; title cut plus others. (Arista) **486•233**

Linda Davis—Shoot For The Moon (Arista) **460•095**

Randy Travis—This Is Me (Warner Bros.) **477•463**

Best Of The New Grass Reviva (Liberty) **476•069**

Best Of Chris Ledoux (Liberty) **476•044**

Suzy Bogguss—Greatest Hits (Liberty) **476•051**

"8 Seconds"—Orig. Sndtrk. Featuring Reba McEntire, Vince Gill, etc. (MCA/Nashville) **475•483**

Country Jukebox Greatest Hits, Vol. 1—Various Artists (Warner Bros.) **468•603**

Confederate Railroad—Notorious (Atlantic) **475•194**

Neal McCoy—No Doubt About It (Atlantic) **474•619**

Marty Robbins—Lost And Found (Columbia) **474•056**

Pam Tillis Collection (Warner Bros.) **473•744**

GARTH BROOKS

In Pieces. The Cowboy Song; One Night A Day; Kickin' And Screamin'; Standing Outside The Fire; Callin' Baton Rouge; and the other greats. (Liberty) **463•745**

The Chase. Somewhere Other Than The Night; Learning To Live Again; many others. (Liberty) **448•746**

Ropin' The Wind. #1 smash from the country superstar. The River; What She's Doing Now; and more. (Liberty) **428•862**

No Fences. The Thunder Rolls; Unanswered Prayers; Wild Horses; etc. (Liberty) **411•587**

Garth Brooks. The Dance; Much Too Young; Alabama Clay; more. (Liberty) **381•608**



"Maverick"—Orig. Sndtrk. Featuring Clint Black, Vince Gill, etc. (Atlantic Nashville) **484•139**

Kathy Mattea—Walking Away A Winner (Mercury/Nashville) **481•663**

Marty Brown—Cryin', Lovin', Leavin' (MCA Nashville) **480•210**

Grammy's Greatest Country, Vol. 1—Various Artists (Atlantic) **478•438**

Tracy Byrd—No Ordinary Man (MCA) **484•758**

The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band—Acoustic (Liberty) **484•691**

George Jones—High-Tech Redneck (MCA Nashville) **473•082**

The Statler Brothers—Home (Mercury/Nashville) **471•722**

Billy Dean—Grt. Hits (Liberty) **476•036**

Delbert McClinton—Honky Tonk 'N' Blues (MCA Nashville) **475•970**

Country Dance Mixes—Various Artists (Atlantic) **471•599**

Emmylou Harris—Cowgirl's Prayer (Asylum) **468•975**

Pirates Of The Mississippi—Dream You (Liberty) **468•868**

Country Love Songs, Vol. 2—Various Artists (Warner Bros.) **468•629**

Charlie Chase—My Wife...My Life (Epic) **467•530**

Kathy Mattea—Good News (Mercury/Nashville) **466•920**

"Beverly Hillsbillies"—Orig. Sndtrk. (Columbia/Legacy) **466•490**

Highway 101—The New Frontier (Liberty) **466•003**

Dolly Parton—Slow Dancing With The Moon (Columbia) **454•264**

Dolly Parton/Tammy Wynette/Loretta Lynn—Honky Tonk Angels (Columbia) **467•712**



Read My Mind. If I Had Only Known; Why Haven't I Heard From You; more. (MCA) **479•717**

Grt. Hits, Vol. 2. More of the hits that made her a legend. You Lie; Fancy; Walk On; They Asked About You; and more. (MCA) **467•316**

It's Your Call. Featuring the rousing Take It Back; For Herself; etc. (MCA) **450•361**

For My Broken Heart. Heart-touching collection includes Title Cut; Is There Life Out There; The Greatest Man I Never Knew; etc. (MCA) **430•090**

Grt. Hits, What Am I Gonna Do About You; Little Rock; Whoever's In New England; and more. (MCA) **355•826**

Marty Stuart—Love And Luck (MCA Nashville) **474•544**

Mavericks—What A Crying Shame (MCA Nashville) **474•403**

Evangeline—French Quarter Moon (Margaritaville/MCA) **473•090**

Collin Raye—Extremes (Epic) **473•025**

Doug Stone—More Love (Epic) **470•013**

Lee Roy Parnell—On The Road (Arista) **470•450**

Asleep At The Wheel—Tribute To The Music Of Bob Willis (Liberty) **469•650**

Common Thread: Songs Of The Eagles—Featuring Clint Black, Vince Gill, Trisha Yearwood, etc. (Giant) **469•999**

Tracy Lawrence—Alibis (Atlantic) **456•558**

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Vince Gill—I Still Believe In You (MCA) **448•571**

Mary Chapin Carpenter—Come On, Come On (Columbia) **440•560**

Collin Raye—In This Life (Epic) **447•268**

Loretta Lynn—Country Music Hall Of Fame (MCA) **416•339**

Mary Chapin Carpenter—Shooting Straight In The Dark (Columbia) **411•876**

Sawyer Brown—Grt. Hits (Liberty) **411•363**

Alan Jackson—Here In The Real World (Arista) **406•785**

David Ball—Thinkin' Problem (Warner Bros.) **487•066**

Marty Stuart—This One's Gonna Hurt You (MCA) **442•418**

Kenny Rogers—Back Home Again (Reprise) **432•146**

Confederate Railroad (Atlantic) **439•158**

Wynonna Judd—Wynonna (MCA/Curb) **435•909**

Vince Gill—When I Call Your Name (MCA) **402•867**

Dwight Yoakam—Just Lookin' For A Hit (Reprise) **389•718**

Hank Williams, Jr.—Greatest Hits 3 (Warner Bros./Curb) **378•182**

Conway Twitty & Loretta Lynn—Making Believe (MCA) **376•509**

Conway Twitty—#1's: The Warner Bros. Years (Warner Bros.) **374•389**

Billy Dean—Men'll Be Boys (Liberty) **486•365**

Cristy Lane—Country Classics, Vol. 1 (LSR) **418•020**

Pirates Of The Mississippi (Liberty) **413•260**

Texas Tornados (Reprise) **413•252**

Dolly Parton—Eagle When She Flies (Columbia) **412•171**

Merle Haggard—His Epic Hits (Epic) **329•672**



Rhythm, Country & Blues—Featuring Al Green & Lyle Lovett, Aaron Neville & Trisha Yearwood, etc. (MCA) **474•536**

Billy Dean (SBK/Liberty) **428•987**

Trisha Yearwood (MCA) **426•148**

Diamond Rio (Arista) **424•739**

Mark Collie—Mark Collie (MCA) **453•860**

Kathy Mattea—A Collection Of Hits (Mercury/Nashville) **424•622**

Hank Williams, Jr.—Pure Hank (Warner Bros./Curb) **420•109**

Vince Gill—Pocket Full Of Gold (MCA) **418•459**

George Strait—Chill Of An Early Fall (MCA) **417•634**

Ricky Van Shelton—Backroads (Columbia) **416•909**

Doug Stone (Epic) **405•100**

Sammy Kershaw—Haunted Heart (Mercury/Nashville) **456•541**

Joe Diffie—Honky Tonk Attitude (Epic) **454•629**

Steppin' Country—Various Artists (Columbia) **464•206**

Carlene Carter—Little Love Letters (Giant) **461•079**

Tanya Tucker—Greatest Hits: 1990-1992 (Liberty) **458•935**

Patty Loveless—Grt. Hits (MCA) **458•349**

McBride & The Ride—Hurry Sundown (MCA) **458•240**

#1 Country Hit Mix—Various Artists (Real) **457•911**

Charlie Daniels Band—All-Time Greatest Hits (Epic) **456•608**

Suzy Bogguss—Something Up My Sleeve (Liberty) **465•997**

Steve Wariner—Drive (Arista) **464•255**

Patty Loveless—Only What I Feel (Epic) **454•637**

Ricky Van Shelton—A Bridge I Didn't Burn (Columbia) **454•611**

George Jones—Walls Can Fall (MCA) **450•296**

Randy Travis—Greatest Hits Vol. 2 (Warner Bros.) **448•662**

Randy Travis—Greatest Hits Vol 1 (Warner Bros.) **448•654**

Sammy Kershaw—Feelin' Good Train (Mercury/Nashville) **485•730**

Doug Stone—I Thought It Was You (Epic) **425•637**

Kenny Rogers—20 Gr. Hits (Reprise) **444•885**

Doug Stone—From The Heart (Epic) **444•075**

Ricky Van Shelton—Greatest Hits Plus (Columbia) **444•067**

Trisha Yearwood—Hearts In Armor (MCA Nashville) **444•042**

Billy Ray Cyrus—Some Gave All (Mercury/Nashville) **441•451**

Michelle Wright—Now & Then (Arista) **441•147**

Mark Chesnutt—Longnecks And Short Stories (MCA) **440•847**

Anne Murray—Fifteen Of The Best (Liberty) **439•620**

Shenandoah—Grt. Hits (Columbia) **436•808**

Little Texas—First Time For Everything (Warner Bros.) **435•438**

Sawyer Brown—The Dirt Road (Capitol/Curb) **433•656**

George Strait—Ten Strait Hits (MCA) **432•617**

Tracy Lawrence—Sticks & Stones (Atlantic) **432•211**

Little Texas—Big Time (Warner Bros.) **460•204**

Dwight Yoakam—This Time (Reprise) **456•913**

Billy Ray Cyrus—It Won't Be The Last (Mercury/Nashville) **463•240**

HOT COUNTRY ARTISTS

Rick Trevino (Columbia) **476•150**

Blackhawk (Arista) **473•397**

Shawn Camp (Reprise) **471•730**

Faith Hill—Take Me As I Am (Warner Bros.) **473•728**

Tanya Tucker—Sonn (Liberty) **468•850**

George Strait—Easy Come, Easy Go (MCA) **467•308**

Conway Twitty—Final Touches (MCA Nashville) **466•607**

George Strait—Almost Goodbye (MCA) **463•273**

Trisha Yearwood—The Song Remembers When (MCA Nashville) **469•924**

Clay Walker (Giant) **467•449**

Ronna Reeves—What Comes Naturally (Mercury/Nashville) **464•446**

Kelly Willis (MCA) **463•513**

John Berry (Liberty) **463•265**

Ricky Lynn Gregg (Liberty) **458•869**

Toby Keith—(Mercury/Nashville) **458•315**

Shania Twain (Mercury/Nashville) **458•273**

Pam Tillis—Homeward Looking Angel (Arista) **446•963**



John Michael Montgomery—*Kickin' It Up, Full-Time Love; Be My Baby Tonight; Rape The Moon; I Swear*; more. (Atlantic) 473•157



Travis Tritt—*Ten Feet Tall And Bulletproof, Hard Times And Misery; Tell Me I Was Dreaming; Outlaws Like Us*; plus more. (Warner Bros.) 480•244



Reba McEntire—*Read My Mind, If I Had Only Known; Why Haven't I Heard From You; Everything That You Want*; etc. (MCA Nashville) 479•717



Garth Brooks—*In Pieces, Callin' Baton Rouge; The Cowboy Song; The Night Will Only Know*; and many more. (Liberty) 463•745



TRAVIS TRITT

Ten Feet Tall And Bulletproof. *Walkin' All Over My Heart, Tell Me I Was Dreaming*; others. (Warner Bros.) 480•244
T-R-O-U-B-L-E. Mixes blues & a bit of rock 'n' roll with his country sound! Title cut. *Looking Out For Number One*; etc. (Warner Bros.) 445•767
It's All About To Change. Heartfelt ballads to Dixie-fried rockers! *Anyone, The Whiskey Ain't Workin'*; etc. (Warner Bros.) 422•113
Country Club. *Drift Off To Dream, Put Some Drive In Your Country, I'm Gonna Be Somebody, Help Me Hold On*; etc. (Warner Bros.) 405•068

Alan Jackson—*Don't Rock The Jukebox* (Arista) 420•935

Patsy Cline—*Grt. Hits* (MCA) 365•924

Kenny Rogers' Grt. Hits (Liberty) 313•700

Willie Nelson—*Grt. Hits (And Some That Will Be)* (Columbia) 311•001

Collin Raye—*All I Can Be* (Epic) 431•445

Sammy Kershaw—*Don't Go Near The Water* (Mercury/Nashville) 431•437

Freddy Fender Collection (Reprise) 430•934

Brooks & Dunn—*Brand New Man* (Arista) 429•969

Palomino Road (Liberty) 455•584

Diamond Rio—*Close To The Edge* (Arista) 448•290

Smoky Mountain Players—*Smoky Mountain Old Time Favorites* (Brentwood) 446•302

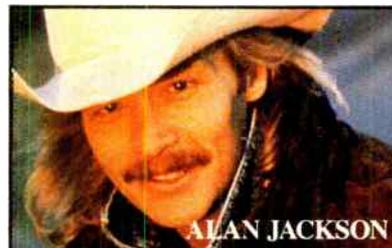
Chris Ledoux—*Whatcha Gonna Do With A Cowboy* (Liberty) 444•562

Evangeline (Margaritaville/MCA) 440•685

George Strait—*Pure Country* (MCA) 448•753

John Michael Montgomery—*Life's A Dance* (Atlantic) 453•746

Brooks & Dunn—*Hard Workin' Man* (Arista) 454•025



ALAN JACKSON

Alan Jackson—*Who I Am, Livin' On Love, Summer Time Blues; If I Had You*; title cut plus others. (Arista) 486•233

A Lot About Livin' (And A Little 'Bout Love). His latest album includes *Chattahoochie, She's Got The Rhythm, Mercury Blues*; (Arista) 447•458

Don't Rock The Jukebox. Smash follow up to his debut! *Love's Got A Hold On You, Midnight In Montgomery, Dallas*; title cut; etc. (Arista) 420•935

Here In The Real World. Title cut: *Ace Of Hearts; Blue Blooded Woman*; etc. (Arista) 406•785

Country Jukebox Greatest Hits, Vol. 2—Various Artists (Warner Bros.) 468•611

The Greatest Country Dance Record Ever, Vol. 1—Various Artists (Warner Bros.) 468•595

Mathews, Wright & King—*Dream Seekers* (Columbia) 463•455

Essential Steve Earle (MCA Nashville) 456•723

Country Christmas

Vince Gill—*Let There Be Peace On Earth* (MCA Nashville) 482•349

A Chipmunk Christmas (Epic/Chimpunks) 459•198

Travis Tritt—*A Travis Tritt Christmas* (Warner Bros.) 459•164

Garth Brooks—*Beyond The Season* (Liberty) 459•131

Doug Stone—*The First Christmas* (Epic) 452•185

Tennessee Ernie Ford—*The Heart Of Christmas* (Liberty) 440•065

Glen Campbell—*Merry Christmas* (Liberty) 440•057

Alan Jackson—*Honky Tonk Christmas* (Arista) 467•142

Charlie Daniels Band—*Christmas Time Down South* (Epic) 418•913

Roger Whittaker—*World's Most Beautiful Christmas Songs* (Capitol) 406•736

Randy Travis—*An Old Time Christmas* (Warner Bros.) 405•654

Christmas In The Country (MCA) 380•600

Ricky Van Shelton—*Sings Christmas* (Columbia) 405•621



Dolly Parton—*Home For Christmas* (Columbia) 418•921

Reba McEntire—*Merry Christmas To You* (MCA) 368•647

George Strait—*Merry Christmas Strait To You* (MCA) 355•974

Lee Greenwood—*Christmas To Christmas* (MCA) 343•962

Elmo 'n' Patsy—*Grandpa Got Run Over By A Reindeer* (Epic) 334•599

Anne Murray—*Christmas Wishes* (Liberty) 319•517

Willie Nelson—*Pretty Paper* (Columbia) 302•968

Best Of Pirates Of The Mississippi (Liberty) 476•077

Eddie Rabbitt—*All Time Greatest Hits* (Warner Bros.) 477•133

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POPULAR HITS

- Frank Sinatra**—*Dues* (Capitol) 471•615
- Elton John**—*Grt. Hits* (Polydor) 471•011
- Crash Test Dummies**—*God Shuffled His Feet* (Arista) 470•476
- Meat Loaf**—*Bat Out Of Hell* (Epic) 279•133
- Sting**—*Ten Summoner's Tales* (A&M) 454•561
- "The Bodyguard"**—*Orig Sndtrk.* (Arista) 448•159
- Kenny G**—*Breathless* (Arista) 448•142
- Rod Stewart**—*Sing It Again Rod—Grt. Hits* (Mercury) 423•822
- Journey's Greatest Hits** (Columbia) 375•279
- John Lennon Collection** (Capitol) 405•308
- Air Supply**—*Grt. Hits* (Arista) 321•307
- Barbra Streisand**—*Back To Broadway* (Columbia) 461•988
- Benedictine Monks Of Santo Domingo**—*Chant* (Angel) 477•067
- Ace Of Base**—*The Sign* (Arista) 468•108
- Eagles**—*Grt. Hits, 1971-75* (Asylum) 287•003
- Aerosmith**—*Get A Grip* (Geffen) 458•075
- Simon & Garfunkel's Greatest Hits** (Columbia) 219•477
- Spin Doctors**—*Turn It Upside Down* (Epic) 482•638
- Phil Collins**—*Both Sides* (Atlantic) 481•952
- Jon Secada**—*Hearst, Soul & A Voice* (SBK) 481•671
- Jimmy Buffett**—*Fruitcakes* (MCA) 480•491
- "The Crow"**—*Orig. Sndtrk.* Featuring Pantera, Stone Temple Pilots, etc. (Atlantic/Interscope) 478•230
- Yanni**—*Live At The Acropolis* (Private Music) 475•178
- Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers**—*Grt. Hits* (MCA) 474•411
- The Steve Miller Band**—*Grt. Hits 1974-78* (Capitol) 290•171
- Michael Bolton**—*The One Thing* (Columbia) 470•005

Ketchum's Not Dry and Sandy

Re: Geoffrey Himes' review of *Every Little Word* in the September/October issue: Hal Ketchum's voice is anything but "dry and sandy," and he certainly isn't "finally learning how to sing," nor is his voice a "modest instrument." Where've you been since 1991—certainly not at any of his concerts! Otherwise it was a great issue of *Country Music* for us Hal Ketchum fans, with the centerfold and the Facts of Life page for those who may not know about the man. Now how about a cover story or 20 Questions with Hal?

Diane Barnhardt
Ontario, Canada

American Recordings a Gem

As an Executive Director of a symphony orchestra, I appreciate the impact of marketing and the media and their influence on the public's acceptance of an artistic work. Never have I witnessed such a media blitz on behalf of Johnny Cash as has occurred with the release of his *American Recordings*. In this case the media attention and rave critical reviews are deserved, not just because an artist of his stature and longevity chooses to continue to successfully create and grow artistically, but because *American Recordings* is a musical gem. I personally invite all to take a listen. I suggest you do as I did and be in an environment to allow you

to immerse yourself in every chord, every word. For my first listen, I sat back, propped my feet up, sipped a good French red, watched a storm blow down along the Jersey Shore and let the guitar and "that voice" wash over me. You'll find that Johnny Cash's *American Recordings* is good to your ears and a gift for your soul.

JoAnn Montarelli
Toms River, New Jersey

Defense for Travis Album

I'm writing about the review that Bob Allen gave to Randy Travis' new album, *This Is Me*, in the July/August issue. I don't know where your hearing went, but I must tell you I thought it was his best since *Storms of Life*. I usually agree with your reviews, but this one was way off. Randy can sing better than any of these new pop-country singers, and he isn't as rude and full of himself. So I am very disappointed in you, Robert. I just love the album. In fact, it is almost worn out.

Betty Crowe
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Don't Trash Tritt

I just finished reading Geoffrey Himes' critique of Travis Tritt's new album, *Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof* (July/August issue), and I think he's jealous. Travis writes, chooses and sings his songs from his heart, from his experiences. And as

for his boisterous bellowing, there is nothing noisy and hollow about his singing. I hear strong and full. Please don't compare the outlaw in "Southern Justice" to the outlaws in "Outlaws Like Us." I'm just happy the mold didn't break on Hank Jr. I think Mr. Himes has some explaining to do; one line he's praising Tritt's talents, the next he's trashing him.

Nancy Schmitt
St. Louis, Missouri

Proud Alabama/Jo-El Fan

I just received the September/October issue of CMM and wanted to drop you a note to say thanks for the 20 Questions with Alabama. Now, how 'bout another cover story and a centerfold? They're not "has beens" in any sense of the word. In fact, I recently got a checkbook cover with their logo on it, and I'm proud to use it. Also, I appreciated John Morthland's review of Jo-El Sonnier's *Cajun Roots*. I have the CD, and I agree that Jo-El is at his best performing cajun music, although I have all of his country CD's and enjoy them very much. A friend and I recently attended the LeCajun Music Awards and Festival in Lafayette, Louisiana, and Jo-El was the headline guest artist. Jo-El received the first "Award of Excellence" given by the Cajun French Music Association. I could see the emotion on his face when he was presented with this award and how touched and honored he felt.

Peggy J. Alford
Natalbany, Louisiana

We're All Crazy

I bought my subscription to your magazine for only one thing, Dwight Yoakam. But in reading it, I have found one other thing I enjoy almost as much as I enjoy reading about Dwight: the fan letters. It doesn't make any difference who they write about. I love reading them—who they saw or met or friends made at fan fairs. They're proving to me that I'm not crazy, and I'm not the only one who cares. Perhaps I just joined the right club, and we're all crazy. At least I'm not alone.

Pam Loftis
Gallatin, Tennessee

Loves Letters

I've been subscribing to your magazine for a couple of years now, and I wish to thank you for an insightful and heartening journey. I wish I'd found your magazine earlier. You folks got it, and I especially like seeing the old-timers we enjoy, such as your recent issues with Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash on the covers. They're the best.

Brenda Stueve
Riverside, California

More Women, Please!

Okay, I'll start at the top. I'd like to see one country music magazine that doesn't, every week, have a picture or more of

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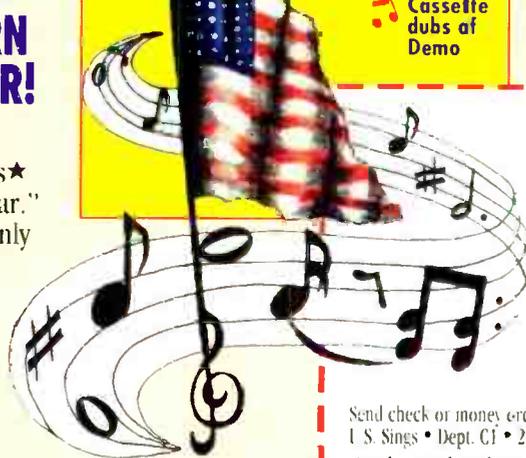
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If you want to flatten your stomach and trim your waist, you should know about a new book, *3 Simple Steps to Flatten Your Belly!* The book shows you a simple and fast way to give yourself a flat, firm stomach—even if other attempts to lose your pot belly failed.

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Incredibly, some stomach programs only make your pot belly worse. You see, some stomach programs may actually build up and swell the muscles in your stomach without removing the fat—making your stomach appear larger and puffier. What's more, exercises that work on your "love handles" (the sides of your waist) can actually build muscle and increase the overall size of your waist. Even worse, some so-called stomach exercises don't even work your stomach—they can merely strain your back and neck.

Why This Program Will Flatten Your Belly

This book shows you a simple program that won't bulge out or puff up your stomach but actually flattens it out, so your stomach becomes slimmer, trimmer and firmer. And this program is designed to flatten your stomach without straining your back or neck. What's more, this program shows you how to remove layers of fat around your belly. The book tells you about "fat melting" foods that work in conjunction with the exercise program to break down and flush away pockets of flab and fat around your midsection. This program launches an all-out attack on the bulging fat cells around your waistline.

Following this program should transform your pot belly from unsightly flab to a flat, trim and sexy waistline. A firm, flat belly makes you look and feel better. Your posture often improves while nagging back problems often disappear.

Forget about expensive exercise equipment, health spas and starvation diets. This belly-flattening program must work for you or you pay nothing. This book is being made available for only \$12.95 (plus \$3 postage and handling). To order, send name and address with payment to United Research Publishers, 103 North Highway 101, Dept. CMF-1, Encinitas, CA 92024. You may return the book anytime for refund if not satisfied.

Garth and Billy Ray. Come on! There're more talented singers out there we'd like to see, especially us guys, like centerfolds or covers with country women on them. Whenever you do show a woman, it's Reba! When is Wynonna ever going to be seen in your magazine? Will any magazine ever get the point? There are requests for less BRC and Garth. Some people say Garth led the country music boom. For the people I know, he lessened their attitudes. Wynonna kept me a fan.

Isaac Branther
Mordovi, Wisconsin

New Country Radio Wasteland

San Francisco has become a country wasteland. KSAN was great until they became "new country." KSAN's award-winning former DJ, Sully Roddy ("All Kinds of Country"), was kicked over to their weaker AM station, KNEW (Classic Country). I called KSAN and was told that Roddy was too "arcane." Her slot is now yuppie pseudo-country, like all KSAN's air time. "Young Country" 93.3 tries hard, but the music is the same. Both 93.3 and KSAN run spots needling "grandpa's country." Both are so busy with call-in shtick that music comes second. We city kids who didn't grow up with the Grand Ole Opry need to hear classic country as well as new, because it is the roots of country music. Current stars emphasize their artistic debt to older performers (Haggard, Jones, etc.), without whom "new" country would not exist. Yet these artists are not played at all on "new"/"young" country radio. Many "new country" artists look and sound alike (a professional musician myself, I can't tell some of them apart).

V. Graham
Oakland, California

Get Back to Cool Ol' Country

What in the world has happened to country music? I'm 21 years old and my favorite singer is Merle Haggard. I know there is a large group that agrees with me (more older folks than younger), that it doesn't get any better than Merle. I saw the early September *TNN Country News* when they aired the older singers' views on what they thought about today's singers. I can't agree with them more; it's gone sour. It seems that all you have to do these days is play a guitar and you can be a country music singer. Let's get rid of all these rock 'n' roll rejects and hot new country cowboys and play some cool ol' country music, because most of today's singers and listeners ain't got a clue.

Casey Kennedy
Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

Our Kind of Reader

I think you should be nominated for Entertainer of the Year. Reading your letters, I am totally entertained. First,

there's too much Wy, Tanya, Dolly and such, then the next letter seems to complain there's not enough of the same. You might as well quit trying to please every reader. Do an article on someone you like for a change—surprise us. One thing does stand out, though, listeners and artists like the traditional country (steel gee-tar, not all that rockability and boom of those loud drums). One trip to the Hall of Fame got my blood boiling. Some didn't even know enough about the "greats" to keep their mouths shut to hide their ignorance. But as I started out, if there were more airplay and more magazine coverage of these greats that paved the way for these "sudden stars," then more would know who Fred Rose, Wesley Rose, Jimmie Davis and Kitty Wells are. Out of all the letters (27 in the September/October issue), I was glad that someone out of the "greats" of the 60's cares enough to set the record straight. Thanks, Justin.

Kitty Richards
Brighton, Michigan

Write It Down, Folks

I just subscribed to your magazine. Like it very much. On page 70 of September/October 1994 issue, you mention *Goldmine*, the record collectors' magazine. Would you please give me their address? I would like to write to them.

Matt Fleit
Kensington, Maryland
Try newsstands, or write Goldmine at 700 East State Street, Iola, Wisconsin 54990, or call (715) 445-2214.—Ed.

Young Country Music Reader

I love your magazine, I'm the only 16-year-old at my school who listens to country music. Garth is my favorite. I was just thinking that Mark Collie, Little Texas and Doug Stone might make good centerfolds. I would love to see Billy Dean. Your fan,
Amanda Holstein
Rainelle, West Virginia

Thanks for Older Artists

Thanks so much for the wonderful articles on the older country artists. I say artists because they weren't just singers, they were true artists. I really liked the Waylon interview (May/June). I used to sing his songs in the hay fields when I was around four years old. I grew up listening to country music, but a lot of the new listeners wouldn't know about all the great older artists if it weren't for your great magazine. The radio stations ignore them. Keep up the great work.

Melissa Frazier
Nashota, Oklahoma

Radio Format Fantastic

After reading the letter from Teri Nelson in the September/October issue, I can truly appreciate her situation. I, too, enjoy some of the newer artists, but I love

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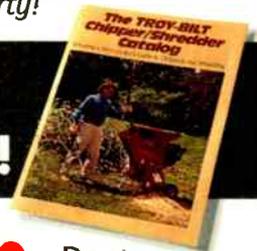
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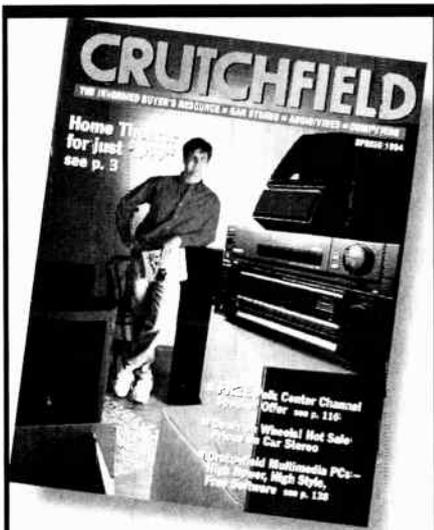
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the older, traditional artists. I am fortunate to be in the coverage area of one of the Great Empire Broadcasting stations. I have listened to KFDD in Wichita, Kansas, for 30 years, and their programming is fantastic. They play the "Top 20," but they also dedicate a large portion of their programming to traditional artists. There is a Saturday program dedicated to playing oldies (nothing later than the 70's) for five hours. Broadcast areas of this network include Nebraska, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas and Kansas.

June A. Morgan
Cottonwood Falls, Kansas

A Little Change, a Good Thing

I am a new reader of your publication, and even though I am not a big fan of the September/October issue's cover artist, Marty Stuart, I thought the edition was excellent, with stories on Suzy Bogguss and George Jones and 20 Questions with Alabama's Randy Owen. I think the Letters feature is a great way for readers to express their views. I fully agree with Ron Young's letter regarding Ronna Reeves. She is one of the most underrated (not to mention talented and beautiful) country singers today. I would love to know more about her. How about Patty Loveless, Martina McBride or (Canadian) Michelle Wright centerfolds?

David Hopp
Williams Lake, British Columbia

Cyrus a Fans' Man

I just had to tell you about one of the best concerts I've ever been to! I'm recently back from a Billy Ray Cyrus concert in Connecticut. Billy Ray signed autographs and took pictures before he left the venue! He gave an incredible hour-and-a-half concert too! The audience wasn't leaving either. They stayed, Billy stayed. I wish people who question Billy Ray and his integrity could see these shows, because if they ever tried, they'd know the true Cyrus spirit.

Kim Warfield
Milford, New Hampshire

Wants Oslin Update

Just a reminder to you to keep passing news about K.T. Oslin on to us through your magazine. She has a lot of fans out here who are interested in her activities, whether it be writing songs that are sung by other artists, or acting, or digging in her garden. I believe the AIDS benefit concert that was held December 1, 1993 at the Grand Ole Opry is in the planning stages for this year. K.T. hosted it last year. Do you know who will be involved this year? I am already planning my vacation to be in Nashville for this concert.

Marilyn A. Hilb
Arlington Heights, Illinois
According to her publicist, K.T. is expected to appear at the December 1st concert.—Ed.

Neal's the Real McCoy

I just received my September/October issue and have read it already, as usual. I was pleased to read the write-up on Neal McCoy in the People section. To quote you, "You can't fool a country fan. They know one when they see one. A star, that is." I agree, and if you really feel that way, could we please see more on Neal? He's the real Neal McCoy, no doubt about it.

Jean Knox
Rochester, New Hampshire

Cover Radney

I have subscribed to your magazine for a year now and just renewed, but have yet to see a word about my favorite country music star, Radney Foster. He writes all his own songs and performs them wonderfully. He is the most talented singer/songwriter around today and definitely deserves to be recognized for that. So, why does he keep getting overlooked? Please, let's see a story on Radney and band.

LaDonna Mackay
McKinney, Texas

BRC Gets Short End of Stick

I am an intelligent, responsible music consumer who also happens to be one of the millions of Billy Ray Cyrus fans around the world, and I am saddened and angered by the poor treatment that Billy Ray has gotten from the country music industry in general. Unfortunately, it seems the "one big happy family" atmosphere that supposedly exists in country music is a myth. The constant Billy Ray "bashing" that has gone on shows an utter disregard and lack of respect not only for Billy Ray, but for his fans as well. I, for one, am tired of giving money and support to an industry which regularly questions and insults my taste and intelligence.

Billy Ray has given much time and energy to his fans and to using his money and celebrity status to do good works. His music and performances have given us a lot of enjoyment, and he has paid his dues. Billy Ray does not have to prove his talent to critics. I will always continue to enjoy and support Billy Ray.

Karen Witkowski
Pompano Beach, Florida

Where/How is Don Gibson?

I have been a subscriber to your magazine for about five years, and I have a question. Could you give me some information on where Don Gibson is? Last thing I read there was something wrong with his legs. Is he okay now? Can I write him? This man has the best voice.

Don Linbares
Somerset, Massachusetts
Gibson is semi-retired, though he remains an Opry member. Try writing him c/o Grand Ole Opry, 2804 Opryland Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37214.—Ed.

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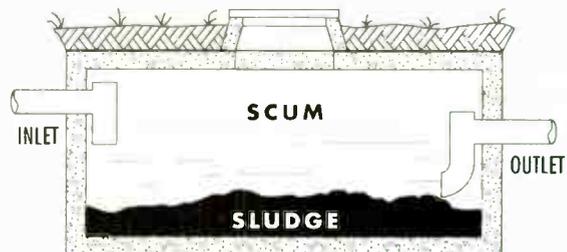
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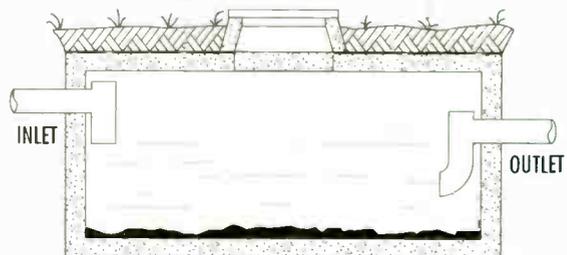
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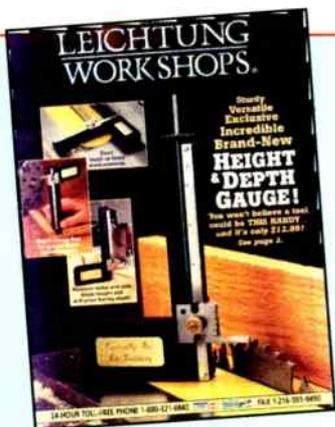
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 Page 79



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Johnny Paycheck Found

In response to Richard Lopes from Alaska who was looking for Johnny Paycheck in your September/October issue: Johnny now records on Playback Records, and his new album is available in most record store chains. If you have trouble finding it, the manager of your favorite store can order it from Playback by calling 1-800-532-1964. Incidentally, I'm one of Johnny's little-known labelmates. If you'd like to buy my album too...

Angela Christie
 Flint, Michigan

No, Really, Go On . . .

I've been reading your magazine for years, and my favorite section in each issue is the Letters to the Editor. It's amazing that people become so emotional over whether or not their favorite artists are featured. After all, a magazine is a business, and if certain artists sell more magazines, then they are going to receive a larger share of your coverage. I think you do an excellent job of presenting a variety of artists, both old and new, and I plan on reading your magazine years into the future. I also wanted to comment on the many complaints that radio stations don't play the older artists. We have a station here in Reno called KHIT that plays a little of everything spanning the history of country radio. It's nice to listen to the hits of today mixed among the classics of yesterday, and their respect for the older artists is appreciated by their ever-increasing audience.

Christie E. List
 Reno, Nevada

Judge Not

In regards to the letter in the September/October issue Letters section about Tanya Tucker and Wynonna: So what if Wynonna and Tanya Tucker had or are having children when they are not married? This does not make them bad people! Nor does having long hair. These things are choices people make for themselves—not you and me. If you can't say something nice...

K. Johnson
 Portland, North Dakota

Good Seattle Radio

This letter is in response to a letter from Teri Nelson of Port Orchard, Washington, in your Letters section in the September/October issue: I agree with her opinion of the three main stations in the Seattle/Tacoma area, but there is one more country station on the Country Gold Network: KJUN 1450 AM, Puyallup; KENU 1330, Enumelaw; KTOL 1280, Lacey; KBLB 1540, Bellevue and KWYZ 1230, Everett. It plays a blend of old and new, but mainly old and lots of requests. Give it a try.

Marcy Valleroy
 Seattle, Washington

More Clint/Letters

Hey, something is definitely wrong here. I must be getting a different *Country Music* than everyone else. People keep writing in complaining how some performers are always being covered, and one who keeps getting mentioned is Clint Black. According to some, Clint is one of these stars who has had "preferential saturation." Quite the opposite! I enjoy all the Letters from readers. I say, "Keep them coming!"

Kathy Abbot
 Greeley, Colorado

Out with the Flash 'n' Trash

Re: Patrick Carr's commentary, "Waylon, Research, Boom and Bust," in the September/October issue. Thank you for giving me hope that some day the influx of "bi-coastal BMW drivers" will reverse itself, leaving Music Row once again in the capable hands of those who can give us country music the way it should be. I have been appalled at the proliferation of new acts that I can only describe as talent-free and in dire need of barbers and tailors. I have cried tears of frustration over the shocking number of bad songs that have been recorded and turned into hits. I have been saddened to hear the quality of country music deteriorate because of the frantic pursuit of the Almighty Dollar. I long for the day when the flash 'n' trash acts will fizzle out, leaving us with the heart and soul of country music: stayers like Marty Stuart, Lorrie Morgan, Vince Gill and a handful of others who know what it's really about because they've lived it all their lives.

Anne Weatherford
 Redding, California

Loves Letters, Legends and More

I have read almost every magazine that has been printed about country music, and I want to say that *Country Music* is the best I have found! It is so good that I have been a subscriber for years, and I am sending my renewal for another great year. I love everything about your magazine, but I especially like the many pages of letters and the Collections section. I want to say a big thank you for doing the wonderful article on George Jones, The Living Legend of Country Music, in the September/October *CMSA Newsletter*. He is just that! You often say that we are never satisfied, but I do have another request (ha). I can't remember you doing a centerfold of George. Would you do this for me and for fans who love George as much as I do? I tell all of my friends about your magazine.

Judy Wilson
 La Follette, Tennessee

Harsh Words for New Industry

Thank God for CMM, by far the number one country magazine on the market today. Better yet, thank God for people like Patrick Carr who in the September/October



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ber issue has no fear telling it like it is with his Final Note. He left no stone unturned. You may not get a lot of letters like this, but I say Carr hit this subject dead center, and millions of country music fans feel the same. We are sick of buying the artists BMW's, making them bazillionaires, and then we are treated as if we owe them. Very few give two hoots in hell about the "fan" as long as they get the money. It is time the Garth-driven country music boom is fading. Garth has made more money in a few years than most of our greatest artists have in their lives. That also goes for Reba as well. She is called "the queen of country music." Hold the phones, what Number One hit did she have at 13 years old? Or is it just the money that some people think she earned that makes her queen? Will we ever get back to the good ole days? Nope. How sad. It is too late for the air strikes, Mr. Carr, they have too much money and power now.

Regina Young
Marion, Kentucky

On His Soapbox

With the emergence of alternative and grunge rock, my faith in good rock music has died. In its place, I've discovered that country music is great. One of my favorite artists is Dwight Yoakam. Dwight's songs and videos have brought me a lot of enjoyment, but I can do without his "Try Not to Look so Pretty" and "Pocket of a Clown" videos. These videos are not enjoyable. But now on to other items.

Have you noticed that newcomer Jamie O'Hara is an almost perfect duplicate of the late Ricky Nelson? The man even sounds like him. Did you also notice that David Ball ("Thinkin' Problem") looks like a young Porter Wagoner, but sounds like a young George Jones? Did you notice that Mark Chesnutt bears a resemblance to Bono, of U2? I've never understood what was so great about Hank Williams. The man's voice was absolutely horrible and personal life very irresponsible. One current group that never fails to get on my nerves is Sawyer Brown. Lead singer/songwriter Mark Miller tries too hard to come off as country's Mick Jagger. Their stage act is severe overkill. Keep up the good work.

Jay Allen

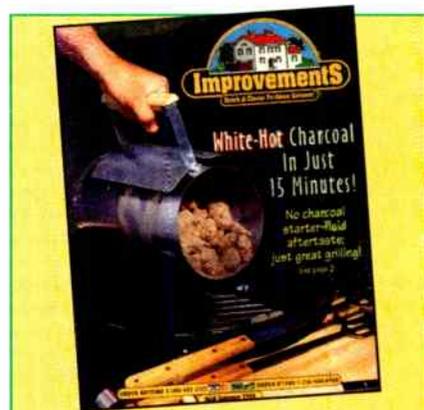
Lake Charles, Louisiana

For more on SB, see feature.—Ed.

Sweeps Winner

The winner of our June/July 1994 \$1000 Renewal Sweepstakes is CMSA Member Martha Dittsworth in Huntington, Pennsylvania. Congratulations!

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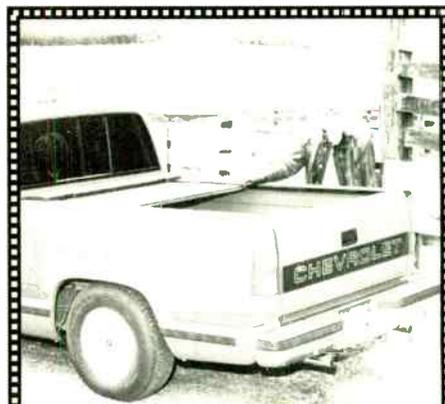
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Country Music VIDEOS



KATHY MATTEA *The Videos - 30 mins.*

She is running a new wave of success with her recent Grammy Award for *Best Country Gospel Performance*. *The Videos* features six hot singles including "Walking Away a Winner," "Lonesome Standard Time," "Battle Hymn of Love," "Asking Us to Dance," "Time Passes By" AND MORE! Item No. V40 - \$14.95

HIGHWAYMEN LIVE *On the Road Again - 60 mins.*

Cash, Nelson, Kristofferson and Jennings are together on this European Tour. You'll meet them backstage, talking candidly about their lives and their music. Then you'll see them on stage from the opening bars of their theme song "Highwayman" until the final chord of "On the Road Again." Item No. V25 - \$14.95

TANYA TUCKER *Tanya Tucker - 22 mins.*

No video collection is complete without Tanya Tucker. Included are "Walking Shoes," "Love Me Like You Used To," "Strong Enough to Bend," "Daddy and Home," "Don't Go Out," "Just Another Love," plus live interview footage. Item No. V77 - \$19.95

COUNTRY HITS OF THE 90'S *15 Performances - 56 mins.*

Here are the best of the best, including "A Better Man" by Clint Black, "Simple Man" by The Charlie Daniels Band, "Give a Little Love" by The Judds, "Crazy in Love" by Conway Twitty, "It Ain't Nothin'" by Keith Whitley, "Don't Toss Us Away" by Patty Loveless, "When I Call Your Name" by Vince Gill AND MORE! Item No. V6E - \$19.95

RAY STEVENS *Comedy Video Classics - 30 mins.*

You have seen this popular video on TV. Now you can enjoy the outrageous musical/comedy talent of Ray Stevens at his hilarious best. Included are "Everything Is Beautiful," "It's Me Again Margaret," "Santa Claus Is Watching You," "Sittin' Up With the Dead," "Surfin' U.S.S.R.," "Mississippi Squirrel Revival," "The Streak" and "Help Me Make It Through the Night." Item No. HJ90 - \$19.95

HANK WILLIAMS SR. *Hank Williams Tradition - 60 mins.*

This video traces Hank's life story through rare film clips, music and revealing interviews with friends and fellow performers such as Roy Acuff, Minnie Pearl and Chet Atkins. Included are performances of many of Hank's greatest songs by today's top country artists, who also tell how Hank inspired their careers. There are also five hit songs performed by Hank himself. Item No. V2M - \$19.95

HANK WILLIAMS SR. *The Show He Never Gave - 86 mins.*

Using Hank's last ride as its dramatic context, this movie permits the haunted singer to play one final show, during which all his fears and passions—all his genius—tumble out for us to see. "Sneezy" Waters plays the self-destructive superstar and admirably performs 23 songs. Adding to the authenticity of the project is the audience of supporting characters who populate the mythical roadhouse where Hank confronts his life, just as it is ending. Item No. V2L - \$19.95

PATSY CLINE (REDUCED) *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. This memorable video biography features rare, classic performances of such hits as "Crazy" and "I Fall To Pieces." Item No. G5C - Was \$24.95 - Now \$19.95

MARTY ROBBINS & ERNEST TUBB - 60 mins.

Catch these two legends at the peak of their powers, in the early days of their careers. There are 26 songs including "Walkin' the Floor Over You," "Singin' the Blues," "So Many Times," "Time Goes By," "So Doggone Lonesome," "Tomorrow Never Comes," "I Can't Quit," "Pretty Words," "They'll Do It Every Time" AND MORE! Item No. V2G - \$39.95

LEGENDS OF FINGER-STYLE GUITAR - 96 mins.

Here are some of the greatest guitarists of all time performing 21 songs including Merle Travis "John Henry," "Muskrat," "Lost John"/Doc Watson—"Deep River Blues," "Traveling Man" and Doc & Merle Watson—"When I Lay My Burden Down." Item No. V3V - \$19.95

MARTY ROBBINS *Super Legend - 120 mins.*

This memorable video features 18 performances: "El Paso," "White Sport Coat," "Devil Woman," "Ribbon of Darkness," "Singing the Blues," "I Can't Keep From Cryin'," "Don't Worry 'Bout Me," "This Time You Gave Me a Mountain" plus Marty's Grammy-winning song, "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife." It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and the big screen. Item No. G2A - \$39.95

WEBB PIERCE *Greatest Hits - 52 mins.*

Shortly before his death Webb personally created, from rare filmed performances, a compilation of his greatest hits, narrating and providing background on the songs, their writers and their origins. This program contains 17 of Webb's greatest hits including "Wondering," "More and More," "There Stands the Glass," "In the Jailhouse Now" AND MORE! Item No. V2R - \$19.95

LORRIE MORGAN *Something In Red - 18 mins.*

Included are "Trainwreck of Emotion," "Dear Me," "Out of Your Shoes," "We Both Walk," "A Picture of Me (Without You)" along with the opening and closing music, "Something in Red." Item No. V1J - \$14.95

COUNTRY ON BROADWAY *Filed New York City - 96 mins.*

Here is the first country music movie ever filmed. See Hank Williams in his only filmed appearance, uncut. Enjoy 30 full songs by Hank and headliners like George Jones, Hank Snow and Porter Wagoner. Including: Hank Sr. - "Hey Good Looking"/George Jones - "White Lightning"/Hank Snow - "Moving On"/Porter Wagoner - "Satisfied Mind" AND MORE! Item No. G8F - \$39.95

BILLY RAY CYRUS *Live On Tour - 60 mins.*

Here are 14 songs performed live on stage, including "Should I Stay or Should I Go," "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'," "She's Not Cryin' Anymore," "When I Gonna Live," "Someday, Somewhere, Somehow," "Could've Been Me," "I'm So Miserable," "Never Thought I'd Fall in Love With You," "Ain't No Good Goodbye," "Only Time Will Tell," "Achy Breaky Heart" AND MORE! Item No. V2B - \$29.95

BEST OF MARTY ROBBINS TV SHOW

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Take a return visit to Marty's first syndicated TV show (1968-1969). **VOLUME ONE** features 21 songs along with humorous excerpts from the show. Included are "I Can't Help It," "Are You Sincere," "Long Gone Lonesome Blues," "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" and "El Paso." Item No. V8E - \$29.95

VOLUME TWO includes "Take Me Back to Tulsa," "Mississippi River Blues," "Anytime," "Streets of Laredo," "Deep Water," "Candy Kisses," "Never Tie Me Down," "Time Changes Everything" and "Kalua." **22 SONGS IN ALL.** Item No. V9I - \$29.95

VOLUME THREE includes "Room Full of Roses," "Red River Valley," "Beyond the Reef," "Oh How I Miss You," "Now Is the Hour," "Way Out There," "Chant of the Wanderer," "One Kiss Too Many," "Lonely Old Bunkhouse" and "People's Valley." **22 SONGS IN ALL.** Item No. V2E - \$29.95

VOLUME FOUR includes "Cool Water," "La Paloma," "It Makes No Difference Now," "Aloha Oe," "Born To Lose," "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes" AND MORE THAN A DOZEN MORE! Item No. V2E - \$29.95

Request Item No. V55 When You Order ALL FOUR FOR ONLY \$99.80 - SAVE \$20.00!

MERLE WATSON *Memorial Festival - 120 mins.*

In 1987, the first annual Merle Watson Memorial Festival was held. Since then, it has become a yearly celebration. This record of the 1992 festival features Emmylou Harris and The Nash Ramblers, Riders in the Sky, The Nashville Bluegrass Band and Ricky Skaggs, just to mention a few. Plus, there's Doc jamming with all sorts of combinations of other participants. Item No. V7V - \$29.95

THE JUDDS (REDUCED) *Across The Heartland - 50 mins.*

Here is The Judds' very first video, featuring hits like "Have Mercy," "Dreamchaser," "I Know Where I'm Going," "Girl's Night Out," "Don't Be Cruel," "Old Pictures" AND MUCH MORE! Item No. G6A - Was \$39.95 - NOW \$29.95

TOBY KEITH (NEW) *A Video Collection - 25 mins.*

Billboard voted him Top New Country Artist for 1993. This, his first video, features "Should've Been a Cowboy," "Wish I Didn't Know Now," "He Ain't Worth Missing" AND TWO MORE! Item No. V9F - \$19.95

MINNIE PEARL *The Life And Legend - 60 mins.*

This is the only authorized life story video of Sarah Ophelia Cannon. Never before has her story been told in such remarkable detail with hilarious excerpts from her best performances. The story of her childhood and her harrowing experiences on the road are truly astounding. Item No. V20 - \$19.95

HANK WILLIAMS JR. (REDUCED) *Star Spangled Party - 60 mins.*

Welcome to the world's largest floating country music party aboard the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Constellation. Listen to Hank Jr. along with Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, Earl Conley and Gus Hardin perform hits like "Honky Tonkin'," "Good Hearted Woman" and "Luckenbach Texas." Item No. G8E - Was \$29.95 - Now \$19.95

MERLE HAGGARD *The Best Of - 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 River," "When Times Were Good," "Honky Tonk Night Time Man," "Okie from Muskogee" AND 10 MORE! Item No. G3F - \$19.95

CHARLEY PRIDE *In Concert - 26 mins.*

Included in this noteworthy live performance are "Kiss an Angel Good Morning," "A Whole Lotta Things to Sing About," "Oklahoma Morning," "I Ain't All Bad," "Crystal Chandelier," "I Don't Think She's in Love Anymore," "Someone Loves You Honey" and "Mountain of Love." **10 SONGS IN ALL!** Item No. V2V - \$19.95

ERNEST TUBB *Thanks Troubadour* *Thanks - 62 mins.*

Here is the 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 movies, to the Grand Ole Opry. This fascinating video also features classic performances and his top hits. Item No. V2N - \$19.95

WAYLON JENNINGS *Lost Outlaw Performance - 60 mins.*

The master recording of this memorable concert was never released and had been forgotten in the vaults of RCA since 1978. Now we bring it to you in its entirety, as it was recorded on August 12th at the Grand Ole Opry. Here is the "Outlaw" period in all its glory, with eight #1 singles including "Good Hearted Woman," "Luckenbach, Texas," "Amanda," "This Time" AND MANY MORE! Item No. V4D - \$19.95

EMMYLOU HARRIS (REDUCED) *At The Ryman - 45 mins.*

Just some of the great hits included are "Guitar Town," "Half As Much," "Lodi," "Hard Times," "Abraham, Martin and John," "Smoke Along the Track," "Get Up John," "Walls of Time" AND FOUR MORE! Item No. V6C - Was \$24.95 - NOW \$19.95

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THE THIN MAN FROM THE WEST PLAINS

Porter Wagoner Special

There's currently only one Porter Wagoner collection available, a boxed set from Germany's Bear Family. No domestic releases are available, not even a simple greatest hits package, and that's a tribute to the continued short-sightedness of RCA regarding their archives. Meanwhile, Bear's *The RCA Sessions: 1952-1962, The Thin Man from West Plains* (BCD 15499) covers 112 songs on four CDs, literally every number Porter recorded in that era (including previously unissued material), except for one lost recording. Included are all his early hits: "Company's Comin'," "A Satisfied Mind," "Eat, Drink and Be Merry," "What Would You Do? (If Jesus Came to Your House)," "Uncle Pen," "Trying to Forget the Blues," "Your Old Love Letters," "Misery Loves Company," "Cold Dark Waters" and "I've Enjoyed as Much of This as I Can Stand." As with all Bear Family boxed sets, there is a detailed booklet with complete recording session details from the RCA files. A four-CD boxed set. Regular price \$139.95, Members' price \$129.95.

No current Porter anthology covers his later hits, which is tragic. In the near future, though, Pair Music will be releasing a budget-priced double CD of Por-

ter and Dolly duets. When it becomes available, it will be featured in *Buried Treasures*, so keep watching.

Porter and Dolly

This time out, the *Legends* feature in the *CMSA Newsletter* covers Porter Wagoner. As Rich Kienzle describes in the piece, Porter was an important contributor to the early career of Dolly Parton. Here's a classic photo of the two performing one of their duets on a television program in the mid-70's.

Buried Treasures Special

CMSA members are entitled to discounts on all products offered in *Buried Treasures*. Members may deduct a heaping \$40.00 off the price of the Jim Reeves boxed set, \$5.00 off the price of the Bill Monroe boxed set, and \$2.00 off everything else. Featured this time are George Jones, Merle Travis, Elvis Costello, hillbilly boogie and Delbert McClinton. Include membership number if taking discount. See complete ordering instructions in *Buried Treasures*.

Essential Collector Special

CMSA members are also entitled to a discount on items featured in *Essential Collector*. Take \$3.00 off the mandolin and piano instructional videos, and \$2.00 off all other items, including books on Dolly, Elvis, Travis Tritt and more. Include your membership number with your order. See ordering details on the *Essential Collector* page.

How to Order

To order items listed on this page, send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 091094N, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Include \$3.00 postage and handling per order. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 additional postage. Offer expires February 28, 1995.



VOTE

MEMBERS POLL/NOVEMBER 1994

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

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. In the boxes below, write the numbers of any of the albums on the Top 25 list in this issue which you bought in the last month.

3. For any albums you bought in the last month not on the Top 25 list, write performer's name and album titles in the space below. (Attach a separate sheet if you need more room.)

Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

4. List numbers of your five favorites from Top 25 in this issue.

Singles (list 5 numbers)

Albums (list 5 numbers)

Tell Us About Yourself

5. How old are you? 45-49
 Under 18 30-34 50-54
 18-24 35-39 55-59
 25-29 40-44 60 or over

6. Are you male or female? Male Female

7. Check the amount of the combined annual income of everyone in your household. Be sure to include all salaries, wages, interest, rent and profits from business or farming.

Under \$15,000 \$40,000 to \$44,999
 \$15,000 to \$19,999 \$45,000 to \$49,999
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 \$25,000 to \$29,999 \$55,000 to \$59,999
 \$30,000 to \$34,999 \$60,000 to \$64,999
 \$35,000 to \$39,999 \$65,000 or more

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 CMSA member but would like to join and vote immediately, enclose your check for \$16 for a one-year CMSA membership (you get an extra year of *Country Music Magazine*, too).

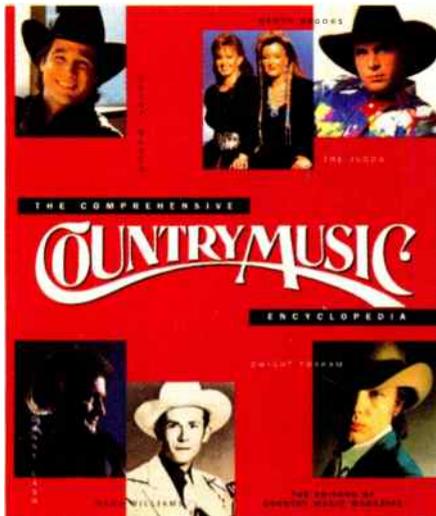
Fill out poll and mail to: November Poll, *Country Music Magazine*, 329 Riverside Avenue, Suite 1, Westport, Connecticut 06880.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

BRAND NEW! COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE'S OWN COMPREHENSIVE COUNTRY MUSIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Our own brand new *Country Music Encyclopedia* is the best reference book available on the subject. In 680 entries—from Acuff to Zydeco—you'll find the answers to all your questions on country music's past, present and future. And, it is lavishly illustrated with OVER 600 photographs...including many rarely seen.

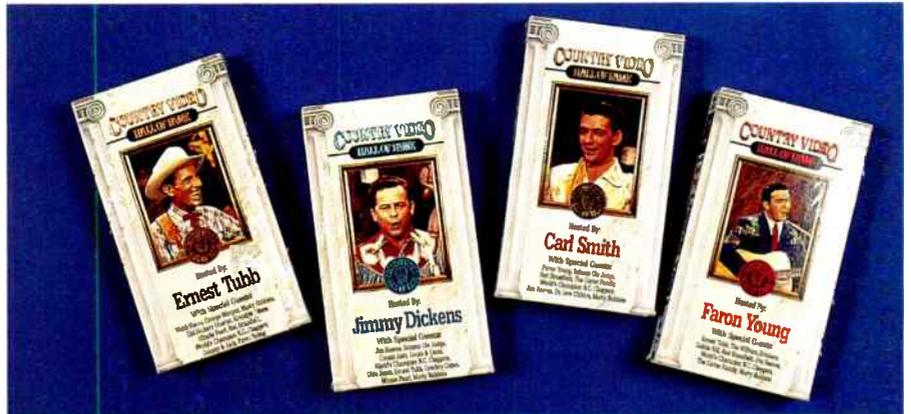
Just to give you a little history behind this great volume, in 1974, two years after *Country Music Magazine* began publishing, we published the *Country Music Encyclopedia*. There was nothing else like it at the time. In fact, up through the 1980's, if you had asked the Library of Congress for recommended



reading on the subject of country music, the two books always mentioned first were the *Country Music Encyclopedia* and another book we published, *The Illustrated History of Country Music*. But 20 years have passed. Not only has a lot happened in country music since 1974 (Garth Brooks was 12), but new facts have come to light, old "facts" have been discovered to be incorrect and, most importantly, the young and relatively inexperienced *Country Music* staff of 1974 has become mature, experienced and reeking with authority. So recognizing the need for an up-to-date book of this kind, rather than simply revising the original, we decided to start from scratch and produce a completely new book. This is it...the definitive book on country music. Ask for #B1S/G1B, \$25.

SPECIAL BONUS—GET THE OFFICIAL 1995 COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION PHOTO CALENDAR...FREE!

Order the NEW *Country Music Encyclopedia* now and you'll also get the new 1995 Country Music Foundation Photo Calendar...previously sold in this magazine for \$16.95...FREE!



THE COUNTRY VIDEO HALL OF FAME COLLECTION—4 VIDEOS—120 MINS.

Here is a real treat for every serious fan of old-time country music, four complete shows from the early days of the Opry, each one hosted by one of the biggest names in country music. There's Ernest Tubb with guests Webb Pierce, George Morgan and Marty Robbins, just to mention a few. Carl Smith with Jim Reeves, The Carter Family and others. Faron Young with June Carter, Ernest Tubb and Marty Robbins again. There's Little Jimmy Dickens with Cowboy Copas and a bunch of other great stars. The best part is, you see all these great legends as they appeared in their prime doing such fabulous hits as: Ernest Tubb—"Walkin' the Floor Over You," "Two Glasses, Joe," "Letters Have No Arms," "Dear Judge"/Marty

Robbins—"I Can't Quit," "I've Gone Too Far," "Poor Unlucky Me," "Pretty Mama," "Tennessee Toddy"/Faron Young—"If You Ain't Lovin'," "If That's the Fashion," "A Place for Girls Like You"/Jim Reeves—"My Lips Are Sealed," "Bimbo," "Down in the Caribbean"/Carl Smith—"Satisfaction Guaranteed," "Darling," "Am I the One?"/The Carter Family—"That Ain't the Way I Heard It"/Jimmy Dickens—"Hillbilly Fever"/George Morgan—"So Lonesome"/Grandpa Jones—"Are You From Dixie?"/Cowboy Copas—"I'm So Blue I Could Cry"/Webb Pierce—"You're Not Mine Anymore" AND MORE! Request #V5W. If Ordered Separately—\$39.96. Now get all four for ONLY \$34.95. YOU SAVE \$5.00!

NEW! DOLLY: MY LIFE AND OTHER UNFINISHED BUSINESS (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

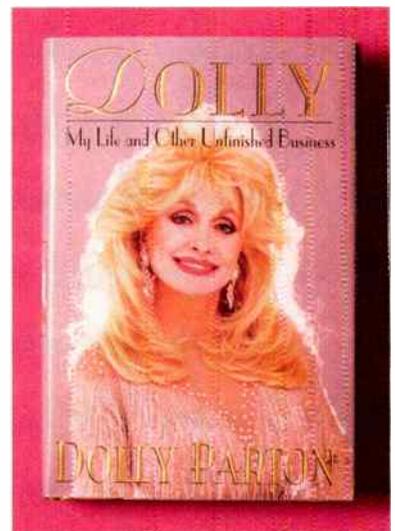
Here, for the first time, Dolly talks openly about her life—both public and private. She reveals how she got to where she is today, her no-nonsense attitude and the down-home philosophy that has helped her from the start. Whether discussing her sense of style, her inability to have children, the music she loves, her unique marriage or her friendship with other stars, Dolly is amazingly candid, incredibly warm, wise and funny, proving over and over again why she is so loved. In this refreshing and heartfelt autobiography, Dolly reveals the woman behind the superstar, one who still considers herself a simple girl from the country. Every Dolly fan will love it. Hardcover, 6 1/2" x 9 1/4", 256 pages, illustrated. Ask for #B40, \$22.50.

LISTEN TO DOLLY TELL YOU HER LIFE STORY (4 Cassettes, Lightly Abridged)

And here's Dolly herself telling her story, *My Life and Other Unfinished Business*, with all her distinctive grace, humor, and unflinching wit captured on four audio cassettes. She recounts her rise from poverty through her trail-blazing music career and her triumphs as a pop star, actress, business-woman and humanitarian. Ask for #C2D, \$22.50.

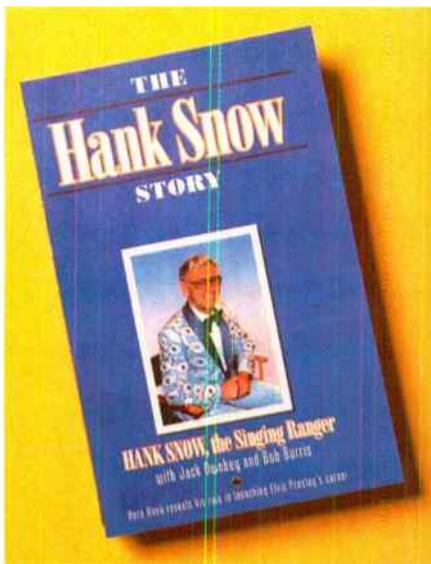
NEW! DOLLY'S COAT OF MANY COLORS BOOK FOR CHILDREN (NOT SHOWN)

Also, don't miss the touching story of a young Dolly Parton growing up in the rolling hills of Tennessee. Ask for #B5P, \$14.



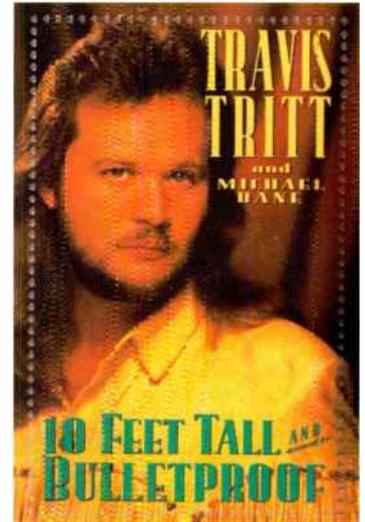
BRAND NEW! THE HANK SNOW STORY (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

Here is one of the biggest country music books of the year, featuring revelations from a long-time, outspoken star. With remarkable candor, Hank Snow traces his life from its humble beginnings in a small town in Canada, with his parents' divorce, his grandmother's abuse and his stepfather's cruelty, through to his emergence as an entertainer in Canada, in the United States and throughout the world. Through it all, he gained stature as one of the most influential figures in country music. He reveals the inner workings of the music industry, including his vital and unsung role in launching the career of Elvis Presley. Don't miss this compelling story. Hardcover, 6" x 9", 552 pages, 102 photographs. Ask for #B4V, \$29.95.



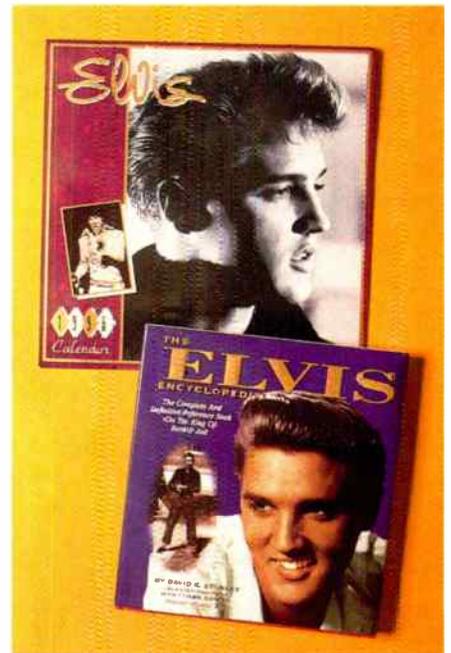
NEW! TRAVIS TRITT: 10 FEET TALL AND BULLETPROOF (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

Tritt is the king of Nashville's new generation of outlaws, one of the youngest members ever inducted into the Grand Ole Opry and one of country music's hottest new superstars. Now you can meet the real Travis Tritt, in the words of the talented performer who gave us the honesty, humor and forthright lyrics of hits like "Here's a Quarter (Call Someone Who Cares)," "t.r.o.u.b.l.e." and "Put Some Drive in Your Country." He talks about his non-glamorous years, with two failed marriages, a job loading trucks and an unrewarding career in sales. He cites lessons learned along the way from mentors like Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings. We see Tritt struggling to find his true vocation, fighting his way out of the narrow box of prejudice that comes with the territory and using the best weapon he has...his music. Hardcover, 216 pages, illustrated, #B5C, \$19.95.



NEW! THE ELVIS ENCYCLOPEDIA AND 1995 ELVIS PRESLEY CALENDAR

The Elvis Encyclopedia, The Complete and Definitive Reference Book on the King of Rock & Roll is just as it states—the first complete and authentic reference volume that contains all there is to know about Elvis. It's compiled by his stepbrother, David Stanley, who traveled and lived with Elvis at Graceland for 17 years. After talking with fans and fielding questions about Elvis, some of which even he couldn't answer, Stanley knew what he had to do: compile a reliable sourcebook on the life and person of Elvis Presley. The result of his work includes every relevant, interesting, and amusing event in Elvis' 42 years. You'll find

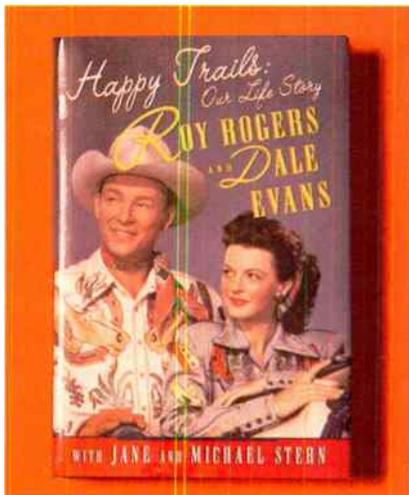


BRAND NEW! HAPPY TRAILS: OUR LIFE STORY ROY ROGERS AND DALE EVANS (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

Beloved and admired by millions, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans are true American icons. They were childhood heroes to millions who grew up in a more innocent

and romantic time. In their brand new autobiography, *Happy Trails*, these two living legends finally tell their stories.

Tracing his life from his midwest childhood, through his early years as a singing cowboy, to his almost instant box office success in Western movies, *Happy Trails* follows the life and career of Roy Rogers and parallels it with that of Dale Evans, a singer and dancer who initially had no intention of becoming a Western movie actress. But when she teamed up with Roy, the public responded, and soon on-screen romance became a real-life marriage. The Cowboy King and his Western Queen are enduring symbols of a time when America seemed brimming with promise and hope. The story of their 50-year love affair will appeal to all who long for heroes in real life as well as on the screen. This is a story that every fan, every American, should read. Hardcover, 6 1/8" x 9 1/4", 256 pages, 32 pages of black and white photographs. Ask for #B5M, \$23.



reproductions of documents such as Elvis' birth certificate and over 250 photographs—some never published. There are comprehensive lists of songs, tour dates, recordings, films and an insider's section that relates intimate information about Elvis' pastimes, general preferences, his drug use and more. Whether you're a die-hard fan, or an Elvis trivia buff, you won't want to miss this new book. Request #B1V, \$29.95.

THE OFFICIAL 1995 ELVIS PRESLEY WALL CALENDAR

Here are twelve fabulous, high-gloss photos of "The King" during the early years of his legendary career. It measures 12" x 12" and opens up to a big 12" x 24". Don't miss this bestseller. Request #G6F, \$10.95. Order both the calendar and the book for \$37.90 and SAVE \$3.00.

I LOVE COUNTRY MUSIC BASEBALL CAP

You've seen our ever-so-popular "I Love Country Music" T-shirt. Now you can get the same design on a baseball cap. The "I Love Country Music" baseball cap comes in midnight black with the words "I Love Country Music" and the designs of the guitar and banjo all in puffed white. To add a nice touch, the words "Country Music" and "love" are highlighted in a subtle red. The baseball cap is 100% polyester, with foam lining inside the top-front and mesh in the back for ventilation—it is extremely comfortable. The cap costs only \$6.95, #G2N.



DIAMOND CHIP WATCH

Move over, Gucci! Here is a gorgeous, 24-karat, gold-layered watch with a *real diamond!* We have proudly displayed our *Country Music Magazine* logo in gold, contrasting nicely with the black face and pebble-grain, genuine leather strap. The diamond and the gold-color hour, minute and second hands add a handsome touch to the highly accurate, quartz electronic analog movement. This watch is so good-looking that Tony Bunting, a Vice President of *Country Music Magazine*, wears his daily, and I must say it looks sharp! The *Country Music* diamond watch is for both men and women and only costs \$19.95, #G4L. I have given this watch to family and friends as gifts, and they just love it—it looks more expensive than it is!



JOHNNY CASH: COME ALONG AND RIDE THIS TRAIN

This has got to be one of the most phenomenal collections of recordings and insights into American history ever assembled! *Johnny Cash: Come Along and Ride This Train* brings together 87 songs on four CD's, and covers Cash's saga and Americana numbers from 1960 to 1977. It begins with the material from his *Ride This Train* album, then continues with *Blood, Sweat and Tears*, *Mean As Hell: Ballads from the True West* and *Bitter Tears*, and follows through with *America*, *From Sea to Shining Sea* and *The Rambler* albums. Cash ran the gamut on these, from the wild West to dramatic incidents in American history, to life in rural America, to vignettes from his own Arkansas boyhood. Among the Cash standards that debuted on these albums are "Busted," "Mr. Garfield," "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" and "25 Minutes to Go." And, as Bob Allen states in his superb liner notes, "Much of this music is a testament to Cash's most vital, creatively focused, and thematically ambitious period as a writer, singer and interpreter..." *Johnny Cash: Come Along and Ride This Train* also includes a 32-page booklet with original comments about his *Ride This Train* album from Merle Travis and Tex Ritter, and liner notes detailing the immense influence the American Indians have had on him. Illustrating this booklet are various publicity shots of Cash in his Western movies—many of them never published. When Marty Stuart came to *Country Music Magazine's* office to visit Publisher Russ Barnard, Marty couldn't wait to get his hands on our copy of *Come Along and Ride This Train*—he got it! And for anyone who knows Marty, he only collects the best! This set costs \$99.95, #BCD15563.

JOHNNY CASH: THE MAN IN BLACK (1959-1962)

Here is yet another fantastic compilation of Cash's recordings, brought together in a five-CD Bear Family boxed-set. *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black* covers four of his most distinguished recording years from 1959-1962. Included in this 134-song collection are: "The Great Speckled Bird," "If We Never Meet Again," "Were You There (When They Crucified My Lord)," "I'll Remember You," "I Got Stripes," "Five Feet High and Rising," "Second Honeymoon," "Tennessee Flat Top Box," "Sing It Pretty Sue," "Bonanza," "I'm Free From the Chain Gang Now," "Tall Man," "Five Minutes to Live," "The Big Battle," "The Girl in Saskatoon," "An Empty Chair," "Relief is Just a Swallow Away" and "The Fable of Willie Brown." For \$129.95, #BCD15562, also included is a 39-page booklet illustrated with photos of Johnny in his younger days, liner notes explaining the meanings behind the songs, his move to Hollywood, a discography and more.

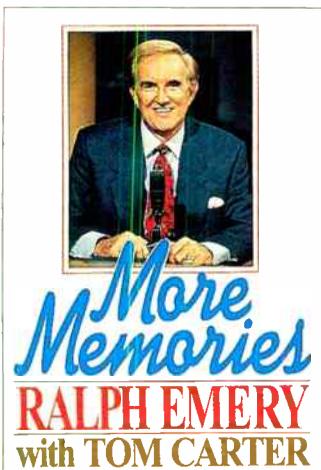
JOHNNY CASH: THE MAN IN BLACK (1954-1958)

And, finally, here is a third Johnny Cash boxed-set by Bear Family, also titled *Johnny Cash: The Man in Black* but covering his recording years from 1954-1958. Packaged in a handsome, five-CD boxed-set, this arrangement consists of over 100 songs: "Don't Make Me Go," "Next in Line," "Home of the Blues," "Doin' My Time," "Oh Lonesome Me," "Oh What a Dream," "What Do I Care," "All Over Again," "Walkin' the Blues," "Sugartime," "Born to Lose," "You're the Nearest Thing to Heaven," "Fools Hall of Fame" and lots more. Also included is a 36-page booklet filled with plenty of photos of a young Cash (some previously unpublished), a self-written life story, an outline of his life from 1954-1958, and even a discography. For only \$129.95, #BCD15517, you don't want to miss out on this fine collection or on "The Man in Black" during his prime.

RALPH EMERY: MORE MEMORIES

His first book, *Memories*, sold more than 330,000 and climbed to Number Two on *The New York Times* bestseller list. Now the popular talk show host brings country fans *More Memories*, a new collection of down-home anecdotes and interviews with some of country music's brightest stars—past and present. *More Memories* is also a chronicle of the growing pains of country music, an insider's look at how it has changed from a business where everybody knew everybody into an impersonal, multi-billion dollar industry. This 288-page, illustrated, hardcover edition sells for \$21.95, #B4A.

If you missed the original *Memories* edition, order it now too. Specify item #B5S for \$19.95.

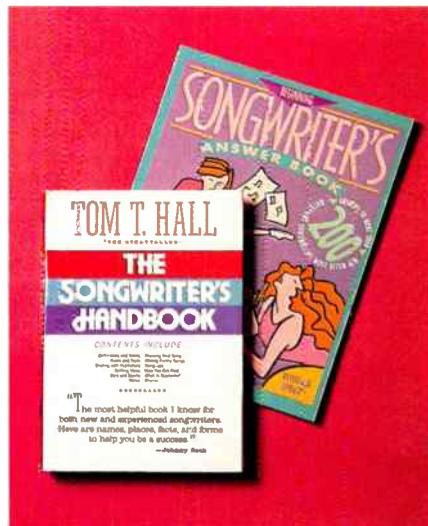


GREAT GUIDES TO SONGWRITING

The Beginning Songwriter's Answer Book gives the new songwriter the essential tools for the craft. Over 200 most often asked questions are addressed, from lyrics and structure to publishing and the music industry itself. Straightforward and easy-to-read, this new book is a must for new songwriters. Item #B2C, \$16.95.

Veteran Tom T. Hall's long-esteemed *Songwriter's Handbook* is a practical guide that Johnny Cash says is "The most helpful book I know for . . . songwriters. Here are the names, places, facts and forms to help you be a success." Tom T. tells it like it is, with all the wisdom and wit of a legendary songwriter and storyteller. Contents include Rules and Tools, Hang-ups, Ideas, Do's and Don'ts and much more. Item #B9H, \$14.95.

Order both for \$29.90—**SAVE \$2.00!**



NEW! REBA MCENTIRE AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

Her talent and songs have made her today's bestselling female country music recording artist, as well as one of the top performers on the concert circuit, and one of the world's most awarded show business performers. Now, at last, Reba McEntire presents the most moving story of all—her own. Here is the full autobiography of one of today's most beloved and successful entertainers told with all the winning style, heartwrenching honesty, delightful humor and unbounded energy that have earned her the love of her millions of fans. From her Oklahoma ances-



NEW! HANK WILLIAMS BIOGRAPHY AND VIDEOS

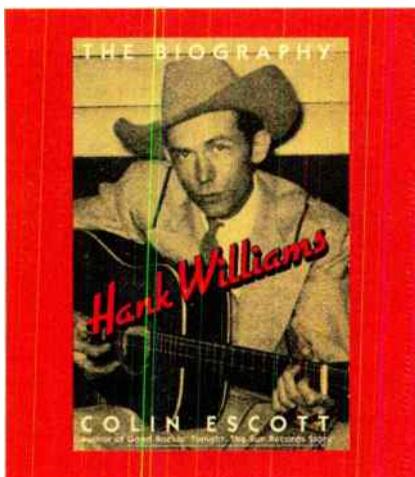
We are now offering the upcoming, new *Hank Williams: The Biography* (June release). This is the definitive biography of this country music legend. Based on years of research and interviews, it discards the myths created by heirs (who claim they never saw him drunk) and fellow performers (who never saw him so-

ber). Hank Williams emerges as a "pure product of America"—driven, unsophisticated, intelligent, weak. Order your copy early and pay \$20.95—**\$2.00 OFF**—#B2A.

You'll also want the new video, *In the Hank Williams Tradition* (not shown), which traces Hank's incredible life story through rare film clips, music and revealing interviews. Featured are such favorites as "Your Cheatin' Heart" and "I'm So Lonesome, I Could Cry." There's also Hank singing "Hey, Good Lookin'" and four others. This video is a country music collectible. Select #V2M, \$19.95.

And here is another fascinating new video, *Hank Williams: The Show He Never Gave* (not shown). Using Hank's last ride as its dramatic context, this movie permits the haunted singer to play one final show in the mythical roadhouse, during which all his fears and passions—all his genius—tumble out for us to see. "Sneazy" Waters plays the self-destructive superstar and performs 23 songs. Ask for #V2L, \$24.95.

When you order any two Hank Williams items, **DEDUCT \$2.00 MORE!**



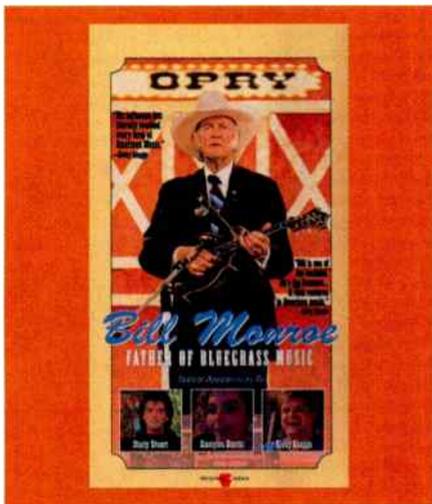
tors who rode with outlaws through her experiences as a daughter, sister, wife and mother, Reba shares the touching memories which have shaped her life and career. With her much admired candor she also presents many of the feelings and perspectives that have won her praise as one of the foremost chroniclers in song of the emotional ups and downs of modern women. There have been other books about Reba. Now it is time to read her story in her words, told with the help of Tom Carter, co-author of numerous nonfiction books including Ralph Emery's two *New York Times* bestsellers, *Memories* and *More Memories*. Ask for #B2F. Reserve this illustrated, hardcover edition early (it has a June release date) and **SAVE \$2.00**. You pay \$19.95.

Don't miss Reba's newly released video either. *Greatest Hits* (not shown) features the making of "The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia" plus "Take It Back," "The Heart Won't Lie," "It's Your Call" and more. This new video is #V3D, \$29.95. (Don't miss the two additional Reba videos we are offering for sale on page 59 of this issue.)

When you order both the book and video, **DEDUCT \$1.00 MORE**—pay just \$48.90.

NEW VIDEO! BILL MONROE: FATHER OF BLUEGRASS MUSIC

Made with the cooperation of Bill Monroe, ex-Bluegrass Boys and others, this documentary clearly defines Bill's unique role in American music. It covers his early years in Kentucky with great video footage. The era of The Monroe Brothers, the Opry, the classic Flatt-Scruggs-Wise version of The Bluegrass Boys—all are covered. Even smaller details of his career aren't overlooked, such as his long estrangement from the Gibson company and his gutsy insistence on performing right after major surgery a decade ago. Of great interest are interludes with the likes of John Hartford, Sonny Osborne and Mac Wiseman. #V2K—\$19.95.



NEW COUNTRY MUSIC CELEBRITY SPOOF TROLL DOLLS

Can you guess the identities of these country music and rock 'n' roll superstars? They are just two of the growing number of headliners released in this popular new Celebrity Spoof Troll series. These hideously cute spoof dolls measure 7" high and are made of sturdy, high-impact plastic. They make great gag gifts. We'll be offering others in the future, so keep your eyes open. Country Music Doll on the left is #D1B. Rock 'n' Roll Doll on the right is D1C. Only \$16 each. Order both for \$29.95. YOU SAVE \$2.05!



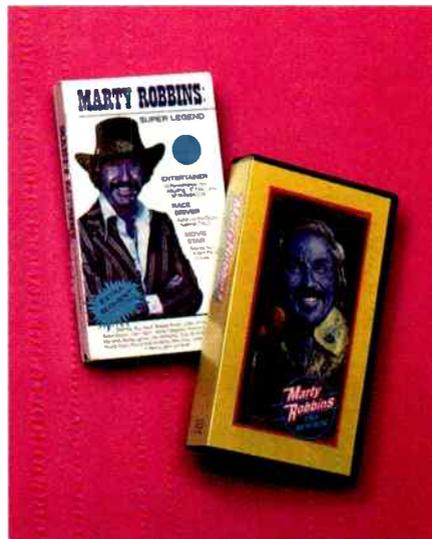
MARTY ROBBINS VIDEOS

Complete your Marty Robbins video collection! If you haven't seen one of these productions, you're missing out.

The two-hour video, *Super Legend*, features 18 performances and candid interviews with family and friends like Roy Acuff. Also included are early big screen and television appearances. You'll find familiar Robbins hits like "El Paso," "White Sport Coat," "Ribbon of Darkness," "Singing the Blues," "I Can't Keep from Crying," "Devil Woman" and his Grammy-winning song, "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife." Ask for item #G2A, \$39.95.

Marty Robbins made it his business to take the road less travelled in the music industry. While this often baffled industry folks, his fans loved it. He knew just how to show his fans a good time. And that's exactly what's been captured on *The Man and His Music*, a 55-minute video taped during a 1980 Grand Ole Opry concert. Ask for #GIG, \$29.95.

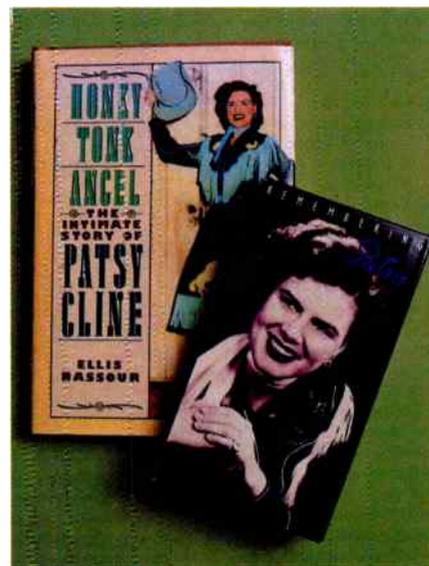
No one has seen Robbins at his best till they've seen his TV shows. Now these classics are available on three volumes, *Best of His TV Show*, Volumes 1 (#V8E), 2 (#V9I) and 3 (V2E). With Volume 1, you revisit Marty's first syndicated show (1968-1969). Thirty-nine shows are edited into back-to-back per-



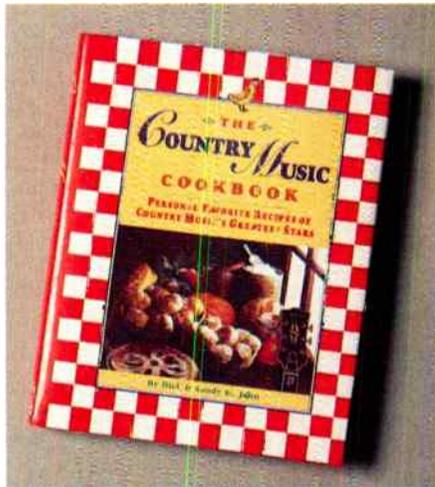
formances with 21 songs and his usual hilarious segments. It features standards such as, "Lovesick Blues," "Low and Lonely" and "Tumbling Tumbleweeds." Volume 2 is an extension of the first with hits like "Candy Kisses" and "Never Tie Me Down," with 22 songs in all. The final in the series also features 22 hits like "Room Full of Roses" and "Now Is the Hour." Each video is \$29.95. ORDER TWO OR MORE OF THESE FIVE VIDEOS AND DEDUCT \$3.00!

PATSY CLINE IN PRINT AND ON VIDEO

1993 marked the 30th anniversary of the tragic death of Patsy Cline, along with fellow stars Cowboy Copas and Hawkshaw Hawkins, who perished in a plane crash near Waverly, Tennessee. *Honky Tonk Angel: The Intimate Story of Patsy Cline* is the definitive biography of this country music superstar. Author Ellis Nassour taps right into the tumultuous heart of this musical legend. His initial 1981 study of Patsy Cline received accolades from the likes of *Billboard* and the *Houston Post*. Since then, he has investigated Patsy to even greater depths, and his 14-year passion for the singer has resulted in this authoritative, engaging biography. It's the best look at her career so far, with plenty of information about her early days in Virginia, her initial popularity in the Washington, D.C., area, her hit with "Walkin' After Midnight," her marriages to Gerald Cline and then to Charlie Dick and their move to Nashville. Nassour does not sanitize the facts. He weaves together a fascinating oral history of the star from interviews he conducted with more than 125 family members, friends and other intimates including Dottie West, Loretta Lynn, Patsy's mother and her two husbands. Hardcover. # B4B—\$22.95.

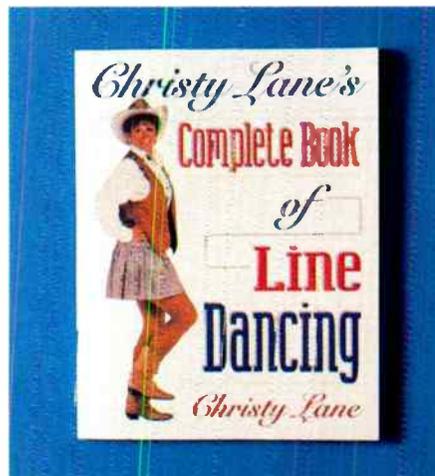


Remembering Patsy, the 60-minute video from Hallway Productions in Nashville, features 17 Patsy songs and 10 rare television appearances, recently discovered and never before seen on home video. This video is a collector's gem for any Patsy Cline fan. Ask for item #V1E - \$19.95. OR ORDER BOTH FOR ONLY \$38.90—YOU SAVE \$3.00!



BRAND NEW! PERSONAL RECIPES OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S GREATEST STARS

Here are over 100 of country music's biggest stars sharing their favorite recipes. There's everything from Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Breadsticks" to Clint Black's "Guiltless Burritos" and Dolly Parton's "You Will Always Love My Favorite Dessert." But recipes are only part of the story. There are also intimate profiles along with "then" and "now" photos of everyone. Hardcover, 7 1/2" x 9 1/2", 240 pages, 200 photographs. Ask for #B4K, \$19.95.



THE COMPLETE BOOK OF LINE DANCING AND HOT DANCE VIDEOS!

With five dance books and 23 videos behind her, Christy Lane is more than qualified to present *The Complete Book of Line Dancing*. She leads you through 55 easy-to-follow illustrations for dancers at all levels. Softcover. Item #B1T, \$13.95. And get Christy's first two videos, *Line Dancing Volume I* (#V2X) and *Volume II* (#V2Z). Volume I features Tush Push, Boot Scoot, Electric Slide, Slappin' Leather, The Freeze and Alley Cat. Volume II includes Achy Breaky, Cowboy Boogie, Cowboy Cha Cha, Elvira Dance and Walkin' Wazie. Each video \$14.95. For Christy's latest videos with the hottest new dances, see page 76 of this issue.

THE GEORGE JONES VIDEO AND ALBUM CORNER

If you are a Jones fan, or a country music fan at any level, you'll be interested in this album and three videos. They're the best there is on this country music superstar.

SAME OLE ME—60 MINS.

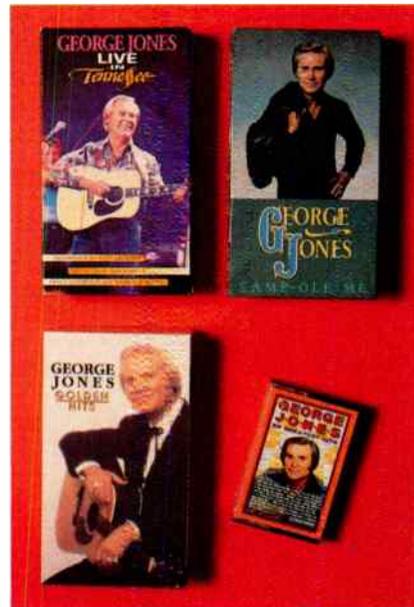
Same Ole Me is the story of George Jones, finally told his way with the help of such great stars as Roy Acuff, Loretta Lynn and Johnny Cash. It includes such hits as "He Stopped Loving Her Today," "Bartender's Blues," "The Race Is On," "She Thinks I Still Care," "White Lightning," "Why Baby Why?" AND MORE! Ask for video #G4Z, \$29.95.

LIVE IN TENNESSEE—54 MINS.

Live from the Knoxville Civic Coliseum, you'll see George thrill the audience with 15 of his songs including "I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair" and the great classic, "He Stopped Loving Her Today." There's also "The Race Is On," "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes," "Bartender's Blues," "Once You've Had the Best" AND 9 MORE! Ask for video #V1X, \$19.95.

GOLDEN HITS—50 MINS.

This video presents Jones talking about his greatest hit songs and performing these songs at the time each one was released. We're taken into a time capsule that allows us to experience the career of this "living legend" as it unfolds. Some of the 14 songs are "White Lightning" (Feb.



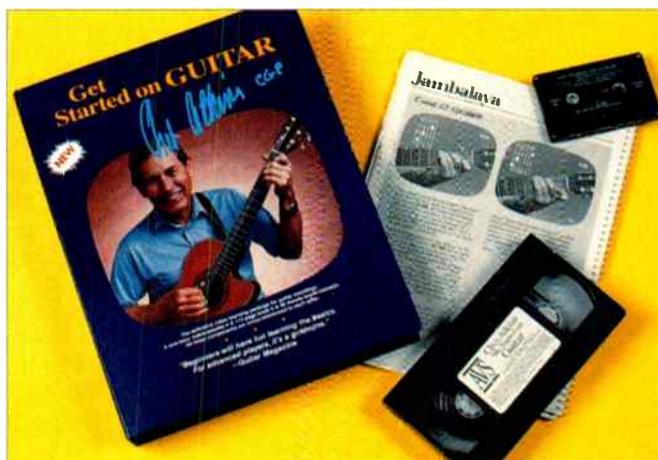
9, 1959), "Near You" (Dec. 11, 1976) and "He Stopped Loving Her Today" (April 12, 1980). Ask for video #V3T, \$19.95.

20 GREATEST HITS CASSETTE/CD

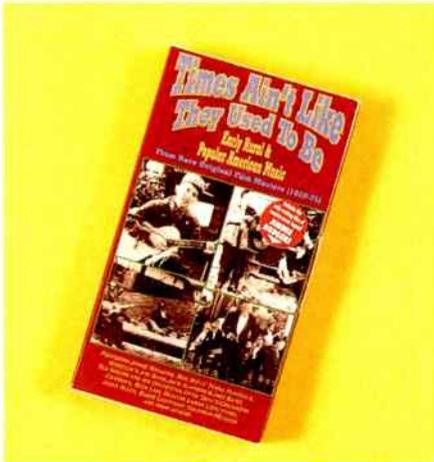
Included on this album are "The Race Is On," "Take Me," "From Here to the Door," "You Gotta Be My Baby," "White Lightning," "I'm Ragged but I'm Right," "Run Boy" and 13 MORE! Order cassette #CASS34 - \$8.95 or CD #CD34 - \$12.95.

CHET ATKINS VIDEO INSTRUCTION COURSE: GET STARTED ON GUITAR

Here is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn to play the guitar (or sharpen your existing skills) with one of the grandmasters of guitar pickin'. With the *Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar* video course, beginners can have fun learning the basics, and advanced players will discover a true goldmine of helpful hints and ideas. *Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar* includes a one-hour video cassette, a 112-page instruction book and a 40-minute audio cassette—all three components cross-referenced to each other and packaged in a sturdy plastic case for convenient carrying and access. The instruction book will guide you through the music Chet plays in the video. Each tune has its own chapter complete with advanced tips and basic information. There are also special easy-to-read reference sections titled "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...plus an on-screen clock to help you go instantly to specific spots on the video. You receive the video, audio cassette, instruction booklet and the binder case all for only \$69.95. Specify #B2G.



NEW VIDEO! TIMES AIN'T LIKE THEY USED TO BE: RARE ORIGINAL MUSIC FILM MASTERS 1928-1935 (FEATURING JIMMIE RODGERS)

In the early days of sound film, in addition to covering major events, newsreel cameras captured the sights and sound of everyday life in America, including its music. Musicians were filmed by roving crews at country dances, in nightclubs, broadcasts from churches and radio stations. Until this new 70-minute video was put together, most of this film remained raw, unused footage. The compelling performances assembled here communicate the innocence and power of the music of everyday America from an earlier era. Besides Jimmie Rodgers, some of the other pioneers included are Bob Wills' Texas Playboys and Otto Gray's Oklahoma Cowboys. This video is an essential country collectible for only \$29.95, #V11.

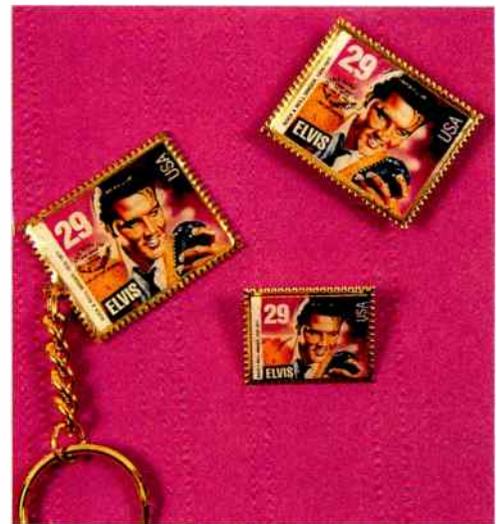
THE STATLER BROTHERS

Everyone knows that The Statlers (the only hosts of a current TV variety show) have deep roots in gospel music, where the act began in 1955, under the name The Kingsmen. *The Statler Brothers Gospel Favorites* is a 22-track compact disc that



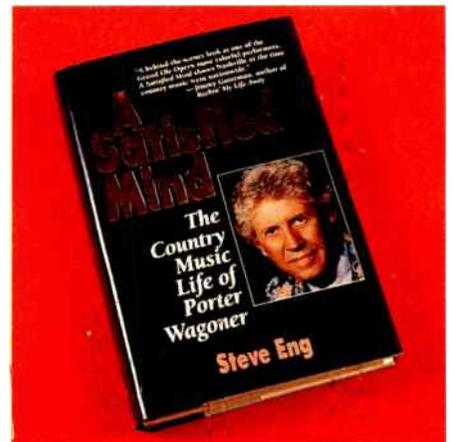
ELVIS U.S. POSTAL STAMP—ON THE ONLY OFFICIALLY LICENSED KEY CHAIN, LAPEL PIN, MAGNET (3-PIECE SET)

You don't want to miss this fabulous keepsake collection depicting the most famous commemorative stamp in history. The striking, full-color energy of the stamp's design has been vividly captured in an exclusive "photomagic" process, with intricate brass borders and a protective epoxy dome to protect the finish. This officially licensed issue marks the first use of a front-side cancellation of a stamp on a key chain, lapel pin and magnet. You receive ALL THREE Elvis stamp collectibles for only \$15.95, #S1S.



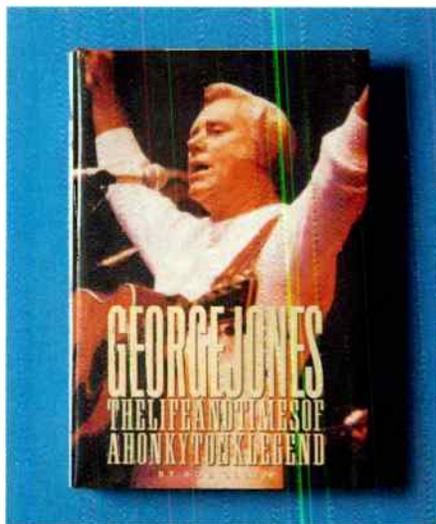
A SATISFIED MIND: THE COUNTRY MUSIC LIFE OF PORTER WAGONER

His name rolls across the memory and into the present like one of those rhinestone-spangled wagon wheels stitched onto his famous stage costumes. With the name comes a blur of images, facts and snatches of gossip, like a kaleidoscope filled with sequins. Behind Porter's glitter and showman's big grin lies a complex personality whose life story—until now—has never been told in detail. Country music fans are somewhat familiar with the rise of "The Thin Man from West Plains" from working in a Missouri butcher shop to national prominence on the



includes the boys singing just about every gospel song that ever mattered, from "Amazing Grace," "Rock of Ages" and "Turn Your Radio On" to "The Old Rugged Cross," "Sweet By and By," "Precious Memories," "Just a Little Talk with Jesus" and "How Great Thou Art." They also tackle Stuart Hamblen's "This Ole House" and "Over the Sunset Mountains." Several numbers are originals, such as "I Believe I'll Live for Him" and "Jesus Is the Answer Everytime." The other favorites include "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder," "I'll Fly Away, I'll Fly Away," "Noah Found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord," "There Is Power in the Blood," "Blessed Be," "Love Lifted Me," "A Beautiful Life," "A Different Song" and "In the Garden." If you ever wanted this portion of The Statlers' repertoire all in one place, this is an excellent way to get it. You can order this outstanding CD for only \$11.95, #HD2012.

Grand Ole Opry. Many know that for seven years he gave Dolly Parton unparalleled opportunities both on his television show and in live performances, and that for nine years he produced her hit records. But until now the facts of his own early life have remained obscure. *A Satisfied Mind* cuts through the tabloid gossip to show the complex, adventurous and enormously methodical man behind the image. However, this is no standard biography. Reflecting more than three years of research and writing, it is rich in detail and historical perspective. The pages come alive with dialogue from more than 160 interviews, with Porter himself, with Chet Atkins, Dolly Parton, Norma Jean, Si Siman (his first manager) and even his school teachers and members of his first bluegrass band. Porter's relationship with RCA, his financial entanglement with Dolly Parton (leading to lawsuits) and his behind-the-scenes leadership at the Grand Ole Opry have been brought to light with painstaking care. Here is a rich story of an unbelievable, sometimes outrageous, and certainly inspiring man and his career. It's hardcover, illustrated and sells for only \$19.95, #B1K.



GEORGE JONES: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A HONKY TONK LEGEND

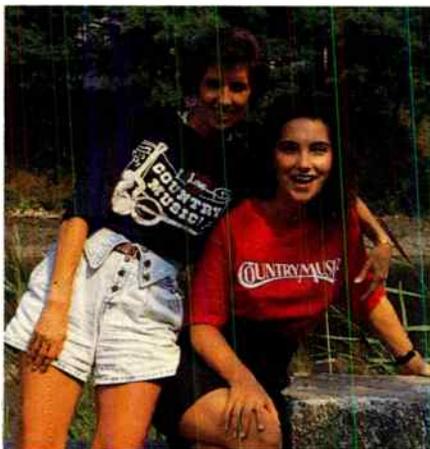
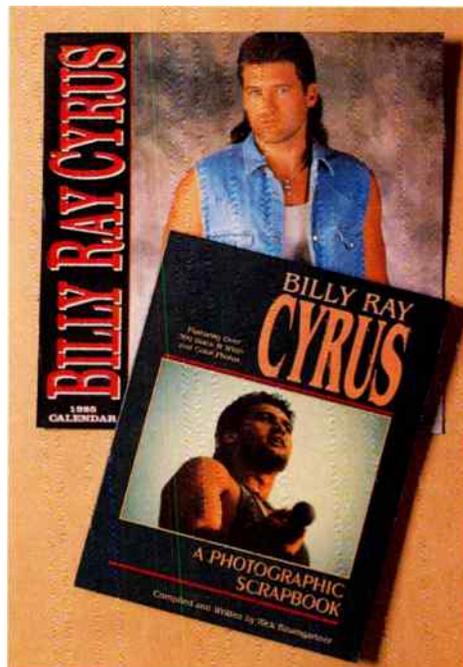
In his tumultuous life, George Jones has been like two men running in opposite directions. He's the only country singer to have had a Number One hit single in each of the last four decades and whose voice, some say, has a quality so powerful that it's "felt," and not merely heard. The other Jones is a man who drank whiskey like water, shot at his best friend and destroyed his own home in a fit of rage. This newly revised book, written by *Country Music*'s own Contributing Editor, Bob Allen, explores both sides of this complex man. We follow him through his impoverished boyhood in Texas, his stint on the honky tonk circuit, his rise to stardom and descent into alcoholic hell, and his stormy marriage to and divorce from Tammy Wynette. This captivating biography brings readers up to date as Jones marries the woman of his dreams, stays clean and sober, and achieves the status as the Grand Old Man of country music. Hardcover, 306 pages, illustrated. Request #B2Y. \$19.95.

BRAND NEW! 1995 BILLY RAY CYRUS PHOTO CALENDAR!

Don't miss the new Billy Ray Cyrus Calendar for 1995. It measures a big 12" x 12" and features twelve sensational, high-gloss color photos of Billy Ray in different poses. Ask for #G3G, \$11.99.

THE BILLY RAY CYRUS SCRAPBOOK

Not only is this the first photo-filled book about Billy Ray, but it's also the most intimate look at him that you'll find anywhere. The author traveled to Billy's hometown of Flatwoods, Kentucky, and visited with the friends and family who know him best. The book contains over 325 black and white and color photos (some even taken from BRC's old bedroom walls) and personal, detailed captions chronicling his life and career. Fans are calling it "the bible on Billy Ray." Billy Ray himself endorses this photographic biography. He says, "Man, you really hit the nail right on the head, you really did. Thanks for takin' the time to prove that I'm certainly no overnight success. Pictures don't lie!" Softcover, 159 pages. Ask for #B4J, \$19.95.



COUNTRY MUSIC T-SHIRTS AND BASEBALL CAP

The holiday season is the perfect time to get the widely recognized *Country Music Magazine* logo on a 100% cotton Champion t-shirt in navy blue or red. The logo is in white. Or pick our other bestselling "I Love Country Music" T-shirt in navy blue only. They are \$10 each. *Country Music* logo T-shirt, #G2P-navy blue, #G2Q-red; "I Love Country Music," #G2O-navy blue only. S, M, L, XL and now, XXL.

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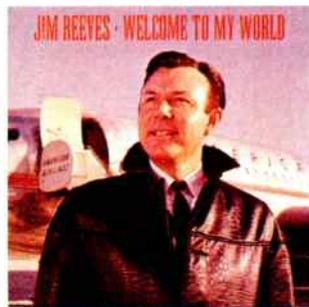
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Buried Treasures

by Rich Kienzle

Jim Reeves: 1994 marks the 30th anniversary of Jim Reeves' death in a plane crash outside Nashville. Bear Family has honored that occasion by assembling every single song Reeves commercially recorded, plus dozens of demo recordings, into *Welcome to My World* (BCD 15656). All told, it encompasses 447 songs on 16 CD's, beginning with his first four 1949 recordings for Macy's, a tiny Texas label. There's no sense in listing the



songs—if he recorded it, it's here—from the complete Abbott recordings, including his first hit, "Mexican Joe," and a number of alternate takes, through all the RCA Victors. Even 26 RCA cuts that received overdubbed accompaniment are reissued, including his ghostly hit duet on "Don't Let Me Cross Over" with Deborah Allen. Also here are the equally ghostly, and questionably tasteful, 1980 versions of "Have You Ever Been Lonely" and "I Fall to Pieces" that combined Jim's voice with Patsy Cline's.

And that's not all. Discs 15 and 16 feature dozens of previously unheard demo recordings, and provide insights into the way he achieved his vocal style. The earliest, featuring only voice and guitar, come from radio station KGRI in Henderson, Texas, where Reeves worked as an announcer. More amazing are three fine-sounding 1952 live tracks with a band that he recorded at Reo Palm Isle, a legendary Longview, Texas, honky tonk. Later demos include four with his band, The Blue Boys,

from a 1959 recording session for a Mary Carter Paint radio ad. It's generally accepted that Reeves began his recording career singing in a higher register and later evolved into a deep, mellow crooner when he did "Four Walls." However, he was singing low on some of the early demos. One early Abbott recording, "Padre of Old San Antone," featured vibes and a vocal chorus much like his later RCA Nashville Sound recordings.

This is a lot of Jim Reeves for any but the biggest fan, and an expensive package. But for those who must have it all, the sound quality is phenomenal, even on the early demos. A 124-page booklet features detailed notes, a discography and what appears to be every Reeves photo available. Only the true Reeves fanatic may want this, but for those who do, set aside several months to digest it all.

George Jones: I annotated this collection, so nothing but the facts. Sony Legacy's Columbia Country Classic series returns with *The Essential George Jones: The Spirit of Country* (Legacy E2K 52451). This two-disc, 44-song box collection covers most of the biggest hits of Jones' career, from the beginning in 1955 through 1988. As with the Bill Monroe set reviewed elsewhere in this column, this compilation was done through cross-licensing non-Columbia Jones hits such as "Why Baby Why" and "Just One More" (Starday); "Color of the Blues," "White Lighting" and "Who Shot Sam" (Mercury); "She Thinks I Still Care," "We Must Have Been Out of Our Minds" with Melba Montgomery and "The Race Is On" (United Artists); and "Love Bug," "I'm a People," "If My Heart Had Windows," "A Good Year for the Roses" and "Walk Through This World with Me" (Musicor).

The remainder of the collection covers the Epic years from his first hit, "We Can

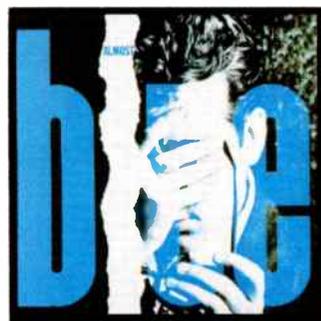
Make It," recorded in 1971. Five duets with Tammy, "The Ceremony," "We're Gonna Hold On," "Golden Ring," "Near You" and "Two Story House," are included along with duets with James Taylor; "Bartender's Blues," Johnny Paycheck, "Maybelline," and Ray Charles, "We Didn't See a Thing." The obvious Jones solo hits, "The Grand Tour," "A Picture of Me (Without You)," "He Stopped Loving Her Today," "Same Ole Me" and the other biggies up through "One Woman Man," are here. The set ends with the off-the-wall "Ya Ba Da Ba Do (So Are You)," also known as "The King Is Gone (And So Are You)." It's the first time Jones material from beginning to end has been released on one commercially available set (Time-Life offered a subscriber-only Jones LP box in 1983).

Merle Travis: *Hoedown Shows and Films* (RFD CD 14) features 14 Travis performances for the Armed Forces Radio's *Country Hoedown* show, four soundtracks from late 1940's "soundie" films and six from his 1951 Snader Telescriptions. He performs "Merle's Boogie Woogie" (not "Boogie Woogie Feelin'") with the fiery guitar of Joe Maphis, which nearly equals the studio version on which Merle overdubbed multiple guitar parts. Just as exhilarating are his live versions of "Knee Deep in Trouble," "Bayou Baby" and his slow, bluesy "Midnight Special." Backed by members of Tex Williams' Western Caravan, he tears through "Louisiana Boogie," "Cincinnati Lou" and "Fat Gal." The four Soundies are inferior to the six Snader tracks, which include "Petticoat Fever," "Spoonin' Moon" and "Too Much Sugar for a Dime," sung with then-wife Judy Hayden, which all feature a band largely made up of *Hometown Jamboree* band members including Speedy West and Harold Hensley.

"Lost John," "Nine Pound Hammer" and "Dark as a Dungeon" are solo acoustic performances.

Alas, lackadaisical production and programming mar the set. "You'd Better Be There" and "Talking Boogie" by Tex Williams and "Answer the Phone" by Ernest Tubb belong on another compilation. California collector Lou Curtiss, who provided the material, also provides confusing, ill-written and sometimes inaccurate notes. He misidentifies Merle's compositions "Louisiana Boogie," "Merle's Boogie Woogie" and "Spoonin' Moon" and refers to "Lost John" as one of "Merle's composed folksongs"; in fact, it was around before Travis. The "same trumpet guy" he mentions on the Snader tracks is ex-Texas *Playboy* Danny Algure, and the bassist is Jack Rogers, not Red Murrell.

Elvis Costello: New Wave rocker and country fan Elvis Costello attracted some notice after appearing as a guest on



George Jones' 1979 duet album, *My Very Special Guests*, produced by Billy Sherrill. Costello then appeared on a cable TV salute to George, and in May 1981 he and his band, The Attractions, traveled to Nashville to record a country album. With Sherrill producing, and a British TV documentary crew filming, they produced the excellent *Almost Blue*, released on Columbia that year. Costello tackled everything from Hank's "Why Don't You Love Me" to Hag's "The Bottle Let Me Down," to

George's "Color of the Blues" and "A Good Year for the Roses" to Patsy Cline's "Sweet Dreams" and the R&B/rockabilly favorite, "Honey Hush."

Rykodisc has reissued *Almost Blue* on CD (RCD 20277) along with eleven additional live 1982 Costello performances with The Attractions. The live performances mix songs from the album with other country favorites like Charlie Rich's "There Won't Be Anymore" and "Sittin' and Thinkin'," Leon Payne's "Psycho," the Ray Price favorite "My Shoes Keep Walking Back to You" and Elvis' own "Tears Before Bedtime."

Hardline traditionalists might find his voice weird, but compared to much of the 70's pop nonsense currently passing for country, he sounds downright hillbilly. Making the entire collection more interesting, aside from the outstanding remastered sound typical of Rykodisc reissues, are Costello's newly-written notes recalling the sessions and events leading up to them with great wit and humor.

Hillbilly Boogie: Columbia Country Classics' *Hillbilly Boogie! Volume One* (CK 53940) features 20 country boogie numbers recorded for Columbia from 1946 through 1954, roughly the period when boogies enjoyed their greatest popularity. Among those represented are Bob Wills' "Cowboy Stomp," Lefty Frizzell's "My Baby's Just Like Money," Little Jimmy Dickens' "Salty Boogie," Spade Cooley's "Three Way Boogie" and "Yodeling Polka," Johnny Bond's "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke!" and "Mean Mama Boogie," Al Dexter's excellent "New Broom Boogie" and "Saturday Night Boogie," Leon McAuliffe's "Take It Away Leon" and "Blue Guitar Stomp," Louise Massey's "Squeeze Box Polka," Paul Howard's "Rootie Tootie" and "Drinking All My Troubles Away" and Curly Williams and his Georgia Peach Pickers' "Fiddlin' Boogie" and "Georgia Boogie." A number of more obscure acts including Johnny Hicks' "Hamburger Hop" and "Get Your Kicks From the Country Hicks,"

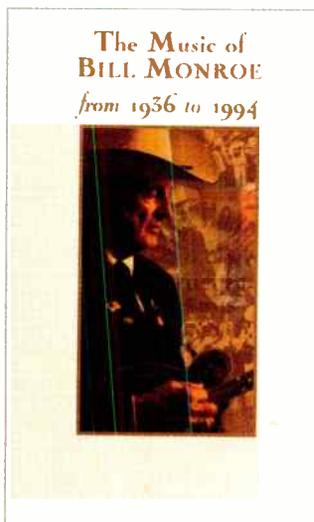
Andy Reynolds and the 101 Ranch Boys' "Beer Bottle Mama" and Smiley Maxedon round the set out.

Much of the material is fine, and this wasn't meant to be a serious historic reissue. The listening is enhanced by Bob Irwin's always outstanding remastering work. If there's a weak spot on this set, it's the selection, which omitted some great boogies while including songs that don't even remotely qualify. Johnny Bond's extensive boogie recordings for Columbia were barely touched, and "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke" doesn't boogie at all, nor does the Lefty Frizzell number. "Just Can't Live That Fast Anymore" would have been a better choice. Other excellent Columbia boogie material by Dickens, Joe Maphis, Jimmy Murphy, Sid King, The Collins Kids and Chuck Murphy was inexplicably bypassed. This set is fine, but with more careful programming it could have been much, much more.

Bill Monroe: MCA's *The Music of Bill Monroe from 1936 to 1994* (MCAD4 11048), produced in conjunction with the Country Music Foundation, features 98 songs on four CD's, all of the material outstanding. Six numbers are previously unreleased, three from live radio shows, two from live onstage performances, another track being an unissued number recorded early in 1994. The collection begins as it should, with two 1936 Bluebird recordings by The Monroe Brothers, one being the now-classic

"What Would You Give in Exchange for Your Soul."

Most significant is the live performance of "Mule Skinner Blues," taken from Monroe's historic November 25, 1939, debut on the Opry with The Blue Grass Boys that got the ball rolling. Through a process known as "cross-licensing," MCA added material from RCA and Columbia to repre-



sent all aspects of Bill's recording career. That's how The Monroe Brothers songs and two 1940-41 Bluebird recordings by The Blue Grass Boys appeared, as well as six 1945-49 Columbia recordings. It was at Columbia that Monroe truly defined his music, with a band featuring Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs and fiddler Chubby Wise. Though the Columbians included are fine, missing are such seminal sides as his two biggest hits: "Kentucky

Waltz" and "Footprints in the Snow" as well as the Columbia versions of "Blue Moon of Kentucky," "Summertime Is Past and Gone" and "My Rose of Old Kentucky." They probably had to take whatever tracks Columbia would allow.

The remaining tracks come from his 44 years with Decca/MCA. The booklet itself is beautifully done, with many rare photos and competent notes by John Rumble, though his Decca notes add little to Charles Wolfe's notes on the Bear Family Decca/MCA Monroe boxes. The big question is, who is the target audience for this set? Newcomers to Monroe might find four CD's too much, while true Monroephiles already have previously released reissues covering most of this. There's RCA's reissue of the 1940-41 Bluebird material, Legacy's Monroe Columbia box and Bear Family's comprehensive Monroe boxes, covering 1950 to 1980. In any case, the CMF would do well to reissue more unheard, early live Monroe, like the 1939 "Muleskinner Blues" track. That would fill a real need.

Delbert McCClinton: Having reviewed for this magazine for 21 years, I remember the excitement that Delbert McCClinton caused when his first ABC album, *Victim of Life's Circumstances*, was released in 1977. The tough combination of country, blues and R&B blew many of us away, and *Country Music Magazine* was among the first to see McCClinton's vitality and action. All of his ABC albums are out of print and haven't been reissued on CD, but MCA has done the next best thing with *Honky Tonk 'N Blues* (MCAD 10033). This 14-track collection of the best from all his albums features "Two More Bottles of Wine," and several other high points from the first album like "Honky Tonkin' (I Guess I Done Me Some)" and later gems like "Love Rustler."

Personally, I still think all Delbert's old ABC albums should be reissued on CD, but if that doesn't happen, this will have to do.

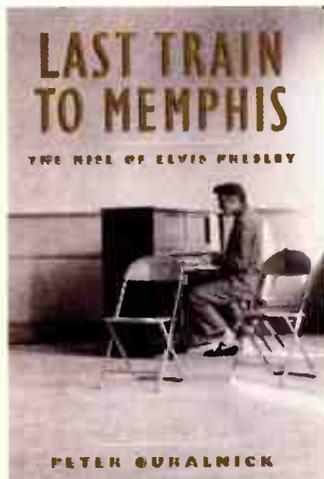
How to Get These Treasures

Available in formats shown at prices shown: Jim Reeves, *Welcome to My World* (BCD 15656), a 16-CD boxed set, \$399.95/George Jones, *The Essential George Jones: The Spirit of Country* (E2K 52451), 2 CD's or 2 cassettes, \$39.95 CD's, \$24.95 cassettes/Merle Travis, *Hoedown Shouts and Films* (RFD CD 14), CD only, \$21.95/Elvis Costello, *Almost Blue* (RCD 20277), CD or cassette, \$19.95 CD, \$12.95 cassette/Various Artists, *Hillbilly Boogie! Volume One* (CK 53940), CD or cassette, \$21.95 CD, \$15.95 cassette/Bill Monroe, *The Music of Bill Monroe from 1936 to 1994*, cassette (MCAD4 11048), a 4-CD or 4-cassette boxed set, \$69.95 CD's, \$59.95 cassettes/Delbert McCClinton, *Honky Tonk 'N Blues* (MCAD 10033), CD or cassette, \$21.95 CD, \$15.95 cassette. Send check or money order payable to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 111294, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.95 postage and handling. Canadian orders, add an additional \$3.00 postage. **CMSA Members, see For Members Only page for discounts on products offered.** Offer expires February 28, 1995.

Essential Collector by Rich Kienzle

▪ Books ▪

Elvis: Elvis books have flowed since his death 17 years ago, some worthwhile, most not worth even the wholesale cost. Not so Peter Guralnick's *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley*, volume one of his



projected two-volume Elvis biography. Guralnick has given us the definitive Elvis bio, telling the story in a way writers less competent or less literate than he is would not be able to do.

As Guralnick points out in his introduction, he wrote his first Elvis article in 1967, an era when Elvis' importance had been obscured by the wretched movies he made. That changed in the 70's as Guralnick and others looked seriously at Presley's career (though some, like rock writer Greil Marcus, relied on pompous overinterpretation). The result of all Guralnick's research is rich, flowing detail that places the reader in 1950's Memphis, a city where eccentrics were a way of life. There, Elvis, son of a loving, overprotective mother and an unambitious father, began to stand out and gain confidence, only to be turned inside out by his sudden, unanticipated rise to fame.

Guralnick likewise breathes life into the cast of local characters involved in Presley's rapid rise, from neighbors who taught him guitar to Memphis

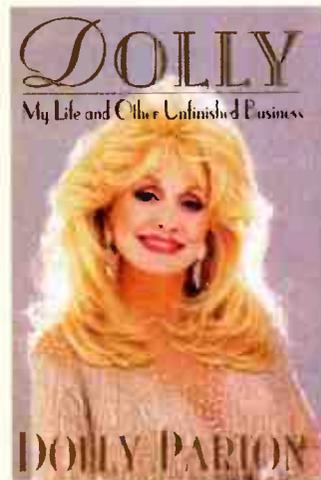
DJ/wildman Dewey Phillips, Sun Records owner Sam Phillips (no relation), Elvis' early girlfriends and original sidemen Scotty Moore and Bill Black. Colonel Parker, RCA's Steve Sholes and others join the narrative. Interviews with 1950's RCA employees Chick Crumpacker and Brad McCuen shed light on Elvis' early stardom. Guralnick has written a true classic in American music biographies, one that will make everyone hanker for the second volume, due in 1996.

Last Train to Memphis aside, there are still the *other* Elvis books, like art gallery owner and art historian Patricia Jobe Pierce's *The Ultimate Elvis*. This volume's classy appearance is about as good as it gets. Pierce may know art, but not the art of music or of Elvis. Her ignorance of music history provides an unending stream of factual errors; most of her accurate facts have appeared many times elsewhere. It's bad enough to irresponsibly speculate "Some people felt Vernon Presley...had been sexually assaulted in prison," but to state that in 1944, at age nine, Elvis "yearned to be like Hank Williams and Jimmie Rodgers" is bizarre. At that time Hank Williams was unknown outside Alabama, and didn't have a hit record until 1947. Such inattention to detail destroys the book's credibility and makes it an embarrassment. The dust jacket remarks begin with the words "Fan Alert!" I agree. Consider it a warning, fans.

Dolly: Everyone else has written their autobiography, so why not Dolly Rebecca Parton? Well, there are differences between *My Life and Other Unfinished Business* and similar superstar books. For one thing, Dolly's voice tells the story, untempered by any obvious ghostwriters, and peppers it with vivid remembrances of heartbreak, mysticism and joy. A fair amount of self-deprecating, occasionally

raunchy, humor sneaks in as well. The best chapters deal with her rural East Tennessee childhood, some stories well-known, others rarely heard, but all conveying her determination to escape the harsh poverty that dominated her early life.

Her accounts of superstardom are bolstered by candor about the tribulations—including one period of severe depression—it brought her, and she tells it better than any tabloid. Again, she debunks ancient rumors about her controversial relationships with husband Carl Dean and childhood friend Judy Ogle. It's surprising to read that the normally astute Dolly was surprised by the hostility many of her original fans had for her new pop country sound. Though most readers wanted the juicy parts, I wish she had discussed her approach to songwriting in greater detail. And though she emphasizes her admiration for Porter Wagoner's pivotal role in her career, that important seven-year period gets a mere 15 pages when it deserved more. Perhaps the unpleasant ending to their partnership col-



ored the account. Even so, this is far superior to many current star autobiographies.

Travis Tritt: Dolly's into her third decade as a professional entertainer and star. Reba's way into her second. What,

then, of artists around a few years who feel they already merit an autobiography? In Travis Tritt's case, the result is *Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof*, co-authored with CMM's Michael Bane. This painfully thin volume reflects the fact that Tritt has only been a national figure for five years. The subjects are predictable: early career, two marriages and his rise under high-falutin' manager Ken Kragen.

In the end, Tritt has little to say and Bane, who did a magnificent job co-authoring Hank Jr.'s autobiography, *Living Proof*, has little to work with. Not only is the treatment shallow, the editing was sloppy, as other reviewers have noted. One wonders why careful proofreading didn't catch errors like the spelling of the name of Earl "Skruggs" on page 117. On page 118 Tritt's album, *It's All About to Change*, becomes "*It's All About the Change*." Terri Gibbs becomes "Terry Gibb" on page 144. I hate to criticize my friend Michael, but there's no excuse for this.

Guitars: Guitar historian George Gruhn and his collaborator Walter Carter did an outstanding job on their lavish coffee-table book, *Acoustic Guitars and other Fretted Instruments*, published earlier this year. The companion volume, *Electric Guitars and Basses: A Photographic History*, beautifully complements the first book by focusing on amplified instruments, utilizing over 500 newly-shot color photos from various collections including Gruhn's.

Gruhn and Carter begin with early electric lap steel guitars, a relatively undocumented area of research. From there they look at specimens of early Gibson, Multi-Kord and Sho-Bud pedal steels as well. Naturally, guitars by Gibson, Gretsch, Epiphone, Rickenbacker, Fender, National, Mosrite and Guild get most of the focus. Fine shots of such

important models as Leo Fender's first electric Spanish guitar from 1943 (looking like a steel guitar) and his prototype for what became the Telecaster appear. So do various Gretsch Chet Atkins models and Gibson Les Paul models, along with early electric bass guitars and electric mandolins. The photos, Gruhn's expertise and Carter's prose make for a highly worthwhile book.

■ Recordings ■

Reba McEntire: No doubt Reba has more fans now than ever. Many never heard country music before hearing her, while some of her older fans aren't sure they're hearing her



sing country today at all, what with the Vegas stage act and other changes. For those who feel her first decade or so, when she was in the vanguard of New Traditionalism, was her best. Mercury's two-CD, 40-song *Oklahoma Girl* (Mercury 314 522 711) is the answer. Beginning with her first modest chart hit, "I Don't Want to Be a One Night Stand" from 1976, it runs through all the high points until her final Mercury hit, "Tain't No Future in This." Her first big hits, like "(You Lift Me) Up to Heaven," "Today All Over Again," "Can't Even Get the Blues" and "I'm Not That Lonely Yet" are among the best-known. Six numbers included here are previously unissued. Our own Hazel Smith co-produced the set and wrote the booklet.

■ Videos ■

Country Piano: Instruction on playing country piano has been exceedingly rare. One of the few and perhaps the only video to really tackle the subject is Hometown Videos' *Country and Western Piano*, taught by

Chicago-based musician Bob Hoban, a highly capable musician. Hoban concentrates on four important pianists: original Bob Wills Texas Playboys pianist Al Stricklin, Texas hill-billy boogie whiz Moon Mullican and Nashville studio legends Floyd Cramer and Hargus "Pig" Robbins. Hoban knows their styles, and provides excellent general advice, including how to accompany singers. The problem is that unlike other Hometown video instructors, Hoban's not a very engaging personality, and though he knows what he's doing, he doesn't communicate it well. Intermediate and advanced pianists will learn, but non-playing fans won't find it as appealing. Take his comments on musical history with a grain of salt. The first Western swing pianist was not Al Stricklin (not "Strickland") in the late 1920's as Hoban says, but Fred "Papa" Calhoun of Milton Brown's Musical Brownies in 1932.

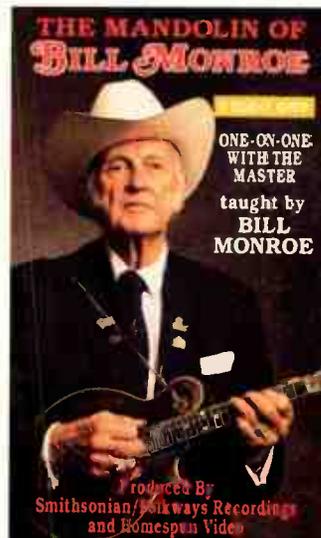
Bluegrass History: Rachel Liebling's award-winning film, *High Lonesome: The Story of Bluegrass Music*, now on video, was clearly designed to appeal to non-bluegrass fans. With Mac Wiseman narrating, and using interviews with Bill Monroe (at his boyhood home in Rosine, Kentucky), Ralph Stanley, ex-Monroe fiddler Jim Shumate, Jimmy Martin, The Osborne Brothers, Alison Krauss and so on, the film more or less traces the development of the music begun by Bill Monroe through its growth into a major industry

and a style with strong appeal to younger people. The rare clips of Uncle Dave Macon, The Stanley Brothers singing "Man of Constant Sorrow," Jim & Jesse and Flatt and Scruggs from a *Beverly Hillbillies* episode (to show the popular acceptance of bluegrass) are all well-chosen, and fans should enjoy them.

What's less enjoyable is Liebling's naive attempt to over-romanticize the music and color its history. This won't bother those uninformed about bluegrass (including those who hand out film awards), but longtime fans may not be so impressed with her dependence on Depression-era black and white still photos and film showing "typical" mountain and rural folk. She doesn't caption rare childhood photos of Bill Monroe and Jimmy Martin mixed in with the generic photos, so only an authority would know who's who. Too often the music winds up accompanying the photos and film, which go on far too long and lose any impact they might have had in smaller doses. A modern interview with two elderly rural farmers seems slanted to suit Liebling's stereotype of "hillbillies" when many of today's mountain folk are as urbane as anyone in New York. There's much worthwhile here, though anyone planning the definitive bluegrass documentary should proceed. This isn't it.

Bill Monroe: Hometown Videos has given extraordinary attention to documenting the mandolin playing of Bill Mon-

roe with not one but two videotapes. *The Mandolin of Bill Monroe, Volume 1* features Monroe with The Blue Grass Boys. With John Hartford—who used his gift for getting



Monroe to talk in a previous Monroe documentary—Monroe explains various aspects of his picking style, including his approach to picking fiddle tunes, playing blues, using techniques like "trembling" and mandolin chording (on "Rocky Road Blues"). He also performs some of his best-known mandolin numbers, including "Wheel Hoss," "Tennessee Blues," "Get Up John," "Jenny Lynn," "Katy Hill" and his awesome "My Last Days on Earth."

This side of Monroe is rarely seen anywhere, and Hartford enhances it by drawing him out about his legendary Gibson F-5 mandolin, the rattlesnake rattle inside (to keep out cobwebs) and his philosophies of life. At one point Monroe even picks up a guitar to demonstrate his approach to that instrument, which he's played only occasionally. The video ends with a clip of Monroe's 1980 performance at the White House. To both mandolinists and bluegrass fans alike, this is a treasure. *Volume 2* features ex-New Grass Revival mandolinist Sam Bush explaining Monroe's techniques from the first video in greater detail (a booklet is included) for mandolinists. Both videos are gems, but *Volume 1* is a must-see.

How to Get These Collectibles

Books: Peter Guralnick, *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley* (B6B). \$24.95/Patricia Jobe Pierce, *The Ultimate Elvis* (B6D) \$30.00/Dolly Parton, *My Life and Other Unfinished Business* (B4O) \$22.50/Travis Tritt and Michael Bane, *Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof* (B5C) \$19.95/George Gruhn and Walter Carter, *Electric Guitars and Basses: A Photographic History* (B6H), \$39.95. **Videos:** Bill Monroe, *The Mandolin of Bill Monroe, Volume 1* (V8D) and *Volume 2* (V8J), \$49.95 each volume/Country and Western Piano (V8G) \$49.95/*High Lonesome: The Story of Bluegrass Music* (V5P) \$19.95. **Recordings:** Reba McEntire, *Oklahoma Girl* (Mercury 314-522-711), a 2-CD or 2-cassette set, \$39.95 CD's, \$29.95 cassettes. Send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 111294EC, P.O. Box 290216, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.95 postage and handling per order. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 extra for postage. **CMSA members, see For Members Only page for discounts.** Offer expires February 28, 1995

TOP 25

Albums

Singles

1. Brooks & Dunn *Waitin' on Sundown*
2. Tim McGraw *Not a Moment Too Soon*
3. Tracy Lawrence *I See It Now*
4. Alan Jackson *Who I Am*
5. Reba McEntire *Read My Mind*
6. Vince Gill *When Love Finds You*
7. Clay Walker *If I Could Make a Living*
8. John Michael Montgomery . *Kickin' It Up*
9. Toby Keith *Boomtown*
10. Joe Diffie *Third Rock from the Sun*
11. Little Texas *Kick a Little*
12. The Tractors *The Tractors*
13. Jeff Foxworthy *You Might Be a Redneck If...*
14. Garth Brooks *In Pieces*
15. David Ball *Thinkin' Problem*
16. Patty Loveless *When Fallen Angels Fly*
17. The Mavericks *What a Crying Shame*
18. Sammy Kershaw *Feelin' Good Train*
19. Tracy Byrd *No Ordinary Man*
20. Mark Chesnutt *What a Way to Live*
21. Blackhawk *Blackhawk*
22. Travis Tritt *Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof*
23. Alabama *Greatest Hits, Volume 3*
24. Dolly Parton *Heartsongs*
25. Garth Brooks *No Fences*

1. Brooks & Dunn *She's Not the Cheatin' Kind*
2. Toby Keith *Who's That Man*
3. Garth Brooks *Callin' Baton Rouge*
4. Patty Loveless *I Try to Think About Elvis*
5. Tim McGraw *Down on the Farm*
6. Mark Chesnutt *She Dreams*
7. Tracy Byrd *Watermelon Crawl*
8. Pam Tillis *When You Walk in the Room*
9. Alan Jackson *Livin' on Love*
10. Sammy Kershaw *Third Rate Romance*
11. Mary Chapin Carpenter.... *Shut Up and Kiss Me*
12. Joe Diffie *Third Rock from the Sun*
13. Kathy Mattea *Nobody's Gonna Rain on Our Parade*
14. Neal McCoy *The City Put the Country Back in Me*
15. Collin Raye *Man of My Word*
16. Little Texas *Kick a Little*
17. Reba McEntire *She Thinks His Name Was John*
18. Tracy Lawrence *I See It Now*
19. Blackhawk *I Sure Can Smell the Rain*
20. Ken Mellons *Jukebox Junkie*
21. Clay Walker *If I Could Make a Living*
22. Trisha Yearwood *XXX's and OOO's (An American Girl)*
23. Travis Tritt *Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof*
24. Vince Gill *What the Cowgirls Do*
25. John Michael Montgomery . *If You've Got Love*

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Less Crap, More Music

I'm all worn out from listening to Joy Lynn White—the best female powerbilly since Paulette Carlson in her Highway 101 mode, and then some—so this issue's column, I'm warning you, isn't what it could be. You dance around your office for a couple of hours (and Ms. White wailing "I Am Just a Rebel" will make you do things like that), and you're pretty trashed when typing time comes around.

You can let the mail get to you when you're like that, the way I can't let go of a letter from Tommy Overstreet, one of the stalwarts of the recording scene in the 70's (forgive me for the introduction, Tommy; as you well know, there are now country music fans who think the 70's were about James Taylor and The Eagles). Having agreed with the sentiments in my last column, notably my dismay about the way major Nashville record companies dance on the end of Young Country radio's string while simply ignoring the rest of us, Tommy dwelled on one of the most significant facts of modern Music Row life.

"Country music today is controlled by ten record labels, and they don't want independent labels out there muddying the water," he wrote. "I received my start on DOT Records, an independent label, and was there for 11 straight years. Independents used to be the lifeblood of our industry, and kept the major labels on their toes. Independents took chances, because they had to, and that created fresh new sound to emerge. Unfortunately that's now gone."

What's gone, to be precise, is not the existence of independent labels, but any chance of them getting their music played on your friendly local country radio station, which in all probability is programmed by some gaggle of "consultants" in New York or Los Angeles; these days, son, if you're not on a major label, you're just not on the air, period.

So while "indies" still exist and in some cases flourish, they pose no direct competitive threat to Sony, MCA and the others. No longer forced to react to hot new indie music challenging their product in the big leagues—on the radio, where everyone can hear it—the majors now have

the luxury of being able to treat Praxis, Watermelon, Rounder, Sugar Hill, HighTone and all the other creatively vital little labels as a kind of cost-free farm system. Promising talent can be bought up and "mainstreamed" for a run at the top, or simply ignored. In either case, no sweat; control stays with the major marketers, consultants and record company executives, safely out of the hands of the people who create the music and the folks who listen to it. Sometimes that works out okay. More often it doesn't, since the



Patrick believes in the "utter rightness" of Sleepy LaBeef, flanked here by Peter Guralnick and Peter's manager, Alexandra.

system is inherently inclined towards conservatism and predictability, and at its worst (or best, depending on where your money comes from), it's perfectly capable of silencing voices and suppressing change. Today, if a new Elvis were to arise in, say, Memphis, it's quite possible that he would either disappear into oblivion or have his music straightened out by some mainstream producer long before he could cause the kind of marketplace havoc wreaked by Elvis and his buddies at Sam Phillips' indy Sun Records in the early 1950's. The same goes for a new Bill Monroe, or a Willie Nelson.

Perhaps this is all just fine with you readers (who are, virtually by definition, the music's staunchest fans), but many of your letters indicate otherwise, your most frequent complaint being that the country radio and recording industries are woefully out of touch with your tastes and wants. That's certainly true for me. When I go over a list of my country high points

for 1994, I find that half my choices are on independent labels—Johnny Cash's *American Recordings* (American Recordings 9 45520), Billy Joe Shaver's *Trump on Your Street* (Praxis 72445-11063), Sleepy LaBeef's *Strange Things Happening* (Rounder CD 3129), and Chesapeake's *Rising Tide* (Sugar Hill CD 3827)—and that only one of my major-label choices, Marty Stuart's *Love and Luck* on MCA, even approached the realm of CMA nominations and heavy radio rotation. The other three, Joy Lynn White's *Wild Love* on Columbia, Bobbie Cryner's

eponymous first album on Epic and Bob Woodruff's *Dreams & Saturday Nights* on Asylum, might as well have been released on other planets—or into the college/folkie/alternative market, which amounts to the same thing as far as K-Mart, Wal-Mart, and the music chain stores are concerned.

In fact, Woodruff's album wasn't even reviewed in *Country Music* when it was released, so even the usual labor-intensive ways by which you readers get to hear off-brand music—reading a rave review, then digging around in an "alternative" record store or ordering from a catalog or magazine—weren't an option.

Sleepy LaBeef's wonderful album wasn't reviewed, either, but that was my fault alone: I'd claimed it as my turf and meant to write about it, but I kept getting distracted by what Peter Guralnick, its coproducer (and the world's best chronicler of American roots music; his long-awaited first volume on Elvis, *Last Train to Memphis*, just hit the bookstores—see Rich Kienzle's review on page 88), calls "all that crap about what's wrong with Nashville."

And that just happened again, didn't it? This column was going to be about the utter rightness of Sleepy LaBeef and Junior Brown, or maybe the similar but separate perfections of Joy Lynn White, Bobbie Cryner, and the fellows in Chesapeake. Damn. Maybe I'll do better in '95—you know: less crap, more music. Don't count on it, though.

Editor-at-Large Patrick Carr has been with C.M.M. since September 1972.

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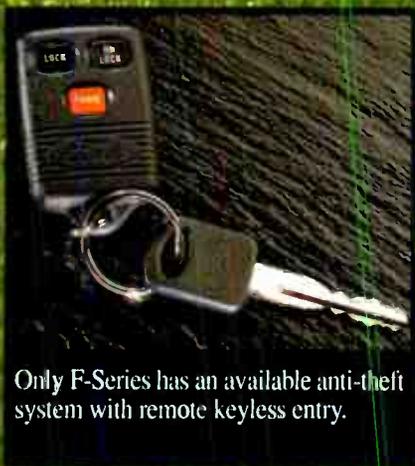


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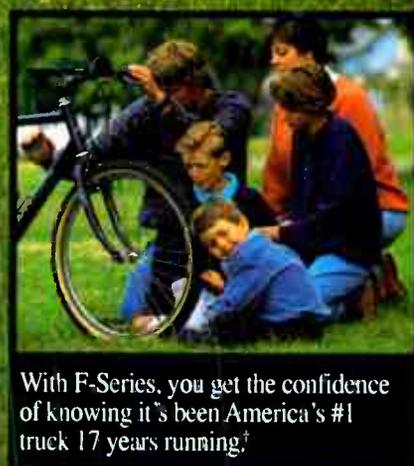
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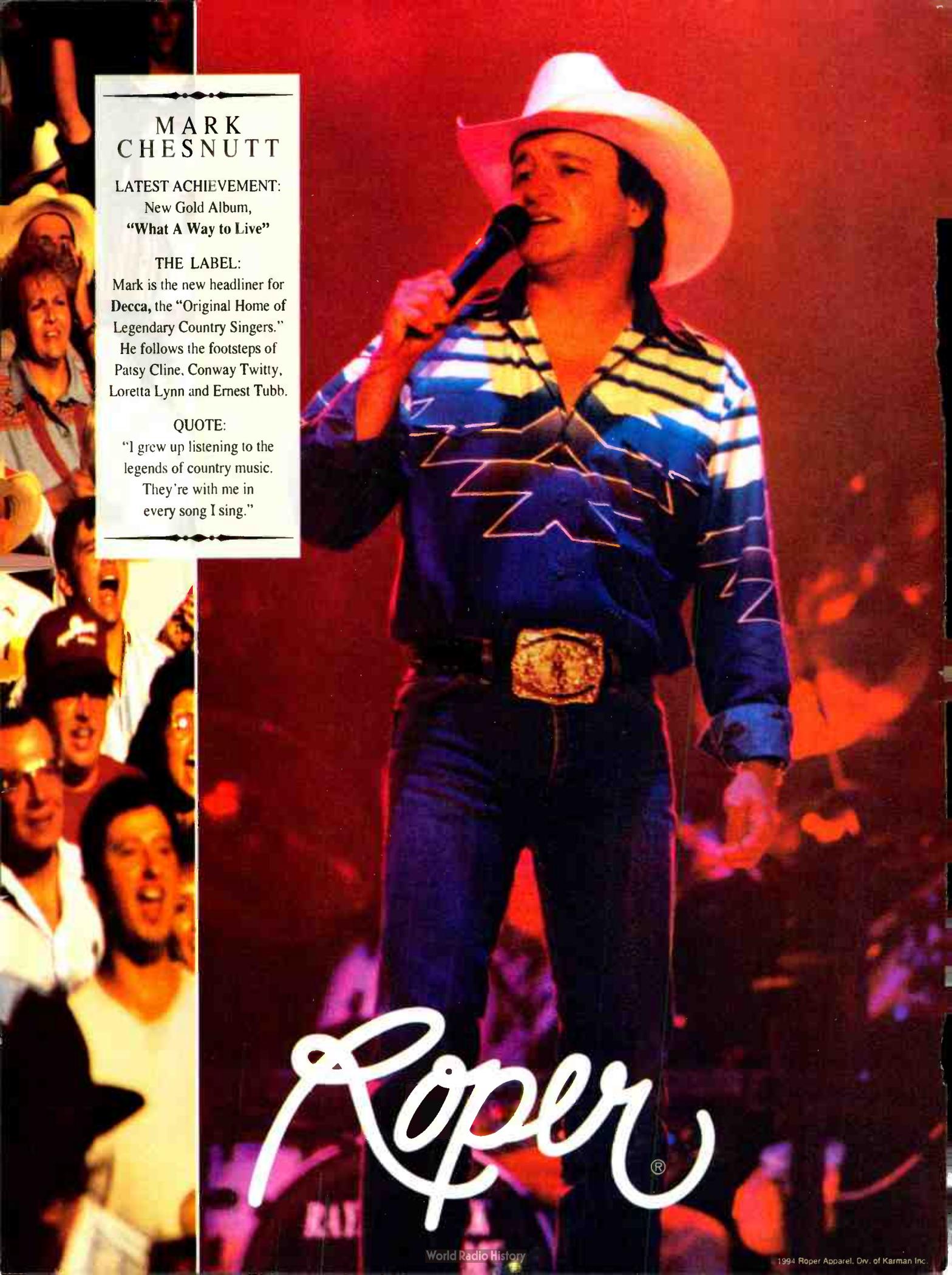


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