

COUNTRY MUSIC

SUZY BOGUSS
Working Artist

GIBSON/MILLER
All-American Band

ALABAMA
Answers
20 Questions

HAL KETCHUM
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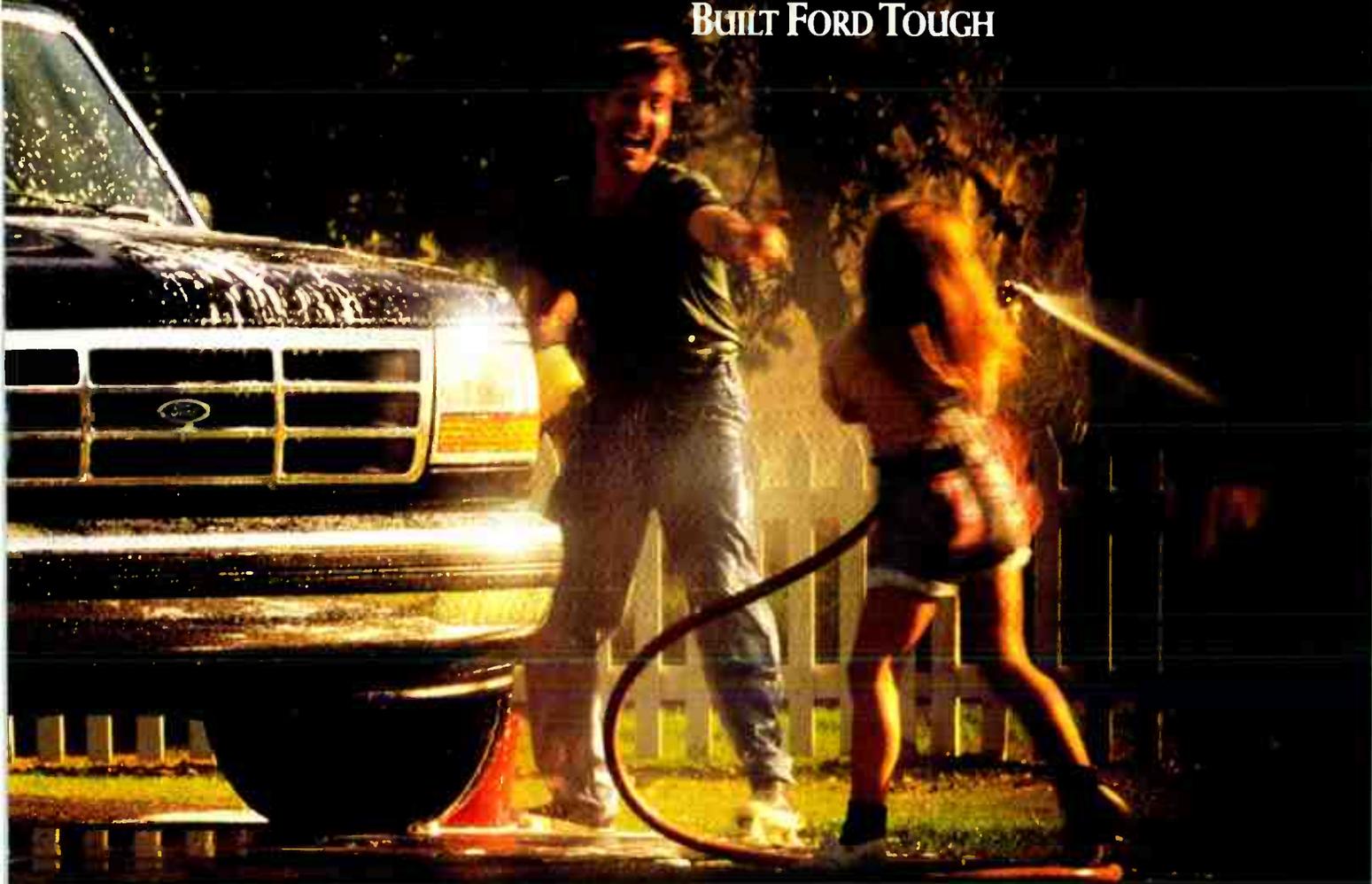
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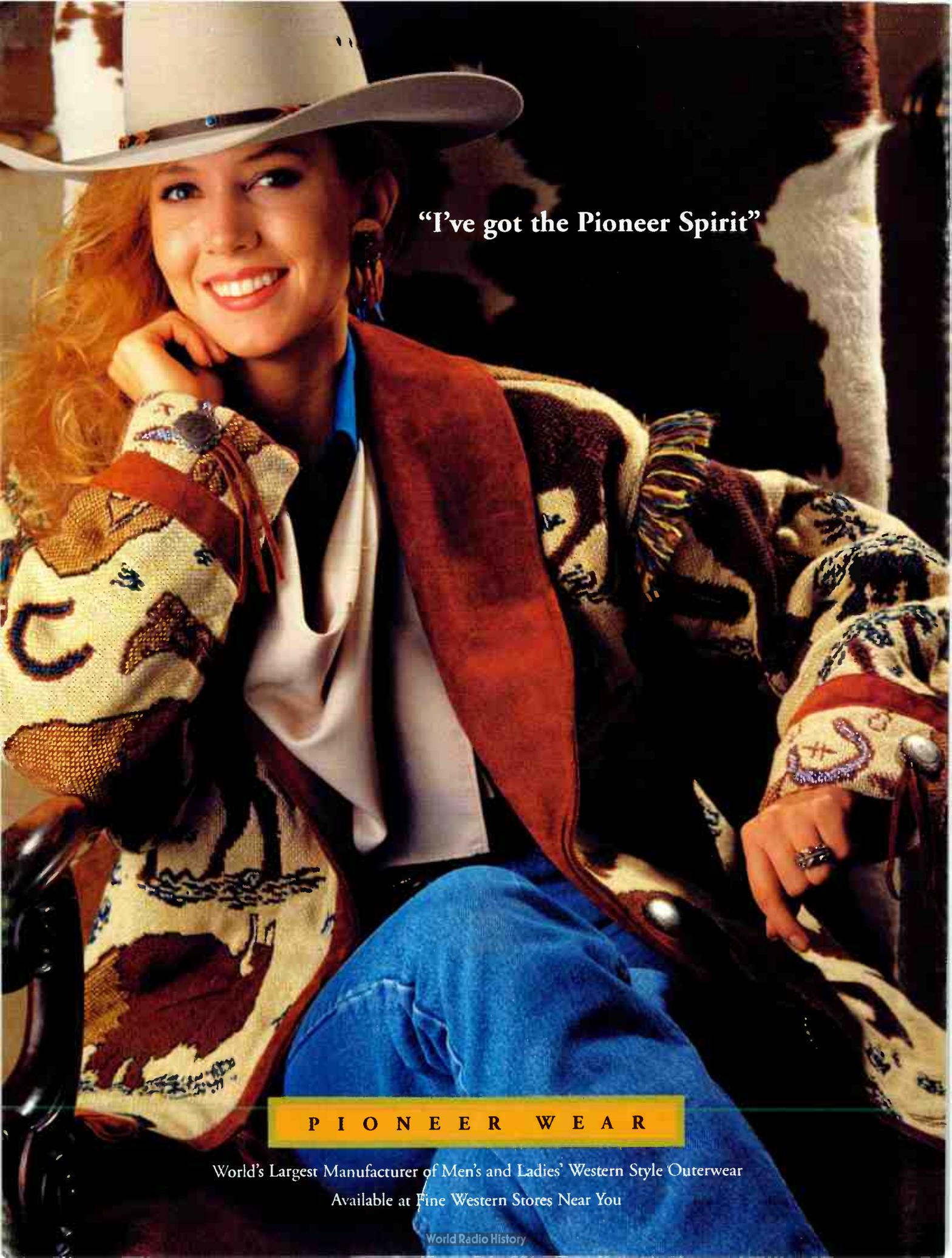


Ford continues to be a safety leader with a new standard driver's airbag.*

F-150



Once again, F-Series is the best seller, making it 17 years running.**

A woman with long, wavy blonde hair is smiling and sitting on a dark wooden chair. She is wearing a white cowboy hat with a brown band, a white long-sleeved shirt, a blue collared shirt, and a brown and white patterned jacket with fringed sleeves. She is also wearing blue jeans. The background is dark with some light-colored patterns.

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COUNTRY MUSIC

FEATURES

- 44 Hal Ketchum Pull-Out Centerfold**
Get the photos and the facts on the hitmaking singer/songwriter.
- 48 Suzy Bogguss: Working Artist** *by Bob Millard*
After years of hard work, Suzy is in a place she's proud of. She's producing albums, her own and one with Chet Atkins, and is taking charge of her career. Her time has come.
- 52 Gibson/Miller: All American Band** *by Michael McCall*
Gibson and Miller were introduced by a producer who "heard" something. They turned it into a five-man band that plays a rocking kind of country.
- 54 Collin Raye: I'm Still Bubba** *by Bob Millard*
Another side of Collin Raye emerges when he opens up to talk about his life. Meet the regular guy who calls himself Bubba.
- 84 20 Questions with Alabama** *by Bob Allen*
Has Alabama slowed down? Not on your life, says Randy Owen, who answers questions ranging from baseball to touring and music, too.

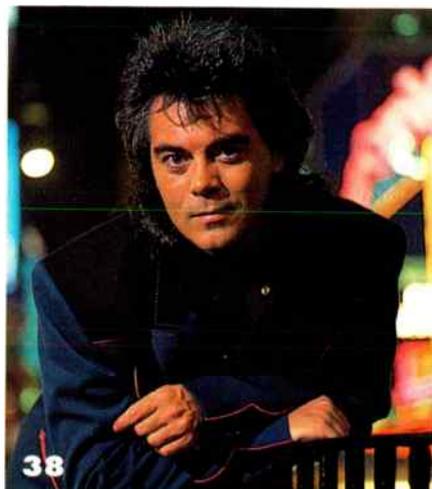
COVER STORY

- 38 Marty Stuart Shoots for the Stars** *by John Morthland*
The interview starts off slowly. Marty is determined that it not be another rehash of his early career. But when it gets rolling, Marty talks about music and stardom and what you gain and what you give up when you go for it all. The years have taught him well.

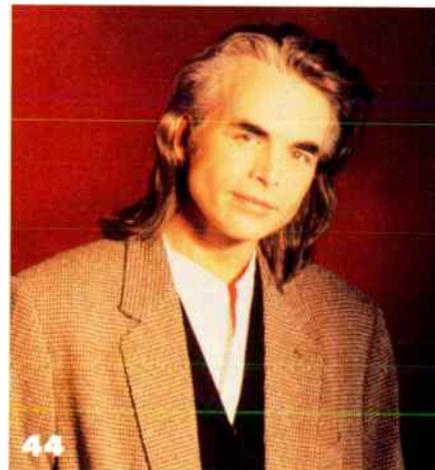
DEPARTMENTS

- | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| People
<i>by Hazel Smith</i> | 7 | Letters | 58 |
| The acting bug bites Dwight, Reba gets a surprise, Dolly gets awarded. Tammy plays madame, Cash is a legend again, Hazel goes to Branson again and The Bellamys celebrate 20 years. Mark Collie lends his name, Merle plays the Ryman, and more. | | For Members Only | 74 |
| Record Reviews | 23 | Buried Treasures
<i>by Rich Kienzle</i> | 80 |
| A winner for Alan Jackson, a standout for Tracy Byrd and a surprise from Jo-El Sonnier. Look for Hal Ketchum, Big Sandy, newcomer Chely Wright, Sammy Kershaw and Billy Dean. There's also Mark Collie, Chet Atkins, Eddy Raven, Gibson-Miller and Restless Heart. Quite a mixed bag. | | Reissues on Bob Wills, Hank Snow, Willie, Webb, Billy Joe and more. | |
| | | Essential Collector
<i>by Rich Kienzle</i> | 82 |
| | | Books on two Hanks—Snow and Williams, plus Patsy and more. Videos, too. | |
| | | Top 25 | 86 |
| | | Final Note
<i>by Patrick Carr</i> | 87 |
| | | What's on Patrick's mind this month? | |

COVER PHOTO: JEFFREY LOWE, ON LOCATION AT DENIM & DIAMONDS, NEW YORK CITY

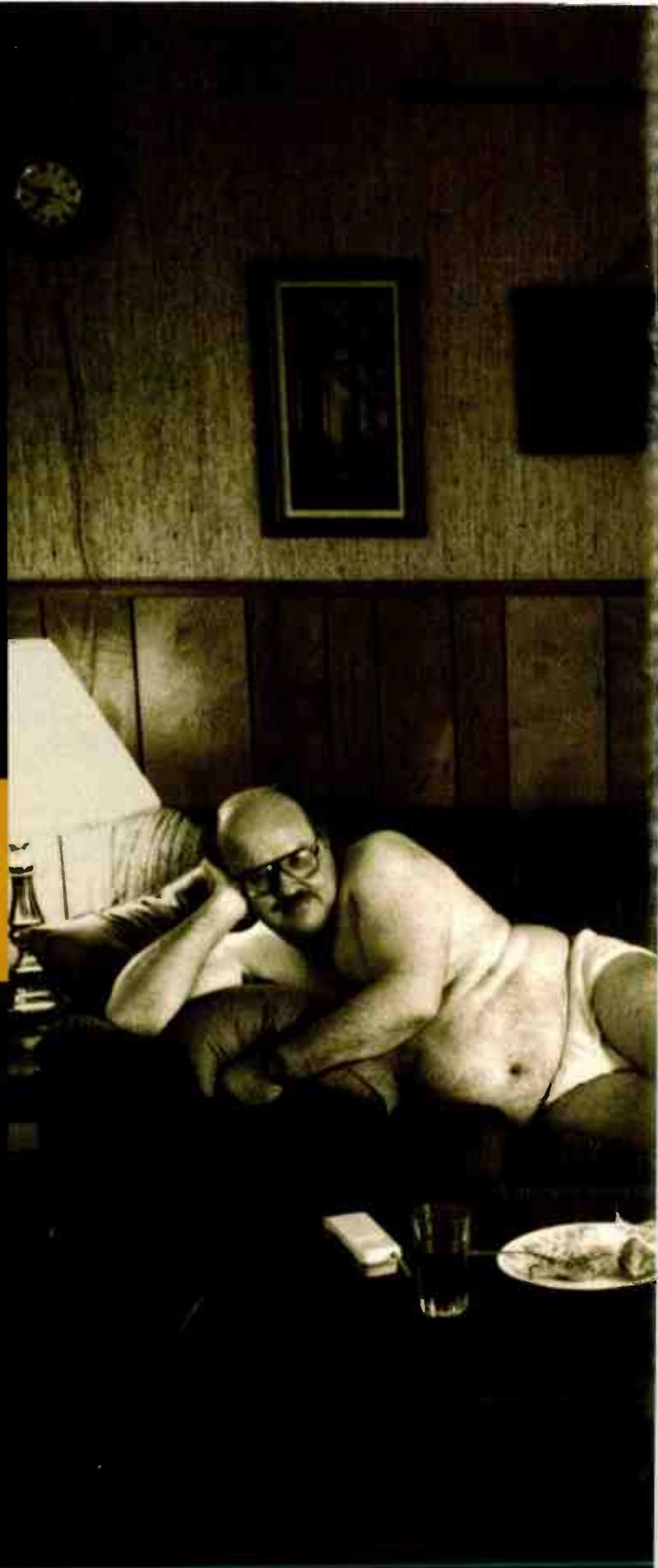


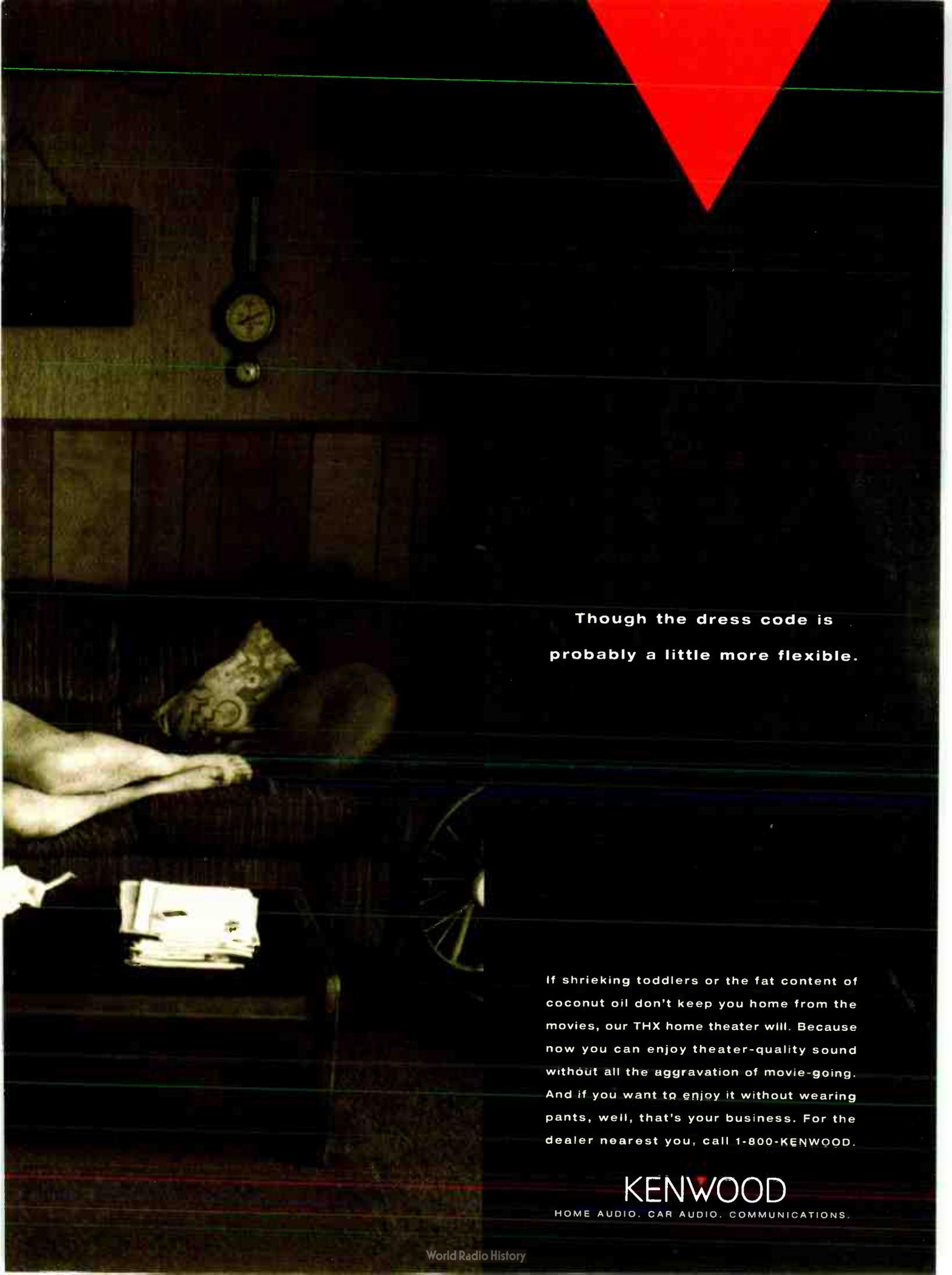
JEFFREY LOWE



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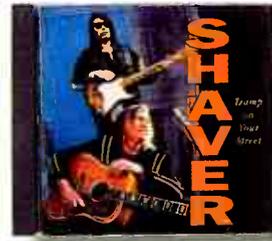
John Berry
“John Berry”
Liberty Records



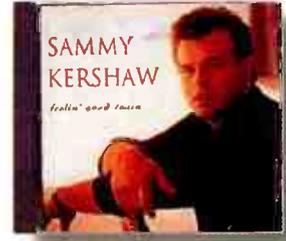
Rick Trevino
“Rick Trevino”
Columbia



Lorrie Morgan
“War Paint”
BNA Entertainment



Shaver
“Tramp On Your Street”
Zoo Entertainment



Sammy Kershaw
“Feelin’ Good Train”
Mercury



Joe Diffie
“Third Rock From The Sun”
Epic Records

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Kathy Mattea
“Walking Away A Winner”
Mercury

People

DWIGHT THE ACTOR

Add to **Dwight Yoakam's** credits his acting role in Showtime's *Roswell*. The film, based on the incident at Roswell, a historic UFO legend, finds Dwight appearing with actors **Kyle MacLachlan** and **Martin Sheen**. About acting, Dwight says he's "looking forward to the challenge of developing the necessary tools to engage in this new avenue of artistic expression." About the possibility of visitors from other worlds, he says, "I believe that we're not alone—that other beings exist in the universe."

TREVINO GETS INTO THE ACT

Another country star asked to put on the acting cap is **Rick Trevino**. He was approached by a Los Angeles casting company to audition for the lead role in the upcoming **Steven Spielberg**-produced film, *Zorro*. Trevino caught the attention of the casting directors with one of his television appearances. We'll see what happens.

TAMMY ALSO ACTING

When *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* plays the Theatre of Performing Arts the week of December 5th-8th, at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas, **Tammy Wynette** will star in the lead role of **Miss Mona**. Tammy's performances take place during National Finals Rodeo Week. Negotiations are currently underway to continue *Whorehouse* with a proposed indefinite run, with a new celebrity being rotated each month in the starring roles. Who knows who could wind up playing the lead.

HEY, PORTER

At the Grand Ole Opry, the thin man from West Plains, Missouri, **Mr. Porter Wagoner**, was wearing a suit on his body that was older than the girl by his side. Bragging about buying the outfit in 1960 and still being the same size, he said, "When you spend that much money for an outfit, son, you can't afford to buy food."

Porter wore Nudie suits for years.



Kyle MacLachlan with Dwight, the actor, in the Showtime film, *Roswell*. Check local cable listings.

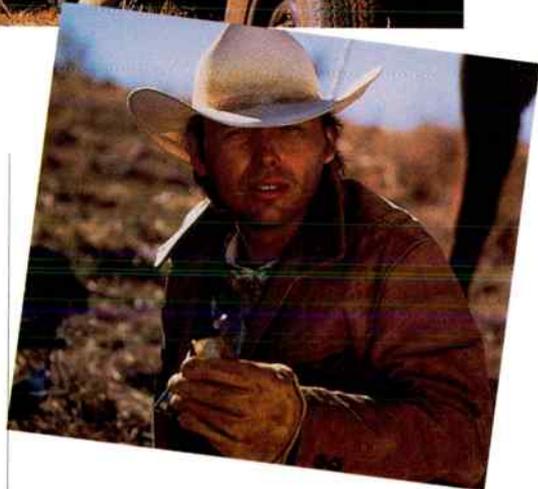
Since Nudie's death, he, like Marty Stuart and others, relies on Manuel for his stage clothes. You'll see Porter at Opryland, daily, wearing a short-sleeved outfit designed especially for hot weather. Porter is the Official Ambassador for Opryland, U.S.A. And I am your Official Teller of Porter Stories.

STARS AND GARTERS

Of all the stars on planet earth, actor **Danny Glover** showed up at Fan Fair, and with excellent credentials. Danny was here helping **Charlie Daniels** and **John Berry** launch a fundraising effort to benefit Coors' "Literacy—Pass It On" program. Liberty's producing a cassette with **Charlie and John**, along with **Tanya Tucker**, **Suzy Bogguss** and **Billy Dean**, with profits going toward helping adults throughout the nation learn to read.

THE WARNER DO

The brand spanking new Warner Bros. building on historic 16th Avenue is the size of a warehouse or two. Tastefully decorated, inside and out, the place spells



money, money, money. With **Travis Tritt**, **Randy Travis**, **Faith Hill**, **Little Texas** and now **David Ball**, money is what they're raking in, what with music like the above make. At the party to honor Warner's new headquarters were Malaco's **Bill Isaac**, writers **Martha Hume** and **Chet Flippo**, *Billboard's* **Ed Morris**, Network Ink's **Liz Thiels**, Warner's **Daffy Duck** and of course **Bugs Bunny** (with whom I had my photo taken), BMI's **Roger Sovine** and **Robert K. Oermann**. Talked with the award-winning **Mark O' Connor** and the angelic beauty with vocals to match, **Rhonda Vincent**. Lastly but not leastly I visited with cute and nice record producer **Doug Grau** in his

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

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Comedian

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People

new office, saw wonderful A&R person **Richard Helm** and visited for a while with my dear friend **Martha Sharp**, Senior VP A&R Warner/Nashville. There was food, there were drinks and there were people...on all three floors. I had a good time.

ONLY IN NASHVILLE

When **Reba McEntire** went on *Music City Tonight* to publicize her autobiography, *Reba: My Story*, written with **Tom Carter**, she was totally overwhelmed by the surprise that hosts **Lorianne Crook**, **Charlie Chase** and hubby/manager **Narvel Blackstock** had in store. Unbeknownst to Reba, they flew her parents **Clark** and **Jackie McEntire**, her sisters **Alice Foran** and **Susie Luchsinger** and brother **Pake** and his three daughters, **Calamity**, **Autumn** and **Chism** to Nashville to be on the show with her. Moved to tears, Reba thanked her hosts for the on-tube surprise. The four siblings performed an acapella hymn, totally unrehearsed, to the delight of the audience and yours truly. Reba's book topped the *New York Times* Best Seller list. In the meantime, Mercury Records hired me to do liner notes and choose music and photos for a boxed set on Reba, *Oklahoma Girl*, due out in the fall. It'll cover her pre-MCA years. So I've read her book, dug through press at the Country Music Foundation, *Tennessean/Banner*, *Country Music Magazine*, Jack Hurst's house, Mercury's drawers and other places. I do recommend Reba's book. Fan or not, her life is like a movie.

POP GOES DOLLY

At the 43rd annual BMI Pop Awards Dinner held at the Grand Ballroom of the Plaza Hotel in New York City, "I Will Always Love You" penned by **Dolly Parton** and published by Velvet Apple (her publishing company), was named Song of the Year. **Whitney Houston's** version of the song, from the movie *The Bodyguard* remained at Number One on *Billboard's* pop charts for an unprecedented 14 weeks, and sold 8 million copies. The soundtrack CD/cassette sold 28 million worldwide. I reckon Dolly will soon have as much money as **Oprah** at that rate.

SAMMY NUMBER ONE WITH AN ARROW IN MY HEART

We convened like sardines, on "the row," at trendy Sammy B's (AKA Sammy K's for the party), honoring dimpled darling **Sammy Kershaw's** Number One, "I Can't Reach Her Anymore." My date was **Russell B.'s** friend, **Norman Dolph**, who was totally overwhelmed when Sammy stopped the show to bow before planting a kiss on the mouth of I. Hear ye. Hear ye. It's Sammy Time USA. Radio, fans, media, get on the Kershaw boat. Shout him, praise him, play him. He's dimpled, cute, handsome and sings his hillbilly butt off. Let's launch a deserving star, friends. A deserving country star, **Sammy Kershaw**. Also on hand for the do was **Roy Stevens**, who is richer than God. Ray's



In front, Pake's daughters Calamity and Chism, and Reba and Narvel's son, Shelby Blackstock. Middle, host Lorianne Crook, daddy Clark, Reba, mama Jackie, host Charlie Chase. Rear, sister Alice, brother Pake, sister Susie and niece Autumn.

People

MORE AWARDS



Winners of Entertainment Radio Network's First Annual Country Radio Music Awards included John Michael Montgomery for Single of the Year, Johnny Cash, honored with the Legend Award, and Tim McGraw, winner of Best New Artist. The Awards are a people's choice award chosen by listeners who voted via an 800 number that was announced over various radio stations.

of the most loved drummer ever on the Nashville scene, the late **Larry London**, will be pleased to know that a research grant will be established at Vanderbilt University in his honor. Larry died due to diabetes complications.

TWO DECADES AND MANY SONGS AGO

Two decades and many songs ago, **The Brothers Bellamy** came forth upon the country music scene where they wrote and sang hit after hit. Commemorating their 20 years, the brothers released a 20th Anniversary boxed set in August entitled *Let Your Love Flow—20 Years of Hits*. The two-CD box chronicles their 20-year journey from their first hit to their current single, "On a Summer Night." Also included are three new European produced cuts. Look for it.

TANYA MOVES

Look for the **Tanya Tucker Building** in Music City this month. Tanya has purchased the DNE Building at Moores Lane and Mallory Station Road near the Cool Springs Galleria Mall in Brentwood, Tennessee, for her corporate headquarters. The newly named building will also be used for the Tanya Tucker Fan Club and the new Tanya Tucker Salsa company, which recently introduced Tanya's own salsa to grocery stores across Tennessee, Alabama and Kentucky. There's also warehouse space to house tour buses, trucks and sound and lighting equipment.

publishing company, Ray Stevens Music (naturally), was publisher of the song. Chalk another hundred thou for Ray Stevens, one of the most talented people in Planet Nashville.

KEEBLERS GOOD TASTE

Watch for **Clint Black**'s pretty face on packages of Keebler Wheatables starting this fall. Clint will be out there entertaining for the good Keebler folks, who are sponsoring his 1995 national concert tour. They are also sponsoring the "Unbeatable Wheatables Country Tour '94" which features **Little Texas**, **Tim McGraw**, **Blackhawk**, **Suzy Bogguss**, **Billy Dean** and others..

ANTICIPATING

Congratulations to **Martina** and **John McBride** on their upcoming December "release," **Baby McBride**. May this child favor his mother and have both daddy and mama's brains. Kidding, John. You're cute as you can be.

MARK COLLIE LENDING HIS NAME AND TIME

The first annual "Mark Collie Celebrity Race for Diabetes Cure" was announced by the star, who is a diabetic. On October 31, "Legends Racing Legends" will be

held at the Nashville Speedway with NASCAR legend **Richard Petty** as Grand Marshall for the event. Celebrity drivers include NASCAR greats **Bobby Allison**, **Benny Parsons**, **Donny Allison** and **CooCoo Marlin**. Celeb drivers besides **Collie** include **Kix Brooks**, **Ronnie Dunn**, **John Hiatt**, **Sammy Kershaw** and **Tracy Lawrence**. Fans



Mark Collie, who was diagnosed with diabetes 17 years ago, will play host to music, film, TV and sports celebrities during the **Mark Collie Celebrity Race for a Diabetes Cure**.

New From
GEORGE Jones

Good Ones And Bad Ones
with MARK CHESNUTT

The Love Bug
with VINCE GILL

Where Grass Won't Grow
with EMMYLOU HARRIS/DOLLY PARTON/TRISHA YEARWOOD

A Good Year For The Roses
with ALAN JACKSON

White Lightnin
with MARK KNOPFLER

Say It's Not You
with KEITH RICHARDS

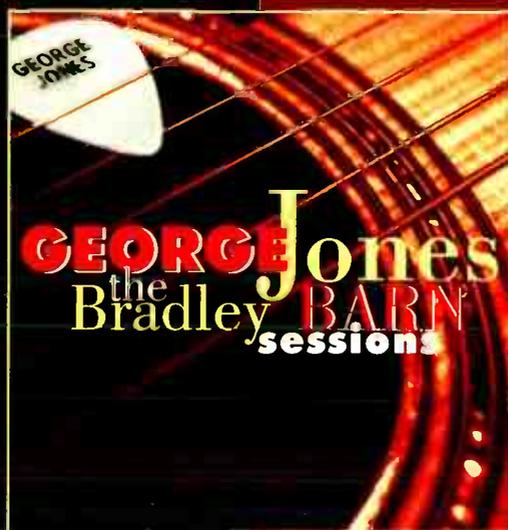
Why Baby Why
with RICKY SKAGGS

One Woman Man
with MARTY STUART

The Race Is On
with TRAVIS TRITT

Golden Ring
with TAMMY WYNETTE

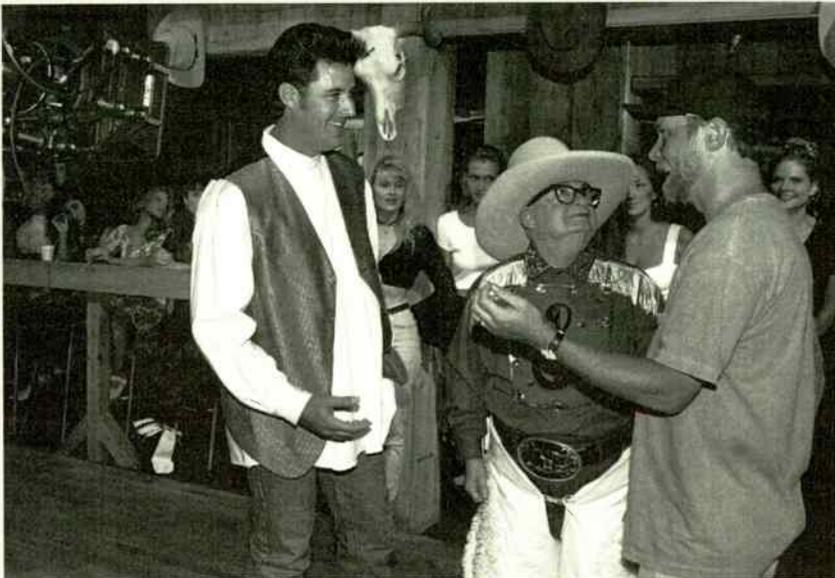
Bartender Blues
with TRISHA YEARWOOD



▼
**IN STORES
OCTOBER 11**
▲

People

VINCE'S NEW VIDEO



See the look on Vince Gill's face. See his hand. His next line is, "Do you really think I will do that?" And probably he did, since Vince is a great sport. With Vince are Larry "Bud" Melman of David Letterman fame and video director John Lloyd. Title of video/single—"What Cowgirls Do."

Besides all this, I had a wonderful time visiting with Charley after the delicious catered buffet lunch.

SYMPATHY

Love and sympathy to Grand Ole Opry longtime performer **Jeannie Seely** on the death of her mother.

ELVIS STANDARD TIME

Suzy Bogguss asked **Bob Millard** to get in touch with me with the following exclusive story. **Suzy, Kathy Mattea** and **Alison Krauss** were winding down a video of "Teach Your Children" long about the crack of 1 AM when up pulls this great long white limo with **Billy Ray Cyrus** behind the wheel. "Know'd y'all lived 'round here somewhere," allowed Billy Ray. "Why don't you come by the house and see my babies."

"Sure thing," said Bogguss. Friends, Billy Ray has a mansion out in Williamson County paid for by "Achy, Breaky Heart." Bogguss gets out, goes inside the house and there, besides Billy Ray, is his wife Leticia, little Miley (short for Smiley per BRC), baby Braison Chance and Billy's mother-in-law, all wide awake as if it's past midday, not midnight. Sleep all day, play all night. Hmmm.... So I called it living on Elvis Standard Time. Whatever works, I say. However, kindergarten is coming, and they don't run kindergarten at midnight.

Charley's premier performance and, it was a genuine thrill. **Rick Cooper**, who actually owns the theater, was just beside himself with happiness.

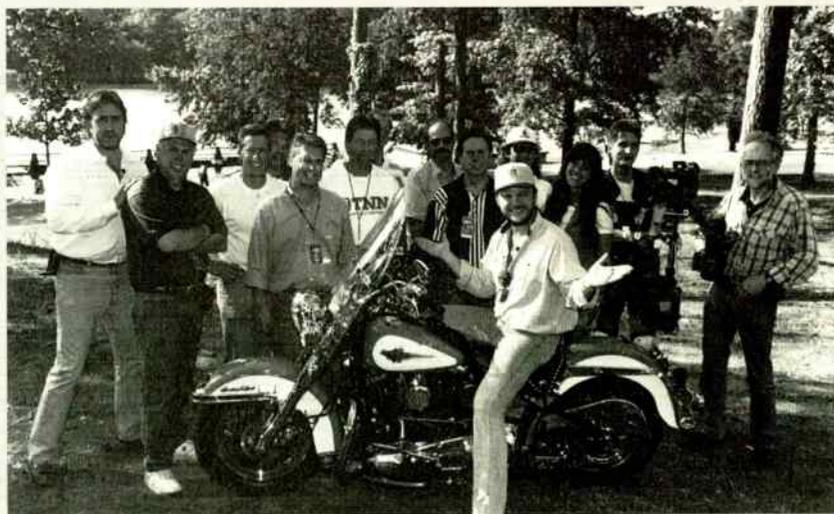
Coming in from the backdoor of the auditorium, Charley performed all the way to the stage, singing hit after hit, leaving the audience screaming, sweating and goosebumped. Commencing with "Kiss an Angel Good Morning," the Pride of Country, who is now the Pride of Branson, wowed the crowd with "Is Anybody Going to San Antone," "Roll on Mississippi," "KawLiga," "I Wonder Could I Live There Anymore," "Snakes Crawl at Night," "I'm Just Me," "I'm So Afraid of Losing You Again," "I'd Rather Love You," "All I Have to Offer You Is Me" and "She's Just an Old Love Turned Memory." Songs don't get no better than these.

Opening the show was one of my dear friends, Mr. Cool, **Don Williams**. If Don only performed "Good Ole Boys Like Me," the **Bob McDill**-penned masterpiece, I'd leave happy. The line, "Those Williams boys still mean a lot to me—Hank and Tennessee," is poetry at its finest. Other Williams classics include "Till the Rivers All Run Dry," "Lord Have Mercy on a Country Boy," "Lay Down Beside Me" and the ever-so-wonderful "It Must Be Love." Don's set was so good, at times I'd think it wasn't real, like a dream.

Some \$20,000 of the night's monies was

presented to the Junior Achievement of Ozarks organization. I've heard that some of the theaters are "soft sell" in Branson this year, meaning they're not filling up like before. The Charley Pride Theater is selling out. It should. It's a great show.

TRAVIS



Just look how cute Travis Tritt is, girls. Him and that Harley make me want to let the wind blow in my face once again. All the people in this foto are part of **Full Access: On Tour with Travis Tritt**, a one-hour documentary special shown on The Nashville Network. The star, however, is all "true Tritt grit."

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World Radio History

People

BRAND NEW BILLY RAY

Stand back and look at the whole new **Billy Ray Cyrus** picture. Hollywood missed out when they let this hunka good looking man leave town. Performing on the *TNN/Music City News Awards Show*, Billy Ray's new look is as cool as it gets.

ROOTS OF COUNTRY

If you saw *Roots of Country* on NBC this past summer, then you saw **Alan Jackson** in a white suit singing "Lovesick Blues." Girls, if God made anything better looking than that, he's walking around "up yonder" on the streets of gold, not selling Gold CD's. I was privy to be in the audience that night, and when Alan walked out dressed like **Hank Williams**, in white suit, white stetson, necktie, white shirt and boots, my breath almost left my body or my body left my breath. Whichever, I am so happy we've got stars like Alan and **Vince** and **Sammy**, **Joe Diffie** and **Mark Chesnutt** who are slap dab country and don't give a flip about being anything more or less. Yeah, I say.

CON-VINCE-D

A DJ friend of my son, **Billy Smith**, named **Bernd Glodek** from Germany, told me this wonderful **Vince Gill** story. Vince played in Hamburg in late spring to a sold-out house of screaming fans. Fans and stars were having such a great time that the star played for 2 1/2 hours. Some 20,000 fans were con-vince-d that the handsome American heartthrob was about the best there was. No ego. No attitude. Just great music. Thanks, Vince, for making us look good halfway around the world. Yes, the DJ plays country music in Hamburg and tells me that it's growing in leaps and bounds. Bernd and his wife, **Ingrid**, make an annual trek to Music City.

MORE BILLY RAY

The hottest thing during Fan Fair was the book, *My Billy Ray Cyrus Story: Some Gave Too Much*, by **Kari Reeves**, the daughter of Grand Ole Opry legend, **Del Reeves**. Kari tells everything she recalls about their four-year, shall we say, tryst. In the tell-all book, Kari reveals the passion, particulars and places...from the first kiss, to a bubble bath, an elevator, back of a pickup truck...you fill in the blanks, folks, and what you think is more than likely what was written. There were also business dealings between the Reeves—Kari, Daddy Del, Mama Ellen—



Billy Ray Cyrus sports a new look.

and Billy Ray. Naturally the last chapter in the book is titled "The Lawsuit," which, incidentally, the parties involved have recently settled out of court for an unnamed amount. Will publication of this book hurt BRC's career? It's hard to know. We'll just have to wait and see.

STATLERS SWAN SONG

This year marked the last Statler Brothers 4th of July bash in their hometown of Staunton, Virginia. And they went out with a bang before 100,000 patrons. Mercury VP **Bob Frank** told me it was the greatest show he'd ever witnessed.

CHARITABLE VH-1

At the first annual VH-1 Honors held in Los Angeles, six artists were honored for their charitable contributions to special causes. Among the honorees was **Garth Brooks**. Thanks to him for his involvement with Feed the Children. We should also mention **Bonnie Raitt** and her contribution to the Rhythm and Blues Foundation. Bonnie is close to the heart of a lot of country fans.

A NASHVILLE DO

You ain't done until you do a Nashville do. And I did the latest. Held at the beautiful home of Mercury Records Prez, **Luke Lewis**, and his wife, too cute **Betsy**, let's call it Cajun comes to Tennessee. Luke flew the best Cajun cooks from all of Louisiana into Nashville, and they prepared the feast. There were huge vats of crawfish

JOSE, I SAY



My pal, **Jose Fontanex** from Marlboro, pictured with newcomers **Jesse Hunter** and **Chely Wright** along with Confederate Railroad's **Danny Shirley**. Look for these artists and others at your state fairs and the dance clubs across the country, as well as at military bases, where the Marlboro sponsored shows will appear. We always appreciate sponsors of live country music.

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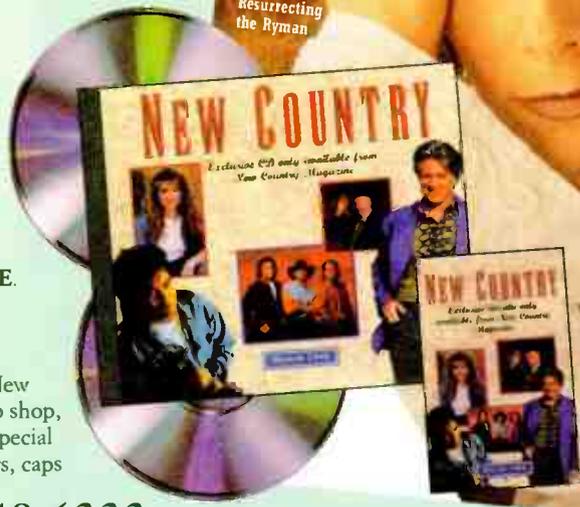
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June 1994

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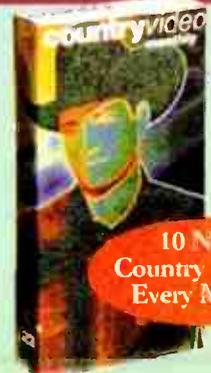
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World Radio History

People

half as big as my fist, jambalaya, gumbo, dirty rice, alligator stew (yum), shrimp dip so good you almost swallowed your tongue, desserts, drink and me. My fave, **Sammy Kershaw**, was there with his little daughter, my fave **Billy Ray Cyrus** was there, and my fave **Kathy Mattea** was there with hubby **Jon Vezner**, her aunt **Alice** and another aunt right out of West Virginia. Kathy told Aunt Alice and sister (whose name I don't recall) that they needed to meet me. She said that I was just like them (figure). Anyway, Aunt Alice sipped a little of the red and allowed as how she didn't recognize any of the rations and wondered should she dine or what. Course I told her, as I took a taste of the alligator, that Cajuns was just like us hillbillies, only they season a little different. Aunt Alice took my advice and filled her plate. Taking her taste of alligator, she said, "Wow, if I'd known alligator was that good, I'd have took the one home I run over that time in Florida and cooked him."

All the Mercury powers were front and center, VP **Sandy Neese** and **Bob Frank**, **John Grady**, **Jim Kemp** and **Anne Weaver**. Also **Twister Alley**, **Shania Twain** and newcomer **Terry Clark**, whose name you will learn soon. Schmoozed I did, dine I did, fun I had.

NEW TRIO TRASHED

Dolly Parton again in the news. Seems the Asylum trio album by **Dolly**, **Emmylou Harris** and **Linda Ronstadt** has been trashed. The oral agreement, as I understand it, was the trio would tour in support of the record. With Dolly's upcoming sitcom, she couldn't find time for touring with Emmylou and Linda. All that wonderful music I was waiting to hear will never be. Please know, tracks were cut, vocals were sung and plans were squashed. And you cannot set that to music.

CMA AWARDS ON THE WAY

Girls, you'll want to set your eyes on CBS-TV on October 5th. The man with it all, **Vince Gill**, who gives me shivers, will be the host of this year's Country Music Association awards show. I will be backstage as close to super-picker, golfer, too-good-looker Vince as I can get, as usual.

NEW BABE ON THE ROW

River North Records is the new babe on the Row. Taking up residence on 16th Avenue are two giants from the pages of country music: **Eddie Mascolo** will serve as Vice-President/General Manager, and



River North's **Joe Thomas** and **Holly Dunn**.

Bobby Young will serve as Vice-President Promotion/Artist Development. Look for big things to happen with the new babe on the Row. After all, two choice talents have the key to the door. Congratulations to my two friends, **Eddie** and **Bobbie**. River North's President **Joe Thomas** also announced that **Holly Dunn** has signed on as an artist, and her first project will be out early next year.

RUSSELL'S BEST FRIEND

Our illustrious leader Mr. **Russell B.**'s best friend from college, **Norman Dolph**, made it to Music City with songs for singers and computer promises for me. Poor thing hadn't had turnip greens, yams and

pork chops with gravy since 1962 (I think he said). Anyway, I obliged him with a meal at Swett's, where I take all New Yorkers, Californians, Yankees and city-born people. Norman about flipped out with every bite. If you aren't acquainted with me and if you are hungry for Southern cooking, go out 28th Avenue North. Tell 'em I sent you.

MAJOR ECONOMIC IMPACT

Fan Fair, so those in high places say, had a "Major Economic Impact" on our fair city, \$8.83 million big ones. I'd personally like to thank each and every fan that came to see us. I hope you had fun and hope you plan early if you are coming next year. Wear loose clothing and comfortable flat shoes. There is nothing on earth as wonderful as Fan Fair.

DOLLY/ALISON

Word I get is **Dolly Parton** is so smitten by the angelic vocals of **Alison Krauss** that when she watches Alison sing, she cries. I've been told Dolly allows as how God sent her a little sister (Alison) for her to hear sing. These days when Alison reaches a concert venue, there's flowers from Dolly. Nobody ever said Alison Krauss was anything but a magnificent vocalist/musician. Both **Tony** (wow) **Brown** of MCA and **Kyle Lehning** of Asylum have offered to sign Alison, but she's still with Rounder.

TALKIN' 'BOUT EUROPE



Lorianne Crook and **Charlie Chase** seem to be pretty amused by **Garth Brooks** on the set of *Music City Tonight*. Garth was talking about Europe and his new daughter, **August Anna**. We do congratulate Garth and his lovely **Sandy** on the birth of their second daughter. By the time you read this, Garth will be down yonder, "Down Under," in Aussie land. Wish I was there.

People

MARTY GROWS UP

Marty Stuart was a cute little thing. Still is. But he's growing up after all these years. Now he has the title "Marty Stuart, Nashville's International Ambassador for Tourism." Having a title of such extravagance bestowed on one, naturally, there's celebrating to be done. So Mayor **Phil Bredesen** honored Mr. Stuart. "An outstanding spokesman," they called Marty, and presented him with two American Airline tickets to anywhere in the world. Course, I suspect wherever he chooses to go, he will probably take me. Most young men do, you know. Lastly, the wonderful *The Roots of Country Music: Nashville Celebrates the Ryman* used Marty as musical director for the CBS TV special. Didja know who co-produced that show? Mr. **Quincy Jones**, who is almost as famous as God. I, face to face, introduced myself to the great Quincy and welcomed him to Music City. As for Marty, well, he did a fine job with the music.

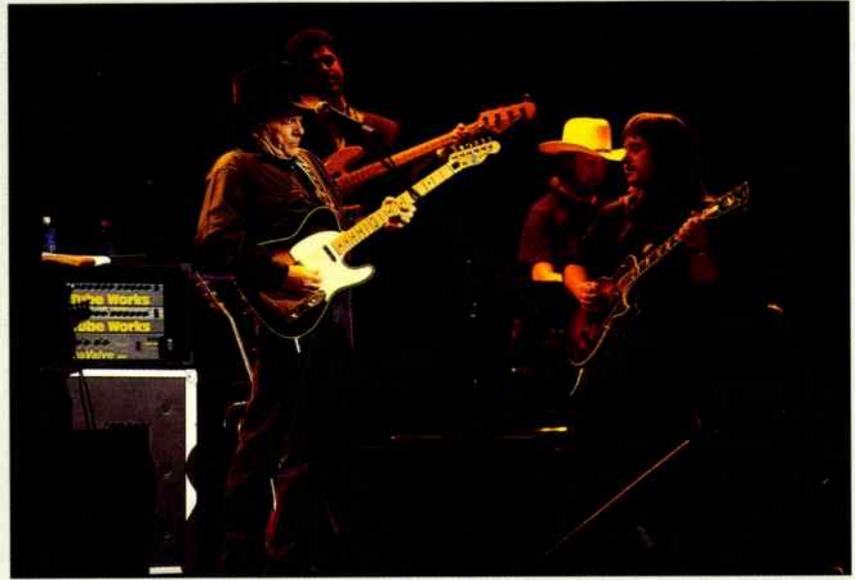
THE NEAL MCCOY

A while back I talked with **Rick Blackburn**, Prez/Atlantic/Nashville, about calling **Neal McCoy** "The Neal McCoy" since he truly is the "real McCoy." We never really "put it in the computer" so to speak; however, with the song "Wink" hanging on at Number One for three solid weeks, one has to smile and say again, I was right on with naming the star "The Neal McCoy." Neal also performed his smash on the *Tonight Show*, for his debut. His Fan Fair performance was incredible as was fan response. You can't fool a country fan. They know one when they see one. A star, that is.

STARWALK

I took myself out to the comfy renovated Chevrolet/GEO Theater at Opryland for the induction of five more deserving creators into Opryland's Starwalk of Fame. Honorees for 1994 included **Rodney Crowell**, **George Jones**, **Les Leverett**, **Mark O'Connor** and **K.T. Oslin**. Retired photographer, Les Leverett received a Grammy for an album cover he photographed for **Porter Wagoner** on RCA back in 1966. I had a tad to do with this. I introduced NARAS exec **Nancy Shapiro** to Les Leverett in May at the Ryman Auditorium. Tons of his photography grace the walls of this historic place of music. While they talked, Nancy became aware that Les was a Grammy winner and had not been included in the Starwalk. She in-

HAGGARD AT THE RYMAN



The great Merle Haggard was a recent featured attraction at the newly renovated Ryman Auditorium. It was a rare Nashville concert appearance for the legend, and the backstage area was lined with the likes of Marty Stuart, Tracy Byrd, Troy Aikman and Shenandoah's Marty Raybon. Naturally, the show was sold out.

vited him to join the 70 or so others, and he happily did so. I'm humbly proud of this. The ceremonies were very nice.

K.T. was so honored to be in the presence of George Jones. She also thanked the academy and the fans for her Grammy of "80's Ladies." Rodney Crowell recognized Porter Wagoner's presence, saying he was honored to be in his company and thought Porter's "I Thought I Heard You Calling My Name" was a masterpiece. He was also thrilled to be in the same place with George Jones. Rodney left a cassette in the concrete with his plaque since they will soon be passe. He also wrote "Truth before money" in cement. George wrote "I Don't Need No Rocking Chair."

Looking back on his Best Instrumentalist Grammy for *New Nashville Cats*, in 1991, Mark O'Connor allowed it was the most significant happening of his career. And he wrote "A New Nashville Cat" in cement.

LORETTA'S PARKWAY

My favorite all-time female singer, **Loretta Lynn**, has done everything, from writing her life story in a book which was made into an Academy Award-winning movie, to being the first female named Entertainer of the Year by the Country Music Association, to winning Gold and platinum albums, having hit singles and sold-

out shows, being a Hall of Fame member, a Grand Ole Opry member...you name it, she's done it all. Now, by cracker, a stretch of Highway 13 some 65 miles west of Nashville at Exit 143, off I-40, is being renamed the Loretta Lynn Parkway: the section extends into Waverly, Tennessee. Humphreys County is where Hurricane Mills is located, the town that Loretta owns. She and hubby **Mooney Lynn** own 5,800 acres, and he leases another 5,000 for cattle to run. Loretta might be the "Blue Kentucky Girl," but her road runs through Tennessee.

BLUEGRASS AT THE RYMAN

Bluegrass at the Ryman has done really well. **Bill Monroe** and **Alison Krauss** sold out for the first show, and fans had to be turned away. I was plum blown away when **Kenneth Tomlinson**, Senior Editor of *Readers Digest*, called my own **Billy Smith** to say he and **Henry Hurt**, Roving Editor for the *Digest*, were flying all the way from Pleasantville, New York, to Music City to see **Del McCoury** and **The Johnson Mountain Boys**. Now, that's a lover of bluegrass, friends. Billy told me he was pretty much blown away sitting in the historic Ryman Auditorium and hearing Del McCoury sing a song he and brother **Terry Smith** had written. And I'm blown away that Tomlinson came from New York to hear Del.

DONNIE BEAUCHAMP

john berry

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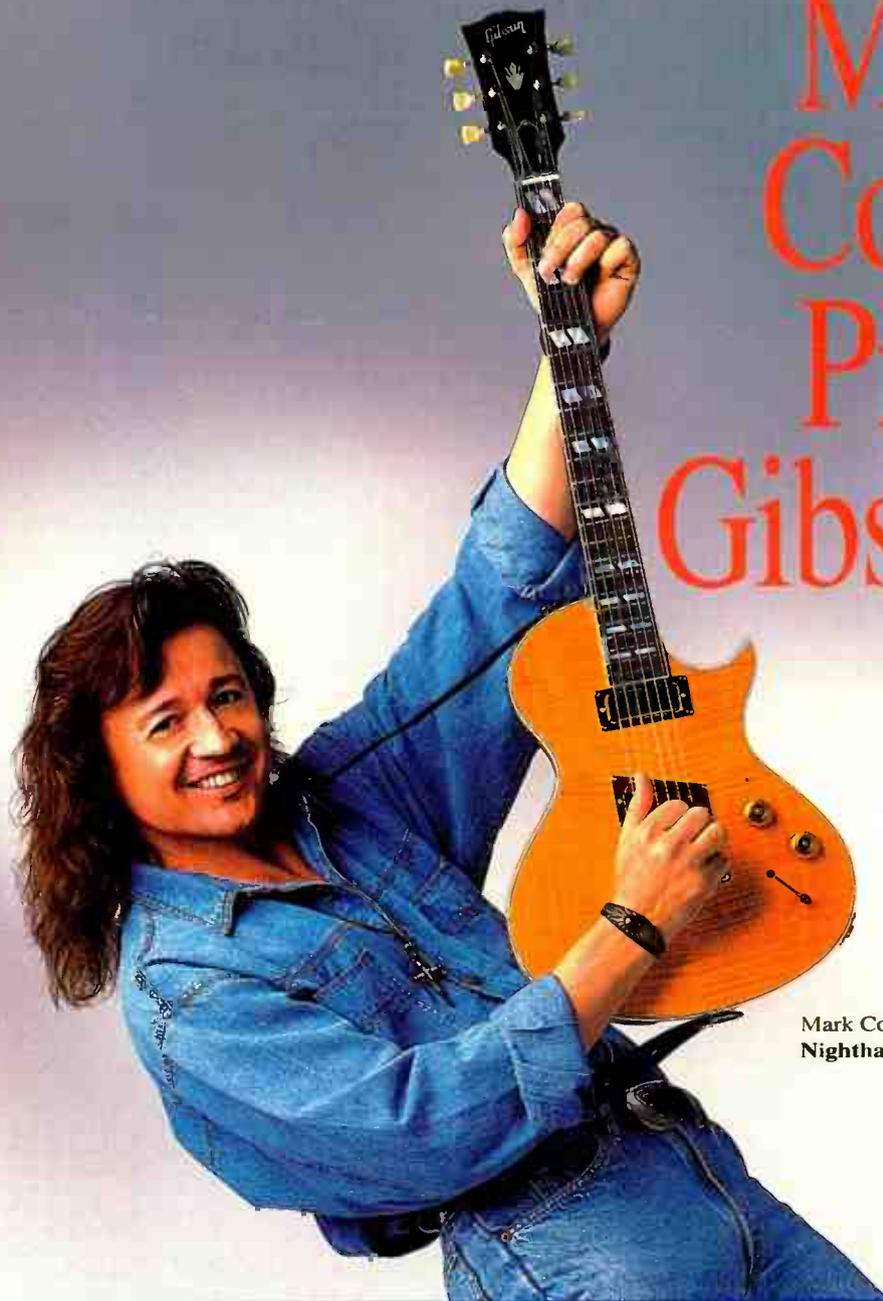
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Record Reviews

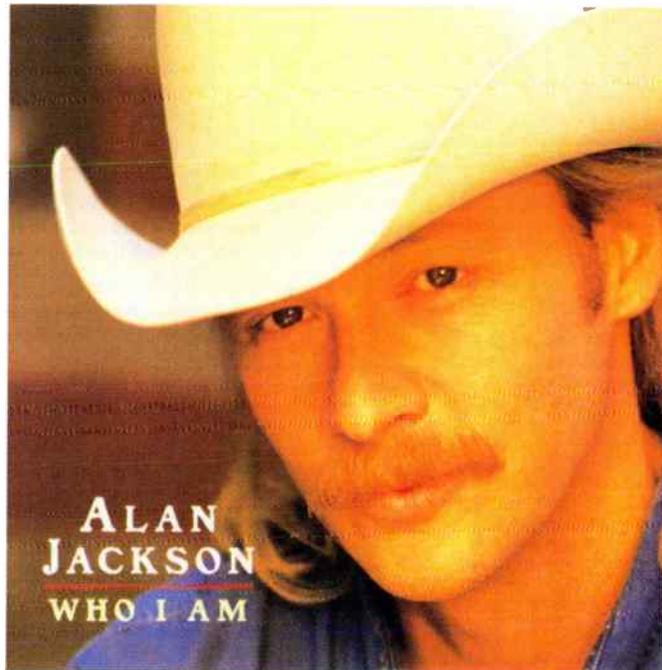
Alan Jackson

Who I Am

Arista 18759

It's interesting to see that Jackson's current remake of Eddie Cochran's "Summertime Blues" is a hit single. Rock bands have revived it on and off since Cochran's original version appeared in 1959. Jackson's version is spirited, has a good dance beat, and is the only song on his new album that I consider a total waste of effort. Why? Because the rest of the songs here are so excellent that Jackson certainly didn't need to dredge up a tired old rock song overused even in TV commercials. I say this because after you get beyond "Summertime," this becomes Jackson's strongest effort since *Don't Rock the Jukebox*.

Not that Jackson and producer Keith Stegall don't have good ears for picking up oldies and other artists' numbers. Jackson makes Rodney Crowell's "Song for the Life" his own, infusing it with passion and fire. His revival of The Kendalls' 1984 hit, "Thank God for the Radio" nearly equals the original version. Jackson's own compositions also remain consistently fine. "Livin' on Love" breaks no new ground in hailing love as more important than possessions or youth, yet it states those sentiments eloquently. The loneliness of "Hole in the Wall," co-written with Jim McBride, is cleverly stated and masterfully performed. The only singer who could possibly equal this version is George Jones, for whom it would be perfect. Jackson's "Job Description" eloquently captures the lot of any touring singer leaving behind a family. Jackson's own rockers easily outgun "Summertime Blues,"



particularly the Bakersfield-flavored "Let's Get Back to Me and You." He vividly chronicles a one night stand from hell in the churning "I Don't Even Know Your Name." The only other loser is "All American Country Boy," a Keith Stegall-Charlie Craig number that strings together the same timeworn clichés about redneck pride that others have sung past the point of reason.

The true masterpiece is Bob McDill's cynical, satirical "Gone Country." I've never heard a better, sharp-edged spoof of the streams of third-rate folksingers and rock performers now flocking to Nashville. Unable to distinguish Bill Monroe from Country Joe and The Fish, they're desperate for the big break that, in most cases, their talents don't merit. This is what a lot of us have bitched about for the past couple of years, and no one is better equipped to put across such a song than Jackson, whose youth and country roots are beyond question.

The line that says it all is "*He says I don't believe in money, but a man could make him a killin' 'Cause some of that stuff don't sound much different than Dylan.*" Amen.

One day, I suspect sooner rather than later, the music will change again, just as it did when everyone got tired of that Urban Cowboy nonsense ten years ago. A lot of current stars will qualify for the "What ever happened to?" sections of magazines and TV magazine programs, if anyone cares by then. Somehow, I suspect that when that happens, as the smoke clears and the fad ends, Jackson will still be among us. —RICH KIENZLE

Jo-El Sonnier

Cajun Roots

Rounder CD 6059

Now I'm the first to realize that most of you out there are not much interested in listening to music sung in another language, especially

when the CD booklet doesn't even provide translations. But if you are willing to hang in there for a few minutes, let me tell you about Jo-El Sonnier, who has had a checkered, and most odd, career.

Sonnier is a Cajun who has worked both sides of the fence, making music in both English and his native Louisiana French. When he launched his career in 1959, the accordionist was known as "The 13-Year-Old Wonder." Sometime after that, he became "The Cajun Valentino" (and you should see his promo pictures from that era!). In the early 70's, he shelved his accordion and headed out to California to play bass and drums in country bands. In the mid-70's, he won a contract with Mercury's country division and moved to Nashville; this was followed by a return to Louisiana and Cajun music, then a return to Nashville and another major-label deal. All this time, Jo-El hopped between Cajun music and pop and country, between French and English; he recorded delicate acoustic music and ham-fisted electronic sounds; he fronted his own groups and worked as a sideman for such legendary rockers as Richard Thompson.

But on *Cajun Roots*, Sonnier returns to, uh, his Cajun roots, with no small assist from Michael Doucet, the brilliant fiddler of contemporary Cajun band Beausoleil. And if you think Sonnier might have lost his touch while doing all that jumping around, you need only listen to the album-opener, his and Doucet's version of that most enduring of Cajun standards, "J'etais Au Bal" ("I Went to the Ball"), to have your mind changed. This is as infectious as the best Cajun music. Yes, it is all in French. Most of the tunes are associated with Iry LeJeune,

Record Reviews

one of the fathers of Cajun accordion, and a man who wore his emotions on his sleeve. But many of these tunes are instrumentals, and you don't have to speak French in those that do have lyrics to understand when something extraordinary is happening. Bright, swirling, reeling tracks like "Church Point Break-down," "Huppes Taiauts 1935" or "La Valse des Chere Bebe" speak for themselves.

Sonnier surprises me. His country work is usually uninspired, hybrids that don't fit together. But when he gets back, he gets down. Here's all the proof you need.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

Hal Ketchum

Every Little Word
Curb 77660

Hal Ketchum is one of those Texas singer-storytellers like Jerry Jeff Walker, Townes Van Zandt and Lyle Lovett who can make you hang on every line no matter how dry and sandy his voice is. Ketchum's fourth album, *Every Little Word*, is no different; it's full of sharply etched stories about men lost on the street and down the road and looking for a woman to lead them back home. *Every Little Word* is Ketchum's best album not because the words are any different but because the music is.

Ketchum is finally learning how to sing. His voice is a modest instrument, but on this new recording he sounds much more relaxed. For example, the album's title tune explains that true love isn't simply a matter of saying, "I love you, baby"; it's an excitement and commitment that can be heard in "Every Little Word" one love says to another. You can hear just what the lyrics are trying to describe in Ketchum's vocal. There's no strain in his throat as he opens up and simply lets the warbling notes spill out. When he sings about his wife "in the kitchen singin' like a bird," there's a chirping giddiness in his singing, too.

Of course, it helps a great deal that Ketchum has some juicy melodies to sing. Some of his new co-writers—most notably Al Anderson of NRBQ and Benmont Tench of Tom Petty's Heartbreakers provide a pop-rock instinct for hooks where the tune and the beat are so intertwined that it's impossible to pull them apart. Ketchum and Anderson wrote the album's first single, "(Tonight We Just Might) Fall in Love Again," which marries a Bakersfield guitar lick to a Beatlesque harmony, as well as "That's What I Get for Losin' You," which hooks up a Rolling Stones guitar riff to a *Hee Haw* sing-along. "Stay Forever," a ballad lament for a departed lover, gets much of

its power from Tench's refreshing chord changes.

Gary Nicholson, Music Row songwriter by day and secret bluesman by night, helped Ketchum write two of the album's best songs. "Walk Away" suggests that sometimes a relationship just can't be saved and it's best to simply separate. The storyline is reinforced by the music, which is all unresolved tension on the verse and first half of the chorus, but when Ketchum shouts out, "The best I can do is just walk away," the harmonies burst free with a wonderful sense of release. "Another Day Gone" is the weary confession of a man who admits, "When I walked away, how could I have known how far we'd drift apart?" The music captures both the pain of separation and the hope for reconciliation.

As good as the music is, Ketchum's way with a phrase creates many of the most satisfying moments on "Every Little Word." Anyone who has ever tried to rebound from a heartache in a singles bar will know just what he means by "the sad ones remind me too much of myself; the sweet ones remind me of you." He sums up the way youthful adventures can turn into middle-aged meanness by singing, "somewhere back in the good old days, I missed the last train home."

"Swing Low" is the album's most compelling story. Sung

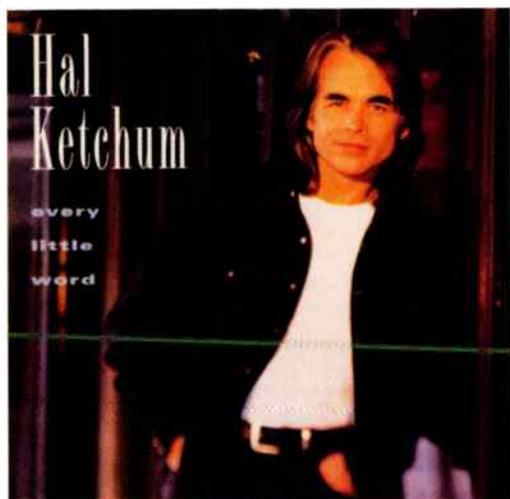
from the perspective of a homeless man, it tells how he met a homeless woman and her daughter at a mission and helped them feel a little less cold and a little less lonely for one night. In the morning, they were gone, but the brief moment stayed with him forever. It's his ability to catch moments like this in their flight that makes Ketchum one of the most interesting singer-songwriters in Nashville today. —GEOFFREY HIMES

Big Sandy and His Fly-Rite Boys

Jumping From 6 to 6
HighTone 8053

If you like music so country it would send most country radio programmers scrambling to the safety of their Eagles albums, these are the guys for you. Formerly an L.A. rockabilly trio, Big Sandy and company have a freshness few current acts can match. They focus on Western swing, but differently than Asleep at the Wheel. While AATW's primary influence remains Bob Wills, Sandy and company draw from West Coast Western swing. They've also been heavily inspired by the rocking Texas honky tonk bands of the 40's and 50's like the legendary Sid King and his band, The Five Strings. Big Sandy even backed King, who still performs (he did a San Francisco gig earlier this year).

Their following includes many fans of "alternative" country and rock, and they enjoy a strong audience even in hip, urbane San Francisco clubs like Bimbo's. The fact that HighTone Records (also located in the Bay Area) signed them won't assure much of the usual high-budget hype. That isn't really the point, however. HighTone is among the few labels who respect off the wall country artists (they still release new Gary Stewart albums). Enlisting singer-songwriter-guitarist Dave Alvin as producer,



MARK CHESNUTT

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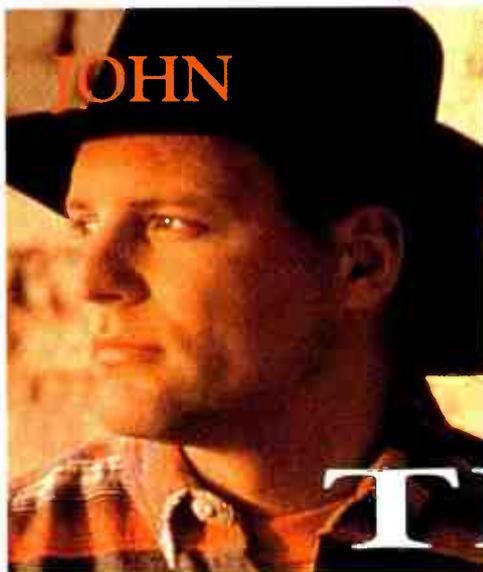
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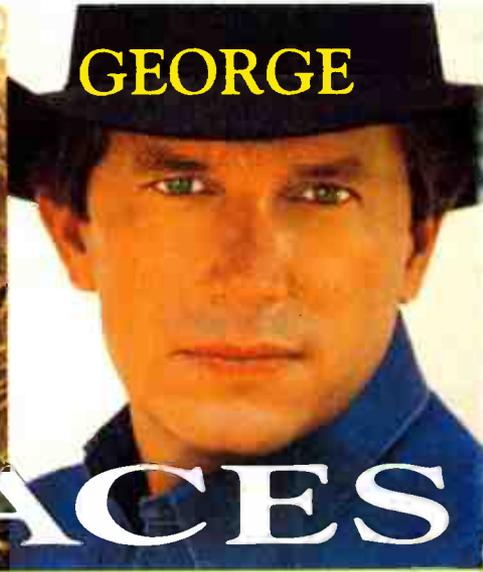
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JOHN



REBA



GEORGE

THE FACES

John Michael Montgomery—Kicks It Up (Atlantic) 473•157
Suzu Bogguss—Grt. Hits (Liberty) 476•051
Best Of Chris Ledoux (Liberty) 476•044
Billy Dean—Greatest Hits (Liberty) 476•036



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

Various Artists—Grammy's Greatest Country Moments, Vol. 1 (Atlantic) 478•438
Eddie Rabbitt—All Time Greatest Hits (Warner Bros.) 477•133
Best Of The New Grass Revival (Liberty) 476•069
Delbert McClinton—Honky Tonk 'N' Blues (MCA Nashville) 475•970
Jeff Foxworthy—You Might Be A Redneck II... (Warner Bros.) 474•833
Mavericks—What A Crying Shame (MCA Nashville) 474•403

Daron Norwood (Giant) 474•114
Marty Robbins—Lost And Found (Columbia) 474•056
Pam Tillis Collection (Warner Bros.) 473•744
Charley Pride—My 6 Latest & 6 Greatest (Intersound) 473•272
Evangeline—French Quarter Moon (Margaritaville/MCA) 473•090
George Jones—High-Tech Redneck (MCA Nashville) 473•082
Shawn Camp (Reprise) 471•730
The Statler Brothers—Home (Mercury/Nashville) 471•722
Kix Brooks (Liberty) 471•649
Dwight Yoakam—This Time (Reprise) 456•913
Tracy Lawrence—Alibis (Atlantic) 456•558

Pam Tillis—Sweetheart's Dance (Arista) 479•683
Rick Trevino (Columbia) 476•150
Best Of Pirates Of The Mississippi (Liberty) 476•077

Various Artists—Grammy's Greatest Country Moments, Vol. 2 (Atlantic) 478•446
Various Artists—Country Dance Mixes (Atlantic) 471•599
Nanci Griffith—The MCA Years (MCA) 470•971
Lee Roy Parnell—On The Road (Arista) 470•450

Asleep At The Wheel—Tribute To The Music Of Bob Willis (Liberty) 469•650
Emmylou Harris—Cowgirl's Prayer (Asylum) 468•975
Pirates Of The Mississippi—Dream You (Liberty) 468•068
Various Artists—Country Love Songs, Vol. 2 (Warner Bros.) 468•629
Mark O'Connor—Heroes (Warner Bros.) 468•512
Rodney Crowell—Grt. Hits (Columbia) 467•720

Benedictine Monks Of Santo Domingo—Chant (Angel) 477•067
Soundgarden—Superunknown (A&M) 475•186
"Philadelphia"—Orig. Sndtrk. Featuring B. Springsteen, N. Young, P. Gabriel, etc. (Epic Soundtrax) 472•928
Sting—Ten Summoner's Tales (A&M) 454•561
Crash Test Dummies—God Shuffled His Feet (Arista) 470•476
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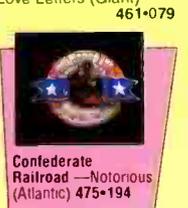
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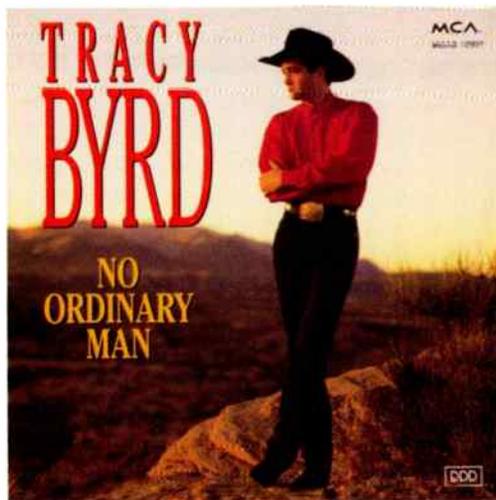
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Record Reviews

who has a natural affinity for Big Sandy's music, was also a plus. Alvin recorded the band live at Capitol's old Studio B in Hollywood, where Gene Vincent and Buck Owens did much of their best work.

First off, these guys are a band. Sandy, the Mexican-American lead singer, sings his lungs out. Wally Hersom's bass-slapping would bring a smile to the face of Bill Black. And there's no pedal steel guitar for these guys. Lee Jeffriess uses the kind of non-pedal models Leon McAuliffe and Noel Boggs used 50 years ago. Lead guitarist Ashley Kingman plays juicy licks based on Jimmy Bryant and Merle Travis. When did any current drummer you've heard ever play accents on a cow bell, the way big band (or Texas Playboy) drummers did? Well, Fly-Rite drummer Bobby Trimble has one and uses it in all the right places. Most importantly, these guys play with fire and authenticity, emphasizing feel, humor and excitement over the sterile perfection that ruins some retro acts.

Six of the 14 songs (how many major labels give you that many tracks on an album?) are covers, including the title song and the closing number, both R&B classics. Except for the sour, strange "Foothill Boogie" and a flat rendition of Hank Williams Senior's "Weary Blues (From Waitin')" on which Sandy tries too hard to do it Hank's way, they don't miss. Their originals are excellent, particularly "Someone Like You," "Hi-Billy Music" (which should be their theme) and "This Ain't a Good Time." On "True Blue," Sandy wails away as Kingman and Jeffriess riff behind him in the spirit of studio guitarist Zeke Turner and steel guitarist Jerry Byrd, who played behind Zeb Turner, Red Foley, Hank Williams and others. The humor-laden instrumental "Barnyard Beatnik," features the instrumentalists on a Jimmy Bryant-Speedy West inspired guitar-steel duet.



One Swedish record label just completed a 30-volume "Boppin' Hillbilly" series, reissuing obscure American honky tonk and country boogie 78's from the 40's and 50's on LP. A Big Sandy and The Fly-Rite Boys track in mono could be added to one of these sets, and nobody'd know the difference. Take that as a compliment, boys. —RICH KIENZLE

Tracy Byrd *No Ordinary Man* MCA 10991

Byrd's debut album had a number of strong points and hinted at good things to come. One reason for that was that nobody seemed to be pushing him to be anything but, to revive a term Patrick Carr coined over 20 years ago, country country. Byrd owes more to Strait than Garth, more to two-steps than line dances, though producer Jerry Crutchfield felt a need to cater to that crowd, which was a lot more than necessary. A strong sense of musical personality was the one thing lacking on that first album and it's understandable on debuts. On *No Ordinary Man*, Byrd remains very much in the Strait mold, yet stronger and more focused. This time there's a greater reliance on humor, though that has its down side in places.



Novelties like "Watermelon Crawl" and "Pink Flamingos," a heartfelt ode to the reassuring icons of blue-collar life, are entertaining, clever and amusing. Byrd excels with non-novelties like "No Ordinary Man," the story of the rough life of the rodeo circuit. His voice is impressive on ballads like "Anybody Else's Heart But Mine" and "The Keeper of the Stars." He makes one care about lost innocence in "Redneck Roses," his most powerful moment on the entire record. "Right About Now," a song about the temptations of cheating, covers old ground, but Byrd's performance saves it from being merely ordinary.

All is not quite perfect, however. I doubt the album needed a dance number, particularly one as worthless as "The First Step." It could have also done without "Lifestyles of the Not So Rich and Famous." This one spoofs the famous Robin Leach TV show by invoking images from blue-collar home life like Elvis TV trays, beans and barbecue and a nine point (stuffed) deer on the wall. Not only is it one novelty too many (covering some of the same ground as "Pink Flamingos"), it's only funny the first time. I also don't quite understand Byrd's sole vocal lapse. He alters his phrasing on the jumping swing number, "You Never Know Just How Good You've Got It." Unfortu-

nately, instead of sharpening his delivery, the results make him sound like a bad Merle Haggard imitator.

Still, in the end Byrd fulfills the potential of his debut, impressively though imperfectly. I hope he ignores the temptation to hang his hat on too many novelties. It's easy to smell a sure thing only to make listeners sick of it by running it into the ground. In the end, I'll take an album that's nearly there to the vast amounts of note-perfect, sound-alike pabulum gushing from Nashville studios these days.

—RICH KIENZLE

Chely Wright *The Woman in the Moon* Polydor 314 523 225

Now here's something different: a young female country singer who draws her inspiration not from Linda Ronstadt and Bonnie Raitt, but from Loretta Lynn and Connie Smith.

Chely Wright is only 23, but she grew up listening to her folks' records by Lynn, Smith, Buck Owens and early Dolly Parton (her parents now run the Flint Hills Opry in Kansas). That much-maligned late-60's, early-70's Nashville sound was Wright's first love, and she's not afraid to wear her heart on her sleeve as she



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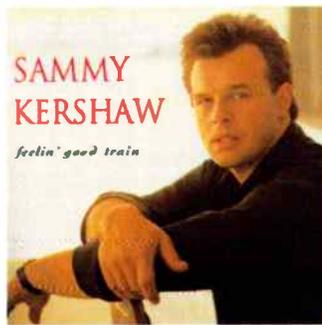
Record Reviews

gives notes a twangy warble on her debut album, *The Woman in the Moon*. She ditches the worst aspects of that era (the suffocating strings, the corny novelty songs, the woman-as-martyr philosophy) but holds on to the unabashed emotionalism and the spunky hillbilly licks from the guitars and pedal steel.

Wright came up through country music's minor leagues (the *Ozark Jubilee* in Branson, Opryland USA in Nashville, Porter Wagoner's road band) before finally being brought up to the majors by producers Harold Shedd and Barry Beckett. Rather than trying to replicate the 60's sound of producers Chet Atkins, Harold Bradley and Ken Nelson, Shedd and Beckett wisely isolate the key ingredients of the '69 Loretta sound—the feisty, rural soprano voice; the note-bending steel guitar; the simple, but bouncy drums—and then record them according to '94 country-pop standards.

The result is not a 60's record, but a 1994 CD that reminds us of our favorite 60's singles. *The Woman in the Moon* includes actual remakes of Connie Smith's '66 hit, "Nobody but a Fool" (written by Bill Anderson), and of Arleen Harden's '68 single, "He's a Good Ole Boy" (written by Harlan Howard), as well as eight new songs which sound as if they could have come from that era. Wright, though, doesn't merely imitate her heroes; she comes across with her own voice and personality.

This is hard to miss on the album's first single, "He's a Good Ole Boy," which finds the singer telling a female rival, "To steal him has been your number-one ambition/But, sister, here's one safe that you don't have to crack/I'll hand him over on one condition/A deal's a deal, and you can't give him back." It's a funny verse, but Wright really makes it click with the effortless flow of her chiming voice and the carefree attitude behind it. She comes from a gen-



eration of women with enough confidence (and enough pocketbook power) to laugh about the battle of the sexes, and that sense of humor turns her remake into a thoroughly modern track.

Wright co-wrote five of the new songs, including the lively two-step description of a Texas dancehall, "Sea of Cowboy Hats," and the bouncy kiss-off number, "Go on and Go." The album's title tune (even though it was written by two men, Gary Scruggs and J. Fred Knobloch) argues that men just don't understand women's problems, so there should be a "Woman in the Moon" for the ladies to talk to.

The catchiest melody on Wright's debut comes on Mark Irwin and Alan Jackson's "Till I Was Loved by You," which boasts the irresistible popably joyfulness of The Everly Brothers. As Wright describes the thrills provided by her new boy friend, she makes her giddiness contagious and proves that even the most commercial aspects of country's past have something to teach us.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

Sammy Kershaw *Feelin' Good Train* Mercury 314 522 125

Like any singer who beat his brains out in the nightclubs for years before getting his recording career in motion, Sammy Kershaw learned to sing just about anything in order to keep the crowds happy—everything from Lynyrd Skynyrd to Ray Charles, and George Jones and



everybody else in between.

But in the big leagues, specialization is the key; and Kershaw, with his first two solid albums—*Don't Go Near the Water* (1991) and *Haunted Heart* (1993)—made his name with such a resolute retro-honky-tonk style that he, at times, sounded more like George Jones than Jones himself did. There's never been any doubt in my mind that Kershaw came by his deep-seated George Jones influence honestly—that he was more a disciple than a mere imitator. Still, Kershaw has surely smarted under the occasional stinging critical rebuke that insinuated otherwise.

I can't help but think that's part of the reason that *Feelin' Good Train*, Kershaw's third and newest album, is such a departure: such a wide-ranging hodgepodge of song styles, all of which the singer handles with ease, and occasionally even mastery. They might have easily called this *The Other Faces of Sammy Kershaw*.

The title tune and opener on *Feelin' Good Train*, written by Mike Lawler and Al Anderson, kicks things off with Sammy working out of a latter-day, Delbert McClinton-style white soul groove, replete with funky-up beat and sassy background vocals. It's followed by "Third Rate Romance," a competent re-make of the familiar old 70's Amazing Rhythm Aces hit. It's a pleasant enough outing, but even the presence of the song's composer (original Amazing Rhythm Aces Russell Smith) does not make for a cover that even comes close to beating the original. Kershaw goes up-

town again on "Too Far Gone to Leave," a bluesy Ray Charles-influenced ballad. On "Southbound," a lush contemporary ballad written by the brilliant Mac McAnally (who also contributes harmonies), he even settles into a pop groove. On other cuts, Kershaw does get closer to familiar territory, to what he does best. "If You're Gonna Walk, I'm Gonna Crawl" is pure indulgence in George Jones mania. And "The Possum" himself even drops in for a duet on "Never Bit the Bullet Like This." With so much vocal horsepower at work, it's somewhat disappointing that the results aren't a little more impressive than they are.

It took courage, or maybe just a burning desire to show he world he's far more than just a Jones clone, for Sammy Kershaw to make an album like *Feelin' Good Train*. But now and then even the best intentions fall flat, as they do on a few of these tracks.

—BOB ALLEN

Billy Dean *Men'll Be Boys* Liberty 27760

Billy Dean belongs to that branch of contemporary country characterized by a country voice and pop phrasing. He and his peers are almost like a modern version of Rick Nelson (a parallel reinforced by the fact that the album-opening "Cowboy Band," a thematic cousin to "Johnny B. Goode," is melodically similar to Nelson's "Garden Party").

Both voice and vocal techniques are smooth and agreeable, ideal for today's country radio, and Dean has benefitted considerably from that fact. Unfortunately, neither has much character. But with Jimmy Bowen producing, you know the sound of Dean's records is going to be right in the country mainstream, tinged with a little drama, and so it is. Sure, those records are

Record Reviews

instantly pleasant—but they also tend to be instantly forgettable, because there's nothing to distinguish them, no personal touches from either artist or producer.

The tender "Wish You Were Here" at least offers a few vocal changes-of-pace, and will probably provide a dramatic interlude during his concerts, while "Starting Over Again" gets a nice arrangement, and a vocal approach to match. Aside from that, though, I hear mostly formulaic, Big-Build schlock like "I Can't Find the Words to Say Goodbye" and "Love and Bide," tracks where all the strength is in the song and none in the singer like, "Men Will Be Boys," and woeful misreadings like "Misery and Gin." Most of it just goes in one ear and out the other.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

Mark Collie

Unleashed
MCA 11055

Mark Collie's first two albums were too smart and too tough for country radio, but it was obvious from the start that this self-described "hillbilly singer" had the voice for Nashville stardom. All he had to do was pick simpler, more sentimental songs. He stepped halfway toward that compromise on his third album, last year's *Mark Collie*, and he goes all the way on his new release, *Unleashed*.

This is the first Collie album which could be described as "mainstream country," and he takes his best shot at the golden ring with some sweet crooning seasoned by a twang straight out of the Tennessee hills. Personally, I prefer the thornier storytelling of his early work, but there's no denying Collie's ability to make the most familiar formula sound personal.

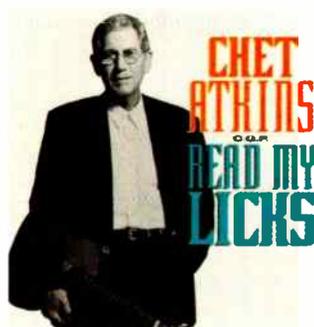
Listen, for example, to a song like "All I Want Is You," which Collie co-wrote with James House. In real life, of



course, people want lots of different things which conflict with each other and cause all sorts of problems. Yet when Collie declares with single-minded devotion that, "All I want to do is love you strong and true," every listener will recognize the temporary state of insanity that blocks the real world out and focuses entirely on just one person. Only a vocal of the highest intensity could make this sound like a confession rather than a line, and Collie delivers the necessary voltage.

Similar sentiments are served up by songs like "Waiting" ("I've been waiting on a girl like you all of my life"), "It Is No Secret" ("it is no secret, I'm still in love with you"), "When You Belonged to Me" ("I had everything when you belonged to me") and "God Didn't Make Me That Strong" ("if you're not standing with me, this life ain't worth living"). These are the cliches every woman may (or may not) long to hear, and with that little catch in his throat, Collie makes them sound like reluctant admissions rather than hollow promises. And when he gets a melodic hook as catchy as the one on "Waiting" or "God Didn't Make Me That Strong," the singer makes the emotions so big they're hard to resist.

Less convincing are the country-rock numbers that open and close the album. "Hard Lovin' Woman" offers the neanderthal advice that when faced with a stubborn, domineering man, a woman should just love him all the more. The title track, "Unleashed," starts promisingly



with the story of a Florida high school teacher boot-scootin' down to the local dance club after the bell rings, but it suffers from a leaden, overly cluttered Southern-rock arrangement that has none of the leanness and spark of Collie's earlier rockabilly recordings. Much better is "Lonely Streak," a terrific Southern soul ballad in the style of Brook Benton and Dobie Gray, which finds Collie singing a duet with co-writer Deborah Allen.

The album's most imaginative arrangement, though, comes on the one older song, "Ring of Fire." Collie slows the tempo way down, and over little more than a ticking drum and a droning organ he sings the Johnny Cash hit in a whisper, echoed voice. It gives a whole new slant on the song, as if Collie were sifting the ashes rather than feeling the flames. Collie's first two albums were full of this sort of smart understatement, but he has pretty much abandoned it in the process of kissing up to country radio.

—GEOFFREY HIMES

Chet Atkins

Read My Licks
Columbia 53756

I've yet to find anyone who doesn't admire Chet Atkins' virtuosity. His pursuit of perfection is both admirable and inspiring. That he's his own worst critic is a matter of fact. There's a down side to this: a feeling even from fans that recordings of recent years are too often relaxed to the point

of being boring, crossing the line from fusion jazz to elevator music. His last album with Jerry Reed was a disappointment that showed both taking it too easy when they should have pushed each other. On his album with Mark Knopfler, the young British guitarist woke Atkins up, reviving the old fire. Part of the problem here is the fact that he still loves that easy listening groove. What he does is flawless, but falls so quickly into background music that it's hard to follow the wondrous things he still plays. Obvious examples here are the terminally boring "Every Now and Then" and "Vincent," both of which sound like background music for The Weather Channel.

That's not the whole story, though. The opening number, "Young Thing," features the gutstring guitars of Chet and his second guitarist, Pat Bergeson. On it, Atkins shows that with just a rhythm section to push him, he can still generate ample fire. He does the same with "Mountains of Illinois" and "Norway (Norwegian Mountain Song)." With the guest artists, Atkins becomes a giant. Longtime friends Knopfler and Steve Wariner, along with jazz guitar ace George Benson and rock virtuoso Eric Johnson bring out the Chet of old. With Johnson on "Somebody Loves Me Now" Chet finds a wave and rides it throughout. His and Johnson's styles couldn't be more different, but the 70-year-old Atkins stands toe to toe with the young virtuoso. Chet and Wariner make short work of the title number, which also features vocals. Wariner, in fact, sounds more comfortable in this context than on many of his own records. Chet and old partner Knopfler do likewise with "Around the Bend."

Few recall that in addition to his country roots, Atkins was a product of the Swing Era. He studied big band recordings when he worked at WNOX in Knoxville in the



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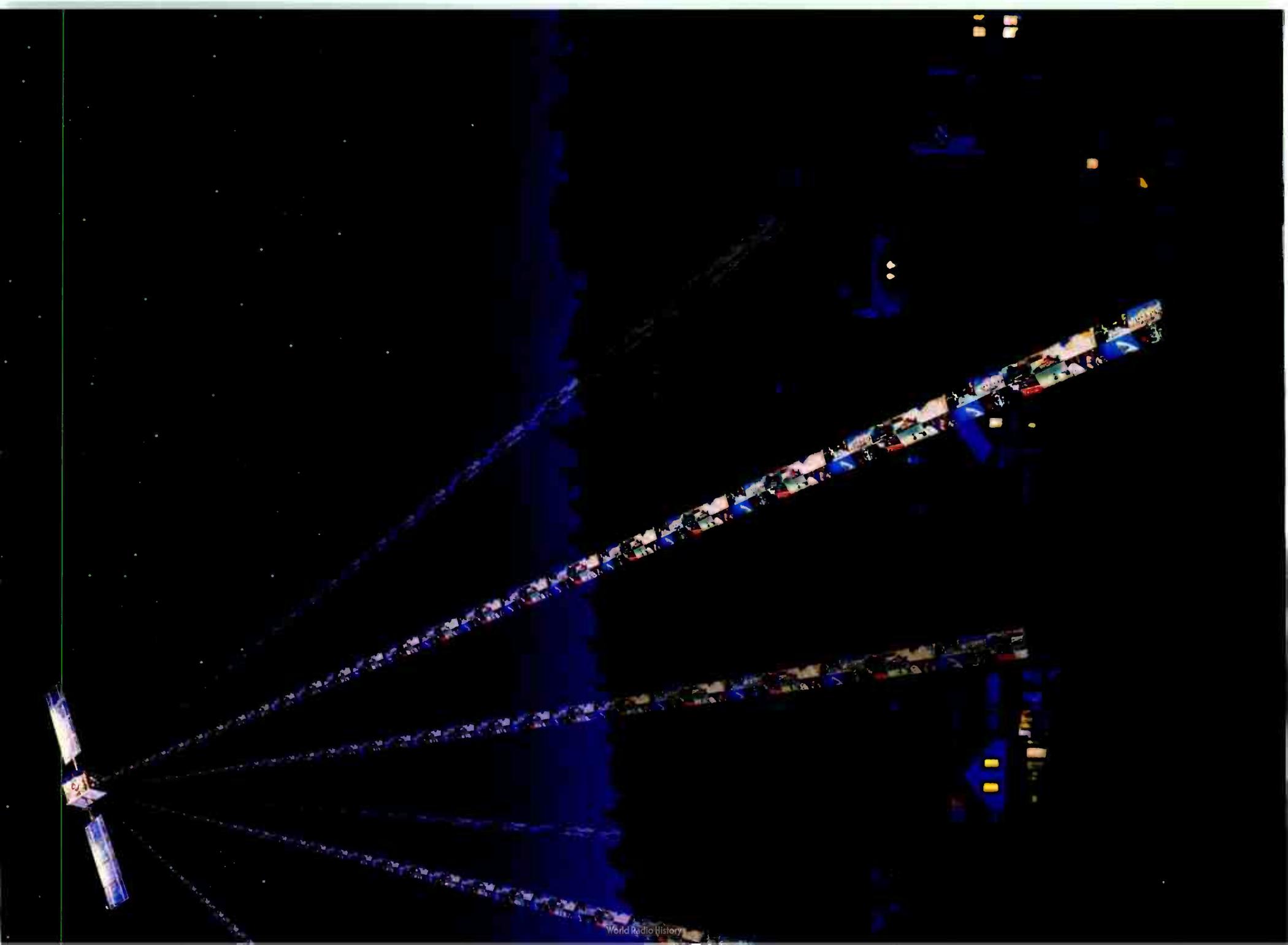
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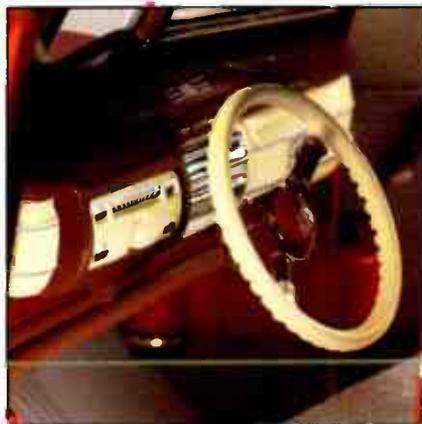
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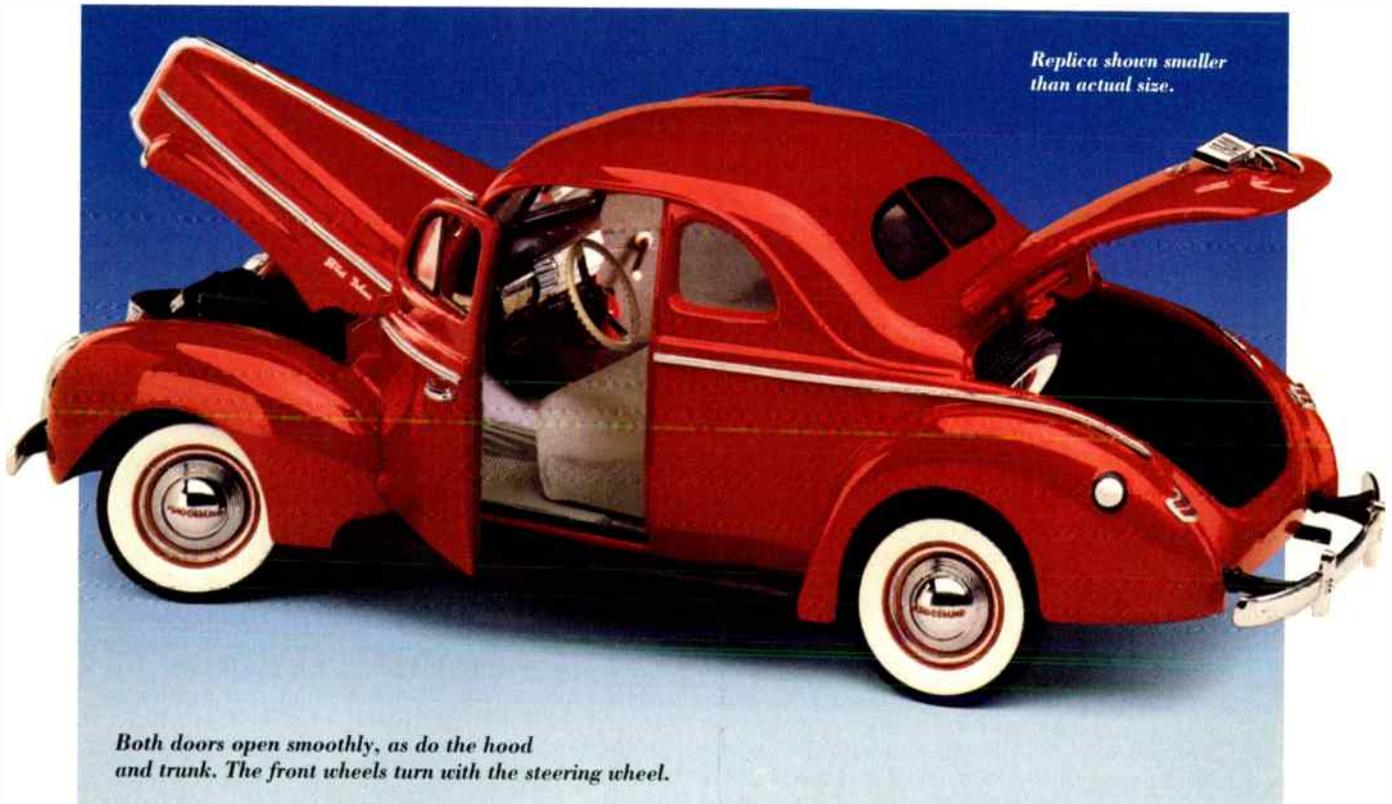
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Record Reviews

early 40's and briefly played in the station's jazz combo. Those roots emerge on the jazz standard, "After You've Gone," nicely sung by Suzy Bogguss (who could handle a whole album of such fare). Chet and Benson (himself criticized for emphasizing his pop singing over his jazz guitar talent) revive The Pied Pipers' 1945 vocal favorite, "Dream," and do a mellow, thoroughly swinging job.

Few country instrumentalists have major-label deals aside from Mark O'Connor and Chet. That's a crime, with so much talent still out there. The fact that Chet can rise above his flatter moments and excel as he does on the high points remains a tribute to his staying power after 48 years of recording. —RICH KIENZLE

Gibson-Miller Band *Red, White and Blue Collar* Epic 57627

The Gibson-Miller Band is a rowdy, good-natured outfit that kind of looks like Alabama on a disastrous hair day and sounds like Confederate Railroad with just a little less raunch and a little more blues and rock-tinged finesse.

The two mainsprings of this five-piece ensemble are singer/songwriter Dave Gibson and Detroit guitarist Bill "Blue" Miller. Gibson's many song

credits include Alabama's "Jukebox in My Mind," Joe Diffie's "Ships That Don't Come In" and Confederate Railroad's "Queen of Memphis." Miller has, in his time, laid down hot guitar licks behind everybody from Doug Stone to Bob Seger. GMB is rounded out by sidemen Doug Kahan, Steve Grossman and Mike Daley.

Gibson-Miller's orientation, which was showcased impressively on their 1992 debut album, *Where There's Smoke*, is Southern boogie: mainline country served up with sassy lyric twists, rock 'n' roll crackle and grunge, and some beery, bluesy atmospherics. And on *Red, White and Blue Collar*, their new album release, they follow their distinctive style to some new and even more adventurous places only hinted at before. The title tune, which kicks off the album, has a surly but warm glow of working-class pride and defiance that's served up with a big beat reminiscent of vintage Amazing Rhythm Aces. Gibson's singing is just about that good, too. By contrast, "Right Off the Top of My Heart," (one of many cuts cowritten by the two band leaders) shows Gibson-Miller's range. It sounds almost like it was ripped right off the pages of Hank Thompson's honky-tonk annals of yesteryear. On cuts like "The Fugitive," a tongue-in-cheek tale of a man urgently

in search of a good time, Miller cranks up the heat with his chugging and burning bluesy guitar work as Gibson dashes off the lyrics in a frenzied, mad-cap rush that suggests both playfulness and desperation.

As often as not, it's Gibson-Miller's sense of fun that really puts the icing on the cake. You can hear this even on "Haunted Honky Tonk," a compelling tall tale about a lost motorist who stumbles upon a fallen-down deserted dance hall that turns out to be a Valhalla for all the departed greats of country and rock 'n' roll. On this and other cuts, GMB's irresistible blend of send-up and sincerity translates into something unlike anything I've ever heard before.

Red, White and Blue Collar does have its soft spots. The guys try mightily to re-enliven Ed Bruce's oft-recorded "Mama's Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys" with a frenzied vocal reading and some cool guitar licks. (Their version of the song can also be heard in the film, *The Cowboy Way*, which I guess is the reason they bothered to include it here.) But when it's all said and done, it's still the same tired song that Willie and Waylon wore out back in the 70's. On "What Are You Waiting For" Miller turns in a reedy, soulful vocal that's decent enough, but also reminds

us why Gibson does most of the lead singing.

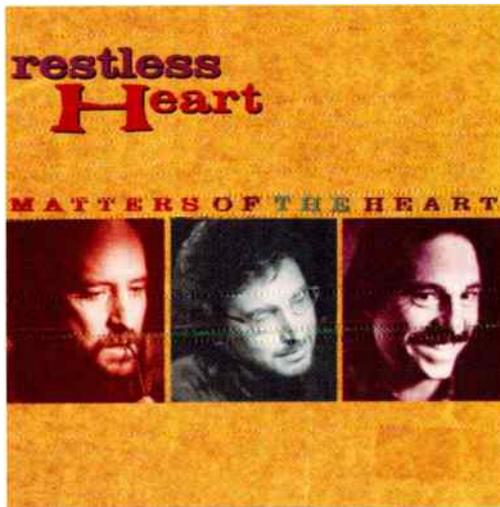
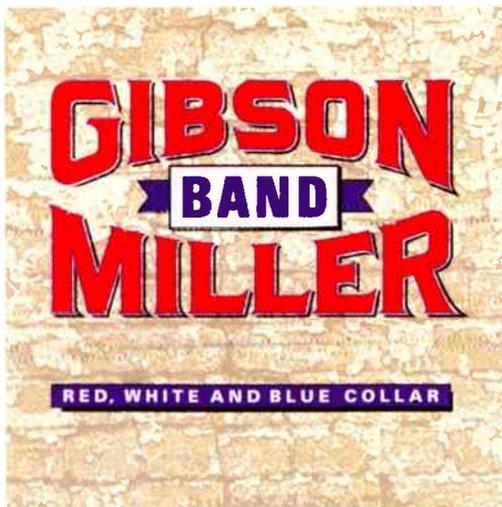
Fortunately, most of the cuts on *Red, White and Blue* do hang together well enough to make it clear that The Gibson-Miller Band isn't just some tossed together Nashville studio concoction. It's a real five-piece band serving up music that's as real and visceral as blood and guts.

—BOB ALLEN

Restless Heart *Matters of the Heart* RCA 66397

Restless Heart's presence in the country charts since its inception in 1984 has always been somewhat against the grain. All through an era when neo-traditionalism was the rage, this accomplished band has flourished with ultra-smooth radio hits that come right from middle-of-the-road country-rock's soft, post-Eagles underbelly.

The mere fact that the Restless boys in many ways seemed like holdovers from a different era made predictions for the band's future all the more dire when lead singer Larry Stewart bailed out for a solo career a couple of years ago. Then when a second founding member, keyboardist Dave Innis, jumped ship shortly after the release of *Big Iron Horses* (1992), the band's first post-Stewart album, most people figured it was curtains for Restless Heart. But the result was quite the contrary. "When She Cries," a single from *Big Iron Horses*, proved one of Restless's biggest hits ever. And with the three remaining original members, Paul Gregg, John Ditttrich and Greg Jennings left to carry on, something strange happened between Innis's departure and the release of their new album, *Matters of the Heart*: something that seems oddly akin to the musical equivalent of the fusion theory, where a larger and more volatile substance



Record Reviews

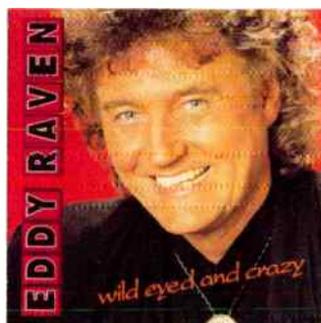
melts down, in a manner of speaking, into a simpler and more durable one.

The changes that have resulted with the new three-man line-up (which has been augmented by the addition of two new, uncredited band members, keyboard player Dwain Rowe and guitarist Chris Hicks) can be heard most dramatically on "Love Train," a stand-out cut on the new album. Written by Gregg, Scot Hendricks and Rob Crosby, it's a drastic departure, quite unlike anything that the Restless Heart of old would have attempted. With its raw, driving, almost rockabilly-ish shuffle beat, it's a far cry from the band's easy listening radio hits of yester-year like "Big Dreams in a Small Town" and "Bluest Eyes in Texas. On "Love Train," lead guitarist Paul Gregg turns in some extended free-wheeling runs that are, now and then, even reminiscent of the late great Duane Allman.

"Baby Needs New Shoes," an anthem of blue-collar optimism in the face of adversity and rising credit card bills, is another example of the down-home vitality Restless Heart has injected into its traditionally bland sound. "Hold You Now" (co-written by Jennings, Stan Lynch and Rafe Van Hoy) is another stand-out which features an intriguing melody and rhythm, as well as some fine steel guitar—that's right, steel guitar on a Restless Heart record!—from Dan Dugmore. On other cuts like "Sweet Whiskey Lies" and "She's Still in Love," the Restless boys cling somewhat to their play-it-safe, poor man's Eagles, middle-of-the-road formula, demonstrating, if nothing else, that Paul Gregg and John Dittrich are such adept singers that Stewart is barely missed.

But even though nobody's still going to mistake Restless Heart for Merle Haggard, the band has scaled down and toughened up, proving to many doubters that it's earned its own niche in contemporary country.

—BOB ALLEN



Eddy Raven
Wild Eyed and Crazy
Intersound 9121

This may be a bit of a cheat, but it's a welcome one. Raven had a string of hits through the 80's, and wrote such hits as "Thank God for Kids" for The Oak Ridge Boys. But he was always a bit underrated. This album contains only five new songs, while reprising such beautifully-crafted working-class fantasies as "Joe Knows How to Live" and "I've Got Mexico."

Raven and his acoustic guitarist Frank Myers co-produced this comeback, and co-wrote all the new stuff, as they had some of the old. With his Cajun background, Raven has always favored eclectic arrangements, even when producers and record companies weren't allowing them; here, he and Myers have come up with a pleasing blend of accordion, guitars and saxes to go along with the standard honky tonk sound. Raven himself has the same kind of urgent voice—virile yet vulnerable—as Raul Malo of The Mavericks.

The title tune is from the point of view of starry-eyed lovers who made their dream come true, while "Tequila Tells" is a down-and-outer that holds out the possibility of hope. These new songs are as strong as anything Raven's done, and I wish more were included. Apparently Raven felt the need to play it safe by re-introducing himself via his old, tried and true, material. Here's hoping that he's successful, so he can get on with more of the new stuff. —JOHN MORTHLAND

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MARTY STUART

SHOOTS FOR THE STARS

“**A**ctually, you caught me at the end of a great week,” Marty Stuart beams, drumming his fingertips on the top of a table at Austin’s Broken Spoke honky tonk while a VH-1 *Country Countdown* crew sets up to shoot a segment with him and Travis Tritt. Marty just blew into Austin about an hour ago, did a quick change at the hotel and then hopped a limo to the Spoke. He spent the last couple of days in Dallas, where he was representing Nashville in a tourism show (it’s a little-known fact, but Mr. Stuart just happens to be the International Ambassador of Tourism for the city). While there, he’d managed to have dinner with Hank Williams’ sister, who keeps a very low profile but is giving Marty a rare interview for this magazine, and, around midnight Saturday, to pay a quiet visit to the book depository and grassy knoll where President Kennedy was assassinated. Sunday morning, he had breakfast with, and then attended the church of, Ralph Mooney, the retired steel guitarist best known for writing “Crazy Arms” and playing with Ray Price, Buck Owens and Waylon Jennings; Mooney became a deacon not too long ago.

Earlier in the week, Marty had joined Johnny Gimble, Chet Atkins, Ray Benson and others to accept a Grammy for his part in *Asleep at the Wheel’s* “Red Wing,” which he sang on the Austin swing band’s Bob Wills tribute album. Tomorrow morning, he’ll be taping an installment of Willie Nelson’s new TV show, *Legends of Country Music*, with Wheel leader Benson, Tritt and Willie.

And so you can maybe understand why the guy’s in such a good mood as he waits to tape his segment with Tritt.

A VH-1 producer comes over to give him some directions, telling him to just kinda talk with Travis like they’re in mid-conversation. You may have

seen Tritt’s show by now, and thus know the drill; basically, he’s introducing the top videos of the week with his guests, and keeping it as light as he can: a little song, a little dance, a little seltzer down your pants.

But with Marty and Tritt, it’s different. Anyone who believes these guys toured for a solid year because it made good business sense has never seen them together. The chemistry is undeniable. As Marty is being called to his stool, Tritt is asking if

anyone knows where his hair-dryer is. “I want you to know Travis Tritt is the only person who’s ever brought his hair-dryer to the Broken Spoke,” Marty cackles. “And I’m proud of him. He’s an innovator. My brother is an innovator!”

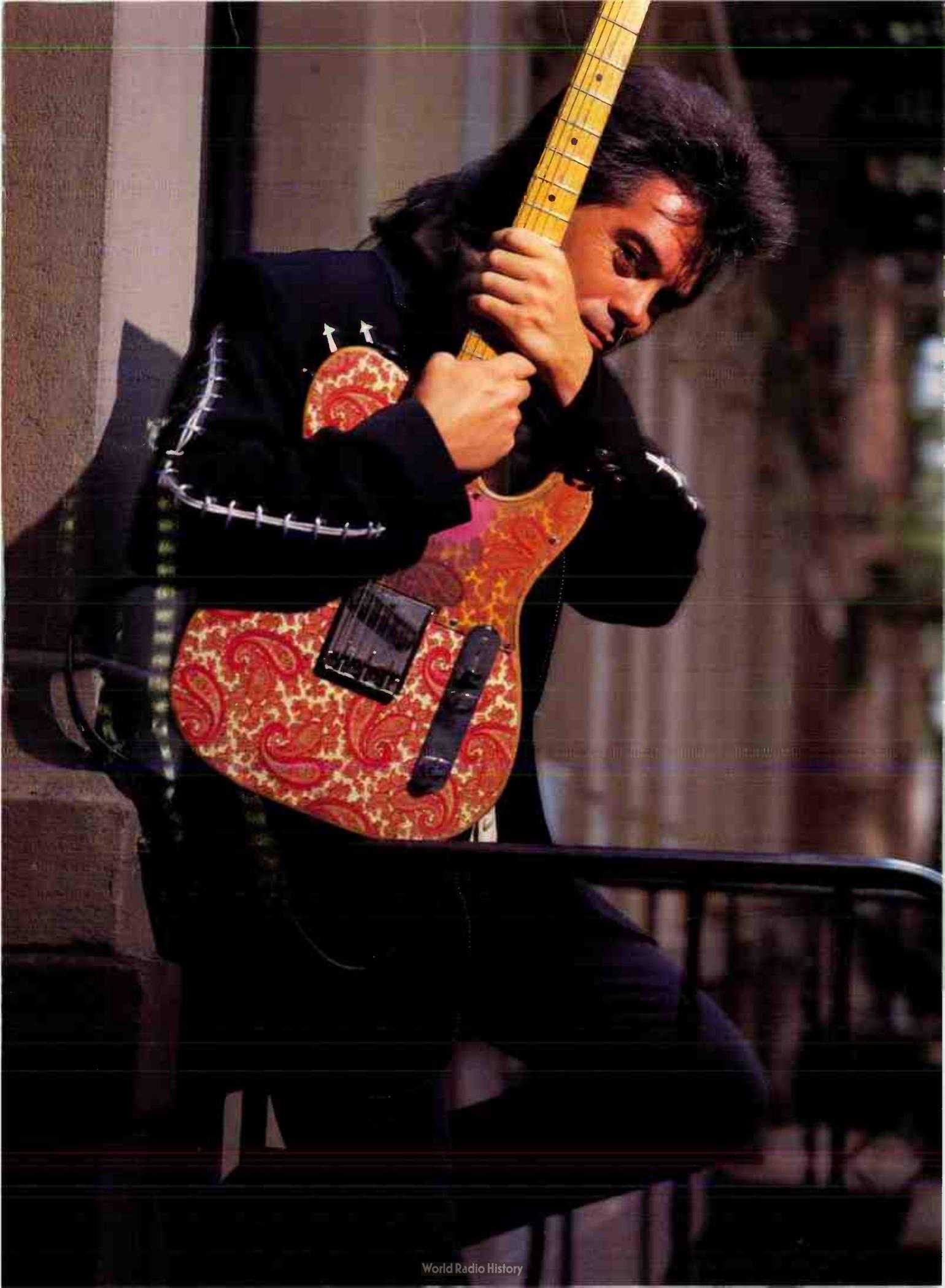
Marty is also taken by the fact that Travis is wearing a puffy-sleeved shirt in a honky tonk, and such banter continues virtually until the millisecond the cameras come on—at which point they stop teasing each other and turn into hams. Their takes are flawless, their comic timing well-honed, but one segment has to be redone because of camera troubles. When the producer tells him this, Marty is still so busy yam-

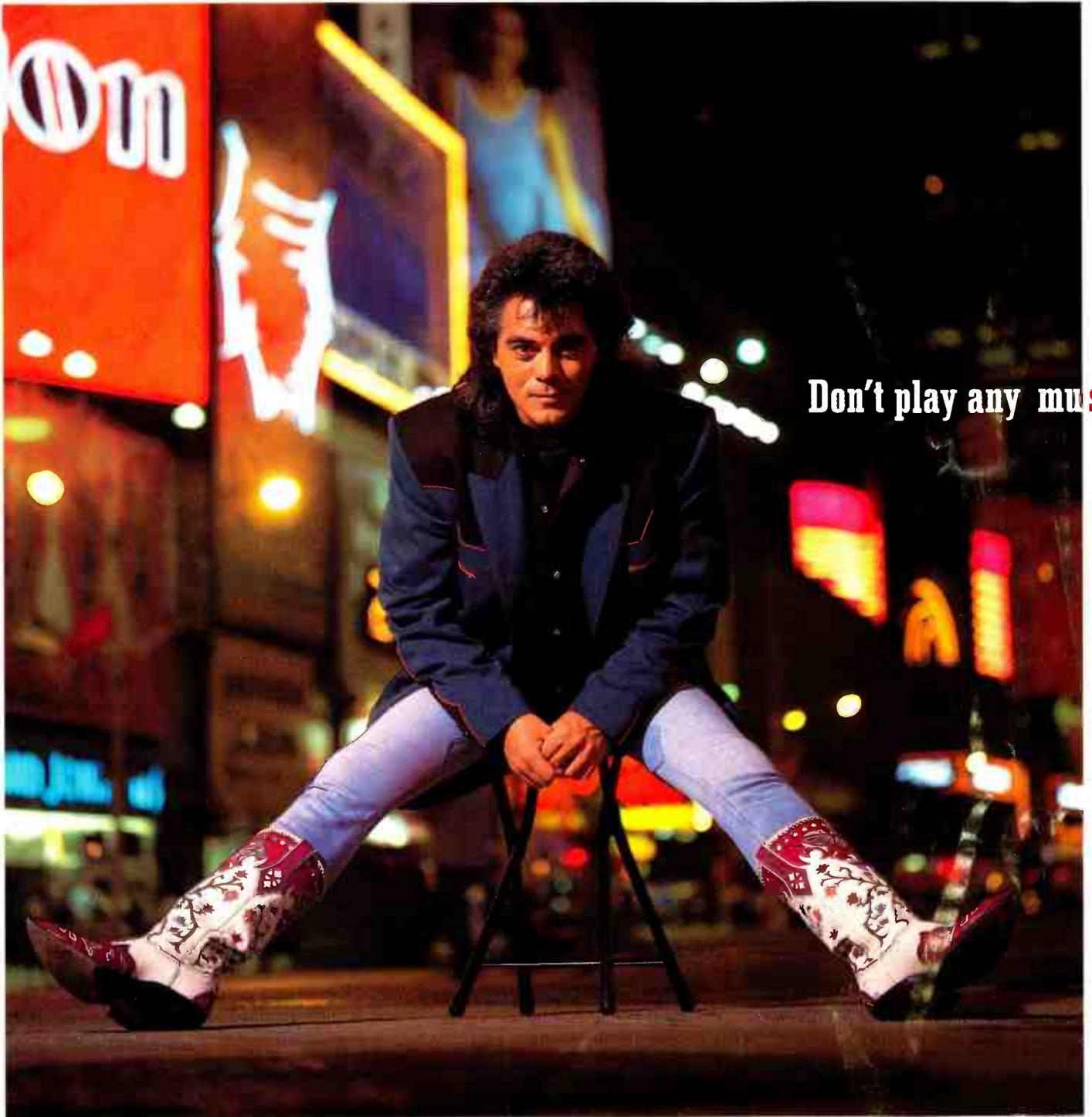
mering into Travis’ ear that she has to holler it to him again; this time, Marty does a hard double-take, like he’s just come out of a coma, and declares, “All you gotta do is tell me twice.” Big laughs all around, and then, presto, the take is finished in no time. While Joe Ely and Jimmie Dale Gilmore prepare to swap some songs on-camera, Tritt’s roadie calls over to the Continental Club to see if Junior Brown is playing there, as he does every Sunday he’s in town (but this week he’s gone). Last time these two were in town together, Marty decided to introduce Travis to the music of Austin’s local legend with the guit-steel, and they liked it so much that they were compelled to hang in until last

Marty talks about music
and stardom and what
you gain and what you
give up when you go for
it all. The years have
taught him well.



By John Morthland





Don't play any music

call while getting themselves notably sideways. That's obviously not in the cards again tonight, and besides, Travis has himself an invite to the governor's mansion for tea. Stuart will satisfy himself with room-service cheesecake.

Thus ends Marty's Excellent Week.

Surprisingly, given my introduction to Stuart Sunday night, things turn serious with Marty come Monday. We meet at a Southwestern cafe just off downtown and try to start an interview before the food arrives, but that doesn't come easy for either of us. He talks a little about his new band, The Rock and Roll Cowboys, who made their first appearance early this year, on the Opry. Then there's the George Jones project—essentially a George Jones “Unplugged” album with the star singing some of his old hits with the new stars, accompanied

by a mostly-acoustic core band which includes Marty on mandolin (he also sings “One Woman Man” with George). Then there's his and John Anderson's version of “Mama Tried” on a forthcoming tribute album of Merle Haggard chestnuts which will also serve as a benefit for Second Harvest; a song called “Beyond the Storm” that Marty wrote with Mike Reid and Steve Cropper for Wynonna; his benefit work for AIDS; his track with Pop and Mavis Staples on the *Rhythm Country & Blues* set...the man definitely has a side project or two going. To say nothing of *Love and Luck*, which is his own newest album (and, to my ears anyhow, easily his best). Much as he likes that one himself, he's not inclined to puff it up too much. When the waiter puts our lunches down, Marty seems visibly relieved. “Let's eat,” Marty Stuart says emphatically.

Over lunch, we small-talk happily about favorite records, favorite stories (apocryphal and otherwise) about the stars, and the like, but at one point Marty puts down his fork and says, simply, "You know, the reason I'm so uneasy with an interview right now is I don't want to do the usual started-with-Lester-and-then-Johnny Cash stuff, and I don't want to hype my new album that much." I begin thinking there isn't going to be an interview, but once we're in my car with an hour to go before he must be at the television studio for Willie's taping, Marty asks if we're close enough to the river that we could go sit there awhile. "This is likely to be my last chance for a little peace and quiet for the rest of the day," he explains, and as I head towards the water, he begins talking about music and stardom, and what you gain and what you give up when you go for the latter. It sounds like he's been thinking about this subject a lot lately, so when we settle down on a soft patch of green alongside the river, I begin by asking him what his intentions were when

the main thing is that at the end of it all, you're able to respect the body of work you've created. And that's the thing I'm most cautious of these days: *Don't* play any music you don't believe in, because it will definitely come back to haunt you."

Now, Marty didn't arrive at these conclusions overnight. Much of his thinking derives from something Lester Flatt told him more than two decades ago, when he was picking mandolin in the bluegrass master's band. "Keep it slow, keep it steady, build the foundation," Lester warned. "Go play music that you love to play with people that you love to play it with. That'll feed you, and it also comes in real handy for your soul, down through the years."

"I caught what he was saying a bit," Marty realizes, "but now I understand it a lot better." More recently, there was another factor: Marty had just come off a year of flat-out touring with Tritt and was down in Mississippi shooting a video when he ran into a beam over a door and

you don't believe in, because it will definitely come back to haunt you ⇄

he first went solo, after his tenure as the 13-year-old boy wonder with Lester Flatt, after his years as the rock 'n' roll cowboy with Johnny Cash. Just what *was* he hoping for on his own?

"Well, the ultimate," he answers forthrightly. "What do you want to do? You want to sell all the records you can, you want to win all the awards you can, but the thing that meant the most to me on top of all that, it wasn't about coming to town and grabbing all the awards and running off, it was really about bringing a point of view with you. And sticking around a lot of Januarys. That's what means a lot to me. And when you're done, you know, what's to do, when you grow up, who do you want to be? Bill Monroe, that'd be great. Or Buck Owens."

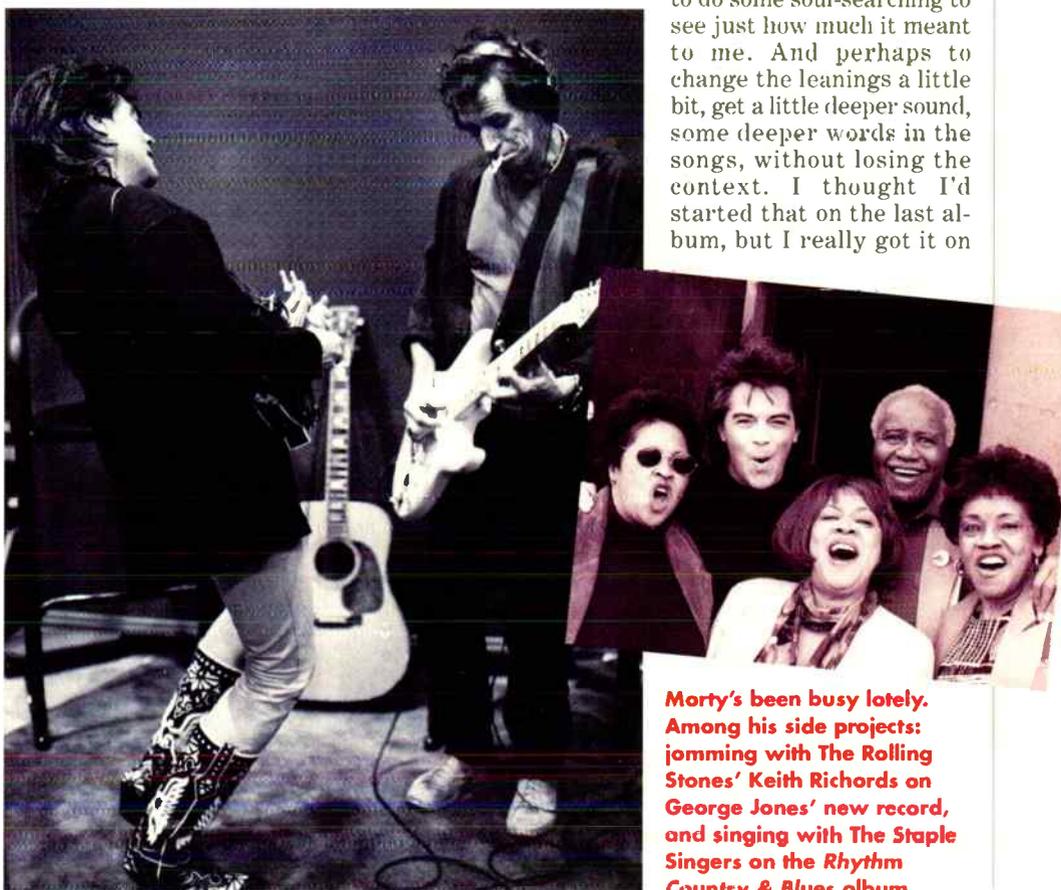
But the way you've been talking, I suggest, it sounds like you're getting discouraged; do you think it's possible to hold onto the music and the point of view *and* have the good career, and to keep all that to the end?

"I feel it's extremely possible to do that. I feel there's a supreme price you pay for it sometimes," he replies, just as quickly as he had before. "It means you're not always the most popular guy on the dance-club circuit, but it's a lot more interesting for me to go in and out of that. I think Willie's a great example. He's been in and out of the driver's seat a few times, and I admire him a lot for it. Johnny Cash, too. It must be hard to figure out how to be those guys after 40-something years. What do you do in the morning? But I think it's that figuring it out that is the fun part of it all. You find yourself with a product in your hand every now and then that don't make a lot of sense, and you say, 'Why am I doing this?' Well, you've got a family to feed and a band to keep together. But

wound up with a concussion and a bunch of stitches.

"I refused to stop, I just kept going, and finally I went down, just passed out," he recalls. "Later, I looked at myself in the mirror and I thought, you ain't doing you or anybody else no good; you're doing more damage than good 'cause you're pretty nuts. So I had no choice really except to sit down and take a little closer look for a couple months. Actually, it was nice, 'cause I got to take a look at the whirlwind I'd stirred up in the last four-five years to get it to the point it is now. I liked what I saw. I thought I'd made a difference; I thought I'd contributed to the movement; I thought it was a pretty original statement; I saw that it made a whole lot of difference to other people.

"I thought I'd spent my time well; it was five years I could really value for the rest of my life. And I thought it was time to do some soul-searching to see just how much it meant to me. And perhaps to change the leanings a little bit, get a little deeper sound, some deeper words in the songs, without losing the context. I thought I'd started that on the last album, but I really got it on



Marty's been busy lately. Among his side projects: jomming with The Rolling Stones' Keith Richards on George Jones' new record, and singing with The Staple Singers on the *Rhythm Country & Blues* album.

My champion cause is helping turn the Grand Ole Opry towards the 21st century. I really think it's like going home to save the church.



this one. This whole album is a product of slowing down. I still did some shows in there, but I just used the rest of my time differently. Instead of hanging out on the bus all day, or laying around the hotel, I did some soul-searching. It's really as simple as visiting some other people in the town where you are, or as simple as this, sitting by a river and getting yourself slowed down enough to listen.

"Before I cut this one, I took that look around. At the first of the year, the last album had gone Gold. Travis and me had won a Grammy, I'd won some country music awards, the piggy bank was full. We'd had a real successful tour. I went back to a checklist I'd made when I was in sixth grade of things I wanted to do in life. Everything was checked off. And I was burned out. So I really just had to be still, and dig inside of myself to see what I had to say, and what God had to say to me. If there was a job to do, put on the clothes and go flashing for a couple hours a night, but then getting back to sitting and listening and thinking about it, figuring out what to do with the second half of my life. I have a pretty good picture of it, and this album was a direct result of such things."

It shows. I agree with Marty that up until 1992's *This One's Gonna Hurt You*, he was still working up to style and statement. And that one, in turn, set him up for the beautifully balanced *Love and Luck*. The title song is one of the most gracious to hit the airwaves in quite a while. "Marty Stuart Visits the Moon" is a mandolin instrumental to end all mandolin instrumentals—and Marty's first good work-out on that instrument in quite a while. Billy Joe Shaver's "If I Give My Soul" is partly Marty's act of humility after a couple years too many in the fast lane, while "Oh, What a Silent Night," which he co-wrote with Harlan Howard, has a purity that speaks eloquently for itself. "That's What Love's About" is the first ballad—the first "quiet" song, as it were—Stuart's written. Gram Parsons' "Wheels" is, as Marty puts it, "the anthem of just burning it, being a road warrior for country music."

And that speaks directly to what Marty does intend to do with the rest of his life. "I think the job at hand is to just go ahead and become a country music superstar, finish that off and be real blatant about it, coliseums and stuff, put more people in the seats, sell more records, that's part of my game

and I love it. I feel a couple books inside me. But I don't at this point want to get off the stage. I figure country music needs a few warriors out there that knows where it came from to bring it into the 21st Century. If anybody cares. If not, I'm doing it for my own sake, 'cause I really believe in it. It's what I choose to do, and it really gets down to what you love and believe. I'd love to carry the ball for country music in a big way, one time. I've contributed in a lot of ways, but I really haven't done that."

Like any good country artist, Marty is also a good fan. That's a big part of what brought him to where he stands now,

hoping to fill those coliseums but also hoping to keep country music, especially its younger new artists and fans, in touch with itself.

"I think more than ever before...my champion cause at the moment beyond this career is helping turn the Grand Ole Opry towards the 21st century. Saying what it's accomplished and making sure that still works. Help yank it from that theme-park status back into being a real show again. I really think it's like going home to save the church.

"A lotta people sign on with the Opry for the prestige of having the name. To me, it means a lot more—because I started there when I was a kid and left for a long time. I signed back on with real intentions. What I see the Opry doing...I see them signing Garth Brooks and me and Travis and Clint Black, and they're making all the right moves, and they're keeping their old stars playing as much as they can," he notes. "But what they don't have is

the access to this new audience that we've gained out here. Their audience has changed along with everything else, and that's gonna take some doing, but I figure I'm one of those hardcore mouthpieces that can get it done. I believe in getting in there and sweating for it, until

Marty Stuart with his Rock and Roll Cowboys: From left; Gary Hogue, Dale Morris, Steve Arnold, Jack White and Keith Sewell.

those younger fans are coming back out just like the younger musicians. Nowadays, when you have a Friday or Saturday night open around Nashville, the Opry's becoming a real scene again. I'm seeing hip young players showing up just to see what's going on. And I love being a part of that; I really do." ■

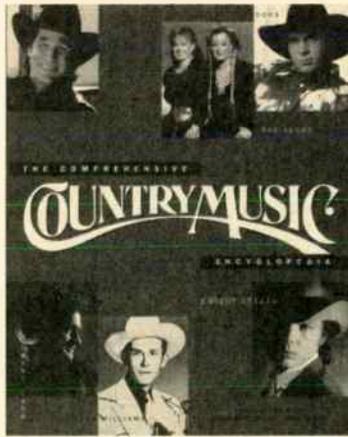


Newsletter

REVIEWS & FEATURES

Special Encyclopedia Preview!

Over the past several months, all of us in the offices of *Country Music Magazine* have been hard at work producing the books we've been telling you about: the updated versions of *The Country Music Encyclopedia* and *The Illustrated History of Country Music*. Through the efforts of all of our staff members and our writers (two of whom, Bob Allen and Patrick Carr, we basically kidnapped from their homes and brought to the offices to work on the books), we think we've got some fine results. And we want to share them with our CMSA members—even before the general public sees them. So, as a CMSA exclusive, this issue of the *Newsletter* provides a special, sneak preview of *The Country Music Encyclopedia*. Due out in September, the *Encyclopedia* includes over 600 entries—from Roy Acuff right through Zydeco music—and almost as many photographs. Below you'll find a sampling of those entries. Among the writers contributing



to the *Encyclopedia* are *CMM*'s own Rich Kienzle, Bob Allen, Michael Bane and George Fletcher, noted country music historians like Charles Wolfe and Dave Samuelson, and more. We hope you enjoy this special preview.

And that's not the only deal for CMSA members. We've also cut the price for you on advance orders: the *Encyclopedia's* regular price will be \$25.00, but members can order a copy for just \$19.95. Add \$3.00 postage and handling. Send check or money order to: *Country Music Magazine*, 329 Riverside Ave., Westport, CT 06880. Mark your envelope, Attention: Encyclopedia Offer. Stay tuned for details on ordering *The Illustrated History of Country Music*.

And thanks again to all who've sent in copies of the original *Encyclopedia* and *Illustrated History*. Your new books will be mailed as soon as we get them. One last note...all regular *Newsletter* sections, including the Poll, will return next issue.

Jeanne Pruett

BORN: January 30, 1937
BIRTHPLACE: Pell City, Alabama



Alabama-born Jeanne Pruett (born Norma Jean Bowman) landed her first job in Nashville in the mid-1960's writing songs for Marty Robbins Enterprises. In her seven years there, her songs were recorded by, among others, Nat Stuckey, Bill Phillips and Conway Twitty. It was Pruett's demo tape, intended to interest other artists in recording her songs, that landed her a recording contract with Decca Records in the early 1970's. After

MCA took over Decca in 1973, Jeanne had her first big hit, the Number One "Satin Sheets," which also reached the Top 40 on the pop charts. That same year she became a member of the Grand Ole Opry. Her charted MCA singles include the Top Ten, "I'm Your Woman" in 1973, "You Don't Need to Move a Mountain" in 1974, and "Just Like Your Daddy" and "Honey

on His Hands," both in 1975. She also broke the Top 30 in 1975 with her own composition, "A Poor Man's Woman." In the late 1970's, Jeanne left MCA for IBC Records, where she had further Top Tens through 1980 with "Temporarily Yours," "It's Too Late" and "Back to Back." Later she recorded for several smaller labels, with less chart success. Pruett remains a popular member of the Grand Ole Opry into the mid-90's. —M.B.

Riley Puckett

BORN: May 7, 1884
BIRTHPLACE: Alpharetta, Georgia
DIED: July 13, 1946

Riley Puckett was an enormously influential blind singer and guitarist active during country music's earliest years of commercial recording. A doctor's incorrect treatment of an eye infection robbed Puckett of his sight at age three months. He attended the Georgia Academy for the Blind, began singing, and eventually learned to play guitar. His idiosyncratic picking style included the use of a special type of bass string runs that would later become a staple of the bluegrass guitar style. He got his start as a performer playing on Atlanta street cor-

In This Issue

- Encyclopedia Sneak Preview
- Hall of Famer George Jones
- Collections
- Readers Create

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ners, and, in 1924, was discovered by Columbia Records talent scouts looking for musicians who played rural Southern music. His recorded repertoire, which mixed both hillbilly songs and pop tunes, sold well, as did those of his friend, fiddler Gid Tanner. By 1926, Puckett's records were selling so briskly that Columbia president Frank Walker created an all-star unit combining Puckett on guitar and vocals, fiddlers Tanner and Clayton McMichen and banjoist Fate Norris, known as The Skillet Lickers. Their records sold in the hundreds of thousands, including classics like "Bully of the Town" and "Watermelon on the

Vine." Their hit comedy recordings such as "A Corn Likker Still in Georgia" pioneered the country comedy genre. One of Puckett's recorded songs that later became a country standard was "Ragged But Right," a staple of George Jones' early repertoire. He continued to record even after The Skillet Lickers disbanded in 1930, and performed on radio stations around the South during the 1930's and 1940's, though his career gradually ebbed as newer styles took hold. He died of blood poisoning on July 13, 1946 and was buried in College Park, Georgia. —R.K.



GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Rabbit track, "Pure Love." Elektra Records took notice and signed Eddie the same year.

His first single for the label, "You Get to Me" (1974), did fairly well, and by 1975 Rabbit's songs began cracking the country Top 20. "Drinkin' My Baby (Off My Mind)" went to Number One, followed by Top Ten entries "Rocky Mountain Music" and "Two Dollars in the Jukebox."

This was only the tip of the iceberg. Throughout the remainder of the 1970's and well into the early 80's, Rabbitt continued to deliver solid chart-toppers, including "You Don't Love Me Anymore," "I Just Want to Love You," "Every Which Way But Loose," "Suspensions," "Gone Too Far," "Drivin' My Life Away," "I Love a Rainy Night," "Step By Step" and "Someone Could Lose a Heart Tonight." The galvanizing neo-rockabilly sound of songs like "Drivin' My Life Away" and "I Love a Rainy Night" (both of which were Number Ones in 1980) that he recorded around the turn of the decade made him one of the closely watched artists in Nashville for a brief time.

More hits continued in the mid-1980's, most notably "Warning Sign" and "Repetitive Regret," even though Rabbitt's music had by now cooled into more predictable chart fare. In 1985 tragedy struck; his two-year-old son, Timothy, died following a liver transplant. Rabbitt retreated temporarily from the music scene, but returned in the late 1980's with a new band and a new label. Though he's not had a major hit record in quite a few seasons, Rabbitt as of the early 90's, is still out there, still cranking out his music. —R.P.



Eddie Rabbitt

BORN: November 27, 1944
BIRTHPLACE: Brooklyn, New York

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 27, 1944, Eddie Rabbitt was raised in East Orange, New Jersey. His first exposure to music came from his dad, a refrigeration engineer who played fiddle and accordion. Rabbitt started playing guitar at 12, and when he was in high school he began winning talent contests. He dropped out of school and worked a number of jobs—soda jerk, truck driver, fruit picker, mental hospital attendant, local country performer—and shopped his original tunes around New York City's publishing houses before heading to Nashville in 1968 with \$1,000 to his name.

Rabbitt began writing and hanging out with songwriters such as Kris Kristofferson and Billy Swan, and found relatively early success when Roy Drusky hit number 33 on the country charts with his "Working My Way Up to the Bottom" (a song Rabbitt later claimed to have written while sitting in a hotel bathtub on his first night in Nashville). He then became a staff writer with music publishers Hill and Range, earning a meager \$37.50 a week.

All that changed, however, in 1970 when Elvis Presley copped a Gold record with Rabbitt's "Kentucky Rain." Three years later Ronnie Milsap went to the top of the charts with another

Marvin Rainwater

BORN: July 2, 1925
BIRTHPLACE: Wichita, Kansas



GENE BEAR ARCHIVES

Popular with both country and rockabilly fans, Rainwater, who is of Cherokee Indian heritage (his mother's maiden name was Rainwater—his real name is Marvin Karlton Percy), didn't enter the music business seriously until after World War II. His early performing experience came on Red Foley's *Ozark Jubilee*, and his first recordings were done for Four Star and Coral. Roy Clark briefly worked for him as his guitarist. It wasn't until he

scored big on the CBS-TV show, *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts*, that he signed with MGM and wrote "Gonna Find Me a Bluebird." The song found nationwide success on both the pop

and country charts in the spring of 1957. He tried recording rockabilly, doing well with "Whole Lotta Woman" a year later—though it did better on the country charts than in pop, where there were reservations about the song's lyric content. In 1959 he recorded John D. Loudermilk's "Half Breed," his last chart record. After that he moved around from label to label and battled health problems. In the early 90's he was back, actively performing in both Europe and the U.S., based out of Minnesota.

—R.K.

Boots Randolph

BORN: June 3, 1927

BIRTHPLACE: Paducah, Kentucky

Homer Louis Randolph III, one of Nashville's original group of session musicians, didn't set out to build a career in country music. His father got him a trombone by swapping a pistol for it—he didn't want the gun in the house. Homer picked up the nickname "Boots" as a kid. The family moved to Evansville, Indiana, during World War II, where at age 16, Boots decided to switch to tenor saxophone. Again, his father got him the instrument. Since his brother played big band jazz, Boots' early listening concentrated in that area, his idols being tenor sax legends Ben Webster, Lester Young, Flip Phillips and Coleman Hawkins. He also grew to enjoy the modern

1940's jazz styles like bebop.

After graduating high school in 1945, he was drafted into the Army where he became a musician. After being discharged in 1946, he focused on music, returned to Indiana and got married. He spent several years with an Illinois band called The Copycats before returning to Evansville. In

early 1958, country finger picker Spider Rich, who lived in the area, asked Boots to work with him on some demos



Rich wanted to play for Chet Atkins. Atkins heard the demos and was impressed by Boots' sax playing on the tape; Atkins' friend and musical associate, guitarist Jethro Burns (of Homer and Jethro fame) knew Boots' work with the Copycats and seconded Chet's enthusiasm. Randolph was recording for RCA in Nashville by that spring. Owen Bradley heard Boots play and used him on a session with Brenda Lee. A sax figure he played in the course of the session impressed Bradley and it evolved into "Yakety Sax." When Randolph recorded the song, session man Floyd Cramer stuffed towels in his piano to make it more percussive. But it wasn't a hit, nor was any of Randolph's RCA material.

Still living in Indiana and playing clubs, he played the Newport Jazz Festival with Hank Garland, Cramer and Atkins in

1960. Boots commuted to sessions in Nashville until 1961, when he finally moved to Music City. As a full-time session player, he also got a chance to record for Monument in 1963. This time, a remake of "Yakety Sax" became a respectable pop hit, enhanced by his appearances on ABC's *Jimmy Dean Show*. In between sessions and stage performances, he worked the road at times with Atkins and Cramer. When he quit session work in the 1970's, he opened Boots Randolph's, a supper club in Nashville's Printer's Alley, where he regularly performed. His final Monument album came in 1982, one of the label's last releases. He closed his club in the summer of 1994.

—R.K.

Wayne Raney

BORN: August 17, 1921

BIRTHPLACE: Batesville, Arkansas

DIED: January 23, 1993

Raney, a singer-harmonica player who learned his instrument from pioneer country harmonica player Lonnie Glosson, met The Delmore Brothers in Memphis during the 1940's. He became a regular with the Delmores and worked extensively on their King Recordings, including their 1949 classic, "Blues Stay Away From Me," the popularity of which sold millions of harmonicas.

Based in Cincinnati, Raney is also reputed to have sold millions of harmonicas himself by mail-order though his 1940's radio show over WCKY. He did his first solo recording session for King in 1947, accompanied by the Delmores. Two numbers, "Lost John Boogie" and "Jack and Jill Boogie," were strong sellers, but it was his 1949 smash, "Why Don't You Haul Off and Love Me," that remained Number One for three weeks. On it, Glosson's harmonica accompanied Raney's vocal. Raney later recorded for Starday. He also formed a family gospel group and founded his own record company, Rimrock Records.

—R.K.



M. GEDDINGS COLLECTION

Leon Rausch

BORN: October 2, 1927

BIRTHPLACE: Springfield, Missouri

Rausch is among the few surviving Bob Wills Texas Playboys to remain active in the music business. He worked with Wills as lead vocalist and guitarist from 1958 to 1964, recording with Wills on some of his mid-60's Longhorn recordings. He recorded for various Texas labels, but the Bob Wills revival of the early to mid-70's brought him his greatest success. He began working with the revived Original Texas Playboys, led by Leon McAuliffe, as lead vocalist in the mid-70's. At the same time he was making honky tonk records for the Texas-based Derrick label. Rausch continued working with The Playboys until they disbanded; today he does extensive freelance recording work and sometimes works with yet another reconstituted Playboy off-shoot group led by ex-Playboys Johnny Gimble and Eldon Shamblin.

—R.K.

CMSA COLLECTIONS

Collecting the Magazine

Members help each other complete their magazine collections.

*Country Music Magazine, Music City News, Country Fever, etc. back issues for sale. Send SASE for four-page list. Rick J. Cunningham, Box 661-CM, Somersworth, NH 03878-0661

*Back issues for sale: Country Music Magazine Nov/Dec '90, Jan/Feb '91-Sep/Oct '91, '92 complete, '93 complete, Jan/Feb '94-Sep/Oct '94. Music City News: Jan, Mar, Apr, May '91. The Journal: Premier-Dec '92. Send for prices. Robert H. Brothers Sr., 141 Birnesser Dr., Beaver Falls, PA 15010.

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.

*Wanted: anything on Tracy Lawrence. I am interested in concert photos, video tapes, posters or anything else. Please send a list of what you have, and what you want for it. Mitch Shell, P.O. Box 321, Roan Mountain, TN 37687.

*CD's for sale: Don't Go Near the Water, Sammy Kershaw; Close to the Edge, Diamond Rio; Fighting Fire with Fire, Davis Daniel; First Time for Everything, Little Texas; A Wanted Man, Rick Vincent; Light at the End of the Tunnel, B.B. Watson; No Sir, Darryl and Don Ellis; Young Man and Billy Dean Billy Dean; Western Underground and Watcha Gonna Do with a Cowboy, Chris LeDoux. Also, 35 Country Gold collector trading cards. Everything is in excellent condition. If interested, respond to: Gail Picklerill, 901 North 29th Street, Lincoln, NE 68503-2604.

*Country Cards for sale or trade. Includes new as well as traditional stars. Please send SASE for list. Also interested in any Oak Ridge Boys items. Kristine Mayeda, 5708 Fresno Ave., Richmond, CA 94804

*Wanted: Judds newsletters, 1983-1986. Originals in excellent to good condition. Will pay fair price. Also, want Kraft, AT&T, Oldsmobile and Target TV commercials, Country Song Hits winter 1986 issue, vinyl LP's of "Love Can Build a Bridge" and "River of Time," 1989 ET segments all week with Judds and Pinkard and Bowden parody. LP with any posters or photos of LP cover. All Judds items of interest to serious and sincere collector. For sale: Randy Travis, Clint Black, Garth Brooks collections. Also, press kits and other memorabilia. Will trade for Judds items. Send long SASE with three 29 stamps for full lists on sale items. Dana Stein, 345 E. 80th St. #10B, New York, NY 10021

*For sale: country music merchandise (poster, cassette tapes, T-shirts, magazine and newspaper articles, key chains, bumper stickers etc. This is my own collection on such artists as Marty Stuart, Billy Ray Cyrus, Diamond Rio, McBride and the Ride, Darryl and Don Ellis, etc. Please send SASE for list. Shella Burns, 2319 Walden Drive, Augusta, GA 30904.

*Wanted: Conway Twitty memorabilia. Looking for candid photos, posters, rare interview cassettes, videos, tour books, etc. Also looking for Conway traders

and devoted fans to be pen pals. Leslie Gardner, 7533 Madara Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91306.

*Seeking Pirates of the Mississippi fans to trade photos, etc. Also buy/sell. Jeanne Nail, 30 Brookside Ave., Naugatuck, CT 06770.

*Please help. I'm looking for all or several artists that have brought out the song "Rocky Top." Also, how can I get a hold of a copy of the song? Kathy Wark, 6277 Big Walnut Rd., Galena, OH 43021

*Wanted: anything and everything on Mary-Chapin Carpenter, especially music videos, TV appearances, interviews, articles, what have you. Also 1992 and 1993 CMA and 1993 ACM Award shows. Will pay reasonable price and/or provide VHS tape(s). Scott M. Hart, Rt. 3, Box 66-B, Clyde, NC 28721

*Country album sale. 1000's stocked and located in 20-page catalog/\$2.00 (refundable) or send SASE with specific artists/titles needed. Reba list and Dolly list, two stamps. Rick J. Cunningham, Box 661-CM, Somersworth, NH 03878-0661

*Cassettes for sale: Fire at First Sight, The Kendalls; Past the Point of No Return, Jim Glaser; Plain Brown Wrapper, Gary Morris. These were only played once or twice. Price is \$5 each or will accept an equal trade. Eric Timm, RR 1, Box 268, Birdsboro, PA 19508.

*Interested in finding someone who has pictures of The Judd's old Del Rio Pike farmhouse in Franklin, TN, and Naomi's mother's house on Bath Ave. in Ashland, KY. Serious inquiries only. I am building 1" scale replicas and need photographs. Will pay reasonable price. Shannon Trimble, 508 Meadowyck Ln. Southampton, NJ 08068-9173.

*For sale: four to six color photos of Patsy Cline riding in a convertible in 1959. John Wise, 9629 N. Memorial, Owasso, OK 74055.

*Wanted: a copy of Hot Country Nights, that aired on TNN on 4/8/94. Starred Dwight Yoakam, Kathy Mattea, Carlene Carter, The Gatlins, Randy Travis, Highway 101 and others. Would also like anything else on Dwight Yoakam. Lisa Zelen, 14595 Cimarron Ave. #2A, Rosemount, MN 55068.

*Wanted: anything on Johnny Rodriguez—LP's, cassettes, pictures, interviews, etc. Will pay for or swap. I have several articles on many artists. Please write Lucile Howard, P.O. Box 615, Pine Mountain, GA 31822.

*For sale: many Dolly Parton items including limited edition picture disc, books and photos. Some items autographed. Will sell separately or whole collection. Send SASE for list to: Stacey Sorensen, Route 2, Box 336, Menomonie, WI 54751

*Wanted: VHS tape (speed SP) of the Merle Watson Memorial Festival show on TV from April through December 1994 (once a month; eight hours total). Will pay for tapes and postage. Marianne Sieland, Ginnerting 11, 83772 Frasdorf, Germany.

*Seeking tape of Moon Mullican's "Broken Dreams" (not, "Land of Broken Dreams") for airplay. No heavy clicks/scratchiness. Will reimburse with new tape and postage. Please use quality type II. Composer of song originated

from this area. You may fill tape of Moon if suitable for airplay. Frank Blue, 214 3rd Ave., Columbus, TX 78934.

*Newsletters for sale: Vince Gill, Reba, Alan Jackson, Sammy Kershaw, Barbara Mandrell, Wynonna, Tanya Tucker. Want to sell all. Please send \$1.00 for postage and SASE to Anita McNeill, Black Creek Postal Outlet, 605 Rogers Rd., P.O. Box 31584, Toronto, Ontario Canada M6M5G4.

*Wanted: books on country stars such as Great Balls of Fire, by Myra Gale Lewis and Whisperin' Bill by Bill Anderson. Let me know what you have, hardcover or paperback, condition and asking price. P.J. Kannianeu, 2338 County Rd., Calumet, MI 49913.

*For sale: onstage/offstage photos of Alan, Clint, Garth, Marty, Suzy, Crystal, Faith, Dolly and all of your favorites from 1970-1994. Also magazines and LP's. Send SASE for list to Galen Duncan, 3517 Grier Nursery Rd., Street, MD 21154.

*Wanted: albums by The Statler Brothers—Country Symphonies in E Major and Carry Me Back. Will buy or will send cassettes for copy. Mr. and Mrs. Willis Rollins, Jr., P.O. Box 108, Deerfield, NH 03037.

*Wanted: anything on The Bellamy Brothers—older cassettes/records, magazines, newsletters, articles, videos, photos for fan club parties and Fan Fair concerts, European CD's. Will pay reasonable price. Denise Riley, 2 Par Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario, Canada M1G 2G3.

*Photos for sale: A. Jackson, G. Strait, T. Tritt, Little Texas, P. Tillis, W. Nelson, R. Travis, R. Heart (old), McBride and the Ride (new), J. Anderson and R. Trevino. Renee Smith, Box 222, Thrall, TX 76578.

*Wanted: copy of Travis Tritt's Proud of the Country on cassette. Will pay reasonable price and postage for a copy. Also, will trade concert photos of Travis for other photos of him. Tanya Day, 410 N. Maple St., Zionsville, IN 46077.

*For sale: close-up concert photos of Reba, Tanya, Judds, RVS, Lorie and many more. Send SASE for list and photocopies of your favorite artist. Richard D. Moore, 20 Maple St., Hopedale, MA 01747.

*For sale: onstage/offstage photos of today's hottest country stars. Reba, Travis, Marty, Neal, Doug and Naomi, just to name a few. If interested, send list of favorites to Laura Messina, 405 Main Ave., Clifton, NJ 07014.

*For sale/trade: Send \$1.00 plus SASE and receive one CMA Country Gold trading card plus one concert photo. Request favorites. Have available: Marty, Travis, Alan, Brooks & Dunn, Joe, Aaron, Lee Roy, Toby and others. Inquiries welcome. Terry Greene, P.O. Box 315, Effingham, SC 29541

*Does anyone know the name and artist of a song that was on the radio in the 1970's? It was about a truck driver who met a little boy who was taking roses to his mom's grave. Also, I am looking for a copy of Travis Tritt's movie Rio Diablo and his first album, Proud of the Country. Please send any of this information to me. Thanks. Christine Ulm, 4020 Wasabh Ave., Hammond, IN 46327.

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.

*Hi from WI! I would like to correspond with people overseas. I enjoy reading, cooking, gardening, theatre, travel and music ranging from Haggard to Pavarotti. I especially like the older artists like Owens, Price, Statlers, etc. No inmates. Jan Genske, 1818 Helene #4, Madison, WI 53711

*Hello. I'm 36 years old and married with children. I am into exercising, lifting weights, reading and movies. Favorites are Dolly, Dwight, Billy Ray and many, many more. Would love to hear from anyone, anywhere. Anita Spencer, 200 Suhaven Dr., Fairfield, CA 94533.

*Hi! I'm 29, married without children. Would love to hear from anyone who can't get enough of Dwight! If you have extra photos of him, please send one! Marcia Taylor, 248 S. Pierce, El Cajon, CA 92020.

*Hello, country and bluegrass lovers. I am a single, professional, country music-loving girl who enjoys dancing, the country, mother nature, travel and down to earth fun and common sense. No age barriers. Kathy Thornhill, Rt. 2, Box 28, Rolla, MO 65401

*Greetings to all country music ladies of any age. I am a 20-year-old cowboy who loves dancing, horses, eating, concerts, festivals, etc., but am too busy and shy to meet friends and influence people in person. Please make my day by filling my mailbox. Adam Thornhill, Rt. 2, Box 28, Rolla, MO 65401

*Hi! I am a 39-year-old, divorced country gal. Music is the love of my life. I especially love Reba, Jones, Marty, Tracy Lawrence, Brooks & Dunn. Other interests are traveling, concerts, fairs, flea markets. Would love pen friends from everywhere. No inmates. Nelda Hayes, P.O. Box 2013, Cave City, KY 42127

*Hi. I'm 24, married with one child. Favorites include Mary-Chapin, Alan, Reba and Vince. Can't wait to hear from you. Laurie Conklin, 416 Bushy Hill Rd., Simsbury, CT 06070.

*Hi! I'm a 23-year-old, married woman with two children. I enjoy football card collecting, stamp collecting and anything to do with Disney/Mickey Mouse. I love country music. Dwight Yoakam has been and always will be my favorite! I have all his CD's including two imports. Interested in hearing from anybody! Christa Gerrish, 2965 Washington Rd., Waldoboro, ME 04572-5602.

*Howdy from Georgia. I'm 24, love country music and anything with the outdoors. Like to hear from anyone 20-35 who would like a friend. Will answer all! Heidi Brumbelow, 2172 High Rock Cir., Conyers, GA 30207.

*I'm a 35-year-old country boy in the state lock-up. Born and raised in OK, love the traditional sounds of Hank Sr., Hank Snow, Stonewall Jackson, Jones and Haggard. Love Dolly, Tanya and Loretta. Enjoy some of the newer singers, Garth the best. Like animals, mo-



HAL KETCHUM

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1994

PULL-OUT
CENTERFOLD
OF THE MONTH

HAL KETCHUM

Facts of Life

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Personal Data

Name: Hal Ketchum
Birthdate: April 9, 1953
Birthplace: Greenwich, New York
Hometown: Greenwich, New York
Family: Wife, Terrell; children, Sara, Graham, Josh and Zack
Current Residence: Nashville, Tennessee
Leisure Activities: Woodcarving, carpentry, painting, writing children's stories, fishing, nature walks, spending time with his family.
Former Jobs: Carpenter, cabinetmaker
Early Influences: Merle Haggard, Buck Owens, Van Morrison
Literary Influences: William Kennedy, John Steinbeck
Instruments: drums, guitar, mandolin (a bit)



Favorites

Movie: *Sometimes a Great Notion*
Book: *A Prayer for Owen Meany*
Band: Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers
Country Singer: George Jones
Food: Everything at Portobello Restaurant in Greenwich Village, New York City.
City: New York City
Car: Studebaker Golden Hawk

Vital Statistics

Height: 5'11"
Weight: 161 pounds
Color of Hair: Brown/grey
Color of Eyes: Hazel

Recording Career

Record Label: Curb Records, 47 Music Square East, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

Albums:	Release Date
Title	Release Date
<i>Threadbare Alibis</i>	1989
(German release on Watermelon Records)	

<i>Past the Point of Rescue</i>	*1991
<i>Sure Love</i>	1993
<i>Every Little Word</i>	1994
*Gold album	

Singles:
"Smalltown Saturday Night"
(Number One single, most played song in 1991 according to *R&R*)
"I Know Where Love Lives"
"Past the Point of Rescue"
"Five O'Clock World"
"Sure Love"
"Hearts Are Gonna Roll"
"Mamma Knows the Highway"
"Some Place Far Away"
"Tonight We Just Might Fall in Love Again"

Videos:
"Smalltown Saturday Night"

"I Know Where Love Lives"
"Past the Point of Rescue"
"Sure Love"
"Mamma Knows the Highway"
"Tonight We Just Might Fall in Love Again"

Current Events

In 1994 Hal was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry as its 71st member. Recently played a bank robber in the major motion picture, *Maverick*. Has a cut on the soundtrack to *Solitary Traveler*. Spokesperson for the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Quotes

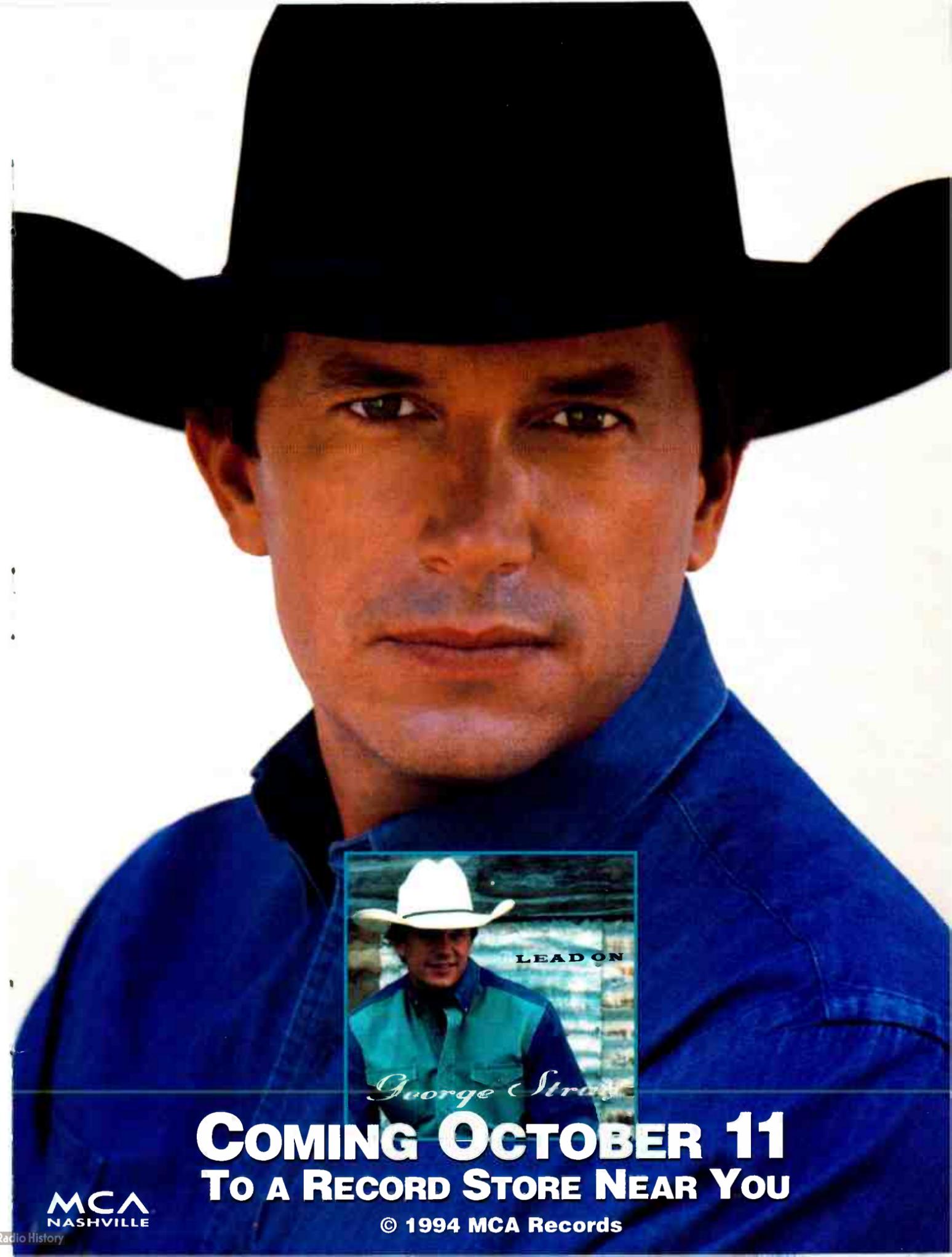
About performing: "Our live show is experimental. It gives me the opportunity to work up a song at sound check, and play it that same night. We stay spontaneous and we're fearless. We'll play anywhere there's oxygen."

About the road: "When you're living out on the road, things get pared down. It's actually a perfect setting for songwriting. There's a drift to your life, and you're always having to assimilate where you are. That keeps songs and ideas flowing."

About the new album: "I told them to let the music slop over the edges a little."

Fan Club

Membership in the Hal Ketchum Fan Club includes biography, membership card, button, bumper sticker, autographed color 8x10 photo and quarterly newsletters which give information on tour schedules, merchandise offerings and more. To become a member send \$12.00 (U.S.), \$16.00 (foreign) to Hal Ketchum International Fan Club, P.O. Box 120205, Nashville, Tennessee 37212.



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CMSA COLLECTIONS

torcycles, 4 x 4's and anything with an engine. Love to hear from country girls from 22 to 55 years old who enjoy the same things. Will answer all. Can anyone send me the words to "Blind Boy's Dog" by Hank Snow from his *Last Train Ride* album. **David Klein 162590, P.O. Box 548, Lexington, OK 73051**

*Hi! I'm a 23-year-old, married with children housewife looking for a few good pen pals who love country music. I'm a big country music fan. Some favorites are Alan Jackson, Randy Travis, Tim McGraw, George Jones, Merle Haggard, to name a few. Waiting to hear from you. Will answer all. No inmates, please. **Shielah Easley, P.O. Box 164, Courtland, KS 66939.**

*Please ladies, don't pass me by! Hi, I am 32 years old and have 22 months left to serve in prison. I love country music and have too many favorites to mention. I enjoy listening to country music (old and new), reading and writing letters, sports, and the outdoors, just to name a few. Would love to hear from ladies 18-45 from all over who are interested in being pen pals and hopefully becoming friends! Will answer all. Your photo gets mine (no polaroids) and please only sincere replies. **Jeffrey W. Wells, #204113, 9625 Pierce Road, Freeland, MI 48623-9036.**

*Hi, I am a single, 21-year-old who loves country music. My favorite is George Strait. Also like Tanya Tucker and John Michael Montgomery, to name a few. My interests are country dancing, traveling and camping. Photo if possible. I will answer all. **Tammie Skidbee, 115 Garry St., Manville, NJ 08835.**

*Hello! I'm a single, 33-year-old female who would like to hear from single males ages 30 and up, from all around the world. Interests include researching family genealogy, dancing, collecting keychains, reading and enjoying life. Some favorites are: Little Texas, Reba McEntire, Tanya Tucker, Wynonna, Patsy Cline and Mary-Chapin Carpenter. Your photo gets mine. No inmates, please. **Kathy L. Harmon, P.O. Box 103, Alexandria, IN 46001**

*Hello. I love country music, going to concerts. My faves are Clint Black, Little Texas, Hank Jr. I like spending time with my dog and collecting country music cassettes. Will answer all. No inmates. Thanks. **Paul Jones, 14672 Lebanon, Pine Grove Rd., Terry, MS 39170-9802.**

*Hi, I'm 18 years old, and I love country music. My favorites are Garth, Vince Gill, Little Texas, Collin Raye and Neil McCoy. My interests include writing letters and going country dancing. I'd like to hear from single guys, 18-25. No inmates, please. **Andrea Dubas, 2510 Mt. Vernon, Colorado Springs, CO 80909.**

*I'm hoping that you'll write to me. I enjoy most country singers, and I have many hobbies. Ages 14-17. Please, no inmates. **Jessica Squier, 13 West Street, East Hampton, CT 06424-1411** (Jessica has a parent's permission to be in Pen Pals.)

*Hi, my name is Thomas, and I'm a good ol' Texas country boy who's killin' a little time. Would like to hear from people from all over. Age doesn't matter. I like all sorts of music, from country to soft rock, but mostly country! I also like to camp and fish, go hiking, dancing, just

about anything. So ya'll come on and write me a letter and fill my box! **Thomas E. Parker, #585941, Rt. 2, Box 20, Midway, TX 75852**

*Howdy! I'm 33 years old, divorced and presently incarcerated. Love country music. Some of my favorites are K.T. Oslin, Reba, Crystal Gayle, Garth Brooks, Patsy Cline and more. I'm just a "good old country boy" at heart. Would love to hear from any country girl as my mailbox is full of spider webs and dust. Love to walk, dance and write long letters. **Andrew S. Step, C97167 L313, P.O. Box 600, Tracy, CA 95376**

*Howdy! I'm a country fan from CO moved to FL. Favorites are Garth, Clint, Reba, George Strait and many more! I'm a 32-year-old female looking for pen pals with similar likes. Also like reading, rodeos, taking walks. Will answer all. **Pam Cydylo, 38804 Winsor Drive, Zephyrhillo, FL 33540.**

*I'm 52 years old and single. I like country music, gospel music. Favorites are Lorrie Morgan, George Strait, George Jones, Mary-Chapin Carpenter, Johnny Cash and others. Don't drink, smoke or do drugs. Looking for pen pal ladies, 20-35. Hobbies are writing letters, tennis, gold, photography, baseball, etc. No prisoners, please. Photo for photo. **Franklin Doster, Rt. 2, Box 18, Sharon, TN 38255-9802**

*Hello, I enjoy country music and have a lot of favorites from Reba to George Jones. I also enjoy hiking, camping, collecting rocks and cow knick-knacks. I live in a small, rural town. I am 34 years old, divorced and mother to two teenage sons. I am a medical assistant and work in the local hospital. Love animals and like to work in the garden. Interested in hearing from anyone who has similar interests. Will try to answer all. **Sherry Mason, 414 N. Shedherd St., Ironton, MO 63650.**

*I'm a 41-year-old serving a short sentence. Looking for a sincere friend to correspond with. I sing, play and love country music. New to the west. Please give this country boy a chance. **Jeff A. Bailey H-33812-B-4, P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95531-7500.**

*Hi, I'm a 29-year-old, single female. Would like to correspond with other music lovers (all kinds), especially Native Americans, male or female. Interests are animals, nature, reading and crafts. Photo gets mine. Would also like to receive postcards from all over the U.S. **Lisa Scafield, 861 Fairfax Dr., Gretna, LA 70056.**

*Hi, I'm a 29-year-old. I love country music. Favorites include: Dolly Parton, The Judds, Reba and many more. Interests are nature things, making new friends and a lot more. Would love to hear from anyone who would like to be friends. Will try to answer all letters. No chain letters. **Phyllis Lawrence, 2911 Sydney St., Augusta, GA 30906.**

*Hi, I like country music. My favorites are Dolly, Alan Jackson, Travis Tritt, Randy Travis. Hobbies are sports, reading, listening to music. I would like to make new friends, male pen pals 18-25. But I will answer all letters. **Larry Minter, Rt. 5, Box 450, Danville, VA 24540.**

*25-year-old country gal wishes to hear

from anyone who loves country music and the outdoors. I will answer all, so write soon. **Heidi Lowe B., 2172 HI-Roc Circle, Conyers, GA 30207.**

*Hello! I'm a 24-year-old country music fan. I am married with children. I have several favorites, but I'll only name Alan Jackson, Randy Travis, Tim McGraw, Joe Diffie, George Jones. Will write to anyone, so fill my mailbox. Will answer all letters. **Shellah Easley, P.O. Box 164, Courtland, KS 66939.**

*Hey to all. My name is Floyd. I'm 28 years old and at the present time, doing time. Love everything to do with country music. Favorites are Haggard, Jones, Jackson, Strait and Tracy Lawrence. I love the outdoors, sports and playing the guitar. Looking to write anyone who wants to make a friend. Have plenty of time to answer all. **Floyd Breeden N-82659, P.O. Box 300, Vienna, IL 62995.**

*Hi, I am a 33-year-old male and an avid C&W music fan. Favorites are too many to mention. I would like to correspond with someone. Will answer all. Your picture gets mine. **Detrect Skinner, 204 Northside Dr., Enterprise, AL 36330.**

*Hi! I'm a big country fan and 18 years old. I would like to hear from anybody that's crazy about k.d. lang or Kathy Mattea. I would like to share information back and forth on k.d. Please enclose a picture, and get one in return. Will answer all. Please, no inmates. **Melissa Singhaus, 202 Pennsylvania Ave., Nutter Fort, WV 26301-4518.**

*Greetings from the Show-Me State! I am a 20-year-old gal who loves country music and country life. My favorite artist is George Strait, but I absolutely love Chris LeDoux and his rodeo songs. Some hobbies include reading, writing short stories, camping, dancing and photography. All letters will be answered. No inmates, please. Would love to hear from all ages. **Amy Holiday, Rt. 1, Box 36-A, Fordland, MO 65652.**

*How do! I'm 34, married with four children. Some of my many interests are reading, nature, hiking, history, writing poetry songs and letters. I am learning guitar and love line dancing and concerts! My biggest passion is music. I enjoy all types, but country/folk is the heart of me. Some favorites are Vince, Dwight, Radney, Suzy, Pam and more. The singer/songwriter who captivates me is Mary-Chapin Carpenter! I have all her albums. If you have similar interests or love Mary-Chapin as much as I do, write me! Will answer all girls/ladies of any age. Also looking to buy anything concerning Mary-Chapin, especially photos and videos. **Tami Lapp, 720 North Main St., Port Allegany, PA 16743.**

*Especially to all you George Strait fans: My hobbies are growing roses, reading (esp. John Grisham) and going to country music concerts. I collect key chains, postcards and anything about George Strait. As you may have guessed, I have a favorite artist, but I also enjoy Garth, Clint, RVS and Alan. I'm 46 years old, married and registered nurse. Drop me a line and I will answer all. How about a picture so I know who I'm talking to. **Barb Pollan, Route 1, Box 22, Pittsboro, MS 38451**

*I am a 24-year-old fan of country music. Favorites are Dwight, Garth, Marty

Stuart and Patsy. I also enjoy movies, old and new. I am a big fan of John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, Doris Day, Cary Grant, Robin Williams and Whoopi Goldberg. Also enjoy reading. I also like old rock 'n' roll. Would like to make new friends, male or female, any age. No inmates, please. **Sandra Lind Trammel, 13 Surf Ct. #304, Wassaubay, TX 77058.**

*Hi, I'm a 30-year-old male, a new fan of country music. Favorite is Tracy Lawrence. I would like to hear from other guys and other red-heads especially, but will try to answer all. I like writing, horror and sci-fi books and meeting people. Write soon! **Mitch Shell, P.O. Box 321, Roan Mountain, TN 37687.**

*Hi, I'm a widow, 63 years old. I love country music, love to watch TNN, especially *Music City Tonight*. I like Garth, Reba, George Strait and George Jones. The list goes on, but especially Lorrie Morgan. I love to travel, do a lot of crafts, go to flea markets and garage sales, write letters, and I love a good walk or drive in the country. Will answer all. No inmates. Like folks with a good sense of humor. Waiting to hear from you. **Etta McCarty, 2544 Gideon, Zion, IL 60099.**

*Hello! I am 37 years old, divorced, a country cowgirl mom of an 18-year old, a 17-year old and a six-year old. My 18-year old has a baby girl. I love, own and ride Quarter horses in parades, fairs and shows. Love country music, Reba, John Cash, Dwight Yoakam, Lynn Anderson and more of the ole time favorites. Love the outdoors, camping, fishing, hunting, sled dog racing, pen pals, country life and more. Love 18-wheelers. Enjoy talking on my CB, too. My handle is Lonesome Dove. **Donna Rogers, 641 North Wood Rd., Freeville, NY 13068.**

*Country music guy seeks pen pal gals 18-25. Have own band working midwest and various county fairs. Likes camping, song publishing, Alan Jackson, Joe Diffie, Clay Walker. **Jerry Minnick, P.O. Box 1946, Hiram, OK 44234.**

*Hello, my name is Jenny. I love country music and would enjoy hearing from anyone who shares my interests. I also love animals and shopping. I make respectable attempts at playing the piano, guitar and harmonica. Favorite artists: Wynonna, Willie, Trisha, Kathy, Mary-Chapin, Patty, Reba, Dolly and especially Emmylou! **Jenny Tolonen, 1460 Wake Forest Dr. #244, Davis, CA 95616.**

*Hi, ya'll. I'm a 38-year-old, divorced country lady and I love country music. My favorites include Confederate Railroad, G. Jones, Gene Watson, Reba and many more. I love dancing, attending concerts and quiet times at home. Would love to hear from you. No inmates, please. Send photo. **Loretta Merricks, Rt. 2, Box 285, Evergreen MHP, Lynchburg, VA 24501**

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By Rich Kienzle



GEORGE JONES

Hall of Famer, Legend, The Singer's Singer, George Jones is all of these things. After several years of struggle, he found a style all his own.

When George Jones became the 54th member of the Country Music Hall of Fame on September 30, 1992, less than two weeks after turning age 61, it was a triumph in more ways than one. Everyone knew, after nearly 40 years of hit records and a reputation as the greatest living singer of all, that he deserved it. By then he'd become an institution. He had more hit records than could ever be listed in this article. The new breed of singers of the 90's paid him ample homage, most because they meant it, a few because it was fashionable.

Even a decade earlier, no one doubted Jones would be in the Hall of Fame, but most expected the honor would be as posthumous one. Even as he made some of his greatest music, his reckless lifestyle, marked by drug and alcohol abuse, chaotic finances, frequent no-shows at concerts and various tussles with the law led everyone to assume that Hank Williams' fate awaited George as well.

While playing in the raw, violent Beaumont honky tonks, George met the woman who became his first wife, marrying her in 1950. Her father loved George's singing, but expected the young man to support his new wife with a day job. With an infant daughter to support, George tried and failed at several such jobs. The marriage ended in divorce and a brief stay in jail for nonsupport, which led to George joining the Marines in November 1951. Stationed in California, he continued singing around the area throughout his two-year tour. After his discharge in 1953, he returned to Beaumont and connected with the area's new record company: Starday Records, founded in 1952 by Jack Starnes and Pappy Daily.

He did his first recording session in Jack Starnes' home studio, and when he sang for co-owner Harold "Pappy" Daily, he was still imitating other top singers. Daily challenged him to sing more like himself. He worked local honky tonks, briefly worked as a Beaumont disc jockey and married again. Four unsuccessful singles followed; by the time of his first hit, "Why, Baby Why," in 1955, he still sounded much like Hank Williams. Three more Top Tens followed in 1956, while George briefly worked the *Louisiana Hayride*. In August he joined the Grand Ole Opry. By 1957, the larger Mercury label was releasing Starday recordings, and 1958 became George's biggest year yet. The crazy moonshining novelty, "White

Lightning," became George's first Number One record.

"The Window Up Above," in 1960, showed his vocal style maturing. The sharp, tense phrasing that became his trademark emerged clearly and became even stronger on his 1961 hit, "Tender Years." In those days, George's recording contracts weren't with individual record companies, but with Daily (who'd sold Starday). Daily next took George to United Artists, where he recorded "She Thinks I Still Care," which became his second Number One. Pappy kept George from getting into a rut by following these hit ballads with upbeat fare like "The Race Is On."

Daily took George to the new Musicor label in 1965 where he produced a virtual landslide of albums and singles. Daily got him onto a novelty kick with hits like the Buck Owens flavored "Love Bug" and "I'm a People," a song arranged in the goofy style then favored by Roger Miller. Most of his productions reflected the smooth "Nashville Sound" style, particularly on his 1967 hit ballad, "Walk Through This World with Me," his first Number One record since 1961.

George's increasingly erratic lifestyle torpedoed his second marriage in 1968. He left Beaumont for Nashville and soon met hot new singer Tammy Wynette, whose own marriage was unraveling. After her divorce, she and George married on February 16, 1969. As "Mr. and Mrs. Country Music," they wanted to record together, but had to wait until George's Musicor contract ended. In 1971 George signed with Tammy's label, Epic, and started working with her producer, Billy Sherrill. By then the couple had moved to Florida.

Over the next several years, as the Jones-Wynette marriage endured ups and downs, largely due to George's drinking and occasional violence, Sherrill skillfully geared the songs to reflect their personal trials, which became a veritable country soap opera. He recorded each separately and doing duets. George had solo hits like "We Can Make It," "Loving You Can Never Be Better" and "A Picture of Me Without You." With Tammy, he recorded the tacky "The Ceremony," the latter reflecting their marriage's increasingly shaky ground. A move back to Nashville in 1972 didn't help. In August 1973 Tammy filed for divorce, then

withdrew the petition. The far better "We're Gonna Hold On," reflecting more of their problems, became the couple's first Number One duet in that fall.

George's solo recordings kept getting better, the greatest yet being his back-to-back 1971 Number Ones, "The Grand Tour" and "The Door." On December 13, 1974, he left Tammy and this time the divorce went through. Sherrill kept them recording together, and in 1976, "Golden

Male Vocalist of the year, and the album containing the song, *I Am What I Am*, won a Gold record—George's first ever.

Sherrill followed it up with more numbers geared to somehow reflecting George's problems, such as his version of Tom T. Hall's, "I'm Not Ready Yet," and the more obvious "If Drinkin' Don't Kill Me (Her Memory Will)" and "Still Doin' Time," a Number One in the fall of 1981. By this time, no one expected him to last much longer. The inevitable loomed closer when he met Louisiana native Nancy Sepulveda, who was attracted to George the man, not the celebrity. George finally realized he was out of options. They returned to George's home area of Texas, and married in March.

GENE BEAR ARCHIVES



Jones in the early days with Stonewall Jackson.

Ring," reached Number One. They did it again in early 1977 with their Number One version of the 1947 pop hit, "Near You." George's personal disasters continued. Drinking was now just part of his problem. He added cocaine to his vices, and concert no-shows (and lawsuits by promoters) became routine. Gradually, the national media took even greater interest in George's problems.

Sherrill bet him \$100 that his recording of "He Stopped Loving Her Today" would be a hit, George insisting the song was too morbid to succeed. In the end, George lost the bet. In 1980 it won Grammys as Best Country Song and Best Male Country Vocal Performance. It also garnered CMA awards as Song of the Year and Single of the Year. George won

radio, eager to play records by George's young admirers, routinely ignored the man who inspired them.

Yet George Jones' legend is secure. In 1994 he did an entire season of shows at Opryland. He's recording another duet album, including new material with Tammy. Still sober, he's also working on his autobiography, to be published in 1995. Now an elder statesman, much like his idols Acuff, Monroe and Tubb have been, George Jones can celebrate not only nearly 40 years of brilliant music, a legacy that will outlive him, but his final triumph over his own worst instincts.

Albums Available

See For CMSA Members Only page.

Readers Create

Family and Old-Time Country

Roy W. Johnson of Kirkwood, Missouri, says his family line includes at least five generations of country fiddlers along with musicians who play guitars, banjos, dulcimers and more at family reunions. It's no wonder he holds to a traditional view of today's country music, expressed in the song below.

Country Music Just Don't Sound Country Anymore

Uncle Tom played the fiddle, Daddy played an old guitar,
Uncle Jud strummed on the old banjo, you could hear it near and far.
That was country music in those good old days of yore,
But country music just don't sound country anymore.

Chorus

Country music just don't sound like it did back then,
They don't play the fiddle now, they play the "violin."
The drums drown out the steel guitar, what is that awful roar?

Country music just don't sound like country anymore.

On Saturday nights we'd gather around the radio,
We'd set the dial to Nashville, that Grand Ol' Opry Show,
Now I want to take that box and throw it out the door,
'Cause country music just don't sound country anymore.

Why do country singers think they have to scream and shout,
Turn their amplifiers up and jump and prance about?
I know Hank Williams in his grave is turning o'er and o'er,
For country music just don't sound country anymore.

Some day I'll go to heaven, walk through those pearly gates,
Meet Roy Acuff and Patsy Cline and all those country greats,
Hear Uncle Tom play "Billy in the Low Ground," like he did back then,
And country music's gonna sound country again!

—Roy W. Johnson



Repro of "Zillion Dollar Photo"

Scott King, a freelance illustrator from Grahn, Kentucky, sent in the illustration above based on the photo referred to as "Zillion Dollar Photo" in the People section of the January/February 1993 issue. As Hazel reported in that issue, this photo was taken at Woodland Studios where the other artists pictured joined George Jones to record "I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair."

Chesnut Inspires

Stacey Hoff says she was inspired to write this poem and dedicate it to her favorite country artist, Mark Chesnut.

The ethereal glow of the neon lights,
through semi-darkness pierces a bright spotlight.
In a crowd of thousands I'm overwhelmed—
alone.
Then, the flash of your smile as you approach
the microphone.

The people vanish; the crowd disappears
as the sound of your voice softly touches
my ears.
Such power, such beauty, such feeling within;
I'm carried to places that I've never been.
I close my eyes and let the sound of you fill me.
Your voice takes control to enchant and thrill me.
I open my eyes to find all surroundings have
gone and all that remains is you and your song.

You stand in the circle of a bright spotlight,
and as your guitar flashes in the brilliant light,
a shadow crosses as you raise your hand
to tip the brim of your hat near the leather band.

Through the darkness I catch the spark of your eyes
and as the hat sets higher something within
me sighs.
as your eyes meet mine you begin to sing,
and—I swear—I'll never hear a more beautiful
thing
than the sound of your voice ringing through
the dark
to seek its rightful place within my heart.

Though I know in truth you're not singing just
to me,
I can close my eyes and believe it to be.
For you, my dear, have a voice from above;
A gift as pure and sweet as love.
You hold music's great golden key,
For you are what country was meant to be.

—Stacey Hoff

The Times Are a Changin'

Loretta Sadler of Harrodsburg, Kentucky, presents a more enthusiastic opinion of today's country music with the song lyrics below.

The Whole Country Is Going Country

The whole country is going country,
It's a charted fact
Gorgeous singing girls, and macho hat acts
Belting beautiful ballads, that'll make you cry
Or a boot scooting number, to make your blood fry

Chorus

The whole country is going country
Now it won't be long
'Til the only kind of music
Is a country song
I see things changing, like what I see
The whole country is going co-untry

You can see your favorite artists, on their videos
Take a CD sound, everywhere you go
From Southern California, to the top of Maine
They're all doing line dances, with a country
name

—Loretta Sadler



She's All "Country"

SAVANNAH

by

Award-Winning Doll Artist

Connie Johnston

She's as fresh as the wide open prairie, and warm as the sun-drenched Western skies. From the tip of her cowboy hat, to her toe-tapping boots, "Savannah" is uniquely all "country."

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"Savannah's" costume is as wholesome as the sky is big and blue. Her eleven button, calico prairie blouse is trimmed with eyelet lace, and a white ruffled petticoat peeks out from under her denim skirt. And, the star-spangled, fringed vest, perfectly matches her detailed boots, and cowgirl hat.

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Respond by: October 31, 1994

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Shown smaller than actual size of 16 1/2" tall

PRODUCING ALBUMS, HER OWN AND ONE WITH CHET ATKINS, HAS SUZY IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT THESE DAYS. IT'S A POSITION SHE'S PLEASED TO BE IN.

Suzy Bogguss Working Artist

BY BOB MILLARD

For years, Suzy Bogguss was "ready to happen," but somehow never quite did. She brought that crystal clear voice into studios for one producer after another, but none could seem to get a focus on her uniqueness.

It wasn't until she took charge of her own musical image and production that she created two great, Gold-selling, albums—*Aces* and *Something Up My Sleeve*—with hits like "Drive South," "Aces," "Hey Cinderella" and "Letting Go." It hasn't been easy. Suzy has had to walk some difficult lines at the boundaries where her career and personal life connect. She has worked long and hard to get to where she is today, and she deserves the credit for most of it herself.

In a man's town like Music City USA, today's married female star has to be very careful of how she is perceived, vis-a-vis her husband, if he is also "in the business." It is easy to be discounted as a product of the man's direction or talent, even though there are probably more good women behind successful men than vice versa in country music. Suzy's marriage to talented songwriter Doug Crider and its perceived relationship to her career is one of the things she used to worry about. Then they wrote "Just Like the Weather" and "Letting Go" together.

When they became hits and Gold records—Suzy Bogguss' Gold records—those concerns were finally erased.

"I was very protective of my individuality, and I guess initially because I am a woman, I felt like that if people see us as a team they'll always think that Doug made me who I am," Suzy explained as she took a break from a recording session in Nashville. "But, Doug didn't know me until the year that I made my first album. I had spent the last 10 years of my life before I came to Nashville booking myself and recording and doing everything myself, the groundwork and all the research. I wanted people to know that I had done that myself—to a fault.

"It was to the point where I turned my back on some things just because I was still protecting that side of me. It took me maybe two or three years before I was totally open to Doug's and my relationship enough to say, 'It doesn't matter what people think,' I can't control that. All I can do is be happy and let he and I work together as much as we want to and as much as it's fun for us."

With the pair's writing relationship out of the closet, the fun has really begun for Suzy.

"This writing thing has really become something we totally get into," she said. "This winter has been even more



productive than the *Something Up My Sleeve* album. We had so much fun because we'd get up in the morning and write as long as we wanted to. You know, pajamas or whatever, and then go on with the day. It's a very cool partnership."

Still, it was Suzy who finally saved her own career. Just a couple of years ago, despite her enormous vocal gifts, she was teetering on the brink of extinction as a recording artist in Nashville.

"I was dangerously close to the Black Hole," she says, laughing in retrospect. "I couldn't have taken another record that didn't get played on the radio. I could have taken it *personally*, because I was fine through all of that, but I don't think I would have had my record deal and I don't think it would have been easy to get another one."

Ever the plainspoken practical Illinoian, Suzy spoke up to Liberty Records' head man Jimmy Bowen. She demanded to be allowed at least to go out on her own terms, if failure was to be her epitaph.

"What I was driven to was just pure panic, that I was gonna lose my deal, and it just got me fighting mad," she explained. "It brought out the survival instinct in me."

"I don't like to dwell on it because it's long past, and Bowen and I have a really great relationship now—but at that point I felt like he didn't know who I was. He was relatively unimpressed and thought that I had this folkie side of me that I could never get beyond; that I was not really catchy enough to really hook people. Initially I think he was thinking here's a voice that could be a Reba McEntire-type artist. The problem was that maybe the voice could have done that if it wasn't attached to me as a person."

They agreed that they would co-produce Suzy's next album, which would be *Aces*, and that Suzy would have complete control of song selection. It turned out to be the right move.

Recently, Suzy got another career promotion. Bowen gave her license to produce her next solo effort, due for release in 1995, and to take production lead on a collaborative project with Chet Atkins, expected to be called *You Bring Out the Best in Me*. Chet and Suzy go back more than eight years, to a time before Suzy had a record deal. They met on a TV talk show, and through all the years when she couldn't buy a hit, or control of her own recording output, his respect and support for her just kept growing. Suzy always hoped she could talk him into a major

recording project but settled for the occasional cameo—until this year.

"We'd sit on the back porch and we'd play tunes," Suzy said. "I kept thinking it would be so cool if we could make records out of these things. I kept dropping hints, but he kept saying, 'No, I don't need to be making a lot of records, I don't want to do that anymore.' But one day he called up and left a message on my code-a-phone. We were

gone, but I called up home and got the messages and here's Chet saying, 'Suzy? Chuck Akers. I found a song I think we could make a hit out of. Talk to you later.' I went, he's hooked; go for the throat.

"So, I talked to him about it and he would never really totally commit, but I went right on to the record label. Then I went to Chet's record label via his son, who is good friends with Roy Wunsch's daughter. Roy was still head of Sony Music at that time. She went to him and said, 'Dad, Suzy wants to make a record with Chet.' He came back to me and said, 'Well, I guess I gotta let you do this or my daughter will never speak to me again.'"

Before producing her album with Atkins, Suzy took seven months off to write new songs and woodshed with Mr. Guitar. It sounded like a dream assignment.

"It really has been," she replied. "I

"WHAT I WAS
DRIVEN TO WAS
JUST PURE PANIC,
THAT I WAS
GONNA LOSE MY
DEAL, AND IT
JUST GOT ME
FIGHTING MAD."



mean, I had four hours of incredible music every single day for the last six weeks. It has been cool. I wish I had kept journals of it. We figured out whether we could make each song work for the two of us, just playing songs and listening to songs. And he brought some great new songs to the project."

Just how does one take charge of producing one of the most influential artist/producers

in Nashville's history?

"Obviously his A&R and producer skills are still there, yet he let me produce the record," Suzy explained. "It's really been an undertaking because I've never produced another artist before. It's always just been myself. It's a completely different thing.

"It's so funny, too, because Chet has got such a reputation and he's such a legend that engineers were like—well, if his guitar was making a buzz or something, nobody would tell him. They'd all just look at me like, 'You tell him.' So it would all come down to me and I would go in and have to tell him, 'Chet, you got a buzz.' He'd just say, 'Oh, damn, I gotta fix that.' But everybody else was like, 'I couldn't say it to him.'

"But, give me a break. He's not untouchable. He's one of the easiest people

to produce I've ever met. If he says, 'Well, I think that's about as good as I can get it,' and I say back, 'I don't think so,' he says, 'Well, you're probably right' and he gets it again. You just have to be brave enough to say that."

Suzy has proven herself in a lot of ways in the past couple of years. Now in her mid-30's, she is fast approaching the time when a lot of women in the public eye go for plastic surgery in a big way. Not Suzy; she wants her life, like her music, to blaze a trail for the fans who follow it.

"That's what 'Hey Cinderella' was all about," she said. "A bunch of women who've been friends for a long time wondering what happened to all the assumptions of their youth..."

"You know, I never thought of myself as a person who would have this one hit and like skyrocket to the top," she reflected. "I've always thought of myself as a working artist, the type who will have a long working career. I have collections of people like Bonnie Raitt, and I've watched how they've developed and I've watched how they've used their art and their music and their lyrics to display the things they have gone through. We need those inner lives, we need people to say, 'Here's what to expect next.' I mean, Bonnie's beautiful, I don't mean it that way, but she hasn't had the eyes and everything else done. You know? Role models are hard to come by.

"That's real appealing to me. I can already feel myself changing, maturing as an artist and as a person. I want to be able to reflect that in this music over the years." ■



Chet Atkins was an early supporter of Suzy Bogguss. The two recently recorded an album together.

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GIBSON/MILLER: ALL-AMERICAN BAND

By 1991, Dave Gibson and Blue Miller had both spent more than two decades gambling in the high-stakes game known as the music business. Despite several setbacks and a few close calls, they kept tossing their talent out on the table and hoping for the best. If they had yet to come up a big winner, they'd at least broken even.

Until 1991, however, they were playing on completely different tables. Gibson, a leathery Southerner who is equal parts gentleman and roughneck, balanced his folk background with his love for rowdy country-rock and hardcore honky tonk. For most of the 1980's, his dream consisted of fronting a cutting-edge country band. Miller, a Detroit native, spent most of his adult life cranking up an electric Les Paul while backing rocker Bob Seger and R&B honcho Isaac Hayes or leading his own traditional rock outfits. His dream had always been a tad louder than Dave's.

As another decade turned, both men, now in their 40's, envisioned themselves moving into record production while continuing to concentrate on songwriting. Common sense had started to diminish their longstanding dreams of hearing their own versions of their songs on the radio.

Then they met each other. They've since been reminded that success rarely has anything to do with common sense. "It's been really freaky how things just fell into place for us," Gibson says. "It was almost as if we didn't have to try. There's no way I can tell how it happened. It was just timing and faith and luck."

Their good-luck tale has a fairy Godfather, hotshot Nashville producer Doug Johnson. Johnson first met Miller in Atlanta, where both had logged many long nights together creating jingles and working behind other artists. They reunited when Miller, still new in town, bumped into Johnson in the lobby of Sony Music on Nashville's Music Row. Miller was there to drop off a tape of his songs; Johnson, then an independent producer, was working on a Doug Stone album and on his way to a meeting.

The two exchanged surprise greetings. Miller invited Johnson to his new home to have dinner with him and his wife; Johnson came that night. "I played him some of my new songs, he played me some of his," Miller recalls. "We never talked business. We just had a good time."

The next morning, Johnson woke Miller with a phone call. "Man, you're gonna think I'm crazy," the producer told the guitarist. "But there's this guy singing for me right now who I've never worked with before, but I think you need to know

each other. Can you come down here and meet him?"

That afternoon, Gibson and Miller were introduced. They performed songs for each other, passing praise back and forth along with the guitar. This time, it was Gibson who came to dinner at the Miller home. "We sat around, played guitar, drank a lot of wine and told our war stories," Miller says. "We found out we were both nuts."

They also found out that, although from different backgrounds, they shared a career full of small successes and several big near misses.

Gibson, an Arkansas native who grew up in Texas, quit a job as a schoolteacher in Chicago in the early 1970's to pursue music full-time. In 1982, after a decade in Windy City nightclubs, he moved to Nashville. Eventually, Steve Wariner recorded two of his songs, "Midnight Fire" and "Heart Trouble." Both became Top Ten country hits. He also had success as a songwriter with hits by Tanya Tucker, Alabama, Joe Diffie and Confederate Railroad.

Miller started out in the 1970's with a hard rock outfit in Detroit called Julia. He also sang behind Bob Seger, both onstage and on a Seger hit, and played in various other bands including Sea Level, of which he was lead singer for a time. He had songs recorded by Gladys Knight and David Ruffin and also performed on nationally known jingles. Other stints followed, but like Gibson, the big break never happened.

Gibson and Miller found common ground in their hard-luck stories. "It was like, 'Man, we can talk,'" Gibson says with a hearty laugh. "I'd say, 'Well, I tried this.' And he'd say, 'Well, I tried this.' We just hit it off right

away. There was a real chemistry."

That first night, the two wrote the chorus of a song, and by the next morning Miller had finished it. When the two played it for Johnson, the producer flipped. "There's really something happening here," Johnson told the guys. "Do more of this!" That first song, "An Offer Her Heart Can't Refuse," ended up on the Gibson-Miller Band's debut, *Where There's Smoke...* So did the next two songs the duo wrote, "Stone Cold Country" and "High Roller."

Johnson encouraged the duo to form a band, offering to produce their first songs. Three months later, Sony Music hired Johnson to head the talent division of Epic Records. The Gibson-Miller Band soon followed.

In recruiting the players, Gibson and Miller decided to emphasize versatility and uniqueness. Drummer Steve

THEY PLAY THEIR
MUSIC WITH A
ROCKING ENERGY
WHILE PAYING
RESPECT
TO TRADITIONAL
COUNTRY.



BY MICHAEL MCCALL



The Gibson-Miller Band, left to right, Doug Kahan, Mike Daly, Blue Miller, Dave Gibson and Steve Grossman.

Grossman has a jazz background, and had been playing with bassist Brian Grassmeyer in support of Sweethearts of the Rodeo. Pedal steel player Mike Daly is from Cleveland, and he developed his left-of-center instrumental style while performing in rock bands. When Grassmeyer left the group in mid-1993, Miller recruited a longtime colleague, bassist Doug Cahan, another Detroit veteran.

"One of the great things about this band is nobody feels you have to leave what you love at the door," Grossman says. "There's a lot of freedom in this band. Everybody gets to bring their own musical personality into it."

From the start, the band was encouraged to bring their wide-ranging background to the forefront. Miller remembers pulling out his Les Paul guitar and plugging it into a Marshall amp when recording "Big Heart" during one of the group's first days in the studio. He knew that sonic combination would create a rough guitar sound more familiar to rock than country. "I was just being facetious," Miller notes. "I didn't think they'd let me get away with it."

On the contrary. When Johnson heard Miller's raw, raunchy guitar work, he walked into the room and said, "If we're going to do this, let's do it right." He reached over and turned

the volume knob on the amp higher. "This is what the band is," Johnson told Miller. "We need more of this."

In retrospect, Miller's rocking guitar is part of what sets the band apart and part of why they received a cold shoulder from some radio stations. One Tulsa radio station executive told the band: "This is rock 'n' roll, this isn't country. This song has devil guitars!"

Miller laughs as he restates the response. Although the smoother "High Rollin'" became the band's lone Top Ten hit in 1993, "Big Heart" and the similarly rocking "Texas Tattoo" proved more popular in concerts, in dance clubs and on music video channels.

But the two know that few new country acts last long as cult favorites. They both yearn for that big breakthrough hit. For the band's second and current album, *Red White and Blue Collar*, Miller packed away his Les Paul guitar and his Marshall amp.

"We toned the guitars down a bit," Gibson says. "The album is more focused in a way. It's more country, but it's still rockin'. We feel we're just three minutes away from having that big career record that makes it all happen. We think this is going to be that record." ■

COLLIN RAYE

"I'm Still Bubba"

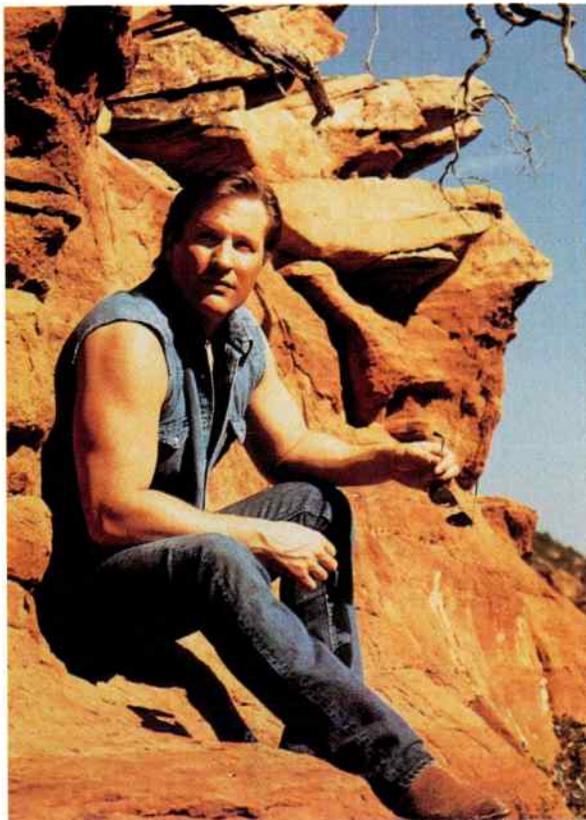
When Collin Raye topped the charts for three weeks with 1992's nostalgic megaballad, "Love, Me," there were those who thought they had his number: smooth, sensitive new age hunk. For those who knew him only via radio and music videos, follow-up ballad hits like "Somebody Else's Moon" and "That Was a River" might have confirmed that verdict.

But Raye, who has been performing since he was about four years old, can rock, and he wasn't about to get pigeon-holed. Hit singles "I Want You Bad (And That Ain't Good)" and "That's My Story" show another side of this 34-year-old sometimes-sensitive Texan. If the music refuses to let first impressions lie, talking to the guy one-on-one blows the Mr. Mellow image away. Raye has strong opinions on various figures in country music history, a social conscience, a soft spot for kids and an eclectic concert repertoire as daring at times as any since Willie Nelson hooked up with Leon Russell.

Let's start with the music.

"I know early I was tagged 'a balladeer,'" says Raye, "which is wonderful for people to say 'boy, this guy can really sing a ballad,' but that's not all that I am about. I've just got to sing good music and do a good show and give it 100% and we'll try to overcome some of that. There's always somebody who will try to tag me as an outsider because of the kind of music I do. I mean, if I do a concert and I did 'Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me' by Elton John, I get criticized for this. But, listen to the song. It's a beautiful song. Just because an Englishman sang that song 15 years ago doesn't mean that there's something wrong with me because I want to sing it. I think a great song is a great song."

That's one reason he has been known to



*Another side of
Collin Raye surfaces
when he opens up to
talk about his life.
Here's a Collin Raye
that few get to see.*

By Bob Millard

end his shows with The Beatles' driving trilogy, "Golden Slumbers," or Rod Stewart's steaming, sexy "Hot Legs."

"I love uptempo fun stuff," Raye confesses, still a little on the defensive. "I think as artists we are obligated to do stuff like that for our shows. People pay hard money to come and see us, and I want them to leave saying, 'God, I enjoyed that.' Besides, I don't know any artist who doesn't admit they had an impact on them, that doesn't say 'Man, The Beatles were great!'"

British Invasion and 70's rock stars still take a back seat to Raye's country mentors. As far as Collin Raye is concerned, modern country music history began with Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash.

"Waylon was a big influence on me when I was really young," he explains. "Waylon and Willie and George and them guys, they basically built the foundation for this thing. If they hadn't done what they did and went through the years and years of the hard road work—it was not what we do today. They didn't have the big Eagles; it wasn't quite that easy. To me they are at least partially responsible for where I am today and a lot of artists, because they kept this going; because they did such good music."

"Waylon and Willie, they brought a lot of people to the table. And they stuck to their guns, and I have a tremendous amount of respect for them and even Cash. On my last album I cut 'Big River.' And on this album I cut an old Waylon album cut, 'Dreaming My Dreams With You,' which is my favorite song of all time. Someone told me that it is Waylon's favorite song, too, and you know, Allen Reynolds wrote that, who is Garth's producer. It was kind of my way of saying 'Thank you, Waylon, I love you.'" (Reynolds also produces Hal Ketchum, The Cactus Brothers and others.)

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“Without them guys, who knows where a lot of country music artists would be today. Also, without them guys, would there be all the big buildings on Music Row in Nashville? Would the labels be able to reach out and help us like they are today without that first foundation they were able to build on them boys? You know what I’m sayin’? I think it’s important to thank ’em. I just think that they ought to be treated with more than respect.”

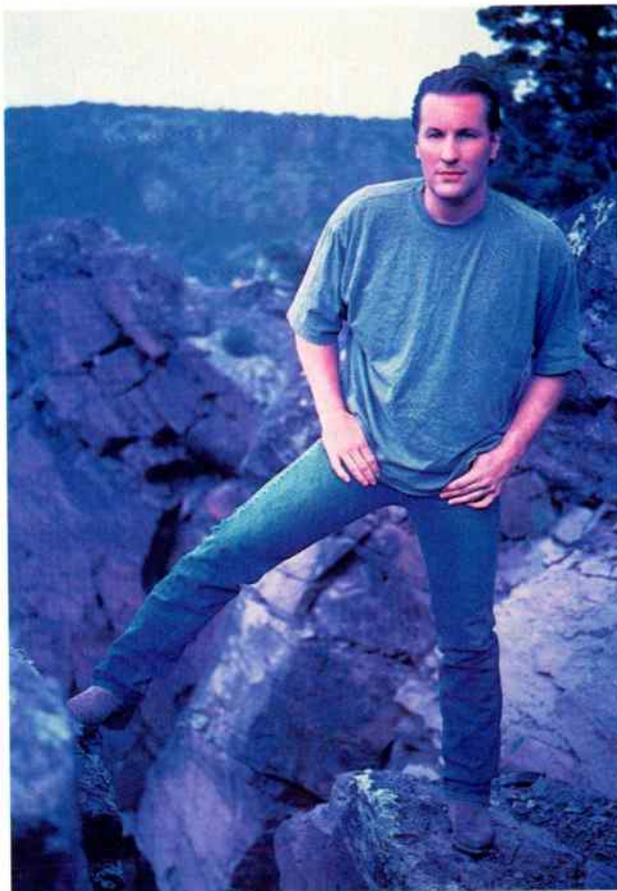
With that history lesson delivered, he points to his peripatetic musical family as another important influence.

Raye was born Floyd “Bubba” Wray (named for his father) into a musical family in DeQueen, Arkansas, in 1960, and reared on the Texas side of Texarkana. His father played bass, and his mother was a regional backup singer who stood on stage doing oos and ahs behind Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins in their Sun Records salad days. He founded a band with his older brother, Scott, when he was 14, moved with the band to the North Pacific region in the early 80’s, then relocated to a series of long term Reno, Nevada, lounge engagements. As The Wray Brothers, and then The Wrays, the act took several stabs at country recording in that decade, but nothing really took off.

Raye has a lot to say about the lounge venue as his training ground. Frankly, there are not many subjects on which Raye holds an opinion that he doesn’t have a lot to say about, but this one especially so. He has come in for much the same criticism as did Lee Greenwood and Barbara Mandrell, whose Nash-Vegas bombastics and stage show glitz was far from the rural Southern and Midwestern image country critics wanted from their country heroes. He reads all his reviews, and he rejects the provincial concept that honky tonks are the only place to polish a country band.

“In Nevada, all you were looking at was people sitting there,” he says. “I always had a great band, but we had to go that extra mile. We had to make ’em laugh. We had to give them songs that would make ’em want to hold each other’s hands. We had to make ’em get up and have some fun. I think it was good training.

“A lot of guys get their training in honky tonks. I was playing Texarkana honky tonks when I was 14, but honky



“I always had a great band, but we had to go that extra mile. We had to make ’em laugh. We had to give them songs that would make ’em want to hold each other’s hands.”



tonks are not a good barometer to whether you are entertaining or not. Making them dance and making them clap and holler are two different things. Guys who only trained in honky tonks may have looked out there and thought, ‘Wow, they’re all dancing,’ but they should have stayed around after the Muzak came on. It was Vanilla Ice or something and they were all still dancing.”

Raye continues filling his playlist with new hits like “Little Rock.” In keeping with his deep sense of obligation and a strong caring for kids, Raye turned the battle-with-the-bottle hit video for “Little Rock” into a vehicle to promote Al-Anon, the teen support group for children of alcoholics. He followed that up with a series of Al-Anon public service announcements.

“You’re in an environment where alcohol is so prevalent and so accessible that I’ve had band members who have suffered with it,” he explains. “Club owners

always want to buy you drinks, and then people in the crowds want to buy you a drink. So, of course I’ve been affected. That’s why when we really got into the song and realized it, we said let’s take advantage to see if we can help in this. Let’s not just cut a song, let’s see if we can make this work to help somebody.”

Raye’s other charity activities are all child-related. He gives time to the Dallas-area Special Olympics and to the Florida-based Emily Harrison Foundation which funnels help to children suffering the effects of severe head injuries.

“My son’s disability matured me a great deal,” says Raye of his eight-year-old, Jake Wray, who has mild cerebral palsy. “It made me realize that we’re just fortunate to be brought in healthy, whereas he was brought in with a little problem. But, I’ve always been a kind of kids person. The kids are why I do most of the things I do. My band, originally, almost everybody in my band was married and had children. That’s one reason we came out of Oregon and settled in working in Reno for so long, for the stability it gave the families.”

Collin is divorced from Jake and 11-year-old Brittany Wray’s mother, but he has chosen to live in the Dallas exurb, Greenville, Texas, to be near her and his kids. He says Nashville music industry regulars sometimes mistake his absence from the

Music City scene for aloofness.

“My manager has to explain to ’em that that isn’t what it is,” Raye offers. “It’s just that I love my kids, and when I’m not working, I head home to spend time with them. When I’m home, I see them every day.”

If all that makes his career and even love life a little more difficult, so be it, he says.

“I think there are women who wouldn’t want the baggage of my family carrying a lot of weight with me,” he says. “You know, my parents were divorced, so I relate to it from that standpoint, too. It’s baggage, but I don’t carry some big steamer trunk of anger along. They’d have to accept all that with me.

“I have a girlfriend now, and my heart tells me she’s in love with Bubba Wray, and not Collin Raye. I’m Collin Raye to the world, but to the people I love and to the people who care about me, I’m still ‘Bubba’.” ■

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Fond of Faith

Liked the July/August article on Faith Hill. I would also like to see Faith and Tim McGraw in a centerfold and more interviews on both.

Chad Jackson
Gorman, Texas

Cash and the Nashville Establishment

Hazel is so right about Nashville's wrongdoing of Johnny Cash. I'm a big country music fan, but I won't waste my money on one of Nashville's puppets—and they are easy to spot. I just hope the next time Rick Rubin is out scouting about, he picks another guy with great talent that Nashville has seemed to shut out, like Steve Earle. Rubin has good sense for his business, because if the artist is comfortable doing the music that means the most to him, the fans pick this up as being the best representation of the artist. I have more respect and admiration for artists who come across this way. Nashville will never get this. But people like Johnny who defy this system will end up being the most successful because Nashville has forgotten about the relationship between artist and fan.

Connie Bengé
Huntington, Texas

Clint Consumed

What have you done to Clint Black? This black and white centerfold looks like Joe Diffie “propped him up beside the jukebox.” Get this “half the man” a doctor for exhaustion, malnutrition and consumption.

D. Moxley
Kingsland, Texas

Never satisfied.—Ed.

Clint Centerfold Doesn't Cut It

I have been waiting for a pull-out poster of Clint Black (my favorite). I was pleased to learn that Clint would be centerfold in the July/August issue of *CMM*, but I was disappointed when I opened the magazine. The poster didn't do Clint justice. How about next year we get a real poster of Clint?

Brandy Pool
Eros, Louisiana

Never, ever satisfied.—Ed.

Liked Clint, Wants Marty

I enjoyed the July/August issue. I really liked the Clint Black pull-out poster, but I would like to see Marty Stuart make the centerfold. I read your magazine, but I don't see much of him. To see him in a centerfold would thrill me.

Lisa White
Brookhaven, Mississippi

Would you settle for the cover?—Ed.

Tubb Sets Opry Record Straight

I'm a little slow getting around to this, but it concerns a statement made in the January/February issue this year. On the back (page 38) of the Lorrie Morgan pull-out centerfold, you state that Lorrie is

one of two artists who were made members without ever having a hit record, the other being me, and that we were honored for our dedication. I'm sure this was meant (and is) a compliment...but I just wanted to set the record straight. In 1954 I had a duet with Goldie Hill called “Looking Back to See” which reached Number Four in *Billboard*. Later that year our follow-up, “Sure Fire Kisses,” reached Number 11. Then in early 1955, I had “I Gotta Go Get My Baby,” which made it to Number Eight. These may not seem like monster hits today, but they sure seemed it to me back then. I did not join the Opry until September 10, 1955, after all of the above songs had peaked out at the positions noted. I can think of other acts who supposedly were signed without hits, though. Stonewall Jackson was not even recording when he was made a member. And The Four Guys and Mike Snider might also have been asked to join without hit records. Thanks anyway for the mention. I read the magazine every month, and I did consider it a compliment, for which I also thank you.

Justin Tubb
Nashville, Tennessee

Thanks for the details... Those Opry claims always get us into trouble.—Ed.

Lots of Good

I love your magazine. It's great! Next, I'd like to compliment you on a few of your many good articles in recent issues—Brooks & Dunn, Alan Jackson and especially the one on Alison Krauss. As for centerfolds, Brooks & Dunn and Clint were a sight for sore eyes! I am 13 years old and have heard Hank Williams Sr. because my dad and granddad listen to his albums. I think it would be nice if you said a little something about him so that other kids could hear about this legend. It just beats all when he sings.

Megen Meeks
Farwell, Texas

July/August *CMM* a Favorite

Thanks for putting out a consistently great magazine. Our July/August issue is a favorite. We love Randy Travis. With the turn toward rock in country music the past couple years, it seems like our only real country music stars are Randy Travis, Alan Jackson, George Strait, Dwight Yoakam and maybe one or two others. Mike Bane did his usual great job in the 20 Questions with Randy Travis. We are happy to see you feature some of the older all-time greats, like Johnny Cash, and hope you will continue to do so. A lot of us younger people are genuinely interested in staying current on what is happening with the older entertainers. Your Legends of Country Music section is really an education in country music.

Rick and Cary Nelson
Charlotte, North Carolina

Bane Asks All the Right Questions

I had to write to thank you for the great 20 Questions with my favorite artist, Randy Travis. “Iron Mike” asked all the right questions that we fans have been wanting to know the answers to. I've seen Randy in concert 23 times, and I, like most country fans, was wondering when he'd start touring again. I'm happy to hear we won't have to wait too much longer. Just one other thing: Is Bob Allen listening to the same *This Is Me* album as I am? I guess not. I think once again Randy has come out with an exceptional album, just like all of his others. Randy has definitely proved to me and all of his other fans that he is the real reason we have ears.

Gina Canova
Dravosburg, Pennsylvania

Handsome Travis/Imposing Cash

Your July/August issue arrived yesterday, and we have already read it cover to cover. Special thanks to Michael Bane for his outstanding interview in 20 Questions with Randy Travis. Randy's been our favorite since he first burst onto the country scene. As my teenage daughters and their friends say, “Randy's got it all”—a great voice (and it's real country), those handsome hunk looks and a personality to match. Welcome back to touring, Randy, we missed you. We also loved the imposing Johnny Cash cover and in-depth article. It's refreshing when your magazine features both the older and younger generations. Keep it up!

J.T. and Betty Talton
Drexel, North Carolina

Taking Exception to Travis Review

I'm writing this letter to take exception to some of the things Bob Allen said in his July/August review of Randy Travis' new album, *This Is Me*. Allen says some pleasant things about the album, but in one spot he commends Randy's “amazingly compelling and resonant...drawl,” while in another he complains about Randy's “mellow, almost listless drawl...as if he's phoning it in from Montana.” Make up your mind! I think “Runaway Train” has plenty of “bump-bounce urgency,” and I disagree that the same vocal styling should be applied to “Gonna Walk That Line.” I like the way Randy sings every song on that album.

Kay Jesse
Conifer, Colorado

Knows a Good Song...

Wow! I just received my July/August issue of *CMM*, and was I pleased. Nevermind the articles on Faith Hill and Lee Roy Parnell (they were great), I loved the record review on Rick Trevino's self-titled album. Just one problem, why in the world did Rich Kienzle leave out “Life Can Turn on a Dime?” This song is my favorite. I'm 15 years old and have been a country music fan all of my life. And I

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QUIZ

Answers to these questions can be found by reading this issue of *Country Music Magazine*. Answers will be published in the November/December 1994 issue.

1. What is the name of Marty Stuart's current band?
2. With which country legend is Suzy Bogguss currently producing an album?
3. What song does Collin Raye pick as his all-time favorite?
4. How many members of The Gibson-Miller Band are there?
5. Alan Jackson currently has a hit single with what often-covered 50's rock tune?
6. Chevy's new S-Series Extended Cab Pickup is well sealed to keep out leaks and road noise. How many times are the doors sealed?

ANSWERS TO LAST ISSUE'S QUIZ:

1. American Records
2. B'nai B'rith
3. *This Is Me*
4. The Dallas Cowboys
5. Gary Morris and Reba McEntire
6. Chevy's Full-Size Pickup Truck rides so smoothly on account of its advanced independent front suspension system.

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know a good song when I hear one. Otherwise, Mr. Kienzle was right on the mark. I look forward to seeing more on Trevino. His talent should not be overlooked.

Anna Small
Ravenswood, West Virginia

Kienzle Hits Mark on Trevino

Howdy. I really enjoy your magazine. I wanted to say Rich Kienzle was right on target with his review of Rick Trevino's debut album in the July/August issue. The album is full of great, traditional, honky-tonkin' country music—reminiscent of George Strait. Great job.

Ryan Adams
Mt. Calm, Texas

A Matter of Principle

Bob Allen raises some interesting points in his review of Vince Gill's *When Love Finds You* in the July/August issue. My problem is with the way he constructs a parallel between the title of this album and a book of short stories written by Raymond Carver. The title of Carver's book is *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, and not, as Allen writes, *What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Love*. If Allen is going to toss around judgments like "maudlin" and "bogus self-help treatise off the Walmart discount shelf" in reference to Carver's book, he ought to make sure that the title is published correctly. With that aside, thanks to all of the record reviewers for so many solid reviews, and for not being afraid to be critical when it is called for!

Amy V. Pickett
Wallingford, Pennsylvania
Look again. Bob changed his mind after he read the book—Ed.

DeMent's Too Country for Nashville

I would like to compliment you on the fine review of Iris DeMent's CD, *My Life*, in the July/August issue. I have been a fan of DeMent since I heard her on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion* show a year ago. I think that Mr. McCall's comment that Iris DeMent is "too country for Nashville's tastes these days," is right. She sounds nothing like Lorrie Morgan or Wynonna; she has a very unique voice that stops one in his tracks the first time you hear her. I hope you will do a feature on her someday.

Tige Dickinson
White Cloud, Michigan

Krauss Comparison Premature

I must take exception to a statement Mr. Kienzle made in his review of the Alison Krauss and The Cox Family album, *I Know Who Holds Tomorrow*, in the May/June issue. Now, I like Alison Krauss' music; I'm always delighted to see her on *Austin City Limits* or *Lonesome Pine*, etc. I wish her well and hope to see her in concert. I am sure that Emmylou Harris

is an admirer of Krauss, but to suggest that, at this point in time, Ms. Krauss' "talents go farther" is preposterous. When Ms. Krauss has produced something as unique, personal and wonderful as *The Ballad of Sally Rose*, and shown the diversity of *White Shoes*, *Brand New Dance* and *Cowgirl's Prayer*, when she sells to people from all walks of life, then you can make your comparisons, but not now.

Dorothy Fulks
Webb City, Missouri

All That and Italian, Too

Thanks, Bob Allen, for the great review of Kathy Mattea's *Walking Away a Winner* (July/August '94 issue). I wholeheartedly agree, "to hell with them all." I also loved those records, and I think her new album is a winner all the way. She's not only beautiful and talented but a compassionate lady who has the moral courage to stand up for what she believes. I'm so proud to be a member of her fan club. All that, and she's Italian too! Stupendo!

Joy Collins
Rockport, Maine

Glad Crowell Stuck Around

When I received my May/June issue, first thing I checked the cover for Rodney Crowell. No luck. Then I checked Record Reviews, and there was his smiling face! I had the pleasure and honor of singing an impromptu duet with him at the Crazyhorse in California. He told the audience that he almost quit the music business, but I knew he couldn't stay away for long; it's in his blood. What a loss that would have been for us all! Your record review made my day. Please renew my subscription.

Renee Wilson
Orange, California

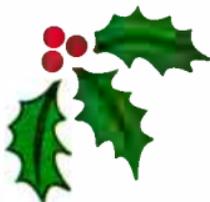
LeDoux's a Helluva Man

I second the letter by Ilsa M. Stai on Chris LeDoux (July/August 1994). You people out there want to know what Western music is all about, let Chris tell you in his music. Want to know what a real cowboy thinks of rodeo and the thrill and fear of that eight-second ride, let Chris tell you. It's all there in his music. Chris LeDoux is the real thing, and his concerts are fantastic. Let's see some recognition on this great writer, singer, performer and all-around hell of a man.

Alice J. Gore
Denton, Texas

Final Note Strikes a Chord

I wanted to drop you a line to let you know how much I appreciated The Final Note in the May/June issue. Luckily, I have finally found a radio station here in Louisville that actually plays Emmylou (FM 98.9). I rarely find anything by Lucinda Williams in record shops. The only time Marty Stuart got any real air-



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play in Louisville by the most popular country station was when they were promoting a concert. I rest comfortably that Emmylou, Lucinda and Rosanne will not conform to fit into anyone's standards of what music should be. However, sometimes I wonder about the managers of Marty's career. As he's said himself, he ain't much with a ballad, yet I hear that a ballad will be his next release from *Love and Luck*. I would love to see "Oh, What a Silent Night" released. Oh, well, I'm not his manager, am I? R.L. Hawley

Louisville, Kentucky

Generally, it's the record company that chooses the singles.—Ed.

An In-Depth on Raye

How about doing one of your "in-depth" interviews with Collin Raye. He is a favorite around our house, and we watch the country videos all day waiting for his to come on. Where can we write to Collin?

Jeanie Mendenhall
LaMesa, California

Interview's in this issue. Fan club's at P.O. Box 530, Reno, Nevada 89504.—Ed.

Too Much and Not Enough

Seven pages of Letters? This is unreal! You could publish perhaps ten choice letters and leave the rest of the space for additional information on country music stars that you never seem to get around to including in your magazine.

Frances Kearney
Blue Springs, Missouri

Feature JMM/Tim McGraw

I have been a reader of your wonderful magazine for almost three years and I have yet to see a pull-out poster of John Michael Montgomery. Is there any chance for that and an interview with Tim McGraw? They've both been long-awaited.

Penny Montgomery
Aurora, Missouri

Hobbs' Undiscovered Talent

I recently enjoyed my first copy of your magazine. I would love to see you do an article on my favorite female artist, Becky Hobbs. She is the most undiscovered talent in country music today. She has ten times the talent of Wynonna Judd, but who gets the headlines? You have the kind of staff that could bring us some more background on this great entertainer. Ever since I started playing her video, "Mama's Green Eyes" (as a disc jockey at a dance club), I've had two dozen or more people come up and ask "Who is that?"

Jim McNally
Des Moines, Iowa

Album'll be in Record Reviews soon.—Ed.

Cover Stuart

Please, please. I would like to know more about Marty Stuart. I have been reading your magazine for almost a year now, and

I have not seen anything on him. I really like his new CD, *Love and Luck*. Please let me find out more about him.

Carol Slemmer
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
You got it.—Ed.

Bogguss Deserves Feature

I am a huge fan of Suzy Bogguss and I keep waiting for you to do a feature on her. I've enjoyed your magazine for quite a few years, and during that time, I've only seen one feature on her and that was a few years ago. She deserves a feature. How about it? Maybe even a centerfold? I hope I don't have to wait too much longer.

Fran Robinson
South Meriden, Connecticut
Wait no more.—Ed.

Bogguss Merits a Mention

I find it hard to believe that anyone could have watched *The Roots of Country* on CBS and referred to Suzy Bogguss as "many others" (responding to the People section of the July/August issue). A lot of the people you mentioned in your column only spoke a few lines where Suzy sang a great old Skeeter Davis song that was the highlight of the show. How come you never have anything about Suzy Bogguss in your magazine?

Rick Lake
Rock Island, Illinois
Alright, already. Turn to page 48.—Ed.

What's up With Willis?

Help! I would like to know what is going on with Kelly Willis. I wrote to her fan club, but the letter was sent back as if that address does not exist. I saw her on *Austin City Limits* earlier this year, and on the CMA awards, but since then, I know nothing of her. I would like to see her in concert sometime, but I don't have a clue as to where she is or what she is up to these days.

Kenneth C. Otto
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
Willis is no longer with MCA Records. We'll keep you posted on where she settles.—Ed.

How 'Bout Some Lady Legends?

What a thrill it is to see some legends are finally making the cover (Waylon, March/April '94 and Cash, July/August '94). Now if we could see a few legendary ladies gracing the cover—what a perfect magazine. We'd have an equal mix of men/women and legends/future legends. With the release of Dolly's autobiography in October and her acoustic album due in December, what a perfect time to feature her on the cover.

Richard McGuire
Vermilion, Ohio

Let's Hear About Ronna

I am a big country music fan and have been a *Country Music* subscriber for 10 years. This is a great magazine, and I

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285	Joan Anderson	174	Waylon Jennings	115	KT Olin
181	John Berry	113	George Jones	315	Lee Roy Parnell
288	Clint Black	317	Wynonna Judd	261	Dolly Parton
109	Suzy Bogguss	180	Toby Keith	308	Sandi Patti
185	Larry Boone	263	KY Headhunters	195	Princess of Miss.
287	Osby Brooks	777	Sammy Kershaw	828	Collin Raye
407	Brooks & Dunn	118	Hal Ketchum	255	Jerry Reed
287	Marty Brown	84	Tracy Lawrence	308	Ronna Reeves
158	Tracy Byrd	180	Chris LeDoux	199	Ronnie Heart
205	Shawn Camp	842	Little Texas	244	Kenny Rogers
241	Carlene Carter	194	Patty Loveless	111	Roy Rogers
279	Lonestar Cartwright	154	Lyle Lovett	281	Billy Joe Royal
232	Johnny Cash	252	Barbara Mandrell	142	Sawyer Brown
141	Rosanne Cash	324	Louise Mandrell	307	Dan Seals
522	Mary Ch. Carpenter	301	Kathy Mattea	129	Victoria Shaw
246	Charlie Christian Band	318	Matthews Wright King	206	Shenandoah
243	Mark Chennutt	201	Delbert McCritton	237	Ricky Skaggs
278	Mark Collie	300	McBride & The Ride	846	Stallion Brothers
318	Confederate Railroad	281	Delbert McCritton	218	Clay Stewart
288	Earl Thomas Conley	302	Nicki McCoy	134	Larry Stewart
287	Rodney Crowell	254	Reba McEntire	324	Doug Stone
310	Davis Daniel	156	Tim McGraw	258	George Strait
304	Eddy Dean	189	JM Montgomery	147	Marty Stuart
128	Desert Rose Band	170	Lorrie Morgan	214	Doug Supernaw
212	Diamond Rio	251	Aunie Murray	843	Texas Tornados
150	Joe Diffie	126	Willie Nelson	844	Pam Tillis
845	Dean Dillon	249	Wayne Newton	282	Aaron Tippitt
238	Holly Dunn	189	Nitty Gritty Dirt Band	240	Randy Travis
173	Elkie Brothers				
171	Everly Brothers				
320	Forrester Sisters				
172	Rainey Foster				
175	Crystal Gayle				
183	Gibson/Miller				
250	Vince Gill				
290	Lee Greenwood				
182	Ricky L. Greig				
207	Nanci Griffith				
311	Merle Haggard				
338	Emmylou Harris				
143	Highway 101				
118	Faith Hill				
298	Travis Tritt				
283	Taryn Tucker				
256	Ricky Van Shelton				
151	Clay Walker				
218	Steve Wariner				
190	Gene Watson				
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368	Hank Williams Jr				
308	Michelle Wright				
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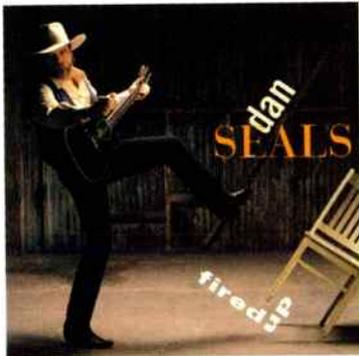
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and
"Love Thing"



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Hearing is Believing

can't wait for the next issue! I wish it came monthly. I would like to see and read more about Ronna Reeves. She is a true artist and a great person. Her third album, *What Comes Naturally*, was fantastic. So, while I enjoy hearing about Vince, Reba, Billy Ray and Alan, let's hear about Ronna.

Ron Young
Mammoth Lakes, California

Lubbock in Song

In your July/August 1994 issue, a letter from Laura Riensche, from San Leandro, California, asked about a song mentioning Lubbock, Texas. I've always been a big Mac Davis fan, and a song immediately came to mind. A few years back, he did a song called "Texas in My Rearview Mirror." It spoke of a vision not clearly understood. The song had a recurring line "happiness was Lubbock, Texas, in my rearview mirror" and ended with the clear vision, "When I die, you can bury me in Lubbock, Texas—in my jeans." I wonder if this is the song they were referring to.

Cynthia Oddl
Watertown, New York

Lubbock in Word and in Mind

Mac Davis wrote about Lubbock twice, mentioning it directly in "Texas in My Rearview Mirror" and indirectly in "Hooked on Music": "The skating rink where Buddy Holly played" was in Lubbock. Texas roadhouse bands of the 30's doubtless mentioned Lubbock when they played there.

Bear Rowell
Hardinsburg, Kentucky

Wilburns "Real Legends"

Indeed—real Legends! I was delighted to read the Legends of Country Music (July/August issue). The Wilburns were most influential in shaping the industry that is known today as "country music." Many thanks to Rich Kienzle for contributing to the future of country music by presenting its past.

Joe Haymond
Franklin, Tennessee

"Hot New Country" Is...

For a number of years, the Boston area had no regular country music station. (The radio stations for Harvard and Boston College have excellent shows which, unfortunately, were limited to weekend times.) As a result, it was a great event that two stations in Boston converted to country music within three months of each other. Unfortunately, both of them soon adopted the "Hot New Country" format. Compounding the misery was the fact that two other good country stations, which can be heard only with difficulty in my area, also converted to "Hot New Country." My passion for the new country stations cooled rapidly, and I soon returned to my tapes of Coe, Jennings, Nelson, Wells, Walker, Copas, Merle, etc.

Luckily, I was recently tipped off to an AM station in Boston which plays a satellite feed featuring programming similar to original country favorites such as WSM-AM recently adopted. Let's hope this is the beginning of a trend.

Kenneth Anderson
Concord, Massachusetts

...Neither Hot Nor Country, Discuss

Here in the Seattle/Tacoma area, we now have three country radio stations. That's the good news. The bad news is that each of the three is virtually indistinguishable from the others, concentrating on the "new" country songs and artists. Let me start off by saying that I love today's country. I'm wild about Alan Jackson, Toby Keith and Tracy Lawrence, to name just a few. Yet, I'm even more wild about Marty Robbins and Conway. But the new stations have forgotten the legends. In fact, to demonstrate how fresh and hip their playlist is, they have commercials featuring a line of a song, stating "This is 'old country,' followed by a line of 'new country.'" They will alienate those of any age with the sense to appreciate the timeless quality of truly good music. I can't see why they can't sprinkle in Merle, Charley Pride, Loretta, etc. every hour or so.

I want to thank *Country Music Magazine*. With your Legends features, record reviews that include veteran artists and cover stories like Johnny Cash, you demonstrate just the right balance between the pioneers, today's traditionalists and the new stars. If only one of our Seattle country stations would do likewise!

Teri Nelson
Port Orchard, Washington

Cover the Young Bucks

I got your magazine subscription as a Christmas gift, and I really enjoy it. There is one problem, however; you are forgetting young readers like me who like younger performers. I have a few suggestions: Clay Walker, Rick Trevino, Billy Dean, Doug Supernaw... I could go on. I'm begging as a fan to see an article, cover or centerfold of these. I am sure other young readers agree.

Heather Pittman
Winchester, Kentucky

Cover Seasoned Artists

I've been a subscriber to your great magazine for years, and while I enjoy a few of the newer entertainers, there's not enough attention given to the older stars. How about an article soon on one of the best acts ever, the great Tompall and The Glaser Brothers. My family and I were privileged to see them in concert several years ago. They were wonderful! I'll never forget the brothers' beautiful harmony. Please feature them soon.

Mrs. Roger Pezley
Kahoka, Missouri

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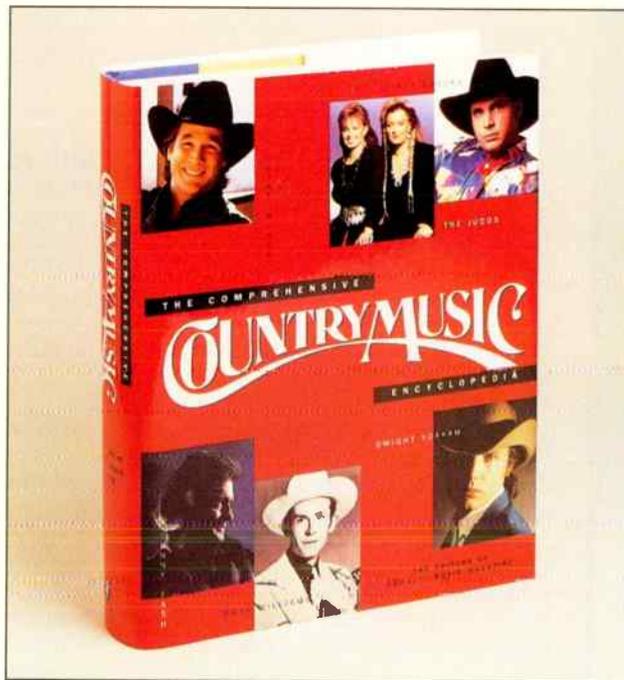
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kind, rather than simply revising the original, we decided to start from scratch and produce a completely new book, the *Comprehensive Country Music Encyclopedia*. A revision

would have been simpler, quicker and less expensive, but it would not have been as good—for three main reasons. First, the earlier book was written as short biographical notes without much historical connection. Second, while the writing and scholarship involved was satisfactory, it was not at the level we are capable of now. Third, the photographs were uninspiring compared to what we have gathered since. The ways in which we and our resources have changed over the years combine to make the *Comprehensive Country Music Encyclopedia* a very different kind of book. In addition, we include 680 entries, more than half again as many as in 1974, and over 600 photographs, many rare and not previously published in any book.

About The Encyclopedia

In 1974, two years after starting *Country Music Magazine*, we published the *Country Music Encyclopedia*. There was nothing else like it at the time. It served a useful function and tens of thousands of copies were sold. 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 our *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, more importantly, the young and relatively inexperienced *Country Music* staff of 1974 has become mature, experienced, professional and absolutely reeking with authority.

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McBride's Tune Too Real for Radio

It was upsetting to hear that some radio stations around the country have taken Martina McBride's latest single, "Independence Day," off the air. This song deals with a person who completely falls apart following years of spousal abuse. We view show after show on TV and read articles daily on desperate women who have used drastic measures when dealing with their abusers. I hope these stations will reconsider their stand on this.

Sue Adams
Winfield, Kansas

Cryner a New Traditionalist

I love your magazine! I enjoyed the 20 Questions with Randy Travis. It is too easy for anyone to break into country music these days. They're bad imitations of Hank Jr. and Buck Owens. Not to mention the new rock artists disguised as country. I have found a new traditionalist, Bobbie Cryner. She has a great voice and style and is down to earth. She wrote or co-wrote most of the songs on her album. I would love to see an interview with Bobbie, or even a poster. Her songs are not played on the radio around here. So I have her tape in my car constantly. Bobbie is true country.

S. Hardy
Liberal, Missouri

Country Music Hits the Mark

Many thanks for many great things! From the March/April issue: the delicious Dwight centerfold and the Waylon interview. From the May/June issue: the Alan Jackson and J.M. Montgomery interviews. From the July/August issue: the long-awaited, fabulous Clint centerfold, the Johnny Cash interview and 20 Questions with Randy Travis. Could you tell me when Dwight and Clint's first interviews and centerfolds appeared? I missed 'em.

Lisa Monson
Franklin, New Jersey

First Dwight centerfold and first Clint interview were both in January/February 1990. First Dwight interview, May/June 1986. First Clint centerfold, November/December 1990. Back issues \$3.00, Westport office.—Ed.

Warm and Engaging Collie

At a Mark Collie concert in Oregon, we sat behind winners of backstage passes. They met Mark before he came on stage and were surprised at his nervousness over the show. Most fans think singing is easy, but he showed us. After he had us "warmed up," he came into the crowd for us to sing solos. What a hoot! His warm, engaging manner and the small venue contributed to our enjoyment. Many stars can sing and write songs, but not many interact with the audience the way Mark did.

Jan McCarthy
Talent, Oregon

Clinton Gregory Joins Polydor

I'd like to address your devoted readers. This September, Clinton Gregory will release his first single since signing with Polydor Records. Be ready to have your socks knocked off! You're about to learn what I've known for three years: Clinton is the most talented country music artist on the scene today. Not only is he talented, he is the nicest guy you'd ever want to meet. He adores his fans, spending hours after every show signing autographs. I'd like to thank Clinton and his band and road crew for making me feel like a part of their family.

Karen Niquette
Burlington, Vermont

Centerfold on McCoy Wanted

Please, put Neal McCoy in your centerfold. He has worked very hard and needs a little more attention. We really don't see enough of him. Your magazine is great, not to mention your calendar.

Evelyn Ankerpont
Isleto, New Mexico

Why Not Wy?

I have been waiting to see a cover story on Wynonna for over a year. I am sick of reading letters about how Wynonna, Garth and Reba get all of the coverage. It's only normal that the best stars get the most exposure. Please put Wynonna on the cover or at least in the centerfold.

Joe Cox
El Nido, California

We're still working on it.—Ed.

Wild for LeDoux

We here in New York have an outdoor theater called the Cortland Country Music Park, which is very much alive. We've had many of the greats perform here. Had the pleasure to attend a show in which Chris LeDoux, Janie Fricke, Vern Gosdin, The Bellamy Brothers and Johnny Russell all performed (along with some of our local greats). Yes, the people went wild when Chris came on to perform. You bet we're country.

Mildred Atkins
McGraw, New York

Feature Radney Foster

I just want to let you know that I think you have one of the best and most informative magazines on the market today. I would also like to suggest an article with pictures on Radney Foster. He is one of the most talented writers and performers today, and there seems to be a shortage of things written about him.

Shelia Jourdan
Abita Springs, Louisiana

Lots to Say

Your May/June issue was the first copy of your magazine I've read, and I really enjoyed it. It's nice to see so many record

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KATHY MATTEA (NEW) The Videos - 30 mins.

She is currently running a new wave of success with her recent Grammy Award for *Best Country Gospel Performance* and the release of her new album. *The Videos* features six stunning clips including the hot new single, "Walking Away a Winner." There's also "Lonesome Standard Time," "Standing Knee Deep in a River (Dying of Thirst)," "Battle Hymn of Love," "Asking Us to Dance" and "Time Passes By." Item No. V40 - \$14.95

HIGHWAYMEN LIVE On the Road Again - 60 mins.

Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson and Waylon Jennings are together again, in concert, on their first European Tour. You'll meet them backstage, talking candidly about their lives and their music. Then you'll see them on stage, firing up the audience and never letting go, from the opening bars of their theme song "Highwayman" through "Folsom Prison Blues" and "Crazy," until the final chord of "On the Road Again." Item No. V2S - \$14.95

REBA MCENTIRE For My Broken Heart - 22 mins.

Reba fans, this is your lucky day. Here is your chance to bring country music's current reigning queen home for a private screening. Featured on this popular chartbuster video are Reba favorites such as "Rumor Has It," "You Lie," "Fancy," "For My Broken Heart" and "Is There Life out There." Whether or not you have ordered either of Reba's past videos, you don't want to miss this one. Ask for Item No. V5M - \$19.95

COUNTRY VIDEO HITS OF THE 90'S 15 Great 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, "Out of Your Shoes" by Lorrie Morgan, "Crazy for Love" by Conway Twitty, "It Ain't Nothin'" by Keith Whitley, "Don't Toss Us Away" by Patty Loveless, "Cry, Cry, Cry" by Marty Stuart, "When I Call Your Name" by Vince Gill **AND MANY MORE!** Item No. V6E - \$19.95

RAY STEVENS Comedy Video Classics - 30 mins.

You have probably seen this popular video advertised on TV. Now you can enjoy the outrageous musical/comedy talent of the legendary Grammy-winning 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

Hank Williams Tradition - 60 mins.

This new video, *In the Hank Williams Tradition*, 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 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

Remembering Patsy - 60 mins.

Now Patsy's musical legacy lives on in this release from Hallway Productions. This heartfelt celebration features 17 great Patsy Cline songs and 10 rare television appearances, recently discovered and never before seen on home video. You'll meet Patsy through her intimate home movies, personal letters and fond reminiscences of Loretta Lynn, George Jones, Eddy Arnold, Charlie Dick (Patsy's husband) and others. Item No. V1E - \$19.95

JIMMIE RODGERS

Times Ain't Like... - 70 mins.

In the early days of sound film, in addition to covering major events, newsreel cameras captured the sights and sounds of everyday life in America, including its music. The compelling performances assembled here communicate the innocence and power of that early American music. Besides Jimmie Rodgers, some of the other pioneers included are Bob Wills' Texas Playboys and Otto Gray's Oklahoma Cowboys. Item No. V1L - \$29.95

GEORGE JONES

Live In Tennessee - 54 mins.

This memorable video is pure music with an introduction by superstar Alan Jackson. Live from the Knoxville Civic Coliseum, you'll see George thrill the audience with 15 of his biggest hits including "I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair" and the #1 country song of all time, "He Stopped Loving Her Today." There's also "The Race Is On," "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes?," "Bartender's Blues" **AND 10 MORE!** Item No. V1X - \$19.95

CONWAY TWITTY

King Of Hits - 45 mins.

This video celebrates the basis for Conway's claim to greatness by taking a long look at his illustrious career. You'll see him as he performs early hits like "To See My Angel Cry" and "She Started to Stop Loving You." You'll hear classic Conway hits like "Linda on My Mind" and "The Games Daddies Play" and come full circle with his more recent ballads like "Somebody's Needin' Somebody." It's a fitting tribute to a legendary star. Item No. V2C - \$24.95

LEGENDS OF TRADITIONAL FINGER- STYLE GUITAR (NEW) - 96 mins.

Here are some of the greatest guitarists of all time together on one video. Included are: Merle Travis—"John Henry," "Mus'rat," "Lost John"/Doc Watson—"Deep River Blues," "Traveling Man"/Sam & Kirk McGehee—"Railroad Blues," "Wheels," "Victory Rag"/Mance Lipscomb—"Take Me Back," "Run Sinner Run"/Doc & Merle Watson—"When I Lay My Burden Down" **AND MORE!** There are 21 songs in all. 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" **AND MANY MORE**, including Marty's Grammy-winning song, "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife." It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and the big screen. Item No. G2A - \$39.95

LORRIE MORGAN

Something In Red - 18 mins.

RCA proudly presents one of their fastest rising stars on one of their hottest-selling music videos. This video features some of Lorrie's biggest hits. 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." Don't miss out on this top-quality, highly entertaining video. Item No. V1J - \$14.95

BEST OF MARTY ROBBINS TV SHOW Vols. 1, 2, 3 - 55 min. each SAVE \$20.00 When You Order All 3!

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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," "Wher'm 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

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. Given the length and quality of this video, this record of the 1992 festival is highly recommended. It 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 participants. Item No. V7V - \$29.95

WEBB PIERCE

Greatest Hits - 52 mins.

No country artist but Webb Pierce can claim 69 hit songs in a row. Shortly before his death he personally created, for rare filmed performances, a compilation of his greatest hits, narrating and providing background on the songs, their writers and their origins. This program contains seventeen 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



Country Music VIDEOS



MINNIE PEARL

The Life And Legend - 60 mins.

This is the only authorized life story video of Sarah Ophelia Cannon, one of America's best loved and most admired entertainers. 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. This is more than an accurate accounting of Minnie's career. It is the story of a great American. Item No. V20 - \$19.95

SAMMY KERSHAW (NEW!)

The Hit Video Collection - 40 mins.

With eight Top Ten singles under his belt, this comes as a welcome release. It features all seven of Sammy's videos including the new single, "National Working Woman's Holiday" and his recent smash, "Queen of My Double Wide Trailer." Also included are "Cadillac Style," "Don't Go Near the Water," "Yard Sale," "Anywhere but Here" and "Haunted Heart." Plus there is a new interview and behind-the-scenes footage. Item No. V5X - \$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," "Big City," "Okie from Muskogee" AND 9 MORE! Item No. G3F - \$19.95

CHARLEY PRIDE (NEW!)

In Concert - 26 mins.

Listen to the rich baritone sounds of Charley Pride, the Country Music Association's 1971 Performer of the Year. 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 complete, true story of "America's Troubadour." From his birth in depression-era Texas, the early influence of Jimmie Rodgers, the first recording sessions, early radio shows and Hollywood movies, to the Grand Ole Opry. It follows over 40 years on the road and sales of over 20 million records. This fascinating video biography features classic performances and his top hits. It's a must for serious country music fans. Item No. V2N - \$19.95

COUNTRY LINE DANCING

Featuring Achy Breaky - 35 mins.

Unlike other dance instruction videos that "break away" for you to practice alone, this one will practice each basic step with you until it's automatic. After learning the basic country line dance steps—vine, stomp, pivot hitch, strut, reggae—you will dance your way through the less complicated Electric Slide to the more demanding Achy Breaky. As new line dances appear, you will know the basics and be able to learn them quickly. Item No. V9B - \$9.95

MORE COUNTRY LINE DANCING

Featuring Achy Breaky II - 35 mins.

Now that you can do the basic country steps (see Country Line Dancing above), you are ready to move on to increase your dance repertoire. You'll practice each step before learning the pattern. Audio cues will help you remember the pattern of basic steps unique to each line dance. Dances include: T.C. Electric Slide, Country Strut, Southside Shuffle, Cowboy Cha Cha, Achy Breaky II, plus the special bonus...Sixteen Step. Item No. V9X - \$9.95

DON WILLIAMS

Live - 30 mins.

Here is your chance to enjoy one of country music's most solid performers on stage. This is Don Williams' only home video to date. Don's songs include "Good Ole Boys Like Me," "Tulsa Time," "One Good Well," "I've Been Loved By The Best," "Just as Long as I Have You," "I Believe in You," "Amanda" and "Lord I Hope This Day is Good." We have only a few of this number still in stock, so hurry with your order. Item No. V5C - \$19.95



JIM REEVES VIDEOS (3 NEW VIDEOS)

First, there's *Golden Memories and Silver Tears*, a 50-minute video with Jim performing 15 of his biggest hits. He does "Mexican Joe," "Scarlet Ribbons, and "Distant Drums," among others. Item No. V4G - \$29.95. Next there's *The Story of a Legend*, the 50-minute story of country music's greatest ballad singer. It also includes big hits like "Four Walls" and "Am I Losing You?" Item No. V2P - \$19.95. And die-hard Reeves fans won't want to miss his only movie, *Kimberly Jim*. This 87-minute, full-color video is a robust adventure starring the guitar-strumming Reeves. Includes eight songs! Item No. V5E - \$29.95.

DWIGHT YOAKAM

Just Lookin' For A Hit - 30 mins.

Few can dispute the impact that this star has had on the country music scene. And what better way to enjoy Yoakam country than with his first Warner video featuring "Honky Tonk Man," "Guitars, Cadillacs," "Little Sister," "Always Late with Your Kisses," "Streets of Bakersfield" and "Long White Cadillac." There's even a Yoakam interview as well as performance footage from the I.R.S. label production "The Cutting Edge." Item No. G1E - \$19.95

GRAMMY'S GREATEST COUNTRY MOMENTS, Vol. 1 - 55 mins. (NEW!)

The most exciting live country performances from the annual Grammy Awards show have been assembled in this exclusive video collection. Volume 1 features: Billy Ray Cyrus - "Achy Breaky Heart"/George Strait - "All My Ex's Live in Texas"/The Judds - "Love Can Build a Bridge"/Randy Travis - Forever and Ever, Amen"/Johnny Cash - "Folsom Prison Blues"/Willie Nelson - "Always On My Mind" AND 11 MORE! Item No. V3Z - \$29.95

PORTER WAGONER (NEW!)

The Life And Legend - 60 mins.

This video scrapbook opens Porter's life to you on a personal level seldom seen in documentaries. He talks about his ups and downs, his struggles and triumphs, his laughter and tears. He talks frankly about his relationship with Dolly Parton. And he shares anecdotes from his life on the road that will make you laugh as you watch. Even if you haven't read his biography, this video will be a treasured addition to your collection. Item No. V2Q - \$19.95

BILL MONROE

Father Of Bluegrass Music - 90 mins.

With the cooperation of Bill Monroe, ex-Blue Grass Boys and other performers he influenced, this documentary clearly defines Bill Monroe's unique role in American music. It covers his early years in Kentucky with great video footage. The era of The Monroe Brothers, his early years on the Opry, the classic Flatt-Scruggs-Wise version of The Bluegrass Boys—all are covered. Even smaller details of his career aren't overlooked. Item No. V2K - \$19.95

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Here is the first full-length country music movie ever filmed. See Hank Williams in his only filmed appearance, uncut and crystal clear. Enjoy 30 full musical numbers by Hank and headliners like George Jones, Hank Snow, Porter Wagoner, Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper. 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

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 for the first time, in its entirety, exactly as it was recorded on August 12th at the Opry. Here is the "Outlaw" period in all its glory, with eight #1 singles including "Good Hearted Woman," "Luckenbach, Texas," "Amanda," "This Time," "I've Always Been Crazy" AND MORE! Item No. V4D - \$19.95

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reviews and particularly on artists I wasn't familiar with (thanks, Michael McCall, for turning me on to Mike Henderson). I also enjoyed Patrick Carr's "Good Men, Great Women" piece, along with his 20 country CD's list, although I would've included Garth Brooks' *No Fences* and some George Strait on my list. It was also refreshing to find another fan of the Kentucky HeadHunters (way to go, Bob Allen). That said, there are a few other things I feel I need to bring up. Now, I'm sure I'll get a severe ration of "boo's" from readers, but I feel that two of the most overrated country performers today are Reba McEntire and Vince Gill. These two make me ill. When they make one of their numerous appearances on the local radio stations, my hand flies out to change the station. Wynonna, too. And speaking of deserving artists, please have some features on Blackhawk, Shaver and Doug Supernaw, and please cover country music's most exciting band, Pirates of the Mississippi.

Patrick Murphy
Mesa, Arizona

Who's in the Hall?

Would you please print all the members that have been inducted into the Hall of Fame, by name and year they were inducted. I have figured out 39 members, but I think there are more. I didn't have the year they were inducted except 1961, the very first year, was Hank Williams, Jimmie Rodgers and Fred Rose.

Harold O. Brewer
Shreveport, Louisiana

You might try writing to the Hall of Fame at 4 Music Square East, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.—Ed.

Keep Country Unaware

It's not bad enough that country music has lost its original design and intent, now the "word" has come down from the powers on high that country music has got to become "more aware" of the causes and issues of today's society and more involved in that capacity in the music presented. What liberal hogwash.

Now country music has to be a forum for a bunch of whiners to further ruin country music and force their own liberal agendas onto folks who mostly just want to hear a good country song minus the pretentious political correctness that is being force-fed down the throats of America today.

Country music is supposed to be entertaining, toe-tapping good music to escape from one's life and have a good time. Now the music, if left to the liberal agenda, would just be earth awareness, socially sensitive to the issues that confront our complex society. Oh jeez, give me a break. What phoney baloney!

Bill Wilkerson
West Cola, South Carolina

Loud Hank Jr.

I saw Hank Williams Jr. in concert at Star Plaza in Merrillville, Indiana. Marty Brown opened for him and was great. He was on stage 45 minutes playing his guitar and singing. After he left the stage we sat and waited for 50 minutes for Hank Jr. to come on stage. Finally, he did, and the music was so loud it was awful. After one hour and 10 minutes, he put the mike on the stand and walked off without saying a word or tippin' his hat. I think he was rude, and I will never go see him again. I think he should get his act together or quit. I love *Country Music Magazine*. Been getting it for years.

Jean Dell
Hammond, Indiana

Powerful Reba Biography

In regards to comments made by Rich Kienle in *Essential Collector* (July/August) concerning Reba's autobiography, I would like to say that Reba has not made a 180-degree turn toward pop music. If Rich really listened to her latest album, he would know that. The comment, "Her fans, of course, won't care. They'll love it...." sounds to me like he is saying that Reba fans are ignorant and simple-minded and as long as it says "Reba," we'll love it. As for myself, I thought the book was powerful and informative. I'm glad she set the record straight. I loved the book, and not because it said Reba on the cover.

Angela Lynn
Sweetwater, Tennessee

Never-Ending Import Saga

In the July/August 1993 issue of *Country Music* you teased all the Dwight Yoakam fans with the record review of his *La Croix D'Amour*. Please, for all the Dwight fans, print in an upcoming magazine how to order the import. Thanks.

John Doris
Fontana, California

As we've said before, check the phone book for import record shops in your area, or pick up a copy of Goldmine, the record collector's magazine, which has advertisements from the major mail-order import dealers.—Ed.

Don't Reduce Reba

I don't have a subscription to your magazine, but I buy it as much as I can. I have to say that I am tired of seeing people writing in and criticizing because you profile Garth and Reba more than others. So what? Reba is my favorite, and I would like to see more of her, not less. I think your format is great just like it is. Keep up the good work.

Jennifer Kickliter
Pensacola, Florida

Looking for Johnny Bond

For a long time I haven't heard about Johnny Bond (in my opinion, one of the greatest voices in C&W music). Is he still

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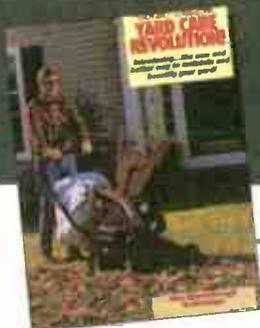
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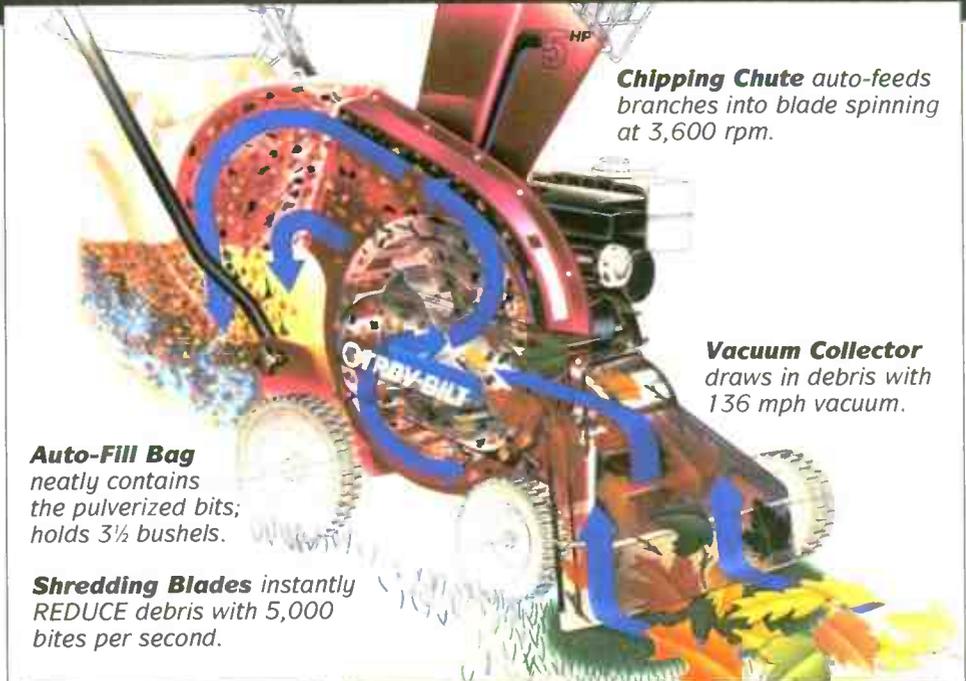


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alive? Does he still perform? Please let me know if you know something about Johnny Bond.

Mario Mariani

Fort Bragg, California

Bond died on June 12, 1978. Reflections, his autobiography, was published in 1976. Check your local library.—Ed.

News on Jimmy Driftwood

A while back someone asked about Jimmy Driftwood, author of "Battle of New Orleans." We saw him recently in Mountain View, Arkansas. He had just celebrated his 87th birthday.

Lotis and Lorrain Lansky
Nashville, North Carolina

Where Are These Outlaws?

I'm 20 years old and can't seem to keep up with today's trendy country singers. Over the past four years, I've discovered David Allan Coe and Johnny Paycheck to be my favorite country singers along with Hank Williams Jr. They've disappeared from every magazine, and I've been busting my back trying to find CD's and cassettes on them.

Richard Lopes

King Salmon Air Force Base, Alaska

Coe has been running a museum in Branson, Missouri, for the past few years. Paycheck, since his release from prison, has been working on rebuilding his career. Coe's Greatest Hits is available on CD, check used record stores for others.—Ed.

It's George Strait Time Again

I've been reading your September/October 1992 article on George Strait every week now for just about the past two years. What do ya think? Don't you think it's about time you mosey on down to San Antone and rustle us up another interview from this mysterious cowboy? I would give my right arm for an in-depth look at what makes that intense, sexy, blue-eyed gift from heaven tick.

Cinnamon Tatum
Gardendale, Alabama

Reader Reviews Haggard

If anyone hasn't heard Merle Haggard's new album, 1994, it's great! I suppose we have to lay blame on the radio stations for not playing older artists' music. Well, this album is very refreshing; it's like the Merle of years past. And can Merle ever tell a story and make it hit where you live. Welcome back, Merle, and thanks for giving us what we've been waiting to hear.

Sheila Richardson
Buckfield, Maine

Making More Friends...

This is a letter of thanks, for being so kind as to not nauseate us with coverage of The Judds—Naomi and Wynonna, with their self-righteous, narcissistic phoni-ness. However, your totally preferential

saturation with Alan, Garth, Travis, Billy Ray, Reba and Clint has a downside also. It prevents us from reading about or seeing the true country entertainers of today: Mark Chesnutt, Patty Loveless, Hal Ketchum and Suzy Bogguss. And for that, no thanks.

Jym Mitchell

Pleasant Hill, Tennessee

Suzy's in this issue, so's Hal (he was also in January/February), Patty was in less than a year ago, and, actually, Jym, Naomi Judd was in 20 Questions in May/June. Do you need a back issue?—Ed.

Overlooking a Huge Star

I have been subscribing to *Country Music Magazine* for three years. Each time I receive my magazine, I anxiously look at the cover in hopes of seeing Wynonna Judd, but I've yet to find her there. Wy is the most talented and, by far, the hippest chick in country music. Since her solo flight, you haven't featured her. Her courage during that stage of her life was admirable, as is the rest of her career, and should be noted. You are overlooking a huge star. So, show me Wynonna!

Kristen Byrd

Kannapolis, North Carolina

We'll let you and Jym duke it out.—Ed.

Another County Heard From...

I'm not a fan of Wynonna. Even less now that she's having a baby and not married. Where is that woman's pride? This all goes for Tanya Tucker, too. (Wy, pick a better boy's name than Tanya did.) And tell Trisha Yearwood's husband to get a haircut. Same for those other male singers. This really turns me off.

P. Cianelli

Kearny, New Jersey

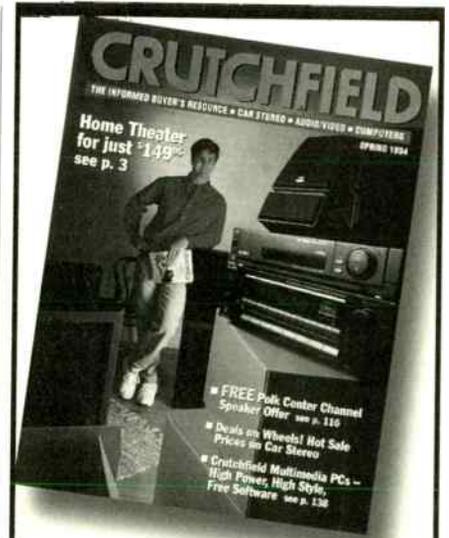
April/May Sweeps Winner

The winner of our April/May 1994 Country Music \$1000 Renewal Sweepstakes is P. Markee of Haiku, Hawaii. Congratulations! And happy spending.

Corrections

On page 11 of the July/August 1994 issue, under the headline, "Those Men of Mine," Dean Dillon is not given credit as the co-writer of George Strait's hit, "Easy Come, Easy Go." He wrote the song with Aaron Barker. In the review of Johnny Cash's *American Recordings* on page 21 of the July/August issue, Glenn Danzig is not the lead singer of Slayer as stated. He leads the band Danzig. Slayer's lead singer is Tom Araya.

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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)

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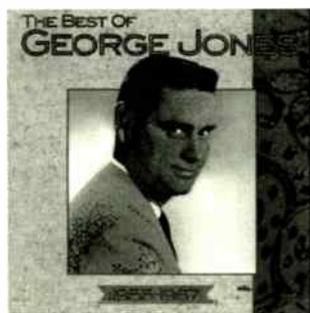
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6. a. Do you make chili at home?
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b. If yes, do you:
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7. Which brands of canned or jarred chili do you use? (Check all that apply.)
 Armour Star Hormel Libbys
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George Jones Special

Unlike many Legends subjects, there are ample compilations covering George Jones' career available, so many we can't list them all. Due out later this month is *The Essential George Jones: The Spirit of Country (1955-1988)* (E2K 52451), a two-CD boxed set and the newest release of Sony/Legacy's Country Classics series. This long-awaited set includes all of George's early big hits, from "Why Baby Why" and "White Lightning" to "She Thinks I Still Care" and "Tender Years," as well as all his biggest hits on Epic, including selected duets with Tammy. It is the first such package to include all his big hits from Starday through Epic. CD only. Regular price \$29.95. Members' price \$27.95.

Rhino's *The Best of George Jones* (R 70531) concentrates almost wholly on early material, 12 songs on the cassette, 18 on the CD, from "Why Baby Why" through "White Lightning," "She Thinks I Still Care" and Musicor hits like "Love Bug" and "Walk Through This World with Me." Available on cassette or CD. Regular price \$11.95 cassette, \$15.95 CD. Members' price \$9.95 cassette, \$12.95 CD.

George's career is also well-documented on video. *Same Ole Me* (G4Z) is a documentary of his life, complete with comments from George and various friends like early sideman George Riddle, as well as vintage clips of George singing his early hits, and a fairly honest coverage of the wilder side of his life. Regular price \$19.95. Members' price \$17.95.

Golden Hits (V3T), another video offering, features 14 performances from (roughly) the eras in which the songs were popular, from "White Lightning" right through the recent "I Don't Need Your Rocking Chair." Regular price \$19.95. Members' price \$17.95.

George Jones Live in Tennessee (V1X) is an onstage performance

featuring George at his most powerful, singing both old and newer songs with a physical vitality that's impressive for a man in his early 60's. Recorded in 1992, this is currently one of Nashville Warehouse's best-selling tapes. Regular price \$19.95. Members' price \$17.95.

Encyclopedia Preview

CMSA members have another membership benefit in this issue of the *Newsletter*—a special sneak preview of the soon-to-be-published *Country Music Encyclopedia*. We've reprinted a few of the 600-plus entries, along with their accompanying photographs, "for members only." We hope you enjoy this advance look. Everyone else will have to wait until later in the fall to see it. The *Newsletter* also contains information on ordering the book at a substantially discounted price. On a related note, the updated *Illustrated History of Country Music* is also due out in the fall. Keep watching these pages for a members-only discount on this book as well. And thanks again to all of those who've sent us reference copies of the original volumes. Your new books will be shipped in the fall.

Buried Treasures Special

CMSA members are entitled to discounts on all products offered in Buried Treasures. Members may deduct \$10.00 off the price of the Hank Snow boxed set, and \$2.00 off all other items. This time out, the offerings include a collection of Webb Pierce's best-known songs, fine reissues on Willie Nelson, Charlie Poole, Billy Joe Shaver and Bob Wills, and a budget-priced compilation series of classic country themes from Rhino. Include your membership number if taking discount. See complete ordering instructions in Buried Treasures.

Essential Collector Special

CMSA members are also entitled to a \$2.00 discount on all items featured in Essential Collector. Hank Snow, Hank Williams and Patsy Cline are among those covered this time out. Be sure to 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 December 31, 1994.

CLASSIFIED

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

FREE INVENTION PACKAGE: For development, patenting and licensing assistance on your new product idea, call Davison & Associates: 1-(800) 677-6382.

TYPING - HAND ADDRESSING. \$500 weekly possible! Details: National, Box 104-CM, Island Park, NY 11558-0104.

\$4,000 WEEKLY from your telephone answering machine! Just pop in my free tapes! Never talk to anyone. Free packet. MESA-DFI, Box 4000, Cordova, TN 38018-4000.

\$1,500 WEEKLY mailing our circulars! Guaranteed! Begin now. Free packet. MESA -11, Box 4000, Cordova, TN 38018-4000.

EDUCATION/INSTRUCTION

PARALEGAL CAREERS. Home study. P.C.D.I., Atlanta, Georgia. Free Catalogue. (800) 362-7070, Dept. LLK621.

BECOME A MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTIONIST. Home study. Free career literature. P.C.D.I., Atlanta, Georgia. (800) 362-7070, Dept. YYK621.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

EXCELLENT INCOME! Assemble easy craft products at home! 1-(800) 377-6000, Extension 7290.

CRUISE SHIPS HIRING - Earn up to \$2,000+/mo. working on cruise ships or land-tour companies. No exp. necessary. For info. call 1-(206) 634-0468, Extension C9024.

ALASKA EMPLOYMENT - Fishing industry. Earn up to \$3,000 - \$6,000+ per month. No experience necessary. Male/female. Age 18 - 70. Call: (206) 545-4155, Extension A90241.

ENTERTAINERS

NEW TALENT - Nashville producer seeking talented singers to promote. 1-(615) 824-3375.

COUNTRY MUSIC'S OLDEST independent record company with world-wide distribution interviewing singers and songwriters to record in Nashville. (615) 391-3450.

FINANCIAL/LOANS

BORROW \$100 - \$100,000! No collateral! Personal, debt consolidation, business, residential, auto. 1-(800) 444-6599.

FREE MONEY! Cash grants! Guaranteed. Never repay. Millions available. Just ask once. Free packet. MESA-12, Box 4000, Cordova, TN 38018-4000.

LOAN PHONE! Debts consolidate? Start a business? Borrow \$500 - \$1,500,000 any purpose! Cash Factory: 1-(404) 288-6332.

MISCELLANEOUS

START YOUR OWN RECORD LABEL. National and international promotion and distribution guaranteed. (805) 965-2313.

MEET WOMEN WORLDWIDE! Free 32-page photo catalog. Cherry Blossoms, 190CB Rainbow Ridge, Kapauu, HI 96755. 1-(408) 980-7488.

JAPANESE, ASIAN, EUROPEAN FRIENDSHIP! Inter-Pacific, Box 304-M, Birmingham, MI 48012.

MEET JAPANESE WOMEN! Free brochure! Pacific Century, 110 Pacific, #208-JT, San Francisco, CA 94111. 1-(816) 942-1668.

NICE SINGLES with Christian values wish to meet others. Free magazine. Send age, interests. Singles, Box 310-CM, Allardt, TN 38504.

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL? Nationwide Western-oriented singles' club introduces, by mail, people with similar interests. Personal. Confidential. For application, details, send \$3.00: Jan's Horse Sense, P.O. Box 1202CM, Pilot Point, TX 76258.

MEET BEAUTIFUL RUSSIAN LADIES through overseas correspondence! (Eager, sincere, and faithful.) Free 36-page - 500-photo brochure. Club Prima, 13164 Memorial Drive, #240KO, Houston, TX 77079. (713) 973-1515, 24 hours.

MISCELLANEOUS

MEET BEAUTIFUL ASIAN COEDS. For free photo brochure, write to: The Phil-Am Connection, 366 N. Allen Avenue, Suite 331-Y, Pasadena, CA 91106.

RUSSIAN LADIES Truly beautiful, educated, seek companionship. Free color photo brochure! Russia89, P.O. Box 888851, Atlanta, GA 30356. (404) 458-0909.

ASIAN LADIES desire correspondence/lifemates! Free details. Philam Connection, 1520 N. Hwy. 97, Suite 328, Redmond, OR 97756.

BUST MAXIMIZER: New/proven. Thigh cream! New weight loss! 1-(800) 878-8844.

SINGLE? We help country stars & fans find someone special. Down Home Introductions: (615) 235-5000.

POETRY PUBLISHED. No gimmicks. Send up to 4 and stamped envelope. \$300 award. Quill Books, Box 3109-CM, Harlingen, TX 78551-3109.

SINGLES. MEET OTHERS. Write: Club, Box 11434-CM, Fort Worth, TX 76110.

MERCHANDISE

REDWOOD SIGNS - Perfect outside home or R.V. Various sizes. Free brochure. 1-(800) 254-8807.

MONEYMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

GET PAID for crafts or product assembly. Send SASE: P.O. Box 3101, Staunton, VA 24402 for details.

MUSIC/INSTRUMENTS

PLAY GUITAR or keyboards by ear - any song instantly! Free information! Bates Music-CC, 9551 Riverview, Eden Prairie, MN 55347.

OF INTEREST TO ALL

ASTROLOGY ENTHUSIASTS! Free celebrity birthday lists! 1-(800) 722-6459. Box 5487, Philadelphia, PA 19143-0487.

POSTERS/PHOTOS

CELEBRITY PHOTOS. SEND SASE - Name favorites. Photoworld I, P.O. Box 31836, Houston, TX 77231.

ACTUAL COLOR PHOTOS - 2,000 celebrities. \$3.00 - catalog, sample. SStars, P.O. Box 720793, Pinon Hills, CA 92372.

GARTH CONCERT PHOTOS. Great Pics. Upclose, \$5.00 each 5x7 \$10. JC Enterprises, 6650 North Blackstone, 101, Fresno, CA 93711.

C&W CELEBRITY ADDRESS DIRECTORY - Write: Cooper, 6607 Oakmaster, Spring, TX 77379.

REAL ESTATE

BRANSON, MISSOURI - Free real estate information. White River Realty: 1-(800) 659-7991.

OZARK MOUNTAIN ACREAGES. Nothing down, we finance, environmental protection codes, huge selection. Includes Branson area. Free catalog. Woods & Waters, Box 1-CM, Willow Springs, MO 65793. 1-(417) 469-3187.

FOR SALE - Elvis Presley's best kept secret. 420 acres of beautiful rolling hills, 35 minutes from Memphis, Tennessee. Well preserved log cabin, 9 lakes, stocked. Wildlife plentiful. 2.1 million. Call: (901) 877-3622.

RECORDING

16-TRACK RECORDINGS - Midi Magic, 7553 Old Harding, Nashville, TN 37221. (615) 646-7440. Demo: \$2.00.

RECORDS/TAPES/CDS

TAPES BY MAIL. Country Western favorites. Free catalog. Warehouse Sales, P.O. Box 550, Angels Camp, CA 95222.

CD's: \$10.98! Cassettes: \$4.99! When you take 2. Information 24 hours: 1-(800) 307-7664.

SONGWRITERS

SONGWRITERS! LYRICS needed for recordings! Royalties possible. NWC Studio, Box 171101, Nashville, TN 37217.

SONGWRITERS

SONGWRITERS: Poems wanted for musical setting and recording. We pay all costs on selected poems. Jeff Roberts Publishing, 299 Newport Avenue(CM), Wollaston, MA 02170.

CALL FREE 1-(800)-345-2694. Nashville's Singer/Songwriter Information Service. Free publisher's list.

POEMS, SONGS WANTED. \$100,000 - recording contract possible! Free appraisal. Majestic Records, Box 1140, Linden, TX 75563.

WANTED COUNTRY GOSPEL song poem hits! \$1,000 cash advance royalties information! Top Records, Box 23505-K, Nashville, TN 37202.

LYRICS, POEMS for musical setting and recording. \$1,000 for best poem. Satisfaction guaranteed. Talent (CM), P.O. Box 31, Quincy, MA 02169.

D.J. ENTERPRISES - Now accepting material for possible publishing and record deal. Send 2 songs only. P.O. Box 6700, Hampton Beach, NH 03842.

SONG DEMOS for songwriters. Free information. Samples \$1.00. Hollywood Records, 603 First, #138-CM, Oceanside, CA 92054. (619) 757-7446.

SPEER AND SONS. Quality, professional sounding full band song demo's. \$75. For information call 1-(615) 661-9144.

PRODUCER - ACCEPTING SONGS, poems, lyrics! Studio 3, P.O. Box 120145, Nashville, TN 37212-0145.

URGENT! SONGS, POEMS NEEDED. Radio, TV, royalties. Hollywood Records, 6000 Sunset, Studio M, Hollywood, CA 90028.

BEGINNING SONGWRITERS first steps to success. How to get songs heard, published, earn royalties, copyright, etc. Forty-eight information-packed pages. Contacts, addresses, phone numbers. \$5.95: First Steps, 140 3rd Street, NW, Plainview, MN 55964. Four weeks delivery.

YOUR OWN SONG! Write just words or words/music. We provide first-class demos! Professional studio musicians. CD quality recording. \$125 - \$225 complete! Sample available. Nashville Digital Demos: 1-(800) 484-8581, Code #3631.

AWARD WINNING SONGWRITER/recording artist, credited with 8 chart records, offering co-writing on accepted material. Send best song lyrics to: Ramsey Kearney, 602 Inverness Avenue, Nashville, TN 37204. 1-(615) 297-8029.

HOLLYWOOD T.V. SHOW! Urgently seeking poems, lyrics, songs. Magic Key Productions, Box 5670-C, Santa Monica, CA 90409-0670.

GET RECORDING DEAL! Vital informational video insights. \$29.95. Hollands How-To Videos, 1240 Holland RDCM, Big Sandy, TN 38221.

SONGWRITERS: Before you make costly mistakes. Read "How to keep your shirt and your songs and still get them recorded." An excellent step-by-step guide to success. \$5.00 to: Def Marketing, 8029 No. 56th Avenue, Glendale, AZ 85302.

SINGER SONGWRITER SINGLES. Box 17999, Nashville, TN 37217. Send \$5.00 for fotosampler.

TICKETS

CMA, TNN, all country tours, all Nascar, NFL, NBA, college football, SuperBowl. Premium seats and sold-out shows our speciality. MC/Visa/Amex. 1-(800) 220-2222.

TRAVEL

WE'LL PREPARE A CUSTOM-MADE Nashville vacation package! Call: 1-(800) 988-6267.

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Country Music classifieds target your perfect market. Every issue is read by more than 3 million country music fans. Send in your ad for our November/December issue today. The closing date is September 20th.

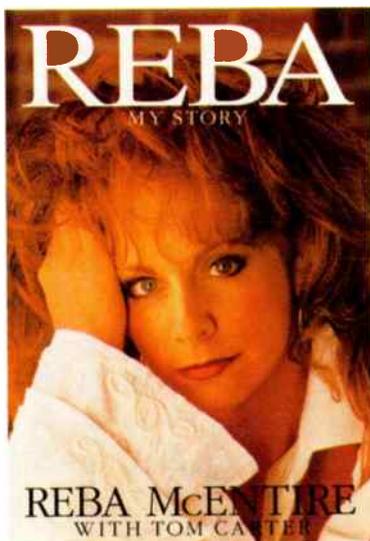
Rates: Regular word classified ads \$5.90 per word, minimum ad 10 words. Classified display is \$340 per column inch. All classified advertising must be prepaid with order by either check or credit card (Visa/MC).

Mail copy and payment to: *Country Music*, P.O. Box 570, Clearwater, FL 34617. Telephones: 800-762-3555 • Fax: 813-442-3555.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

BRAND NEW! REBA: MY STORY (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

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 complete autobiography of one of today's most beloved and successful entertainers told with all of the winning style, heartwrenching honesty, delightful humor and unbounded energy that have earned her the love of her millions of fans. From her Oklahoma ancestors who rode with outlaws through her experiences as a daughter, sister, wife and mother, Reba shares the many

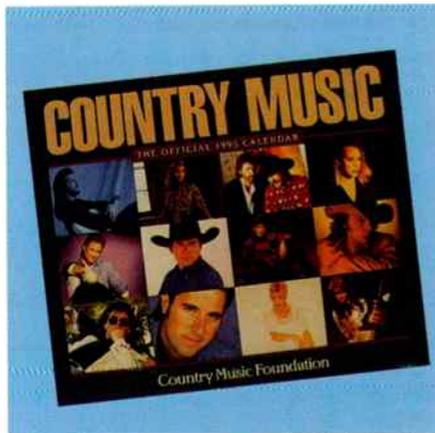


memories which have shaped her life and career. She also presents many of the feelings and perspectives that have won her praise as a spokeswoman for modern women. Many of her songs address the issues and the emotions that today's women face. There have been other books about Reba. Now it is time to 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*. Get this hardcover, illustrated edition #B2F for \$21.95.

REBA IN CONCERT—71 MIN. VIDEO

If you haven't seen Reba in person, or even if you have, you shouldn't miss *Reba in Concert* (not shown). Shot live, this video includes many of her most popular hits like "Whoever's in New England," "One Promise Too Late," "Walk On," "Rumor Has It," "Respect," "Fancy," "Sweet Dreams," "Cathy's Clown" and "Little Rock." Order #V3E for \$19.95. (Look for two other Reba videos on page 69 of this issue.)

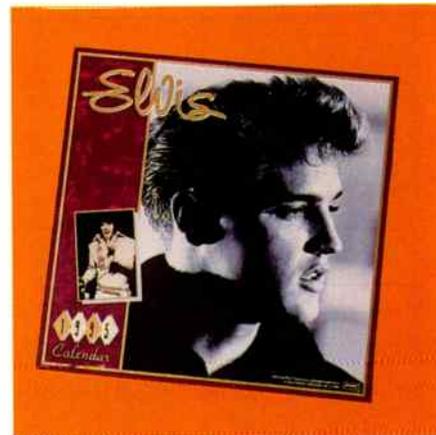
When you order both the book and video, DEDUCT \$2.00—pay just \$39.90.



THE HOT NEW 1995 CALENDARS ARE HERE!

THE OFFICIAL 1995 COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION PHOTO CALENDAR

Here it is again, the official calendar of the world's largest and most active research and exhibition center dedicated to country music. Featured are Travis Tritt, Vince Gill, George Strait, Garth Brooks, Dwight Yoakam, Wynonna Judd, Clint Black and MORE! It's 14" x 10" on heavy duty glossy paper. Cites historic events in country music by day and year. Item #G1B, \$16.95.



BRAND NEW! THE OFFICIAL 1995 ELVIS PRESLEY WALL CALENDAR

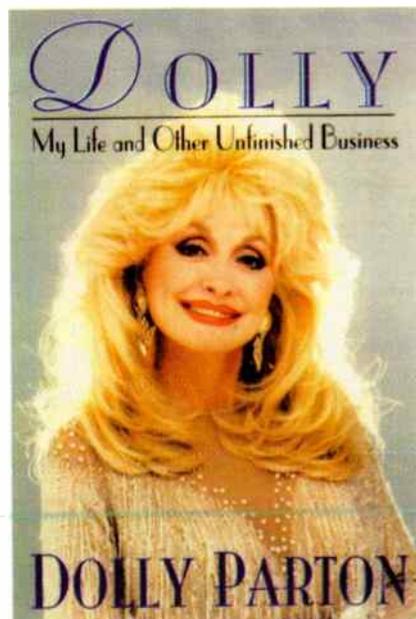
Here are twelve fabulous, high-gloss photos of "The King" during the early years of his legendary career. The pictures measure 12" x 12", and the entire calendar opens to a big 12" x 24". We've ordered a limited quantity, and from past experience we know that they go fast. So order yours right away! Order one for \$10.95 or two for \$19.90 and SAVE \$2.00 Item #G6F.

BRAND NEW! DOLLY: MY LIFE AND OTHER UNFINISHED BUSINESS (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

There has never been a more beloved star...or a more eagerly awaited book. Due for release next month, 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. It is the book that her millions of fans have been waiting for. Hardcover, 6 1/2" x 9 1/4", 256 pages, illustrated. Item B40, \$22.50.

LISTEN TO DOLLY TELL YOU HER LIFE STORY (4 Cassettes, Lightly Abridged)

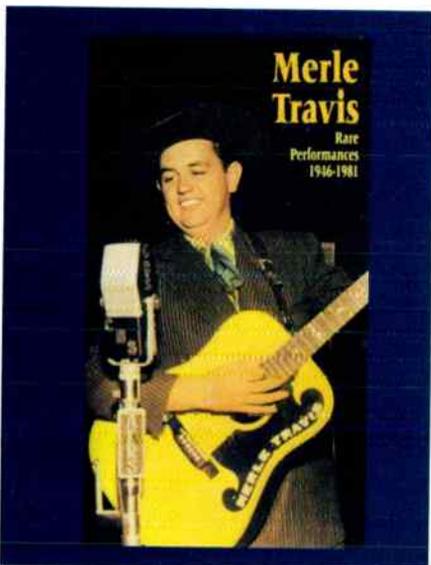
And here's Dolly herself telling her story, *My Life and Other Unfinished Business*, with her distinctive grace, humor, and un-failing wit captured on four audio cassettes. She recounts her rise from poverty through her trail-blazing music career and her triumphs as a pop star, actress, business-woman and humanitarian. Item #C2D, \$22.50.



Nashville Warehouse

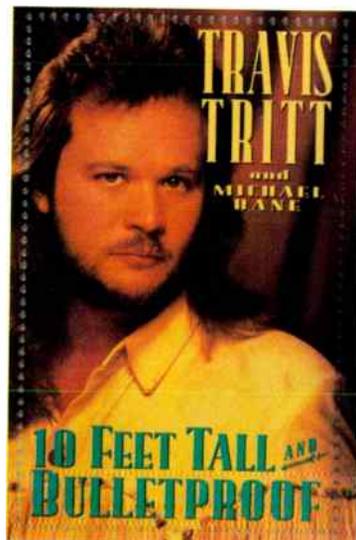
NEW VIDEO! MERLE TRAVIS: RARE PERFORMANCES—1946 TO 1981

This new 60-minute video captures 35 years of rare film and television performances. There's also a booklet that gives you a personal interview, a biographical essay and many rare photos. Some of the songs included are: "No Vacancy" (1946), "Nine Pound Hammer," "Mus'rat," "I'm a Natural Born Gambler Man," "Too Much Sugar for a Dime," "Spoonin' Moon," "Dark As a Dungeon," "Petticoat Fever," "Sweet Temptation," "John Henry" (all from 1951), "I'll See You in My Dreams" (1960), "Midnight Special" (1968), "Cannonball Rag" (1970), "I Am a Pilgrim" (1971), "Sixteen Tons" (1977), "Barbecue Rag" (1981) AND MORE! Ask for #V5D, \$19.95.



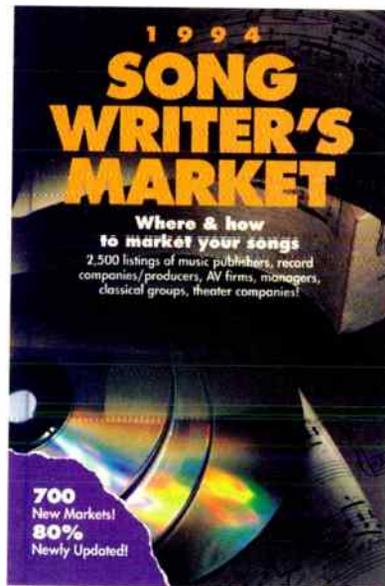
NEW! TRAVIS TRITT: 10 FEET TALL AND BULLETPROOF (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

Tritt is the king of Nashville's new generation of outlaws, the youngest member 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 this 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.



THE MUSIC ADDRESS BOOK—NEW 1994 EDITION! (NOT SHOWN)

Here is the all-new revised edition of Michael Levine's acclaimed 1992 bestseller. Levine has long been regarded as the world's foremost address expert. This new, updated edition contains current addresses of over 3,000 singers, groups, musicians, managers, record companies, agents, radio personalities and more. Even if you already have a 1992 or 1993 edition, you don't want to miss this current updated volume. It's the ultimate sourcebook for anyone who wants to send a letter, tape or song to the right person. Order #B1C, \$12.



COUNTRY MUSIC COLLECTIBLE BELT BUCKLES

Here are our all-time bestselling custom belt buckles PLUS two new additions that we know will be a hit. All four buckles are forged in genuine pewter. You will see that three of them also include striking

enamel coloring to make the designs as vibrant and lively as the unique brand of music they represent. The pure pewter "Country Music" buckle boasts a handsome design that is too detailed for enamel

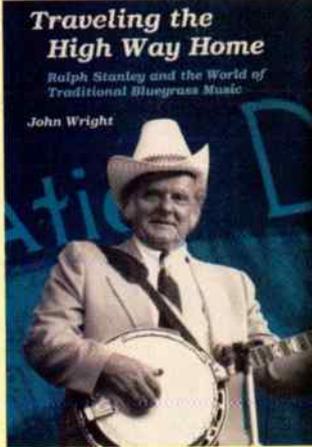
coloring, but something you are sure to love. Each buckle sells for \$9.95. When you order specify the enamel "I Love Country Music" buckle as #G6J, the enamel "Country Music" buckle as #G7L and the new "Two Step" enamel buckle as #G7M. Identify the new "Country Music" pewter buckle (no enamel) as item #G7P. Specify each product number when ordering more than one. An ideal gift item!

SPECIAL SAVINGS OFFER! Order any combination of two for \$17.90 and you SAVE \$2.00!



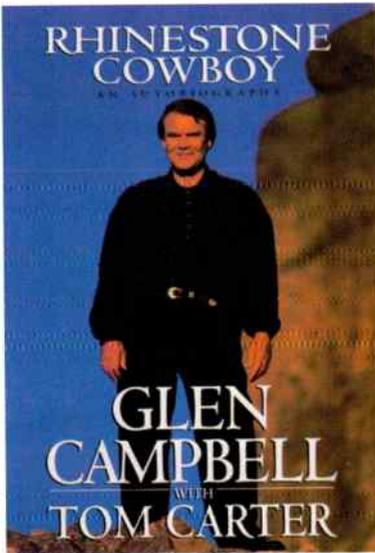
ALL NEW REVISED EDITION! 1994 SONGWRITER'S MARKET

Get your songs into the right person's hands, and do it the right way, with this year's revised edition of the *Songwriter's Market*. This valuable reference tool contains 2,500 listings of song markets, each with the most complete and current information on contact names, royalty/pay rates, song submissions, types of songs wanted and vital tips from the "buyers." Plus, there are listings of clubs, associations, contests, workshops and songwriting publications. You'll also find sections on getting started in the songwriting business, the structure of the music business, submitting your songs, contracts, copyright, record keeping, international markets and co-writing. Even if you have a past edition of this valuable songwriter's tool, this new version is a must for anyone who wants the most correct and up-to-date information. #B5N, \$19.95.



NEW! RALPH STANLEY: TRAVELING THE HIGH WAY HOME (BIOGRAPHY)

Reading this book is like sitting around a campfire listening as the old-timers weave their yarns well into the night. Told by those who create, produce, stage, love and virtually live for old-time mountain music, the tales come from longtime co-workers, sidemen, promoters, friends, a neighbor, a scholar who has known Ralph Stanley from his childhood, the housewife who ran The Stanley Brothers Fan Club and even a souvenir seller. Each chapter's tales range from heartbreaking to hilarious. Hardcover, 273 pages, illustrated. Item #B2M, \$29.95.



GLEN CAMPBELL: RHINESTONE COWBOY (AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

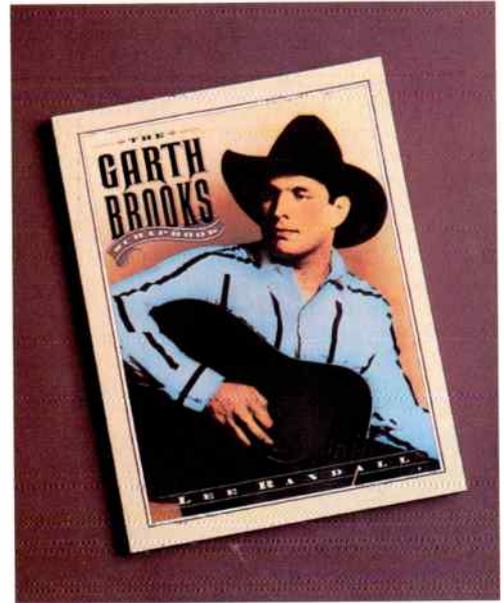
With extraordinary candor intended to set the record straight, Campbell tells of his turbulent life among the decadence and destructive trappings of fame—the bucks, the booze, the cocaine, the women—of his religious conversion and the unconditional love of his fourth marriage that saved his life. He admits that dredging up painful recollections was traumatic, but insists it was a task he felt obligated to undertake. Hardcover, 253 pages, illustrated. Item #B2D, \$22.

THE GARTH BROOKS SCRAPBOOK AND VIDEO

Garth Brooks is country music's hottest star. In addition to having a loyal following of country listeners, Brooks has won over millions of non-country fans. His third album, *Ropin' the Wind*, hit Number One on both the country and pop music charts. Since he exploded onto the scene in 1989, his albums have sold millions of copies and charted scores of Number One singles. He has hosted his own top-rated TV specials—a rare feat for a country music star today.

How did this 31-year-old Oklahoman become America's most popular entertainer, seemingly overnight? In this profusely illustrated, highly readable book, fans will discover Garth's surprising route to Nashville—via Billy Joel, Dan Fogelberg and James Taylor...his amazing decision to quit touring for six months at the height of his popularity and concentrate on his marriage...how Garth met his wife Sandy in a barroom brawl—she was the one fighting...why one of Garth's videos was banned from The Nashville Network (TNN) and Country Music Television (CMT)...Garth's ceaseless devotion to family and friends...and much more!

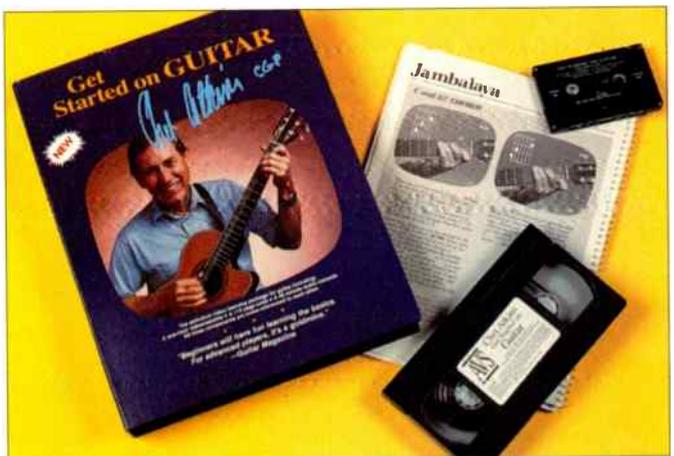
Brimming with anecdotes and quotes



and loaded with great photographs, *The Garth Brooks Scrapbook* is the definitive book on the singer who is redefining country music. This 8 1/2" x 11" edition contains 108 pages. Order #B3N for \$16.95. If you would like to get Garth's celebrated 90-minute *Live TV Special* video (not shown), ask for item #V3H for \$29.95. Or order both (#B3N/V3H) for \$43.90—YOU SAVE \$3.00!

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 item #B2G.



DOLLY PARTON DOLL

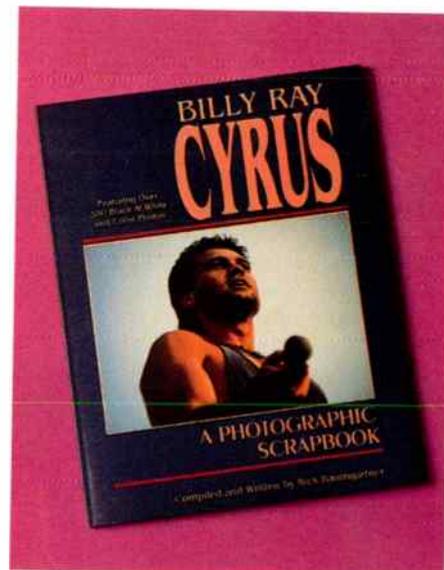
This replica of Dolly Parton stands one-and-a-half feet tall. She's wearing a red-leatherette dress accented with gold and white lace. In her gold-tone belt is a red, ruby-like stone, and the whole ensemble is topped with a gold-tone necklace. Of course, it wouldn't be complete without Dolly's trademark big, beautiful blonde locks, decorated with a red lace bow. The Dolly Parton Doll makes a great gift for both young and old—plus it's an invaluable collector's item! And if you order right away, we'll give you an early Dolly album, *Just the Way I Am...FREE*. You'll receive this Dolly favorite on cassette. The Dolly Doll costs only \$49.95, Item #D1A, and includes a stand. The FREE cassette is Item #R4A. When ordering, include both codes.

BRAND NEW! 1995 BILLY RAY CYRUS PHOTO CALENDAR!

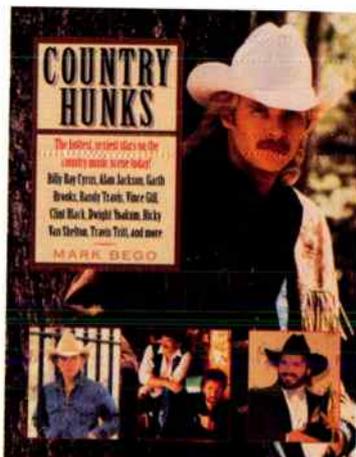
Be sure you don't miss the hot new Billy Ray Cyrus Calendar for 1995 (not shown). Next year's edition measures a big 12" x 12" and features twelve sensational, high-gloss color photos of Billy Ray in different poses. When ordering ask for Item #G3G, \$11.99.

BRAND NEW! THE BILLY RAY CYRUS SCRAPBOOK

Here's the book you Billy Ray fans have been waiting for—the very first photo-filled edition about superstar Billy Ray Cyrus. Not only is it the first, but it's also the most intimate look at Billy Ray 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 scrapbook 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. Item #B4J, \$19.95.



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Buried Treasures

by Rich Kienzle

Hank Snow: *The Singing Ranger, Volume 4* (BCD 15787) concludes Bear Family's chronicle of Hank Snow's complete 1936-1980 RCA Victor recorded odyssey and coincides with his 80th birthday. These 219 songs on nine CD's cover the years 1969-1980. Snow had few hits, despite still touring and performing on the Opry with The Rainbow Ranch Boys. Nonetheless he nailed down one final Number One record in 1972 with "Hello Love," later the theme to Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* radio program (sung by Keillor). RCA angrily dumped Snow after he began an audit of his RCA royalties, denying him an even 50 years with the label. His two Jimmie Rodgers tribute albums remain impressive, and occasional surprises show up, like his effective version of Frank Sinatra's "My Way." His *Live at Evangel Temple* gospel set, done with his son, Jimmie Rodgers Snow, is here in its entirety. One surprise comes on CD nine: a fine-sounding 1969 live performance at a US Army NCO club in Germany, the only live full-length Snow concert recording known to exist.

Not everything is great. His final RCA recordings with Kelly Foxton were a waste, and his 1984 *Brand on My Heart* album with Willie Nelson was similarly weak.

Snow cooperated with annotator Charles Wolfe to provide candid comments. With Snow's autobiography just published by the University of Illinois Press, Bear picked the perfect time to put out this final volume. The whole series is spread over 39 (count em!) CD's on six box sets.

Webb Pierce: A few years ago, Webb Pierce was due to be honored by a reissue of his biggest hits, coordinated with his expected 1990 induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame. When that didn't happen (and Webb died in 1991), the project was shelved. Until



now, no American label has bothered with Pierce's most essential hits. The Country Music Foundation has revived the proposed 1990 set, and *King of The Honky-Tonk* (CMF-019D) is an invaluable digest of one of the music's most intense and passionate vocalists. It chronicles the high points of Pierce's long career with Decca Records, focusing on his peak years 1952-1959.

Few contemporary singers can send chills down one's spine as Pierce did on honky tonk standards like "There Stands the Glass," "Slowly" (with Bud Isaacs, who popularized pedal steel in Nashville), "I'm Walking the Dog," "Even Tho'," "Sparkling Brown Eyes" (with the Wilburns) and "Back Street Affair." "I Just Can't Be True," not a hit, was only issued on Bear Family's complete 1951-58 box set. The CMF set also includes "In the Jailhouse Now" and the long-unavailable Webb Pierce-Red Sovine 1955 duet version of George Jones' "Why Baby Why." Webb's 1959 hit version of Mel Tillis' "I Ain't Never" was one of several hit songs by Mel Tillis that established Tillis as a writer before his singing career took off. Enhancing this set are concise yet richly detailed notes by the CMF's Ronnie Pugh.

Country Shots: Rhino Records' *Country Shots* series is nothing fancy, just five budget-priced, ten-song CD or cassette collections of songs dealing with patriotism, cheating, divorce, drinking and truck-

driving. I compiled song lists for them, but that was the extent of my involvement. The songs speak for themselves.

Two-Timin' Tunes (R2 71647) concentrates on cheating songs, beginning with the first big one, Margaret Whiting and Jimmy Wakely's hit version of Floyd Tillman's "Slippin' Around." Following that is Hank Sr.'s "Your Cheatin' Heart," "Almost Persuaded" by David Houston, "I Know You're Married" by Bill Anderson and Jan Howard, Kitty Wells' "Cheatin's a Sin," "Married But Not to Each Other" by Barbara Mandrell, Jerry Lee Lewis' "One Has My Name (The Other Has My Heart)," Shelly West's "Now I Lay Me Down to Cheat," Jan Howard's "The One You Slip Around With" and Moe Bandy's "It's a Cheating Situation."

Gear-Jammin' Greats (R2 71671) features "Six Days On the Road" and "Truck Drivin' Son of a Gun" by Dave Dudley, "Roll On Big Mama" by Joe Stampley, "Ravishing Ruby" by Tom T. Hall, "Convoy" by C.W. McCall, "Looking at the World Through a Windshield" by Del Reeves, "A Tombstone Every Mile" by Dick Curless, "Widow Maker" by Jimmy Martin, "I'm a Truck" by Red Simpson and "Truck Driving Man" by George Hamilton IV.

Barroom Biggies (R2 71672) begins with "What's Made Milwaukee Famous" by Jerry Lee Lewis, "Stomp Them Grapes" by Mel Tillis, "If Drinkin' Don't Kill Me" by

George Jones, "On Tap, In the Can or In the Bottle" by Hank Thompson, "Jose Cuervo" by Shelly West, "Drinkin' My Baby Off My Mind" by Eddie Rabbitt and "Barstool Mountain" by Moe Bandy. It winds through Mickey Gilley's "The Power of Positive Drinkin'," Willie Nelson's "Whiskey River" and Loretta Lynn's classic, "Don't Come Home A-Drinkin'."

Heartbreak-Ups (R2 71646) consists of "My Son Calls Another Man Daddy" by Hank Williams, "A Church, A Courtroom, Then Goodbye" by Patsy Cline, "So Much for You, So Much for Me" by Moe Bandy, "Child Support" by Barbara Mandrell, "Married By the Bible, Divorced By the Law" by Hank Snow, "What About the Love We Made" by Shelby Lynne, "Will Your Lawyer Talk to God" by Kitty Wells, "Custody" by Hank Jr., "Hill-billy Girl with the Blues" by Lacy J. Dalton and "Mr. and Mrs. Used to Be" by Ernest Tubb and Loretta Lynn.

God Bless America (R2 71645) deals with patriotic songs, some relating to the Vietnam era, other songs more general. Dave Dudley's "Viet Nam Blues" is an early, pro-war tune that Kris Kristofferson wrote while still in the Army. Politics aside, some are a bit strange. Autry Inman's "The Ballad of Two Brothers" and the weird melody of Ernest Tubb's "It's America (Love It or Leave It)" and "The Minute Men (Are Turning in Their Graves)" by Stonewall Jackson seem ancient today. Bill Anderson's "Where Have All Our Heroes Gone" is a quintessential Anderson recitation. General flagwavers include Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A.," Glen Campbell's "God Must Have Blessed America," Tex Ritter's "The Americans," Bobby Bare's "God Bless America Again" and Hank Jr.'s pre-Persian Gulf "Don't Give Us a Reason."

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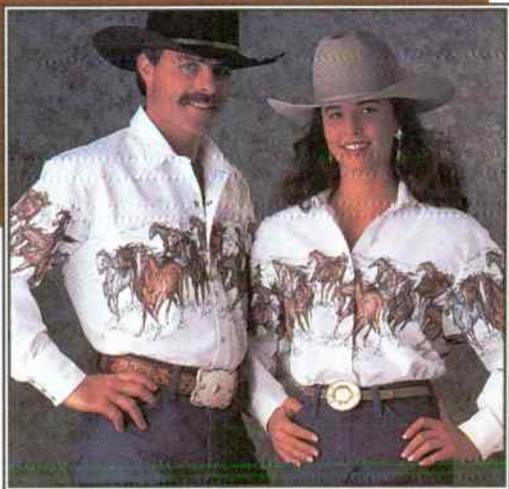
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Bob Wills: In 1973, Bob Wills, confined to a wheelchair after two strokes, organized what he knew would be his final recording session with some of his veteran Texas Playboys. Some were from his legendary pre-World War II Tulsa band, among them Leon McAuliffe, Al Stricklin, Smokey Dacus and Eldon Shamblin. Postwar Playboys Johnny Gimble, Leon Rausch and Keith Coleman were all involved, as was Bob's friend Merle Haggard, whose 1970 Wills tribute sparked revived interest in Western swing. After the first day's session, Wills suffered a stroke that left him comatose until he died in 1975. The musicians had to complete the double album without him.

After far too long a delay, all 24 songs originally issued on *For the Last Time* are available on a single CD. These sessions featured remakes of Wills chestnuts "New San Antonio Rose," "Twin Guitar Special" (mistitled "Twin Guitar Boogie"), "Milk Cow Blues," "Yearning," "Big Ball's in Cowtown" (sung by the song's composer, Hoyle Nix) and obscurities like "Blue Bonnet Lane" and "Silver Lake Blues." It's moving, and a bit sad, to hear Bob, whose jive talk was a mile a minute in his heyday, struggling to say a few words on the song, "What Makes Bob Holler." Haggard mixed the original album, and by boosting Shamblin's peerless rhythm guitar made it possible to hear how important he has always been to Wills sound. The original Grammy-winning notes by Wills biographer Charles Townsend are here, though Liberty failed to add three un-released tracks done at the original sessions.

Willie Nelson: Willie Nelson's Liberty material hasn't been well-handled by anyone. It was his first major-label recording contract, and one that yielded his first hits. *The Early Years: The Complete Liberty Recordings* (Liberty C 28077) brings together 61 songs, 59 from Liberty, two from a pre-Liberty single, on two CD's. Fourteen of the Liberty tracks haven't been issued before. Willie made some interesting record-

ings at Liberty. Though some were mediocre, others were close to his current style, which was too progressive for Nashville in the early 60's. His tremendous 1963 recording of "Am I Blue" and his own "Opportunity to Cry" (both with string arrangements by Ernie Freeman) both hinted, for example, at *Stardust*. Though the pre-Liberty "Night Life" and "Rainy Day Blues," recorded in Houston, have been reissued before, the sound quality of these versions is superior. And other early Liberty numbers like "Touch Me," "Wake Me When It's Over" and "Three Days" remain excellent performances. Unreleased numbers like the two fiery, swinging versions of "Columbus Stockade Blues" (a third was issued in 1975), sung with second wife Shirley, anticipate the jazzy version he recorded for RCA a few years later with his idol, singer-fiddler Wade Ray. Likewise Ray's earlier RCA recording of "The Things I Might Have Been" no doubt inspired Willie's Liberty version.

The overall sound quality is excellent. I wish I could say the same for Joseph F. Laredo's inept liner notes. Laredo, author of a book on pop singer Frankie Laine, spoke with a few key people who worked with Willie at Liberty, including producer Joe Allison and guitarist Harold Bradley. Beyond that, his ignorance of country music and Nelson's career are glaring. He doesn't recognize the Floyd Tillman honky tonk classic, "This Cold War With You" (the composer credit says "writer unknown"),

and inexplicably says that the "cold war" references render the song outdated. (The actual Cold War ended only a few years ago.) Laredo also says Leon Russell worked on Willie's Atlantic recordings. He did not. A project this important deserves expertise.

Charlie Poole: In his own way, North Carolina singer-banjoist Charlie Cleveland Poole was the Hank Williams of old-time stringband music. He grew up in North Carolina's tough, violent, hard-living textile mill country and worked in the mills himself. Booze killed Hank at 29; and the bottle killed Poole in 1931 at age 39.

County's *Old Time Songs: 1925-1930* assembles 16 numbers, among them "White House Blues," "Ramblin' Blues," "Take a Drink on Me" (which became popular among younger folksingers in the 60's) and "Don't Let Your Deal Go Down Blues." "He Rambled" is a reworking of the old New Orleans jazz favorite, "Didn't He Ramble," a measure of Poole's versatility in using non-country material to his advantage.

He and his North Carolina Ramblers (fiddler Posey Rorer and guitarist Norman Woodleiff, later replaced by finger-picker Roy Harvey) sold plenty of records in the 1920's. The latest number here, "Sweet Sixteen," was done about a year and a half before his death. Some of his biggest numbers, like "Can I Sleep in Your Barn Tonight, Mister" aren't included (future Poole CD reissues are certain). The sound here is surprisingly full-

bodied, considering the age of the recordings.

Billy Joe Shaver: In the wake of the success of Billy Joe Shaver's recent *Tramp on Your Street* album, some of his earlier material should be re-released. After all, he recorded albums for Monument and Capricorn in the 70's, all long out of print. Bear Family has gone part of the way with *Honky Tonk Heroes* (BCD 15775), reissuing a rare 1974 MGM single, an unissued MGM recording and both his 1976 albums for Capricorn. The MGM single, "Lately I've Been Leaning Towards the Blues" and "I Couldn't Be Me Without You," are in the mold of all Shaver's direct, "Honky Tonk Heroes"-style material. The unissued track, "Music City U.S.A.," chronicles the rise of an aspiring star who never made it. Shaver's atmosphere and detail have always been his greatest strengths, and they come across here.

His Capricorn debut, *When I Get My Wings* (with a backup band including Charlie Daniels on fiddle), featured his sharp, sensitive version of "Ride Me Down Easy" and a version of "Ain't No God in Mexico" that's less dynamic and focused than Waylon's but provides a totally different impact. "Woman Is the Wonder of the World" and "When the Word Was Thunderbird" (the wine, not the car). And I'd take "America You Are My Woman" any time over the plastic flagwaving of Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A." The second album, *Gypsy Boy*, had some problems, most notably Shaver's conflicts with producer Brian Ahern (then Mr. Emmylou Harris). According to annotator Jimmy Guterman, who interviewed Shaver for these notes, Ahern (who over-produced the record) foolishly rejected some of Shaver's own songs, among them "Old Chunk of Coal." A few fine performances shine through, most notably "I'm Going Crazy in 3/4 Time" (with Emmylou and Rodney Crowell singing harmony) and a version of "You Asked Me To" with Willie adding harmonies.

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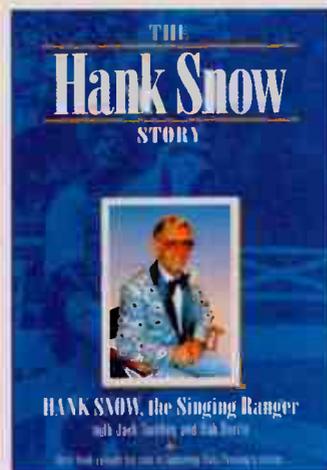
Available in formats shown at prices shown: Hank Snow, *The Singing Ranger* (BCD 15787), a 5-CD boxed set, \$149.95/Webb Pierce. *King of the Honky Tonk* (CMF-019), CD or cassette, \$21.95 CD, \$13.95 cassette/Rhino Country Shots, *Two-Timin' Tunes* (R 71647), *Gear-Jammin' Greats* (R 71671), *Heartbreak-Ups* (R 71646), *God Bless America* (R 71645), CD or cassette, \$9.95 each CD, \$7.95 each cassette/Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys, *For the Last Time* (CDP 28331), CD only, \$15.95/Willie Nelson, *The Early Years: The Complete Liberty Recordings* (C 28077), CD only, \$23.95/Charlie Poole, *Old-Time Songs: 1925-1930*, cassette (CO-505), CD (CO-3501), \$18.95 CD, \$9.95 cassette/Billy Joe Shaver, *Honky Tonk Heroes* (BCD 15775), CD only, \$24.95. Send check or money order payable to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 091094, P.O. Box 292553, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.00 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 December 31, 1994.

Essential Collector

by Rich Kienzle

■ Books ■

Hank Snow: Too many current star autobiographies aren't worth the paper they're printed on. *The Hank Snow Story*, by Snow with two collaborators, is easily on a par with *Coal Miner's Daughter*. Not only is it refreshingly frank, it's a journey back in time. Anyone who knows Snow's career (he turned 80



this year) knows of his horrific childhood. Growing up in his native Canada, he faced a broken home, an abusive grandmother and psychotic, violent stepfather. To escape, he worked on deep sea fishing boats before concentrating on music. Inspired by Jimmie Rodgers, Snow was a Canadian country star by 1940, though it took another frustrating decade before he broke through in America with "I'm Moving On."

Snow is from another era, one sadly distant, when people took pride in their work, when a man's word was his bond and honesty was the rule, not the exception. That strong moral compass dominates every page of this book, though he stresses he was no angel in his younger days, particularly when it came to drinking. The chapter about his relationship with Colonel Tom Parker and their joint role in Elvis' early career is a revelation. It's easy

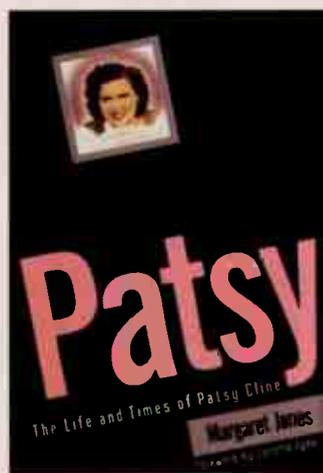
to see why he holds Parker in pure, and largely justified, contempt. He's just as frank about problems with RCA that led to their dropping him in 1980 after nearly 50 years. The book brilliantly capture the experience of being a country entertainer from the 30's through the 50's, and I suspect Snow did more of the writing than his collaborators. That's a strength, because his own clean, clear prose tells an unforgettable story.

Hank Williams: Colin Escott's *Hank Williams: The Biography*, written with George Merritt and William MacEwen, differs greatly from previous Hank biographies. Nearly 25 years ago, Roger Williams' paved the way; Jay Carress later rehashed previously known facts. Chet Flippo's Hank book recreated dialogue and left a sour taste with many. Escott concentrates on Hank's music and how he fit (or didn't) into the music industry of the time. He delves into Hank's development as a performer in Alabama, including his mid-40's regional stardom around Alabama before anyone else knew of him. The details of his pre-Opry days on the *Louisiana Hayride* receive long-needed scrutiny as does his position in the fledgling country music industry after he became a star.

Assisted by the research of Williams buffs Merritt and MacEwen, Escott pursued hard information via interviews with musicians who worked with Hank early on and went beyond interviewing the usual Hank cronies. Even when interviewing people like veteran Drifting Cowboys steel player Don Helms who have been interviewed before, Escott gets more out of them. The same goes for his interviews with Hank's fellow *Hayride* performers like Johnnie Wright. He also got comments from Hank's detractors, among them steel guitar virtuoso Jerry Byrd, who played on

some of Hank's early recordings and despised his lack of professionalism. The photos mix the well-known and the unpublished, including a couple of chilling candid of Hank wiped-out and/or beat-up. Nothing here changes what we know of the basic flow of Hank's life, but by bringing Hank's musical career into focus and foregoing the usual mythology, Escott provides a more honest perspective.

Patsy Cline: Author Margaret Jones is a virtual unknown, but her book, *Patsy*, deserves to be the definitive work on the subject. Jones has dug deeper, done more interviews, uncovered more facts, and gotten more history correctly than nearly any book on the market today. Richly detailed (with a complete discography by Don Roy), it succeeds both as biography and as a research work on country music of the 50's and early 60's. Though the work of other writers like Ellis Nassour and Joli Jensen paved the way for her, Jones uses her own exhaustive interviews and



research to create one of the best country music biographies of all.

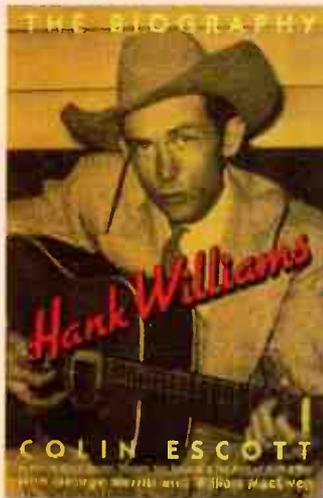
Controversy doesn't deter Jones, who delves into the incestuous relationship Patsy endured at the hands of her father (which she says was to be included in the film, *Sweet Dreams*, only to be cut at the

last minute). She also deals with the tragic relationship between Patsy and Virginia musician Bill Peer and the less than upfront business dealings of Four Star Records owner Bill McCall (whom Patsy allowed to lock her into a longterm recording contract). Naturally Patsy's volatile relationship with second husband Charlie Dick gets ample scrutiny. Jones' portraits of music business figures like Owen Bradley and Connie B. Gay are impressive and nicely blended into the narrative. To cap off her research, Jones briefly explores the prejudices that Patsy's hometown of Winchester, Virginia, still holds against her 30 years after her burial there, refusing to name any city street for her (a shopping mall driveway eventually became Patsy Cline Boulevard).

High Lonesome: It was inevitable, I suppose, that amid the flood of country music books, that an "intellectual" book would surface, attempting to tell us how country music fits into American culture and Western (not cowboy) Civilization. Such a book, in fact, might succeed with the right author. Unfortunately, *High Lonesome* was penned by Vanderbilt University English professor Cecilia Tichi. To put it in hillbilly terms Tichi, who admits she knew nothing about the music before 1987, tried to drive cross country on one tank of gas. Culture she knows, hillbilly music she doesn't. Ivory-tower per-fessers, the sort who get their view of the world from academic journals and from National Public Radio, will love Tichi. She prattles on about certain singers or songwriters reflecting themes also tackled by painters and novelists. She cites country album covers as manifestations of various themes. For example, covers showing artists standing by roadways or around vehicles symbolize

the "road's" importance to country songs (no kidding!).

Any such book should encompass *all* of country, old and new. Though Tichi pays lip service to Hank, Monroe and others of the past, her primary focus is on artists she personally believes best exemplify country. These include Dolly, Emmylou Harris and Rodney



Crowell, as well as Barry and Holly Tashian and collegiate favorites Nanci Griffith and Laurie Lewis. The music of Emmylou, Rodney and the Tashians dominates the CD that accompanies the book. Nothing against these artists, but that's a pretty narrow view of country on which to base an entire book. The only section that didn't cause me to laugh out loud was her excellent interview with producer-guitarist Richard Bennett. According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, the word "dilettante" means, "A person with an amateurish or superficial interest in the arts or in a branch of knowledge." Tichi's book truly exemplifies that term.

■ Videos ■

Town Hall Party: *Town Hall Party* was a classic of early country TV, a local show broadcast weekly from the old Town Hall in Compton, California, from 1952 until 1960. In the late 50's, 39 half-hour *Town Hall* shows, known as *Western Ranch Party*, were syndicated nationally. Twelve are now available on six videocassettes, all important documents of the

era's country and rockabilly music. As with the weekly *Town Hall* show, Tex Ritter hosted. The announcer was Jay Stewart (later announcer for *Let's Make a Deal*) and the cast featured (a very young) Freddie Hart, Johnny Bond and Wesley and Marilyn Tuttle along with rocking brother-sister duo, The Collins Kids. The show's band was led by Joe Maphis, and on many episodes, Larry Collins plays blazing guitar duets with Maphis, his musical mentor. Here's a partial rundown on each show.

Volume 1—Show One: Jimmy Wakely: "Take Me Back to My Boots and Saddle" and "You Are My Sunshine." Merle Travis: "John Henry" and with Maphis and Collins, "Wildwood Flower." **Show Two:** Eddie Dean: "Along the Navajo Trail." Guest comic: Cannonball Taylor (actually *Andy Griffith Show* regular "Dub" Taylor).

Volume 2—Show One: Sons of the Pioneers. **Show Two:** Jim Reeves: "My Lips Are Sealed." Joe Maphis: "Town Hall Boogie."

Volume 3—Show One: Johnny Cash (wearing a gold jacket) sings "There You Go" with The Tennessee Two. **Show Two:** Jim Reeves: "Mexican Joe" and "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You." Carl Perkins and his band: "Matchbox."

Volume 4—Show One: Ray Price is featured. George Jones sings "You Gotta Be My Baby." **Show Two:** Johnny Cash: "Give My Love to Rose." Skeets McDonald: "Trouble in Mind."

Volume 5: Show One: Wanda Jackson, then a hot rockabilly

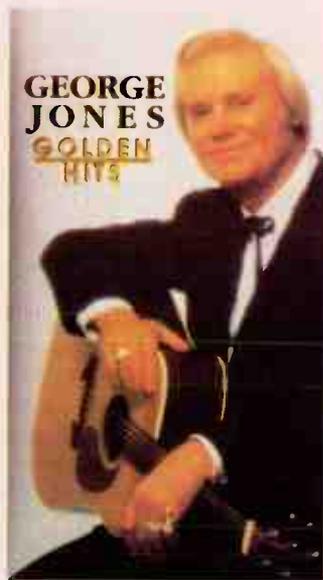
singer, does "Cool Love" with Maphis on guitar. **Show Two:** Johnny Cash: "Next in Line" and "Train of Love."

Volume Six: **Show One:** Johnny Cash: "I Walk the Line." Patsy Cline: "I've Loved and Lost Again." Bobby Helms: "I'm a Long Gone Daddy." **Show Two:** A high point is Carl Perkins doing "Blue Suede Shoes" and "Your True Love." Mac Wiseman's energetic "Wabash Cannonball."

Country Western All Stars: Another video (with somewhat less video clarity), is *Country Western All Stars*, a 1950's program that, given the "Checkerboard" references, may have been sponsored by Ralston-Purina. Stars include Carl Smith, Faron Young, Minnie Pearl, Rod Brasfield, Jim Reeves, Hank Snow and Lew Childre along with The Sons of the Pioneers and Tex Ritter. On the tape, Smith does one of his lesser-known honky tonkers, "Baby I'm Ready." Faron sings "All Right" and "I've Got Five Dollars and It's Saturday Night." Snow sings "Texas Plains," and Ritter performs "High Noon." It's entertaining to see Minnie work with longtime Opry stage partner Brasfield. Chalk up the long and silly Western saloon skit to what passed for country comedy in the 50's.

George Jones: Golden Hits features 14 Jones performances described as coming from "the exact time each song was on the music charts." That's not totally accurate, though the performances range from the 1950's through the early 90's, and George in-

troduces each with a relevant anecdote about the song. It begins, inexplicably, with an early 90's performance of his 1974 hit, "The Grand Tour," taken from his *Live in Tennessee* video. It goes back to the late 50's for a film of "White Lightning," the early 60's for "She Thinks I Still Care" and the mid-60's for "The Race Is On." Performances of such 70's and 80's hits as "The Door," "He Stopped Loving Her Today" and two Tammy duets, "Golden Ring" and "Near You," come from syndicated shows including *Pop! Goes the*



Country. "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes" and "I Don't Need Your Rockin' Chair" also come from the George Jones *Live in Tennessee* video.

Jim Reeves: After the weird Jim Reeves video documentary we reviewed a few issues back, it's heartening to find a video concentrating on his music. *The Jim Reeves Golden Memories and Silver Tears Collection* features Reeves singing 15 numbers, 12 from TV appearances, mixing early hits like "Mexican Joe" and "According to My Heart." He also performs his biggest hits of all including "He'll Have to Go," "Am I Losing You," "Billy Bayou," "Danny Boy" and a tasteful interpretation of Jimmie Rodgers' "Waiting for a Train." Three numbers from the film, *Kimberly Jim*, are interesting, but less so than the other performances.

How to Get These Collectibles

Videos: Various Artists, *Western Ranch Party* Vol. 1 (V4A), Vol. 2 (V4B), Vol. 3 (V4E), Vol. 4 (V4F), Vol. 5 (V4P), Vol. 6 (V4R), each volume \$24.95/Various Artists, *Country Western All-Stars* (V5H) \$24.95/George Jones, *Golden Hits* (V3T) \$19.95/Jim Reeves, *Golden Memories and Silver Tears* (V4J) \$29.95. **Books:** Hank Snow, *The Hank Snow Story* (B4V) \$29.95/Colin Escott with George Merritt and William MacEwen, *Hank Williams: The Biography* (B2A) \$22.95/Margaret Jones, *Patsy: The Life and Times of Patsy Cline* (B2L) \$23.95/Cecilia Tichi, *High Lonesome* (V5T) \$39.95. Send check or money order to Nashville Warehouse, Dept. 091094EC, P.O. Box 290216, Nashville, Tennessee 37229. Add \$3.00 postage and handling per order. Canadian orders, add \$3.00 extra for postage. **CMSA members, see For Members Only page for discounts.** Offer expires December 31, 1994

Metaphorically speaking, it may be a long, long way from the northeastern Alabama outback of Fort Payne to the glass and steel high rises of Music Row. But fortunately for Randy Owen and the rest of Alabama, it's not all that far as the crow flies.

Thus, with a week off from the band's summer-long engagement at Nashville's Opryland, Owen has hurried back to his home place on Lookout Mountain, and he's intent on savoring a little bit of the summer before the season slips away.

As Owen explains, it's been a busy year for Alabama, and it's far from over yet. The band not only has an album on the way, and another they're about to start, but also a Number One video on its hands with "Cheap Seats." Aside from a full schedule of live shows at Opryland and at their club in Myrtle Beach that runs well into the fall, every baseball team in America is after them to sing the National Anthem.

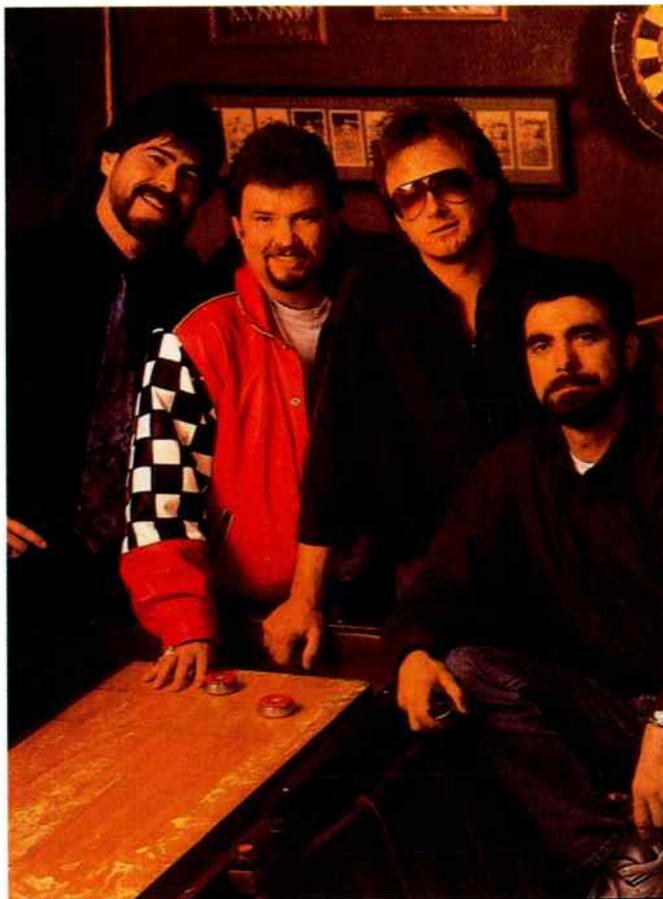
So naturally, with a week off, Owen is doing his best to shake the "I'm In a Hurry" blues (as expressed so vividly in the band's 1992 Number One single of that same name), just like his doctor's been advising him to for a long time.

But knowing Owen, he won't be out of overdrive for long. As he explains, there are a million and one things to squeeze into his week at home: watch his daughter's basketball team, look after some things around his farm, and make advance preparations for next year's June Jam and for his son's junior high baseball team, which he coaches.

Then there's 20 questions....

1 I guess being only two and a half hours from Opryland, you've been able to get home a little more often this summer....

No, not really. (Laughs.) I don't know how that got started, the rumor that we were slowin' down or something. I have never worked as hard in my life as I have at Opryland this summer. It's



20 Questions with ALABAMA

by Bob Allen

about the furthest thing from slowin' down that you can get! We figured we could play there and touch people from all over the world, and all over the country, get to meet them and let them get to see Alabama. It also made sense as a business decision to play there all summer. It's nice having our equipment and lights and everything right there in one place. Our road crew gets a break. (Laughs.) But ol' Randy doesn't get a break!

2 I love the "Cheap Seats" video. I'm not surprised it went Number One. I go to Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore, and they're play-

ing it on the Jumbotron there. Then I go to some dusty little minor league park up in the hills, and they're playing your song over the P.A. at seventh inning stretch. It's like it's become the national baseball anthem of '94.

Well, I love baseball. I played it the whole time I was growin' up, and now my son's on a team that I coach—he batted .681 this year! He's already bigger than I am. He wears a thirteen and a half shoe and he's still growin'! But anyway, it struck me that nobody had done a song about baseball in a long time, so we did one. We got a real unique presentation from Major

League Baseball up at Opryland this summer. They gave us bats with our names and our insignia on 'em and caps and everything. I'm real proud of that.

3 Where's that beautiful old stadium you filmed it in? I own a piece of the Huntsville Stars, which is a minor league team for the Oakland Athletics. It's a beautiful new facility, but we wanted something older. So we filmed up at the Chattanooga Look-Out, an old old ballpark up in Chattanooga. Then we filmed in various other parks here in this area where we live. The one scene with the kids is filmed at the grammar school that Teddy and I attended when we were growin' up. And part of it's done on a field where I played football and semi-pro baseball in high school. Even the old scoreboard was still there. The sad thing is, two or three days after we finished the video, they started tearing all that stuff down.

4 There's an old saying to the effect that any man is lucky if he manages to find his own place, in his own time. Sounds like you have down there in Alabama.

Yeah. This has always been my home, and it's the only place that ever really feels like home.

5 You run a few cattle down there, don't you?

Yeah. About 700 head. Registered Hereford cattle.

6 Guess that makes you a cowboy.

(Laughs.) I am a cowboy! Me and my daddy always raised cattle when I was growin' up. Yeah, I'm a real cowboy!

7 As much as you love being home down there with your kids, and after all the years you've toured so hard, do you ever miss the road?

Well, yes and no. I don't need to miss it much, because we'll be touring again early next year. But yeah, I really do like the aspect of playing a show in Fargo, then the excitement of moving on to a different place, where there's a whole differ-

ent vibe. It kind of revitalizes you. After a while, you feel like a gypsy.

8 *So the thrill of performing is still there?*

Absolutely! Every show is like Game Time. I have a sayin, "All right guys, it's time to hit the beach!" Kind of like the Normandy Invasion! (Laughs.) It's fun to still be that excited about what you're doing. And every show, you never know what you're gonna get into.

9 *Well, before you settled in at Opryland, you hit the road real hard, didn't you?*

Yeah. Last year we made a point of playing places we've never been. We hit it real hard. Parts of Idaho, Wyoming, Oregon, Washington State. There was a lot of gettin' up at 3:30 in the morning to catch planes. We played this one place, in Wyoming. I think it was, where the airport was just this one little strip of asphalt. But 5,000 people turned out for the show. We played this high plateau in Colorado where it snowed in July. It was exciting, and very tiring, but it was what we wanted to do.

10 *But it got to be a little too much there for awhile?*

Yeah, I got kind of burned out. It was really back when I co-hosted the ACM Awards that it all came to a head. We left Fort Payne at 4 A.M., flew out there and rehearsed all day—you know, there's a lotta pressure, millions of people watching, and you want to do good. And what it amounts to is, by the time I got back home, I'd had almost no sleep for three or four days and was starting to feel pretty strange. We have this radio my wife and I use to communicate with our people who run the farm, and it picks up planes and things. And that night we were laying there asleep with it on, and this voice comes on so loud it sounds like the whole house was vibrating to that radio. It woke us up and scared me to death! My heart was just pounding' and it wouldn't quit, and I just got to feeling'

weirder and weirder. I finally told my wife that she better take me to the hospital—which was pretty dramatic for me, since I'd never been to the hospital before, except to see my babies or to visit friends. They ended up sending me to Birmingham for an arteriogram and some tests.

11 *And what did the doctors tell you?...*

They told me there was nothing wrong with my heart, but then the doctor asked me if I liked to fish. I said yeah.... Then he asked me if I liked to hunt. I said yeah.... And he said, "Well, the next time you feel like fishing, go fishin'"—which is just what my son and me are gonna do later this week. So I've learned to slow down some, and I'm just thankful that real stressed out period is out of my life. I'm a fortunate man. I came out of it being real healthy, with my family together and still married to the same woman, still at home here in Alabama.

12 *"My Home's in Alabama"? Damn! Sounds like a great song title to me!*

Yeah, which reminds me of something else really great that happened. I was here at home earlier in the summer, and a guy called me and told me he was Gary Rossington. I said the Gary Rossington? From Lynyrd Skynyrd? He told me MCA wanted to do this Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute album, and he told them no way, unless Alabama gets to do 'Home Sweet Alabama.'" (Laughs.) I didn't quite believe it was really him, because Skynyrd was very influential in our early music.

13 *Like it was almost too good to be true?*

Yeah, it was. But just to make sure, I turned and called somebody I know at MCA, just to make sure somebody wasn't pullin' my leg. They told me, "Yeah, that was Gary and he's dead serious." So we just finished that project in July. We changed "Sweet Home" around just a little bit. They told us to just do it our way, to kick ass. And I gotta

tell ya, it's a mother! There's plenty of drums on there! A wall of 'em! And a wall of Marshall amps!

14 *What's Alabama doing, record-wise?*

We just finished up our *Greatest Hits, Number Three*. It's got some really neat new things on there, too. We did this song called "Can't Love Like This Anymore." It's so good, I think it's like a standard. I really do. And we wrote a song on there called "Give Me One More Shot." It's almost like a prayer that you say to God when you look around and see people out there who just want one more shot at life, one more chance to do things differently. It's a real different song, and I'm real proud we got a chance to record it. It's recorded a little bit differently, too.

15 *You mean to say you went back to the basics?*

Yeah. Kind of like some of our real early stuff. No strings. Just real simple straight-ahead arrangements. I also went in and redid the vocal on "Angels Among Us," which is something I've wanted to do for so long. We'll probably do a video on that.

16 *I understand it's taken you three Greatest Hits packages to finally get your first Number One record, from 14 years ago, on CD.*

That's right. (Laughs.) I never realized till my manager reminded me that "Tennessee River" has never been on a CD, except for a live version. So we went all the way back to our first Number One record and put it on there.

17 *And I hear you're also on an upcoming tribute album to Merle Haggard.*

Yeah. It's funny.... Last night I was driving' down to see my son play baseball, and I was listenin' to this country station and they played Merle Haggard's "Silver Wings." I looked at my wife and said, "On the first show that we did together as kids that was our back-up song." Our first song was "Sing Me Back Home." We got the

opportunity a couple days ago to record "Sing Me Back Home" for this Merle Haggard tribute. We went back and did that song with the instrumentation exactly the way we were the night we played it on stage for the first time. I went back and got the old twelve-string that I played back then. And the other guys used the same guitars and everything. It came out great.

18 *You know, as a critic, I've taken my share of potshots at Alabama. But these past few years I think you've been making some of your best records ever.*

Thanks. We've really worked hard at coming up with some things that were different. Ya know, I've got a family to feed and bills to pay like everyone else, but I've just never been one not to take chances, or to play it safe: If you like something, do it. Like "Cheap Seats." It was not a Number One record, but I certainly feel like it accomplished what we wanted to accomplish. Same thing with "Pass It On Down." I felt like that was one of the most special songs we've ever performed on record, because I felt like we had something to say. It wasn't a Number One record either. Then we put out "She and I." It had that drum sound that everybody tried to find for the next year and a half, and people kinda said, "Wow this is Alabama!?" I'm really looking forward to trying out some new ideas I have on the new studio album we're starting next month.

19 *But it just seems like Nashville, and country radio, isn't in a mood for taking chances these days.*

Well, I think you pay for anything that makes people... makes people have to stop and listen to the words. I remember our first record we put out, "Tennessee River," one of the promotion men from RCA just laughed and said, "'Tennessee River'?... Now what am I supposed to do with this?"

20 *50 million records later, maybe he's figured it out. Yeah. (Laughs.) Maybe.*

TOP 25

Albums

Singles

1. Tim McGraw *Not a Moment Too Soon*
2. Alan Jackson *Who I Am*
3. John Michael Montgomery . *Kickin' It Up*
4. Vince Gill *When Love Finds You*
5. Reba McEntire *Read My Mind*
6. David Ball *Thinkin' Problem*
7. Travis Tritt *Ten Feet Tall & Bulletproof*
8. Various Artists *Maverick (Soundtrack)*
9. Garth Brooks *In Pieces*
10. Brooks & Dunn *Hard Workin' Man*
11. Alan Jackson *A Lot About Livin' (And a Little 'Bout Love)*
12. The Mavericks *What a Crying Shame*
13. Neal McCoy *No Doubt About It*
14. Sammy Kershaw *Feelin' Good Train*
15. Mary-Chapin Carpenter.... *Come On Come On*
16. Lorrie Morgan *War Paint*
17. Diamond Rio *Love a Little Stronger*
18. Blackhawk *Blackhawk*
19. Dwight Yoakam *This Time*
20. Martina McBride *The Way That I Am*
21. Little Texas *Big Time*
22. Reba McEntire *Greatest Hits, Volume Two*
23. Various Artists *Rhythm Country & Blues*
24. Faith Hill *Take Me As I Am*
25. Clay Walker *Clay Walker*

1. Alan Jackson *Summertime Blues*
2. Sammy Kershaw *National Working Woman's Holiday*
3. John Michael Montgomery . *Be My Baby Tonight*
4. Diamond Rio *Love a Little Stronger*
5. David Ball *Thinkin' Problem*
6. Clay Walker *Dreaming with My Eyes Open*
7. Tracy Lawrence *Renegades, Rebels and Rogues*
8. Blackhawk *Every Once in a While*
9. Clint Black *Half the Man*
10. Tanya Tucker *Hangin' In*
11. Tracy Byrd *Lifestyles of the Not So Rich & Famous*
12. Randy Travis *Whisper My Name*
13. Wynonna *Girls With Guitars*
14. Travis Tritt *Foolish Pride*
15. Little Texas *Stop on a Dime*
16. John Anderson *I Wish I Could Have Been There*
17. Lee Roy Parnell *Take These Chains from My Heart*
18. Vince Gill *What the Cowgirls Do*
19. Martina McBride *Independence Day*
20. George Strait *The Man in Love with You*
21. Rick Trevino *She Can't Say I Didn't Cry*
22. Trisha Yearwood *XXX's and OOO's (An American Girl)*
23. Sawyer Brown *Hard to Say*
24. Neal McCoy *Wink*
25. Doug Stone *More Love*

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THE FINAL NOTE

by Patrick Carr

Waylon, Research, Boom and Bust

There's blood in the water, friends and neighbors. The Garth-driven country music boom is fading—sales figures are dropping, anxiety levels rising—and the sharks are circling those lush new record company offices looming over Music Row. Weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth, inhibited cash flow, and perhaps relative obscurity may soon befall our beloved bootie-scooty bazillionaires, not to mention hordes of bi-Coastal BMW drivers with which the boom has infested Greater Metropolitan Nashville. Time to go easy on those international cellular-phone positioning conferences, boys and girls, maybe even think about a move back to Malibu.

Do you country fans care? Should you be worried? Well, I don't and I'm not, and in a round-about way I'll tell you why.

Recently, while I was in the Northeast on country music business, I attended a very pleasant but rather bizarre event at which Waylon Jennings, in the flesh, presented his new CD to a small gathering of hand-picked New York press persons over dinner in a private dining room at the terminally trendy Tribeca Grill—a setting which managed, as do many Manhattan venues in these socially challenging times, to suggest both *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *The Road Warrior* (the dining was divine, and very stylish; outside, there were rot and fire in the air, and a fellow felt a little naked without an Uzi).

Waylon, seemingly unfazed, was the way he is these days, open and amiable, and it was a pleasure to see him so easy with himself and looking 10 years younger. Also, the mashed potatoes, though green—*nouvelle cuisine* at its finest, don't you know—were delectable.

Some of the chit-chat wasn't so lovely. In particular I didn't like the bit where one business honcho admitted that although he, and everyone else in Nashville, had been watching sales figures slide for some time, and were anticipating deeper declines and all the discomferts attendant thereon, they'd been too busy "meeting demand" in the Young Country radio market to pay any attention to anything else—for instance other, currently neglected markets and music strong enough to survive or even stave off the coming crash.

I've cranked off about that little problem often enough, though, so now I'll crank off about the "meeting demand"

end of things and what, beyond the obvious, that process entails. Here, for instance, is Rick Blackburn, Atlantic Records' Nashville chief, quoted in *Music Row Magazine* on what his company does once an album has been made, then sent out for "testing" by market researchers: "Once we get our tests, we play it for radio in what we call the 'set-up phase,'" says Blackburn. "We will sit down with them in their market and usually play the three cuts that tested highest. We then get a consensus, their opin-



Will air strikes on Music Row be required soon?

ion about the sound. They may think the drum sound is anemic or whatever. At that stage we take that input and consider doing a remix... There's many times we call the artists back in and say, 'We don't have enough hits here. Don't close your tool box; we're going back in the studio.'"

Well, doesn't that just fill you with respect for the creative process, the sheer free passion and beauty of music in the making? I mean, I don't know about you, but I have to wonder about the "artists" sent back to the studio. Resisting the temptation to tell the boss, the programmers and the researchers where to shove it might be tough. You'd need, I think, either a high degree of spiritual development or a profound hunger for wealth and fame at any price. I can't imagine which is more common among 25-to-30-year-olds.

"Testing," though, is what really gets me, because as it happens, I know what that means. Long ago and far away, it was my dubious privilege to be present at the dawning of music testing's day. It was in Dallas in the mid-70's, and the man of the hour was a fellow who was wiring people up to devices which mea-

sured their "galvanic skin response" in the manner of a lie detector, then playing them album cuts submitted by record companies wanting to know which of pop star X's new songs to release as a single.

My job was to write about the scene, and I'll never forget it. The guy had a little theater-like room where paid "average listeners" sat comfortably in the dark and did their bit for show biz during their lunch hours. He gave them buttons to press and forms to fill out, but that was just to fool them into thinking their considered opinion was being sought.

In fact, the only response he cared about was the one that couldn't lie, the bioelectric dance between the layers of their skin that betrayed emotional reaction—pleasure or pain, strong or weak. His data was absolute, and absolutely simple, lab-rat reliable: A record turned 'em on or it turned 'em off, either hard or hardly, and that's all there was to it. The guy just interpreted the squiggly lines on his printouts, wrote up his extremely confidential reports, and sent them off to New York and Los Angeles, where America's music industry leaders slept secure in the knowledge that

science, not some bloody musician, was watching out for their executive posteriors.

Back in those days, the Nashville arms of record companies couldn't afford such "research." They can now, though. They can find just exactly which new package of bland pop balladry or basic bootie boogie by which new video hunkling causes the most sustained sensations of mild pleasure in the largest number of country music listeners (a demographic group which, we're told, now includes 44% of all white Americans and 20% of all African Americans and Asian Americans). They can also afford five Executive Vice Presidents to sit there, studying data and attending the wisdom of corporate radio programmers, where only one used to sit. But hell, it's okay. Without all the expensive science and brain power, a CD would only cost ten bucks, and that would be just terrible.

You know, there's really nothing wrong with Music Row that a few air strikes couldn't fix. Failing that, a damn good bust to cap off the boom might help a lot.

Editor-at-Large Patrick Carr has been with CMM since September 1972.

A man wearing a light-colored cowboy hat and a dark shirt is playing an acoustic guitar. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, creating a dramatic and intimate atmosphere. The background is dark, making the subject stand out. The entire image has a rough, torn-paper edge effect.

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