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COUNTRY MUSICTM

Volume Seven, Number Two, November/December 1978

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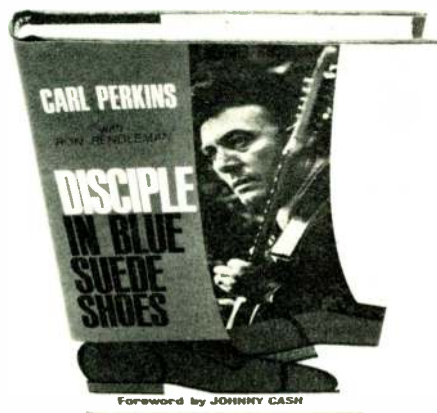
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

As you know, we live in changing times. And rapid change (some for the better, some for the worse) is one important aspect of the magazine publishing business. In the past six months, for example, we have been clobbered with major cost increases from all sides. The recent postage jump has hit us the hardest. Without much notice our postage bill just increased about \$15,000 a month; nearly \$180,000 a year. (For us, that's like having a 13 cent stamp go up to 20 cents.) And, since last year, our costs for printing and paper are up dramatically. It now costs us over \$350,000 more per year to publish *Country Music* Magazine than it did at the beginning of the year. And, this is in spite of the cost savings we have made to help offset these and other increases over which we have no control.

In the past, we made up for inflation by increasing subscription and newsstand prices and advertising rates. For the past several weeks we have thought long and hard about how we should overcome these inflationary threats. We considered raising the cover price from \$1.25 to \$1.50 or higher; raising the one-year subscription price by \$2.00-\$3.00 or more; and lowering the quality of the magazine by running less full color, substituting lower quality paper and cutting the size of each issue by 12-18 pages. But, we hate to increase your costs again, and we certainly don't want to lower the quality of the magazine.

So, even though we knew we had to make major changes just to be able to stay even with where we were last year, we rejected all of the above quality slacking actions. The one thing we all felt strongly about was the need to keep the quality of *Country Music* Magazine at the highest possible level. We are convinced that

what our readers (that's you) really enjoy about our magazine is the high quality we have managed to maintain.

The course of action we eventually decided upon was to combine issues during two different, but equally slow advertising selling periods during the year. You are holding our first double-sized combined issue (November & December) in your hands now. We have doubled the number of editorial pages so that you are getting the same amount of reading material as in two separate issues. And, we have *improved* our quality with more photography, good writing, more full-color pictures, and new features throughout. So, while we have managed to deliver you a magazine that continues to deliver the same amount of exceptional editorial content you have come to appreciate, we have also helped ourselves by cutting our costs for postage, labeling, and other aspects of magazine handling. And, just as important, we avoided raising your subscription price. This shift from publishing every month to publishing ten times a year, including *two* double thick special issues should enable us to weather the impact of the cost increases that have hit us (and the rest of the magazine industry) so hard in 1978 and which we anticipate for 1979, while still giving you the same amount of reading material each year at current prices.

As I said, we live in times of change, and we must change, too, in order to grow and develop.

Everyone at *Country Music* appreciates the loyal support our readers have always given us, and, in return, we pledge to you our continuing efforts to publish the best possible magazine.

—JACK KILLION

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LETTERS

I loved the article on Barbara Mandrell in your September issue. Barbara is by far my favorite singer, and I think she's one of the most beautiful women I've ever seen.

PAULA POW/SUMMERVILLE, S.C.

On The Other Hand

In your Sept. issue there was a letter by Janice Smith concerning stars that don't stay after concerts to sign autographs, sing, chat, etc.

I disagree with her. I am an avid fan of a super-star who doesn't do those things and I respect his right not to. On their way up, it's a little easier to do it, but when they become super-stars the pressures are magnified and it's not humanly possible to give an autograph to everyone.

When you think of the days on tour, making records, writing songs, etc., plus trying to have a private life, you just wonder how they can do it. If you're a real fan, you worry that they won't pace themselves, and will give in to the pressures of the people.

All stars are not alike. Some may love to mingle with the public and thrive on it, but there are others who are basically shy and uneasy. I am determined never to be the kind of fan who demands a "piece" of a star. In fact, my motto is, "What can I do for him, in return for the many hours of pleasure his music gives me."

J.H. TERRE HAUTE, IND.

4000 Miles To See Willie

In praising this year's Willie Nelson Picnic in Dallas, I'd like to say I've seen many concerts but that had to be the best.

I hiked four thousand miles from New Brunswick, Canada to see it and it was well worth every mile. I was disappointed in the turn out of people but I'm glad I was there. I can't wait till next year to go again. This time I'll have to bring more of my own people.

BOB BULMER/MONCTON NB, CANADA

Bravo for Barbara!

"Nothin's Sexy About Barbara Mandrell" (Country Music, September 1978): You guys must be crazy. Barbara's (un)cover photo beats all the Playmates and Pets, clothes down. I couldn't wait to see the full-length Ms. Mandrell in your centerfold, but, alas, Hugh Hefner apparently stole mine. Barbara Mandrell's cover is easily your best and sexiest ever—great photography and an outstandingly beautiful and talented country-politician subject.

WILLIAM R. JENKINS III/GREENWICH, CT.

Stonewall's Still The One

Thank you very much for the wonderful story on Stonewall Jackson. We had written so many times requesting it and hope that maybe our letters helped to get you to do the story. We have seen him perform so many times and always loved him. We have all of his albums and tapes

EDITORIAL CORRECTION

Jimmy Dean Sausage: Porter Wagoner Did Not Invest \$500,000

In the Porter Wagoner story in the July 1978 issue of Country Music, an erroneous statement was made that \$500,000 had been invested by Porter Wagoner in Jimmy Dean's sausage company. Although Mr. Wagoner told John Morthland, the writer, that the investment was made, Kenneth Dillard, Mr. Wagoner's accountant says, "We gave it very serious consideration, but decided not to invest. Porter was just mistaken." Both Country Music and reporter Morthland regret that the error was made.



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and sure hope he does cut some more and that he never quits. Someone with a voice like his, never should.

We have talked to him several times and he always came across as a fine, friendly, quiet sort of person. It is so nice to see a man so devoted to his home and family. He is truly the type of entertainer we'd like to call our friend.

HELEN & HAROLD BEEFIELD
STILLWATER, N.Y.

You'll never know how distressed I've been to receive my Country Music Magazine and Music City News every month and never see anything about Stonewall Jackson. But today when I received my September Country Music, how happy I was to read your article on Stonewall. Now there is a man, who will not be swayed by the kind of songs recorded these days. So I'll just stick it out like he's doing. I'll play his albums and records. I have listened to him on the radio, when I can pull the Nashville station in over these beautiful mountains of Tennessee. Then of course whenever I go to the Grand Ole Opry I'm hoping he'll be there. I've met both Stonewall and Jaunita and can say they are really nice Country folk. So thanks again for the story on Stonewall, loved it.

BETTY V. PAXSON/FRIENDSVILLE, TENN.

We recently attended a Stonewall Jackson concert in Royal Oak, Mich. He and his band are not only talented, but very nice and friendly. They stayed and talked until everyone was happy. He is truly what I consider a star. . .

JANET CLYNETROY, MICH.

(Mis)Understanding Michael Bane

I have just received the September issue of your magazine and I feel I must write to express my disgust at Michael Bane's "Column" criticizing the *White Mansions* album. Who says the LP has to be "Country" just because Waylon and Jessi appear?

I feel that it is one of the most fantastic albums I have ever listened to and I'm sure most would agree. Why try to label the music country or rock and roll. Just enjoy it as music. Mr. Bane sounds like a damn yankee—maybe that's why he doesn't like the album. By the way, thanks for the best country music magazine in the world. I just re-subscribed.

DONNY SCREWS/ATLANTA, GA.

Concerning Michael Bane's column, (Mis)understanding Country, like most open-minded musicians, I play a variety of music. Who is to say what is specifically Country? The article covered R&R (in a vague way) compared to country, or if a dumb hillbilly can do it, so can we, like you said.

I think that is a redneck, close-minded silly outlook of a style of music. Your

problem. Do you write what you feel, or what the rednecks want to hear?

MICHAEL W. GRAHAM/DURAND, MICH.

Michael Bane responds:

Jeez. Redneck or Yankee, make up your mind. I, too, used to believe, hey man, music is music; let it flow. I have since discovered that the people who say that with the most feeling are the ones who would like to turn Nashville into Los Angeles, South, and who have an abiding lack of interest and understanding for the roots of popular music. Besides that, I found White Mansions to be an overwhelmingly bland attempt to capitalize on a lot of different trends. Finally, for the record, I am an unreconstructed Tennessean.

The Debate Continues

In regard to the letter from Mr. Nace in your August issue about Mickey Gilley, I believe he is the one with the wrong fan club. I admit, for years Mickey sounded alot like Jerry Lee, but when he changed his style he became a star and a star he is. I've met both of them and there is no comparison. Mickey is a gentleman and acts like one. He gives credit to his band and featured acts, and anyone that has ever seen Jerry Lee knows he doesn't give anyone anything but mouth. Don't worry about Mickey—Mickey will survive. I look forward to each issue of your magazine.

DOROTHY AL KOCOUREK/HAZEN ARK.

I don't know how to make this short because it's a subject I feel so strongly about. It's concerning a letter in your August issue concerning Jerry Lee Lewis.

First, I've seen many shows of Jerry Lee's and they were all fantastic. Jerry Lee is a giant of an entertainer and has given his blood, sweat and tears to entertain a million audiences. Through more tragedies than most of us will ever face, the show went on.

The Killer has been on the scene for more than twenty years and I don't think we could call that luck. We can call it talent and drive. If I were Jerry Lee, I'd have a chip on my shoulder, perhaps. He's the original but Mickey got the awards. Mickey Gilley is good, but, who among us can deny that he's picked up some of the Killer's style.


CAROL BYRUM/PHOENIX, ARIZ.

On Whispering Bill

I am a new subscriber to your magazine—about 6 months I guess—I wanted to tell you about country music singer Bill Anderson. I have never met a star who is so nice to his fans. I saw him in Nashville in July and he treated me like he had known me for years. He's a great performer and I'll always be a great fan of his.

SHERRY LARSON/MAPLE LAKE, MINN.

(Continued on page 15)



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John Hartford: Country Music's One Man Band

In terms of talent, heart, musicianship and performing ability, John Hartford is one of the biggest men I know. His hit song, *Gentle On My Mind*, was the most recorded song for two years running and won him two Grammy awards. Since the mid-sixties he has recorded ten albums for two major companies, RCA and Warner Bros.

But now we find him, when he's not piloting the *Julia Belle Swain*, a steam powered riverboat, working as a solo performer and recording for a small company, Flying Fish. His last three albums have been on that label. Not that John is slipping into obscurity. **Mark Twang**, his first album on Flying Fish, won a Grammy award in 1977. This may be the finest record in its field, whatever field that is.

So John is taking a more scaled-down and focused approach to his career, and having the time of his life.

PS: *How does it feel to carry the weight of a whole band on your shoulders?*

JH: I didn't think it would be that hard because really what anybody who gets up there is doing is trying to define a beat. I've always been a band musician, I've always been a dance band musician. I was never a single act much... I grew up learning to play for dances where you define a certain beat that's at a certain speed where people will move their bodies to it. Primitive concept though it may be. Well, you can do that with a band, but I also kept thinking if you adhere to those principles you should be able to do that by yourself.

PS: *Dancing on an amplified board while playing is one of the most amazing things I've ever seen. Where did you get the idea?*

JH: I was working on my act, and had got the board, and I was sitting patting my foot on it. Then one day, just quite by accident, I was standing up trying to dance. I woodshedded on that for about two years before I got up enough nerve to do it on stage... It's changed everything for me.

PS: *What inspired you to take this compact approach?*

JH: Part of where that's from—kind of in keeping in line with something I got out of the I Ching, where they kept talking about success through smallness. In other words, keep drawing back to the smallest—that point, you know, the back garbage hole or whatever.



PS: *You don't have any roadies. Does that tie into the same thing?*

JH: Well, now for instance one of the things I've tried to do in becoming a one man act, I've tried to figure out all the things that bands and show people do, and then do the small part of that. Like for instance, I do all my own road management work. I do all my own setting up and tearing down... and be my own bodyguard and do all that sort of stuff.

PS: *I don't know if you'd like to talk about the record companies you've worked for—*

JH: I love Flying Fish. Now Flying Fish was a decision—you see, I'd been on RCA and then on Warner Bros., and that was kind of in line with that success through smallness. I'd been looking around for another big label to go with, and here was Bruce, who just hung in there and offered me this real good deal, and even waited while I shopped around with everybody, and I realized—when that concept got to me then I realized: No—it's real obvious where I should go. So I went, and it's the best move I ever made as far as recording.

PS: *I assume you get more artistic free-*

dom than you got with Warner Bros. or RCA.

JH: No, I've always had artistic freedom because I started recording at a time when it was fashionable and big companies thought it was commercial and that they would sell more records if they gave the artist artistic freedom. So I never really had any problems that way.

PS: *How about record sales on Flying Fish as opposed to RCA and Warner Bros.?*

JH: They've been better there than they have on RCA or Warner Bros. The big difference between Flying Fish and Warner Bros. and RCA is that Flying Fish actually puts the records in the stores where people can buy them.

PS: *You are one of the best noise makers I've ever heard. When did you start making those noises?*

JH: Well, I used to walk around when I was a little kid and make little sounds. And back when I was growing up, which was before television really got going, in the afternoon when we got home from school, we'd listen to *Captain Midnight*

(Continued on page 10)

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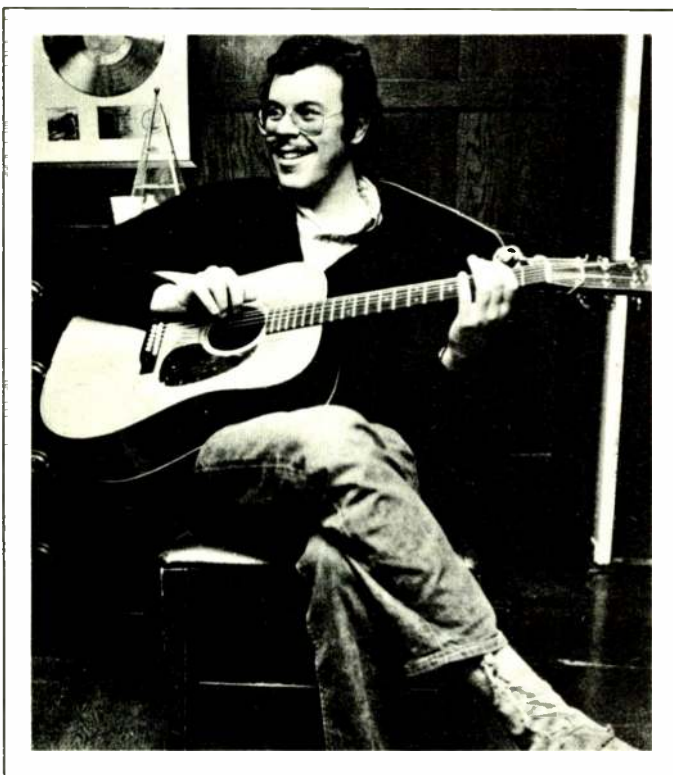
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If you like the pure traditional sound you can find Heritage String Sets at all fine music stores.

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Pickers

(Continued from page 8)

and *Tom Mix* and all those kind of things. And then when I didn't listen to the radio I'd make my own radio: doors opening, telephone dialing and all that kind of stuff. But it was always just something I did for myself, a way of explaining it back to my ear, I guess. And then later on, as I really got into music, and my fantasies about what I wished I could play far exceeded my technique, then I'd walk around and—like for instance when I was in the army and we had to march a lot, and I'd march along, and I'd have my own little fifteen minute Flatt and Scruggs type programs going in my head, and I'd be playing these old tunes and doing these fantastic banjo and fiddle breaks, and I found that as I'd think 'em, I'd do 'em all in my mouth.

One day about four-five years ago I was in California, and I had a tape recorder on, and I just happened one day to get right up to the mike and do some of that stuff into the mike. 'Cause when I get going I can hear I'm doing a bass line, and I'm doing a fiddle and banjo line too, with different parts of my tongue and the thing in the back of my mouth, and I think, 'Well I know this sounds good inside my head, but there's no way I can get it out of the inside of my head and on tape'. So I got to doing it one day on a microphone on a little tape recorder, and when I played it back, I was really surprised at how much came out. So that really was encouraging.

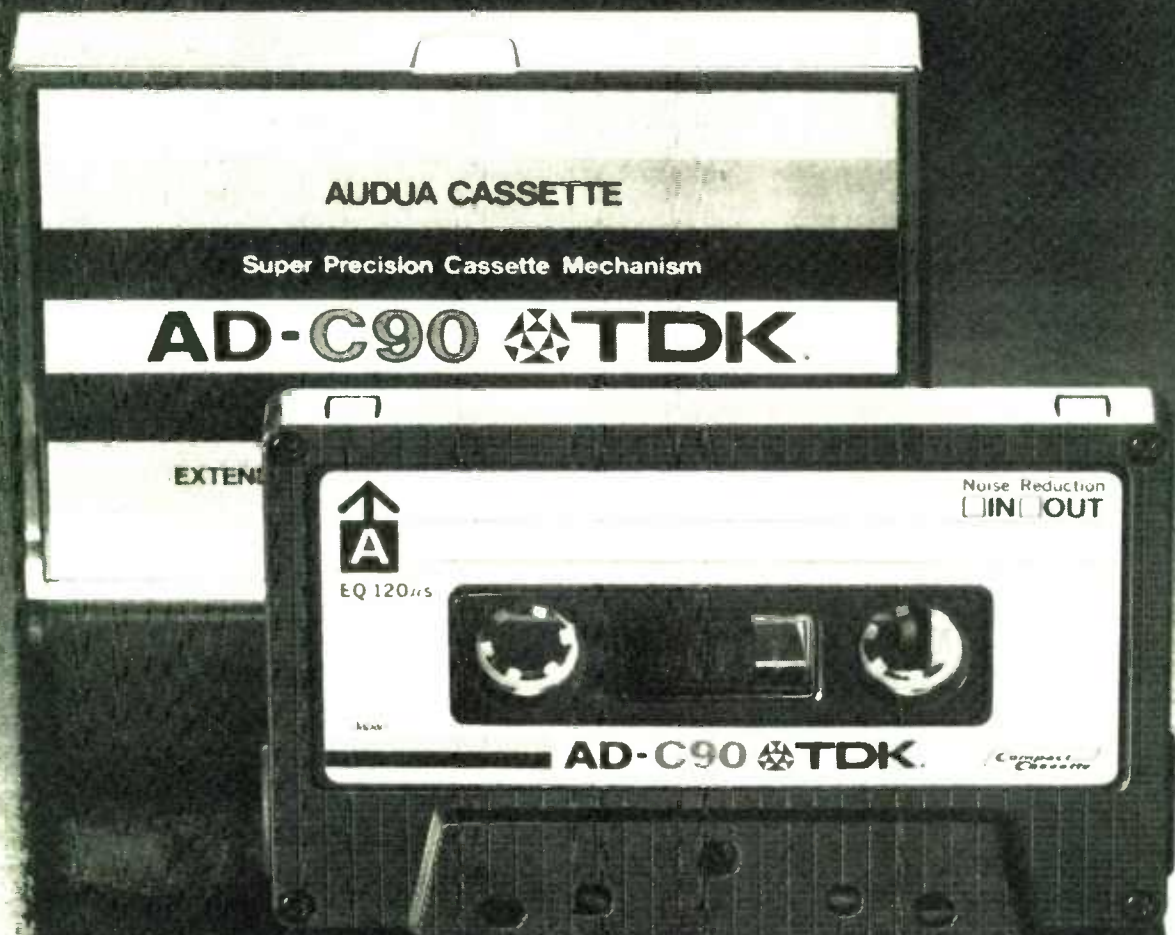
PS: *I read somewhere that you described yourself as always having your nose in a book, who's your favorite writer?*

JH: Well, I can tell you one, his name is Captain Fred Way. He lives in Sewickley, Pennsylvania. He wrote a couple of river books back in the forties, and he writes the *S. and D. Reflector*, which is a steamboat magazine. Amazing, amazing writer—he just writes facts, he's a journalist, like a reporter. I've tried to read just about everything he's ever written. I've gotten to know him quite well in the last few years, and it's been one of the big achievements to me of my life, to have gotten to know this guy. To get where I can go and hang out with him. That's been one of the greats, if nothing else, everything's been worth that.

* * *

There's just a couple things I'd like to say about John Hartford's recent performance at the Bottom Line. He's the only single performer I've seen who is as exciting as a whole band. He not only got a jaded New York audience to sing along, he had them clapping, whistling, harmonizing, and doing harmonies as well. He described the parts he wanted the audience to do so clearly, that everyone got everything right the first time. And finally, he played three of the four songs I forgot to request during the interview. ■

How many products can you think of with a full lifetime warranty?



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Hi-Fi HEALTH TIPS

Simple do-it-yourself techniques keep performance at its best.

Like automobiles, lawn mowers, electric can openers, and the countless other gadgets surrounding us in this technologic age, sound systems also need a bit of regular care and touching up to keep them from developing faults and ailments. I have outlined a few routines that make fine preventive medicine for your stereo and will keep it sounding at its best for a long time.

Health care for your stereo begins right at the tip of the stylus—or "needle" as they used to say in the old days. The most common of all hi-fi troubles is that the sound gets fuzzy because dirt from the record grooves piles up on the stylus tip in tiny dust balls. This keeps the stylus from tracking the record groove accurately, resulting in distortion or groove-skipping.

To get the dust off the stylus, a lot of people just drag their fingers across the tip. This can be disastrous since modern stereo cartridges (the little gismos in the tone arm which pick up the sound from

the record) are extremely delicate.

Service technicians agree that rough handling of the stylus is the most common cause of stereo malfunctions. So, instead of using your fingers, try one of the special stylus brushes made by **Discwasher** or **Audio-Technica** (available in most specialized audio shops). Draw it gently across the stylus from back to front—never from side to side. This lessens the chance of bending the thin stylus shank out of shape. You should do this at least once a week or even more often if you play a lot of records.

Many listeners are unaware that tape recorders also need regular attention to assure top performance. Dust coming into contact with the highly polished metal surfaces of the recording and playback head can be greatly damaging. The dust particles interfere with the smooth flow of tape, causing an increase of flutter—that strange wobbly sound you often hear on poor recorders. Even worse, the dust

grinds down the edges of the hair-thin gap in the metal, through which magnetic impulses must travel. As a result, frequency response suffers and you gradually lose the clarity and brightness of the music.

To prevent this kind of deterioration, clean all metal parts contacting the tape by wiping them gently with a cotton-tipped Q-tip. If you use your recorder daily, you should do this about once a week.

In cleaning the heads, draw the Q-tip vertically over the head surface in the direction of the gap—never across the gap because that will only force the dust deeper into it. Also, never touch the metal surfaces of the heads with your fingers, for the natural skin oils contain corrosive substances. Clean the other metal parts that guide the tape as it moves past the head.

Some manufacturers recommend isopropyl alcohol for such cleaning to remove oily films. But this is a bit risky, for any alcohol running down into the bearings would dilute the lubricating fluid. If you do use alcohol, take care that none of it touches the rubber roll that pushes the tape against the driving spindle, for the alcohol may harden the rubber and cause it to slip over the tape rather than pull it evenly. So, unless you are fairly deft, you had better stay away from alcohol and give your recorder a dry cleaning.

As the magnetized tape moves across the heads in normal tape playing, tiny traces of magnetism accumulate in the heads themselves and in other metal parts. These small magnetic charges gradually build up and may cause an increase in background noise. Also, the remaining magnetism partly erases the high frequencies from your tapes as you play them, thus damaging them permanently.

To avoid such damage, you should demagnetize your recorder about once a month. For this you need a special device called a demagnetizer, obtainable for a few dollars at Radio Shack and many other audio shops. This gismo is practically indispensable for keeping your recorder in prime condition. But it must be handled correctly. Otherwise it can do more harm than good by leaving your recorder even more strongly magnetized than before.

The main thing to remember is never to turn off the demagnetizer when it is near the recorder, for the moment of switch-off creates an extra-strong magnetic surge that magnetizes anything nearby. The



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like digital readout, electronic speed-change systems, and your choice of manual, semi-automatic or totally automatic operation, are why you should see JVC Quartz-Locked Turntables at your dealer soon.

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correct procedure is as follows and takes less than two minutes:

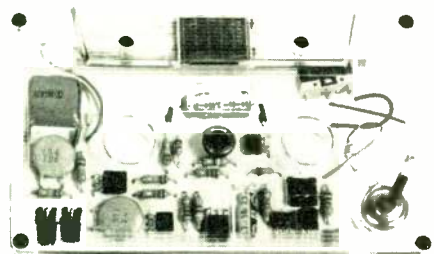
1. Turn the recorder off and push the PLAY button to bring the heads forward from under their protective shield.

2. Hold the demagnetizer about a foot away from the recorder (and any tapes that may be lying around), turn it on and then bring it slowly toward the heads and other metal parts of the tape transport mechanism, moving the demagnetizer in slow circles within an inch of those parts. It is not necessary to touch the heads directly and you should avoid doing so.

3. After several passes over the recording heads at close distance, gradually withdraw the demagnetizer but don't turn it off until it is more than a foot away.

This simple routine, along with regular cleaning, will keep your tape machine in fine condition, assuring wide-range, hiss-free recording and preventing your tapes from having their uppermost highs wiped out while being played.

For cassette recorders, there is an even simpler alternative to all this. You can



buy a special cleaning cassette which snaps in just like a regular cassette. But instead of producing sound, it cleans the head as you "play" it. Scotch Tape and TDK offer such head-cleaner cassettes, and Ampex has one with small magnets imbedded in the tape in such a way as to neutralize magnetic charges that have built up in the head. Still, I suspect that a regular head demagnetizer used as described before will do a better job.

Another frequent cause of hi-fi troubles is corrosion of the cable connections. One way to cure or prevent this is simply give an occasional twist to all the pin plugs of these connecting cables and shove them firmly into their sockets. This scrapes off corrosion and assures firm contact.

Following these basic maintenance hints will rid you of roughly 90 percent of all common complaints and keep away the service-man for a long time. ■



NEW FRONT LOADING CASSETTE DECKS

For those interested in higher quality cassette recording and playback equip-

ment, the new trend toward front loading decks, such as the Kenwood KX-630 (\$250.) and KX-530 (\$200.), provides greater convenience than earlier top loading units.

These units provide similar design and performance specifications, but the KX-630 has added features. Both units use the same dual-belt tape drive mechanism and the same amplifier circuitry, including a Dolby noise reduction system.

NEW PRODUCTS

HIGH QUALITY CAR STEREO

Dash-mounted AM-FM stereo radio/cassette combination units are the rage right now. One of the moderately priced new units is the Fujitsu Ten Model GP-7881 (list price \$239.95). It features good quality reproduction and includes a Dolby noise reduction system which is usually found only in higher priced equipment.

Car stereos like this are designed to play back through four speakers, two in the dash and two in the rear. When buying this system, or any of the others like it now on the market, remember that installation is an important factor. Don't try it yourself unless you are ex-

perienced. Most dealers who sell these units also provide installation. Some-



times it is included in the price and sometimes its extra. So be sure to consider the total cost of the equipment plus installation in evaluating which dealer to buy from. For more information, write: Fujitsu Ten, 1135 East Janis Street, Carson, Calif. 90746.

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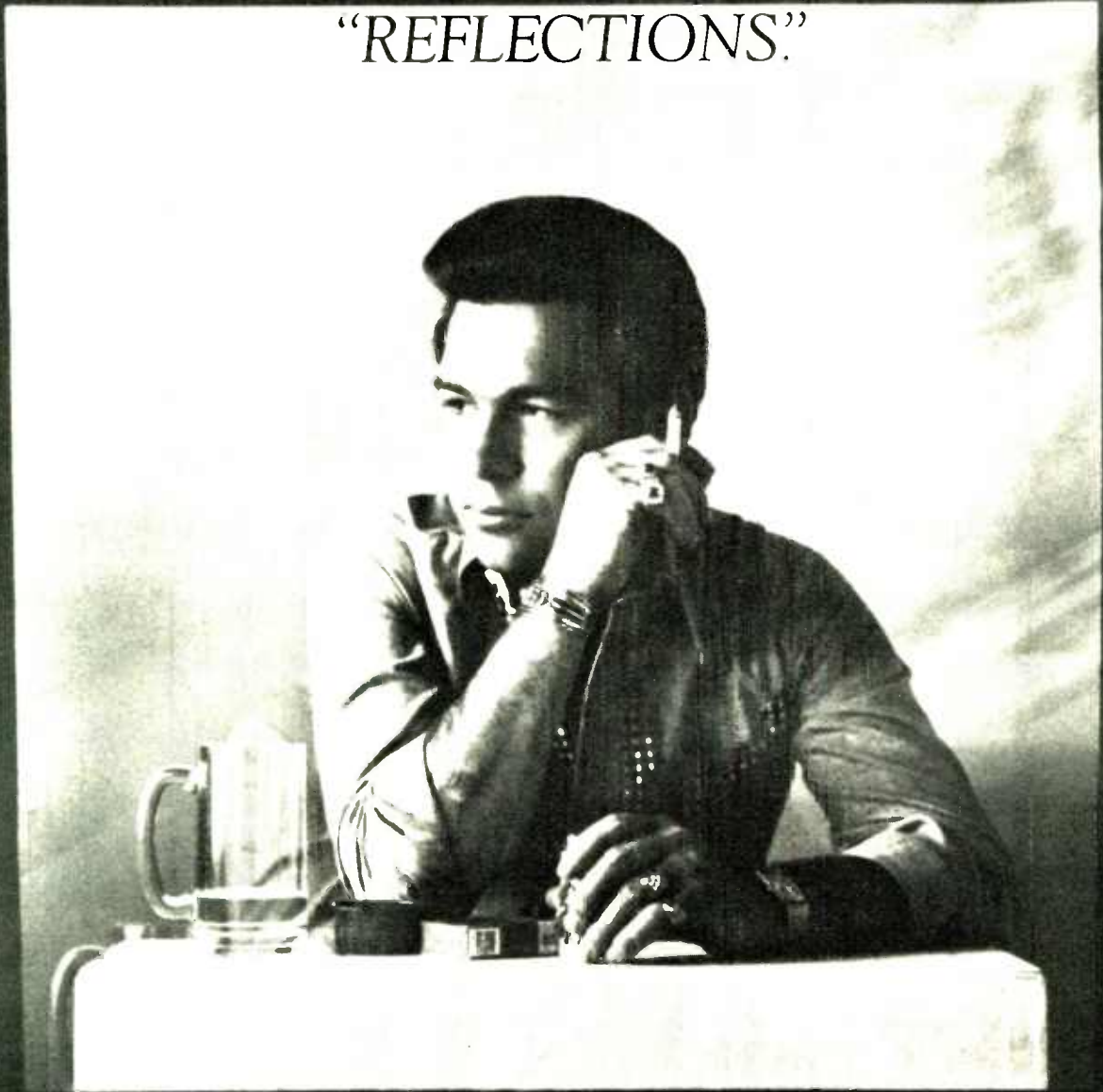
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GENE WATSON

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His Sixth Capitol Album Includes The New Hit Single:
ONE SIDED CONVERSATION



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LETTERS

(Continued from page 6)

Tandy Rice

Your reporter Bob Allen is to be commended for the excellent job he did on the story about me in the October issue: "Tandy Rice: A Look At One Of Nashville's Most Notorious Flesh Peddlers." I thought it was essentially accurate and up to your normally high standards. I would like to speak to the issue of what Bob Allen apparently saw as an on-going professional tug-of-war between Jim Halsey of Tulsa and me. I'm afraid Bob unfairly singled Jim out of the general mass of competition.

To set the record straight, I admire and salute Jim Halsey and what he has accomplished. I do business with him frequently, and consider him both a friend and gentleman of the absolutely highest professional caliber. There will always be competition in a healthy business setting and I have often said that I wish all our competitors were as respectable as he is.

Thank you for letting me address this point.

Continued best wishes to *Country Music* magazine.

TANDY RICE, JR./PRESIDENT TOP BILLING/
NASHVILLE, TENN.

Dolly's Platinum Not The First

In the August *Country Music Magazine*, you said Dolly Parton's album, *Here You Come Again* was the first Platinum award by a female country artist.

I am sorry to say that Dolly Parton is the second to receive it. (Tammy Wynette is first). *Tammy's Greatest Hits* sold 1,500,000. I would like to know what you have to say about it.

WILLIAM RUDOLPH/NEW HAVEN, CONN.

Mr. Rudolph is both right and wrong, see below. Ed.

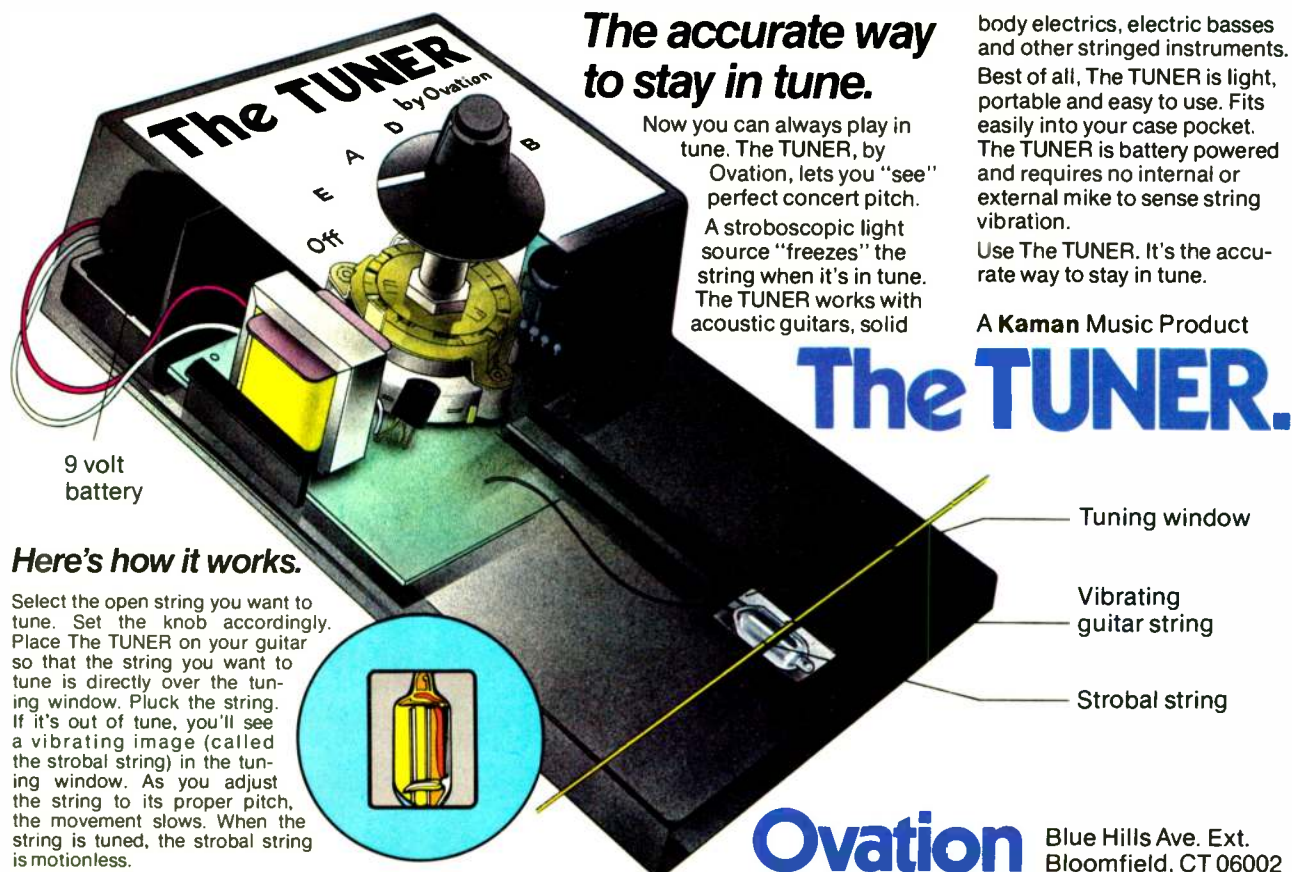
Not All That Glitters Is Platinum

Well, we really stirred up a tempest with the item in our August issue on Dolly's platinum record. When RCA told us about the award, they said it was the first for a female country performer. We checked the RIAA's list, they are the people who issue platinum and gold record awards, and came to the same conclusion. But—we didn't look carefully enough. We got calls—from record companies, managers, and readers—letting us know that we were WRONG! It turns out that the RIAA gave Crystal Gayle a platinum record for *We Must Believe In Magic* on Feb. 15, 1978, and Dolly's was on April 28. That was our first mistake, and RCA's spokesman agrees that they made it, too.

Second, CBS Records reminded us that *Tammy Wynette's Greatest Hits* album sold way over a million copies years ago, (as did Lynn Anderson's *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*) and our headline said "Dolly: First Female Country Artist With Million-Seller." The confusion here is due to the fact that the RIAA only established the platinum award in 1976 and they only give it for records which have sold a million copies *since then*. So, even though Tammy sold over a million, she only got a gold record which was the highest award at the time.

In our opinion, the RIAA should give platinum awards going back to at least 1965, to clear up this confusion and to give artists their just due.

So... who can say who was the first female country artist to "go platinum." You decide. After reconsidering the whole thing, we have decided it was Margaret Whiting in 1949, when her number one record *Slippin' Around* with Jimmy Wakely was on the charts for 28 weeks.



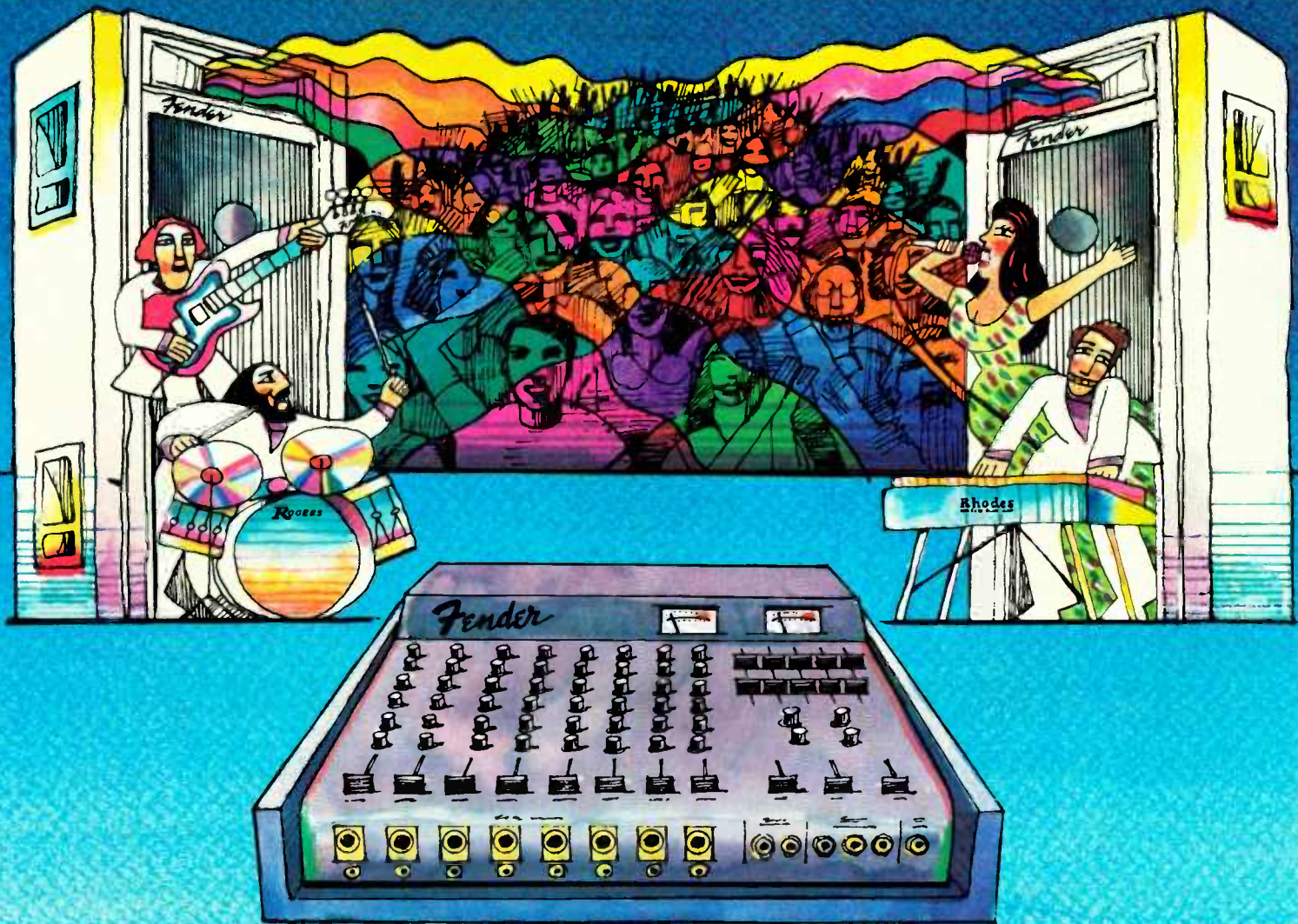
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Country Scene

LEE CLAYTON: He's Gone More Than A Couple Of Rounds With His Dreams

There is an often-studied photograph which Lee Clayton carries in his wallet. Taken nearly a decade ago and folded—almost irreverently—down the middle, it is a faded Instamatic print of a younger Lee Clayton, then a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force, standing next to the fighter jet he piloted: Old Number Nine.

"I used to take that out and look at it to remember that I *could* do something

recalls. "I was either going back to Nashville to give it one more try or," here Clayton pauses, his tone even more deliberative than usual to insure that you're going to follow what is coming next, "I was going to join a monastery."

Clayton had scheduled a visit to the monastery when he went down to the library the day before to read about their Trappist life. "They got up at 2:30



for all the years when..." Clayton breaks off and laughs, shrugging. "There's only two things I ever wanted to do, really," he continues with characteristic dead-serious humor. "One was to fly an airplane and the other was to play music. I figured I was going to have to get the flying out of the way to do my music, because that was going to take a lifetime."

In the Fall of 1976, Lee Clayton came to the proverbial fork in the road. Estranged from Nashville for the last two years, Clayton had finally gotten together whatever it is one gets together in the desert of California and was prepared to make a decision. It was your basic all-or-nothing-at-all proposition. "My life was a complete shambles," he

in the morning—some weird thing like that—and had to take a vow of silence," Clayton laughs. "Well, I couldn't deal with *that*. So, I borrowed enough money to get a bus ticket and I rode that bus into Nashville."

Lee Clayton has the air of a man who has gone more than a couple rounds with his dreams. It is only now, a matter of months after the release of his debut Capitol album, **Border Affair**, that he is beginning to receive the long due broader recognition. A loner who occasionally moves in a pack for, I suspect, the sole purpose of camouflage, Clayton is an intensely private individual. One who, after years of writing hit songs other people recorded, and sleeping on floors in Nashville, went through a self-imposed

exile only to return, cut an album and find himself the most talked about artist in Nashville.

"It's nothing heroic," demurs Clayton, "so much as being obsessed with the idea that you can do what you want to do if you can hang in there. Everybody does the same trip. There ain't no easy way."

During a recent visit to Clayton's farm some 20 miles outside Nashville, Clayton sat me down in the middle of his living room to listen to a tape of new material. Twenty seconds into the first cut, Clayton, pacing in the back of the room, springs forward, grabs my shoulder and hollers into my ear, "Great, isn't it?" He is laughing like a jackal as he retreats to listen to the rest.

Months before the release of **Border Affair**, Clayton carried around the album in tape, cassette and acetate form, playing it for various people in the music community. Reaction to his behavior was met with mixed emotions and it took time to understand that his actions were motivated less by a built-up ego than one that had been taken down to its very foundation in the last four years. The point about Lee Clayton is this: He does have some idea about how good he really is, but he has been good for a long time. The end impression is of a man who thinks he heard something but has to check with others to see if they're hearing the same thing. The years had almost made him unsure as to whether he could trust his own ears.

"I'd pretty much hit zero when I was out in the desert," he recalls. "At the beginning of 1973 I was broke. I got a record deal with a major label (MCA), cut an album (**Lee Clayton**), got a band, spent a bunch of money and ended up at the end of 1973 broke and, within months of 1974, I was off the label. Bam bam. The basic thing was the town was not receptive to my music at that point in time. I realized that it was ahead of its time, especially, at that point, lyrically. It was the same thing that Kris did. He came to town and it took them years to pick up on him because their awareness hadn't evolved to where they could deal with his lyrics. It happened to me with *If You Can Touch Her At All*,

(Continued on page 18)

Country Scene

Lee Clayton

(Continued from page 17)

which is out now as Willie's single. I wrote that song in 1973. It's acceptable now but it wasn't then. It's just time for a change. Nashville is growing up musically."

Clayton should know about innovation in Nashville. It was Clayton that gave an anthem to a movement within country when he wrote (and Waylon promptly recorded) *Ladies Love Outlaws* in 1972. He has been called the "Outlaws' outlaw," a title he appears ready to dismiss, if not deny. "Now the truth is," he says, "country music, from its inception, has been outlaw music. It's always been." Clayton grins broadly. It was a classically elusive reply.

Clayton is pacing back and forth from the fireplace to the windows. Summer is palpably present in the Tennessee coun-

tryside and Clayton wants to cut this interview short and go for a walk with his dog—Elvis Firewolf, at second glance not your average caninus but actually a three-quarter wolf, one-quarter German shepherd mongrel. A highly visible moment of Clayton's years in the desert.

"There are a lot of people who will say that I ain't country," he says, "but nobody who knows anything can listen to *If You Can Touch Her At All* and say that I ain't country. It's evolution..."

Clayton is searching for the right words. "It's a magical time. It's a perfect time. The overall picture couldn't be better. It's..." He does an about-face in mid-room, "imperfect perfection." He frowns, then brightens. "Actually, it's perfect *imperfection*." Clayton pauses for a moment, turns to go back to pacing and stops. "One thing," he says, wagging a finger, "you can't pin the universe down."

GAIL THOMAS

Although Marshall's albums thus far have suffered from a certain lifelessness, the songs she performs from them are fleshed out both by her riveting presence, and the instrumental punch her band provides. The breaks are longer and stronger, and the guitar interplay is more accessible. And from all indications, she's ironed out most of the quirks. The new material she introduced, besides rocking as hard as anything she's done so far, also point to her maturation as a songwriter. Where her songs were cluttered lyrically, she's condensed them some, and disposed of the excess, resulting in an easier flow.

On one song from her latest LP *Jaded Virgin*, Marshall tells how people have been asking her why she's different since she was a child—"I remember the words my mama said when I asked for them blue suede shoes/Why can't you be like other girls?"—until, at the end of the song, Marshall has to ask herself that same question. Well, I for one am glad that she's not like other girls. As Cowboy Jack Clement put it, "Marshall's gonna be a star. It's that simple."

BRUCE PALEY

MARSHALL CHAPMAN: Country's Answer To A Rolling Stone?



Tall and lanky, with shaggy blond hair and a model's body, sharply dressed in a natty white jacket and blouse, with sky blue jeans, Marshall Chapman takes the stage at New York's Other End—appropriately—to the strains of *Honky Tonk Woman*. With her Fender guitar strapped around her, she leans suggestively over the mike, strikes a Presleyesque stance, and with her four piece band cookin' up a rhythm behind her, she stomps out a beat with her right foot and tears into *Rode Hard*

and Put Up Wet.

An original tune, like much of her material, Marshall describes the song as one that she wrote "one day after waking up about noon, face down in the front yard, with nothing on but my panties."

In some ways, Marshall is the Nashville equivalent of Patti Smith a female rocker. Both appear to be living out personal fantasies onstage. With rock 'n' roll being a traditionally male stomping ground, both are acutely aware of how unique they are. Having chosen to break from past female role models, they come across with a certain macho, often akin to that of the Rolling Stones, whom they both conjure up in song material as well as stage demeanor. Marshall is loose but poised, smooth and graceful, and completely at home on a stage. She has fun up there. Her between song patter is always entertaining, and often quite amusing. She introduced Elvis's *Too Much* with a brief anecdote explaining how she'd been "thrown out" of the second grade for singing that song in the hallway, and when her band later slowed down to shift gears in a three song medley, she reminded a silent audience that "we usually get some scattered applause around here," (which she then received).

Marshall doesn't have to ask for an audience's love. (And PS, she can play that guitar.)

Sweepstakes Winner



Congratulations go out to Joseph A. Utyesonich who won \$1,000 in "Country Music's Subscription Renewal Sweepstakes." Mr. Utyesonich hails from Hot Springs, Arkansas where he works in the maintenance department of the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center. Asked who his most favorite country music performers were he replied: "Tammy Wynette, Conway Twitty, Connie Smith," and pausing a moment went on to say, "the late Hank Williams." Our winner, incidentally, thinks *Country Music* magazine is "the best with lots of good articles on my favorite performers."

Thanks, Mr. Utyesonich and the best to you, too.



Beer— That #1 American Golden Brew

There's more to that can of beer in your refrigerator than a mere thirst-quenching cereal malt. Through the ages our ancestors enjoyed the bittersweet elixir around which a myriad of social and religious rites developed. Even if the aesthetics of beer drinking are hard to swallow... beer making is undeniably an artform, perfected since the dawn of civilization.

The art of brewing began around the time the first breads were being baked. About 6000 years ago in Mesopotamia it was made from a special bread that was allowed to ferment. (To this day Russians use oats and "Kvass" derived from rye bread). Archeological remains of 5000-year old hieroglyphic-inscribed jugs containing a barley brew that the Egyptian Book of the Dead said was flavored with spices and herbs have been found. And even Noah had beer on hand for his bash on the Ark. The Hebrews in captivity drank "bre," perhaps the origin of beer's name, as an anti-leprosy potent.

The popularity of beer continued through the Middle Ages. The Duke of Lancaster provided each of his ladies-in-waiting with eight gallons a week. No wonder the chief minister of Queen Elizabeth's reign said, "Her beer was so strong that no man would drink it." She might have been royal but she was not the only descendent of boozers—beer has always been enjoyed by the lower

classes, especially at social functions. In fact, the word "bridal" is derived from the Old English tradition of "bride ale" served at weddings.

By 1437, the sophistication of brewing reached such a height that Henry VI granted a charter to The Worshipful Company of Brewers giving them power to control "the mystery and processes connected with brewing any kind of malt liquor." Many trade secrets exist to this day. If any employee divulges any private information, he chances regretting it in jail.

Beer's history has not always been "on the rocks," though. It was stocked on all long ocean voyages because it retained its freshness longer than water plus, it provided vitamins and minerals needed to combat diseases like scurvy that plagued so many sailors.

The Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower left England but not their beer and early American history was launched prematurely because of it. It is written in the *Pilgrim's Journal*, "For we could not take time for further search or consideration, our victuals being much spent, especially our beere." They panicked and landed at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts instead of Virginia, their original

destination. Ironically, there really was nothing to worry about since the Indians had been drinking corn beer long before Columbus even thought of discovering America.

Billy Carter is not the only American who has promoted beer. The Virginian Assembly urged new waves of colonists to drink beer until their bodies became accustomed to the water. William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania also founded their first brewery. It has been said that George Washington was a far better brew master than a president. He had a brewery on his estate as did most households after the Revolutionary War. The Massachusetts Act of 1784 claimed that "the wholesome qualities of malt liquors preserve the health of citizens and prevent the pernicious effects of spirituous liquors."

Even with all this support, brewing was not a major industry until German immigrants brought their aged lagers. This lighter and less bitter brew caught on so, that today virtually all American beers are lagers. This was when America's most prominent beer processors got their start. Another big boom to beer was the discovery of pasteurization

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Statler's Headed In The Right Direction



Harold Reid (center) of The Statler Brothers waves high a street sign proclaiming the inner loop area of Staunton, Virginia (their home town) as

Statler Blvd. Standing from left to right: Mayor Kivlighan, Phil Balsley, Harold Reid, Don Reid and Lew DeWitt of The Statlers.

Country Scene

Beer

(Continued from page 19)

which made commercially bottled beer possible. It was mass-produced in increasing amounts until the Prohibition. At this time breweries turned out "near beer," a very light drink that has less than half of 1% alcohol by weight (lager has 3.2%). And home brewing which was illegal became popular again. But, after the first day of the repeal, America chug-a-lugged over one million barrels.

After World War II beer became available in supermarkets. (Originally it was sold only in taverns). Sales rapidly shifted from draught to bottle and canned beers.

Today America, the largest exporter of beer, annually producing over 100 million barrels, is only tenth in per capita consumption (16 gallons per person a year). Belgium, West Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Austria, Denmark, Switzerland and Canada—in that order have higher per capita rates. Foreign brews are more expensive and bitter. Pilsner Urquell from an 800-year old brewery in Czechoslovakia is the standard of excellence in beer. It is a light and bubbly lager from crystal clear waters. Heineken Light is the largest selling imported beer in this country. Molson's Canadian Beer, Dos Equis of corn from Mexico, Kirin of rice from Japan and Alsatian Kronenbourg from France are among the popular imports.

GLEN SHERLEY: The Flower Out Of Place

Glen Sherley, composer and performer, died the afternoon of May 11, 1978 by self-inflicted gunshot wounds in Gonzales, California.

Sherley, in the Huddie Leadbetter tradition, wrote and sang his way out of prison after spending a third of his life behind bars. His release, sponsored by Johnny Cash, Ronald Reagan and Billy Graham was the fastest in California history. He was paroled to Cash's custody March 7, 1971.

Sherley met Cash in 1968 at Folsom Prison. The Rev. Floyd Gressett had brought Sherley's song, *Grey Stone Chapel*, to Cash, and Sherley was in the audience when Cash recorded it. After meeting with Sherley, Cash was moved to say, "He's got the greatest treasure of unheard songs of anyone alive today..." While in prison, Sherley and

Ale: All ales are brewed with extra hops and a certain yeast which ferments at the top of the vat (usually its the bottom-fermenting yeast with lager). The result is a deeper, amber hue and a more intense aroma with a fuller flavor.

Stout: A member of the ale family in which the barley or malt has generally been roasted before brewing: it has a deep molasses color, creamy-headed, sweet to the taste and strongly tasting of hops.

Bock Beer: Traditionally brewed in the fall for spring consumption (also in the spring for the fall *Oktoberfest*) bock beer is now available the entire year. It is distinctly sweet to the taste and deeper in color than light lager.

Malt Liquor: This is, essentially, lager with an extra kick. This classification was created since many U.S. state laws prohibit lagers to be labeled as beer when their alcoholic contents exceeded 5 percent. Malt liquors—many of which are 4 to 8 percent alcohol—may go as high as 9 percent alcoholic content.

If warm and cozy times—filled with laughs and relaxation to filter out your worries are what your are after—there ain't nothin' like a beer! Wherever you are—no matter who you're with—if its over a beer, you can't be too far from home.

NANCY TRACHTENBERG

Spade Cooley, also a country artist and songwriter, penned one after another.

On January 31, 1971, Sherley recorded his own live album for Mega Records produced by former Elektra/Asylum producer Jim Malloy at the California



medical facility, Vacaville. All the songs were written by Sherley with the exception of three which he co-wrote with Harlan Sanders. On the album is *Portrait of My Woman*, which Malloy had first heard on a tape of Glen's songs. He liked the song well enough to produce a single and an album by that name on Eddy Arnold; and he liked the singer, Glen, well enough to produce him also.

Upon his release from Vacaville, Sherley became a writer for the House of Cash and a featured singer on one of Cash's concert tours.

For nearly six months Glen Sherley and I lived together. We wrote songs together. We talked, we took pills together. On a couple of occasions we nearly fought. I learned a great deal in six months. Though, in the end, I, like everyone else, failed him. We made it impossible for him to go back to prison, the one place he felt at home, and we wouldn't or couldn't accept him on the outside.

There were times I couldn't. Glen always took *bunk 1 tier 1*.

On being tough: "They put you in the hole, naked, on a cold metal bunk. When you finally do fall asleep the guards throw ice water on you and yell, 'Hey Toughie!' Son, I ain't tough." And he wasn't. He was a poet. A wolf who became a flower child in prison. He discovered Jung and Adler. He read. He composed. He smoked their free tobacco and waited. Imprisoned within this brilliant mind he never learned to trust.

But he was. Glen never used a real gun on hold-ups because he never needed one. Sometimes in place of his famous toy pistol he would just use his finger.

He said, "Man always aspired to the higher good." And, as a student of Escotology, (The Science Of Life) he believed that everything is perfect because, like a flower, everything is constantly unfolding.

Glen Sherley sought enlightenment and wanted oblivion. Anything he wanted he took and on the afternoon of May 11, 1978 he got what he wanted and he found what he was searching for.

The Flower unfolded: A Flower out of place.

VINCENT MATTHEWS
Editor's Note: Vince Matthews is a veteran Nashville songwriter. His songs have been recorded by Johnny Cash, Hank Williams Jr., Crystal Gayle, Sammi Smith and Gordon Lightfoot. His one LP, *Kingston Springs Suite*, was co-produced by Kris Kristofferson and Shel Silverstein, with the assistance of Johnny Cash.

EDDIE RABBITT: The Best Is Yet To Come



Since *Country Music Magazine* gave Eddie Rabbitt its Rising Star Award (September, 1976) and its Silver Bullet Award (January, 1978), it's been nothing but onward and upward for the likable guy from East Orange, N.J. We spoke to him recently when he was in New York for a Palladium concert with none other than Dolly Parton. He was in the middle of a tour with her that still had about twenty cities to go, after which he would again hit the road, with Kenny Rogers.

The fatigue of a hard schedule showed on Eddie's face as we chatted at the New York Hilton. "I can't remember where we played last night," he said, indulging in an understandable bit of hyperbole. "We've been going out 25 days a month lately. And with Dolly we've been getting to play in front of six, eight and ten thousand people, and that's real good, because in a lot of these places I couldn't draw that myself.

Of course the hard life of a country star has its compensations. As we spoke, his *You Don't Love Me Anymore* sat comfortably atop all the country music charts and was getting very respectable pop and easy-listening chart action as well. That made "five or six number-one hits—seven, I think." Eddie might have added that several other records that didn't quite make it to the top, did climb into the magic top-ten category.

We suspect all this is only the beginning. When Eddie started recording for Elektra, back in 1975, he hadn't performed for about ten years. Still, his voice was full, smooth and expressive while his personality came out from the stage quite well. Many performers far more seasoned than he would have

traded their left...er...arms for his charisma and his ability to inject feeling into the words of a song. Still, vestiges of the small-club singer were evident.

Today, his voice is fuller, more expressive, and his technique highly polished. Very much at home, now, in front of large audiences, he paces his show like the seasoned artist he's rapidly becoming. In the New York concert, there was no doubt that Dolly Parton was the big draw. But Eddie Rabbitt had a strong impact. The audience dug him, and showed it. Dolly was Babe Ruth that night. But the Rabbitt was definitely Lou Gehrig.

We suspect bigger things are still to come. No doubt, Eddie hopes we're right. But his grip on show-biz realities is a firm one. "It's too scarey a business, man, to start takin' it for granted," he

says. "It's up today, it's down tomorrow. I'm still just kind of amazed over all this. It may all stop tomorrow, but..."

Nowadays, a country singer that's reached Eddie's level usually turns a hungry gaze toward the pop charts. Country just ain't big enough no more for the ambitious folks from Nashville, and the desperate attempts to go pop make some pretty important folks sound ridiculous. But Eddie seems likely to keep his perspective. "I'd rather have ten thousand people at a concert than two thousand. Who wouldn't? But I don't want to just go in and say, 'I want to try for a crossover record' because when you do that you lose, sometimes, what you have originally. You can't get away from what you do because that's what made you what you are."

ART MAHER

Stars Pay Tribute To Ernest Tubb On New LP

Recently, some of the biggest names in country music took some time out from their hectic schedules to pay tribute to Ernest Tubb, one of the legends and founding fathers of modern country music.

In recent weeks, folks like Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Conway Twitty, Loretta Lynn, George Jones, Johnny Paycheck, Charlie Rich, Marty Robbins, Cal Smith and Vern Gosdin have all been seen slipping in and out of Pete Drake's studios on Nashville's 18th Avenue South where they have been

contributing their vocal and instrumental talents to an Ernest Tubb "tribute" album, produced by Pete Drake.

Drake refers to the LP, which will be released this fall on his own First Generation record label, as "the most fun thing I've ever done in my life." And when he plays it for a visitor, he literally beams with excitement and pride. As he explains, the album was also *his* tribute to Ernest.

"My brother, Jack (Drake) played bass with Ernest for twenty-four years," he explains. "So I've known Ernest a long time. He is just my ideal of country



"It's a great honor and a good feeling to know that all these people would do this for me," says Ernest Tubb.

Ernest Tubb

(Continued from page 21)

music; he's one of the most honest and best men I've ever known. He is also one of the most important people as far as making Nashville what it is today: Music City, U.S.A. Back in the thirties and forties, when he was really hot, he was one of the first major artists to come down here and record. Ernest has spent most of his life, helping other people."

What is most amazing about this album is that Pete Drake was able to keep the entire project a secret from Ernest right up until it was nearly completed. He started by persuading Ernest and his Texas Troubadours to lay down new tracks of 20 or so of Ernest's great hits.

"After doin' the tracks, Ernest went back on the road, and I started callin' people that I felt had been influenced by him," says Pete. "I explained what I was doin' and asked if they would come in and over-dub some tracks for us. Everyone of 'em just jumped at the chance to sing with Ernest. These people just love him. When word got out, some of 'em even called me and said 'if you've got an empty space, I wanta be on there too!' That's how much they wanted to do it."

Soon, for everyone involved, the effort clearly became a labor of love: "Conway stayed in here almost all night, gettin' his duet just right," Pete grins. "Larry Butler *stopped* a Charlie Rich session just so Charlie could put his voice on Ernest's record. Merle Haggard sang and played guitar. He told me, 'My life's ambition is to play guitar behind

Ernest Tubb!' We brought Johnny Cash in one night and we gave him about twenty of Ernest's songs to choose from. He went into the studio, and he didn't even need a lyric sheet.

Even though Ernest almost caught him when he dropped by the studio unannounced one night just as Johnny Cash was leaving, Pete was able to keep the project under wraps until it was in its final stages. Then, as a surprise, he played it for Ernest.

"I didn't know how Ernest would react," Pete laughs. "The first cut I played him was *Waltz Across Texas*, and when Willie Nelson came in singin' on the tape, he just looked at me real funny and said, 'Who's that!'

"Johnny Cash does a recitation on the album and so does Cal Smith," adds Pete. "Those two things really choked Ernest up. Usually he stays a couple hours after a session just to talk or make tape copies, but that night, he just said, 'I gotta go!' Big ole tears was in his eyes when he hit the door," Pete grins. "It was really worth the whole thing, just seein' his face!"

"Pete Drake's a little bit tricky," laughs Ernest when asked about the album. "He kinda sneaked this one in on me. But it's a great honor and a good feeling to know that all these people would do this for me."

"Since the word has gotten out," adds Pete, "all kinds of people are callin' me, wantin' to be part of this. Everybody's just tryin' to show Ernest Tubb how much they love him. If it hadn't been for him, most of us wouldn't be here."

BOB ALLEN

title. Then, a little while later, Bob Montgomery, who is a songwriter at our publishing company, came in with this title idea. He said, 'What do you think of *Let's Shake Hands and Come Out Lovin'*? It's yours if you want it.'"

"For me to take such a step was quite unusual, because I rarely am turned on by lyrical suggestions other writers give to me. But I realized that in this case, I could have a lot of fun with it—playing off lyrically on boxing slang and so forth."

Surprisingly, cleffing does not always



come easy for Kenny. "I must admit I have my cold streaks," confesses O'Dell. In those instances, the only thing I can do is make myself sit down and realize this is what I do for a living. I've never been comfortable as a staff writer—you know with an office and piano, writing on demand every day. I'm better at going through a non-writing collecting period, and then putting it all down.

More hits like his recent smash, however, and Kenny's performing role may equal other aspects of his career. This isn't exactly his first exposure on vinyl—the pop-oriented *Beautiful People* reached the top forty in the late sixties. However Kenny, a stranger to the touring grind, is somewhat enticed by the highway.

"I haven't put a band together just yet, but we are taking the live thing one step at a time. We have some showcase dates on the drawing board, and I know several session players who'd like to get out of the studio and work on the road."

First things first, however, Kenny spent the summer months completing an album of self-penned tunes. "I feel there are two or three more hits on it," Kenny exclaims. If that is indeed the case, anyone know of a Silver Eagle tour bus for sale?

RUSSELL SHAW

KENNY O'DELL: Full Speed Ahead As A Singer On The Touring Highway

Go to your record collection, and pull out *Behind Closed Doors* by Charlie Rich, *Lizzy and the Rainman* by Tanya Tucker, or *Too Much Is Not Enough* by Billie Jo Spears. If you'll look hard enough, you'll find the name Kenny O'Dell enclosed by parentheses on all three disks.

Such bracketing, of course, signifies the author of the particular song. For Oklahoma-born and California-bred Kenny O'Dell, his decade-long skein as tunesmith extraordinaire has earned him a Grammy, several number one country chart placements and a spread past the outskirts of Nashville.

Country is full of these semi-anonymous songwriters, who see a good deal more of pianos and lead sheets than tour buses and state fairs. At one time, Kenny could have been placed in the former category, yet with his own hit, *Let's Shake Hands and Come Out Lovin'*, piercing the top ten in early fall, he might just have to hit the touring highway.

"I was rapping with Phil (Walden, President of Capricorn Records) last year, and he asked me what I was doing at the time. He suggested that we try something record-wise. So I had this basic idea for a tune, but didn't have a

Championship Rodeo Meets Championship Country Music Superstars



Former football pro, Walt Garrison.

Fort Worth, Texas was the scene of the Copenhagen/Skoal Rodeo Superstars Championship earlier this year; a thunderous crowd jamming the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum witnessing this annual event which awards the largest cash prizes ever in professional rodeo competition. The \$65,000 tournament-style, single-elimination match competition rodeo featured three events: Calf roping, with a \$15,000 first prize; bull riding, \$15,000; and girls barrel racing,

\$5,000. Sponsors of the event, the U.S. Tobacco Co., in addition to awarding prize money to contestants in each elimination also donated \$50,000 to the Fort Worth Children's Hospital.

Walt Garrison, who co-anchored this special event with Verne Lundquist and provided home viewers with play-by-play coverage, is by and large a superstar in his own right. Walt joined the U.S. Tobacco Co., in '75 and today serves as Western Marketing Director and whose idea it was to start the successful championship rodeo in Texas. Garrison, however, is no stranger to the rodeo circuit. More well-known for his prowess as the nine-year running back of the Dallas Cowboys, Garrison's been named to the Pro Bowl twice and became that team's third leading rusher in history and fourth on its list of pass receivers. It was then in the '71 Super Bowl his football career was capped with an amazing performance when he was Dallas' leading ground-gainer despite the fact he was playing with a shoulder broken only two weeks earlier. It was while still competing on the gridiron, that Garrison was building up a reputation for his talent on the rodeo circuit as well, and carrying through a love for that sport in grade school, when he and several friends would sneak off

and ride calves. He later joined the rodeo teams in high school and at Oklahoma State and became a rodeo pro after graduating specialized in steer wrestling. At the time, Garrison averaged some 23 to 30 rodeos per year, and during that period came to the attention of U.S. Tobacco due to his frequent use of the company's products.

Walt Garrison's got another love that being country music. And what better way to highlight a championship rodeo than with several championship country music personalities. "Country music surely brings out the crowds," Garrison told *Country Music Magazine*. "And naturally more people are familiar with the form of music than with the rodeo." That's especially true when you have the likes of say a Ronnie Milsap, or Johnny Rodriguez or even Red Steagall and The Coleman County Cowboys performing. "It's an asset when a country music star performs at a rodeo, because more than likely people love that form of entertainment and it's a good way for them to learn more about the workings of the rodeo, too," Garrison explained.

Cowboys love country; it's about real life, life the way they live it. And as Garrison so aptly put it: "I listen to it all the time... in fact, it's the only thing I listen to."

PAT CANOLE

Hollywood Cowboy Foy Willing: A Sad Tune

Foy Willing was in Nashville last July, as he had often been over the course of the last couple of years, supervising the mixing of several recent recordings. On Monday the 24th he was found dead of an apparent heart attack, ending at the age of 63 a long and varied career in radio, record, and film.

Born Foy Willingham in Bosque County, Texas, he drifted in and out of a performing career, beginning on radio for Crazy Water Crystals in 1933. By 1935 he began a career in radio as an announcer and executive, and moved to California about 1940. When the *Hollywood Barn Dance* went on the air in 1943 he formed the Riders of the Purple Sage, a smooth western harmony trio in the tradition of the Sons of the Pioneers, and they became fixtures of the show. They were also longtime staples—as both actors and musicians—of *All-Star Western Theatre*, which featured both music and western drama.

In addition, Foy and the Riders appeared in a number of western films, beginning in support of Jimmy Wakely in



Foy and The Riders of The Purple Sage.

Cowboy Canteen in 1944, and then with both Roy Rogers and later Monte Hale.

The Riders of the Purple Sage recorded prolifically in their heyday, having success with *No One To Cry To* and *Cool Water* on Majestic, and *Texas Blues* and perhaps the most haunting version ever of *Ghost Riders In The Sky*.

By 1952 the singing cowboy had become passe, and Foy disbanded the Riders to return to radio in an executive capacity, although he sporadically reformed the band for special occasions such as recording the sound track for *Cowboy* with Glenn Ford, and making a 1959 tour with Gene Autry.

Foy seemed to disappear after that—rumors abounded as to his whereabouts—but he suddenly reappeared in Belton, Texas, a few years ago, and began recording and making appearances at western film festivals, his lovely baritone voice still supple and strong. In addition he was planning an autobiography and some limited touring—his last appearance had been at the Fan Fair Reunion Show in June.

Foy Willing's death has a particular poignancy in that he was so actively galloping down the comeback trail. Yet, at the same time, he was once again surrounded by the commotion and excitement of the music business he loved, and in a way died with his boots on, as all good cowboys do.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

steel, the blues colorations of the guitar, even the plummy tones of *I Don't Hurt Any More* marked a whole generation's passage into musical maturity. This was the music that Elvis Presley was listening to as he was growing up, this is the music that everyone from Ray Charles to Chuck Berry and Carl Perkins with their own tongue-twisting lyrics and divine reference tunes pressed in the pages of his musical memory book. Without any question the distinctive styling is still there; in fact it comes through better than it has in years—with bluesy material, lots of good clean picking, the comfortable foggy baritone, and relatively uncluttered arrangements—on Hank's latest album **#104—Still Movin' On**. The only difference is that it's 104 and counting.

Hank Snow doesn't really fit into the DisneyWorld atmosphere of the new Nashville. He seems indifferent, however to his reputation for being stand-offish. "I am a loner, that is so right. They have got tired of sending me invitations in this city, because they know better. I'm not conceited. I'm not stuck up. I'm just reserved and ac-

tually a loner. I've been on my own since I was 12. I had nobody. It was very difficult. What I went through during my early years—which a lot of people have gone through, it's just my story, you can find a million stories like that—I always said it was the greatest education, you couldn't get an education like that in no college, there's no way. It prepared me and taught me to be thrifty, it taught me to be business-minded, and it taught me to continue with being on top of everything, to be completely organized, the same as now. So I think it was a great education, and I became well disciplined through all of this."

How does this square, though, with the celebrated panache of his stage presence, deal with getting up on stage at all in fact?

"When you walk out on stage, you go into a completely different world. You forget all about anything else. You are in a different world. Costumes is part of it, because, as you know, flash is part of your act. Look at Liberace. I think he's got the most colorful, beautiful show I've ever seen. Flash is 50 percent of it."

The Hank Snow story is not one of easy success; fame did not grasp him to her bosom overnight, but not once did he falter nor did he let anything steer him from his course. Yes, Hank has been touched by the sometimes harsh sometimes gentle hand of fame but thru it all he has remained the same young fellow who unloaded a ship load of salt to buy his first guitar, and even now when he steps out on stage to greet the roar of applause that resounds around him, you know that he still remembers the cold wet and fearful nights of the days at sea. You know, too, when listening to the songs that pour from his heart and soul, that he remembers the helping hand of the fans the world over that have reached out to lift him up to that spot in the sun from which has flown the almost regal banner of Hank Snow—The Singing Ranger. Yes, you know he remembers and you can almost hear the prayer of thanks that echoes constantly in his heart and when his gentle voice reaches out to you at the close of his programs 'and for now, good luck, good health, and may the good Lord always be proud of ya,'

you feel the surge of wistfulness in the haunting memories that are his—you realize that here is the same young fellow who started out with nothing but persistence, a golden voice and a deep, abiding faith in the great Almighty. This, friends, ends the Hank Snow story the year 1970 but the golden arrow pointing up the mountains and thru the valleys of the future, signals toward even greater heights of success for the courageous little former Canadian and painted on the arrow in glowing letters is written—Hank Snow is still movin' on and may the good Lord always be proud of him.

As I drive back into Nashville, I see what has become a familiar sight, two modern cowboys on the highway, one wearing a hat, each carrying a guitar, thumbs stuck out, squinting into the sun and the Nashville skyline. I think immediately of Hank Snow, but they're probably thinking of Kris Kristofferson, if they're thinking of the past at all. To them the future looks bright ahead. To Hank Snow, "The old greats will never die. They've made their mark on civilization." ■

Willie Nelson and the New Jersey Punks

How "Blue Skies" soothed the savage beasts.

They did not come to the New Jersey Meadowlands to hear Willie Nelson. In fact, most of the 70,000 fans filling the Giants Stadium had never heard of Willie. They came to spend the long summer afternoon listening to The Grateful Dead, and they were a pretty rough crowd. Young crowd. Heavy crowd. Tough. They were scary to look at, a lot of them, dressed in punk costumes that made outlaw Willie look clean-cut. They had a lot of drugs with them and they sat around in clusters sniffing coke and smoking grass right out in the open, looking bleary-eyed and not much caring about anything.

When Willie got up on the stage, The Grateful Dead was inside holding a press conference, so few reporters even got to hear him. The Dead were telling the press about their up-coming concert in Egypt, and the kids were making mischief, like turning all the water fountains loose and drowning the crowd, and Willie Nelson started to sing. He sounded really good, but not too many noticed at first. About mid-way through his set, Willie did *Good-Hearted Woman* (Waylon Jennings had been billed to appear, but cancelled) and some people started to listen and a few clapped along. "He's a weird dude," one kid said. "Spaced out," his friend said. A gang of boys coming down the aisle were doing Indian war whoops, which do not



by LOUISE BERNIKOW

sound like country yells. Willie sang *Georgia On My Mind* and *Blue Skies*. He was rolling along; he didn't seem to know or care what his spaced-out audience was up to. Or maybe he just knew he would turn them on—his way.

He did. More and more kids were listening and clapping and asking each other who the "weird dude" was. Willie

was winding up like a house on fire, like a man inspired. *Amazing Grace* got the crowd to its feet. It felt like the end of the set, but it was just the beginning of something those kids had never felt in their lives. Their mouths were open. *Luckenbach Texas* came next and on top of that, like fireworks, without a breather, *Corinna Corinna* and a great wrap-up rendition of *Whiskey River* that had everyone screaming. Amazing. Really amazing. Willie walked off the stage grinning, full of energy.

To say it was the highlight of the afternoon is to put it mildly. Willie was a ray of sunshine in an otherwise cloudy and grim afternoon. The Grateful Dead spent ten minutes between songs tuning their instruments (Willie had just taken off and kept going the minute he set foot onstage) and the kids got into a lot of bad trouble. New Jersey police say six kids were hospitalized for drug overdoses and there are rumors that three people died there. The place was littered with broken beer bottles and the sour smell of violence. Only Willie Nelson brought with him the good spirit that lies at the heart of real music. He had a pocketful of sunshine, and he passed it out to the crowd. Maybe some of them went home and bought a Willie Nelson record, just to make sure they really heard what they thought they heard. ■

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I Saw the Light
Miller's Churn
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of My Heart
A Legend in My Own Mind
These Hands
When My Blue Heaven
Turns to Grey
My Nova Scotia
My Rough and Ready
In the Jailhouse Now
My Little Old One
Down in New Orleans
Waiting for a Train
I've Ranged, and I've Traded
Why Did You Leave Me
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Name of the Game
I Love You Because
A Petal from a Faded Rose
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Ninety Miles an Hour
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Hel
Mus
Let
Cryin
Mair
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An Exclusive Country Music Interview With Tex Purdom

Following is an exclusive *Country Music* interview with Fleener G. "Tex" Purdom, one of the hottest nobodies in country music today.

QUESTION:

Tex, can you tell us a little something about your early life?

ANSWER:

I was born on a 5000-acre plantation on what is now downtown north Alabama. When I was just a kid my parents realized I had musical ability, so they moved next door to a 14-room shack so I could grow up singing country music from actual experience. Every morning I had to get up and go outside, no matter what the weather, and get the morning paper. Then, however much I wanted to watch *Captain Kangaroo*, I'd have to fix my own breakfast. After that I had to walk through a wild game farm on my way to school. I was only eight years old, but each day I'd have to make my own way past the Monkey Jungle and Flipper's Follies. That was an experience I'd rather forget. Even today I still shudder every time I put on my alligator shoes.

At school, all the other kids made fun of me because I was the only one who didn't have a Buck Rogers ray gun. In fact, we were so poor we couldn't afford jumper cables. Every time the car battery went dead, dad would have to buy a new one. Sometimes he'd even have to buy a new car. But I'm grateful for the way I was raised because it led me to drink.

When I was ten, I had a cold that settled in my saliva glands. The doctors told my mother I'd never be able to spit again, and that I could never again brush my teeth because I could choke on the toothpaste. So I began to chew tobacco. I chewed for months and months until one day I woke up to find brown stains on my chest where I had drooled on myself during the night. The doctor said it was a miracle; that not only could I spit again, but that my saliva glands had been built up so much from the constant chewing that by now they couldn't stop functioning. I would have to spit every 30 seconds or so the rest of my life! That gave me an invaluable lesson about setting your goal in life and never giving up.

When I was 26, I was caught skinny-dipping in the Bering Strait and sent up to reform school. I had to spend a week among the most hardened-type of criminal you can imagine: People who had made errors on their tax returns. I know I



Tex posed with a life-like statue of Dolly, since the real thing was unavailable. What's next for our boy Tex?

could end up just like them if I didn't change my ways. I made up my mind right then when I got out to come to Nashville and make something of myself.

QUESTION:

How did you get started?

ANSWER:

I knocked around town for three years and couldn't get in to see anybody. The

whole time I lived on little black fish eggs, the remains of dead steers and grape juice that had fermented 50 years ago. I was about ready to hock my priceless rhinestone toilet seat—an heirloom that had been in our family ever since I bought it—when one day I slipped and fell on a patch of ice and fractured my abdominal wall. At last I had gotten my big break! Since

(Continued on page 103)

Rhinestones & Sequins

A look at four talented women who design, stitch, seam and sometimes sweat for many of Nashville's top country music stars.

by **ELAINE HOBSON MILLER**

Judy Hunt, Lucy Adams, Patsy Sledd, Ruth Kemp. You won't find these names on record charts, and they don't appear on album credits, either. But they are responsible for making certain entertainers look dazzling before live audiences and television cameras, and their work requires as much talent as cutting a record or putting on a show. For these are some of Nashville's busiest tailors, earning their daily bread designing and sewing stage clothes for some of the brightest stars in country music.

California's Nudie and Harvey Krantz don't have a corner on that market. Nashville performers are awakening to the pride in wearing clothes with an individual look, and to the convenience of having a tailor close to home. That's how many Nashville tailors operate, in fact—from their homes, where they can work odd hours and still be near their families.



Judy Hunt works out of her two-story home. Her clients include Loretta Lynn & Tom T. Hall.

Judy Hunt is an exception, however, having converted the second floor of an old two-story frame house on Music Square into a four-room shop.

You wouldn't call Judy's place chic, nor is it funky. Cramped and homey would be more like it. Half-finished clothes dangle from door casings and scraps of thread and fabric litter the carpets. Several sewing machines and waist-high cutting tables crowd the two sewing rooms, where wall shelves store materials. "We're not really disorganized, but we can't say everything is in its place, either," Judy laughed. "It's messy enough to be comfortable."

Bending over a cutting table one Tuesday afternoon, she chatted amiably as she worked on a dress for Loretta Lynn. "Loretta's got to have some new things before she leaves Sunday for two weeks in

Las Vegas," she said, her scissors slipping easily through the gold-and-white cloth. "I'll probably take them to her office Friday or Saturday."

Lucy Adams, Judy's "right-hand" at this time, was working up some outfits for Dolly Parton, who had just called to say she needed "something" for a television show she would tape in two weeks. "We wouldn't know how to act if they gave us plenty of time," Judy remarked. "Yeah, Lucy joined in, "they call us and say they want something *yesterday*."

Vern Gosdin, Johnny Rodriguez, Tom T. Hall, Kenny Starr and several Elvis impersonators are part of Judy's clientele. "We go to their homes or offices, because they don't have time to come here," Judy explained. "Once, I even had to take some clothes to Loretta in the hospital."

Judy has been in the tailoring business 12 years, Lucy nine. Like their famous customers, they started the the bottom



"We wouldn't know how to act if they gave us plenty of time," says Judy of her schedule.

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and worked their way up. "My ex-husband was in country music in Atlanta (Georgia) and I sewed for him," Judy said, taking a break from her work to smoke a cigarette. "When we moved to Nashville, I kept sewing and one thing just led to another. The first entertainer I sewed for was Hank Lochlin." Lucy made samples and patterns in a fur factory before working for Judy and her ex-husband, who owned Music City Tailors. She worked at home after the factory closed, sewing mostly for Dolly.

Neither Judy nor Lucy has a degree in designing or tailoring although Lucy took some home correspondence courses. Judy figures she inherited her talent from her grandmother, who was head wardrobe mistress for Major Bowes' Showboat, back in the days of Vaudeville.

Sometimes their customers know what they want in their clothes, and sometimes they don't. Most of them want Lucy or Judy to help them create a style of their own. To do this, the women talk with them about such things as their favorite colors, their individual personalities and whether they move around much on stage. They also discuss their stage image. "After a while, you get to know them and you know what they want, but it's hard at first," Lucy said. "Dolly never knows what she wants. She just sees material she likes but can't see it made up. She does like plenty of butterflies and all the rhinestones you can get on her clothes, because these are part of her image."

Some customers change their minds frequently about their clothes. "Right now, Loretta likes lots of trim, but she'll change over in a few months and want to be simple again," Judy said. "But she sticks to the same basic look: pants with a Western cut or long dresses with high necks. She



Lucy Adams opened her own business in the garage behind her house.

wants to maintain her sweet, country-girl image."

When Mr. Blackwell named Loretta Lynn as one of the world's "Ten Worst Dressed Women," Judy took it personally. "It upset me at first," she said. "Then I talked with Loretta who said, 'Anytime I'm on some list with Dinah Shore and Angie Dickinson, I'm not worried. So, I put it out of my mind after that. Besides, Mr. Blackwell is in a different league than we are. He probably couldn't dress a country performer anyway.'"

Judy and Lucy use dress forms for fitting clothes while their customers are out-of-town. They have a basic pattern for each customer, changing it or decorating it to make each garment look different. "We also use body measurements to get the correct fit," Lucy said. But she refused to reveal Dolly's most outstanding measurement. "I'm sworn to secrecy," she said, grinning sheepishly. She did explain Dolly can't buy clothes off store racks,

because "she's so hard to fit."

Most Nashville tailors buy their materials locally, ordering only when they need something special. A rhinestone studder for setting rhinestones is standard equipment in their business, and they may have a surger for binding seams in addition to a blind stitcher that sews invisible hems in garments and an embroidery machine. Judy uses a 100 percent polyester fabric called Suralene for men's suits because of its durability and resistance to wrinkles. "Johnny (Rodriguez) likes polyesters with a silky look, and just a few stones on his clothes," Judy said. "Tom T. wears a lot of Quiana shirts, but he doesn't want any stones. He says they mess up his singing."

The clothes Judy makes vary widely in prices, depending on the amount of work they require. "Anything with any trim on it would start around \$250," she said. "We copied an Elvis suit recently for Ronny Speeks, an Elvis impersonator from Knoxville, and it had a cape and was loaded with stones. It cost him \$1,000."

Shortly after this interview, Lucy left Judy's shop and started her own business located in the garage behind her house. "I used to do all of Dolly and Porter's duet things, and when Dolly left him I continued sewing for her," she said. Now since the inception of her business, Lucy makes clothes for Porter and his new girl singer, Linda Carol Moore and also for Jim Owen, who has the one-man 'Hank' show.

The incessant whirring of sewing machines can be heard all day and into the nights in Patsy Sledd's basement sewing room in her suburban Nashville home. While Judy employs two full-time and one part-time helper, Patsy's only help comes from her husband Larry. "He operates the rhinestone machine, which is run by compressor, and does some sewing," Patsy said. "It's hard to find someone to do the type work I do. If they're good, they're in business for themselves."

The former Mega recording artist traveled and sang harmony with Tammy Wynette for years, and still does some weekend gigs and fair dates. But sewing for Tammy, Margo Smith, Barbara Mandrell and Helen Cornelius keeps her at home most of the time, where she frequently stops what she's doing to get her toddler, Jeb, out of sewing machine drawers. "I needed stage clothes when I first started singing in Missouri, so I started sewing for myself," she said. "When I had the baby I didn't want to go on the road and leave him, so I started putting my sewing experience to use."

Being a performer, Patsy has a special feel for what her customers want, and they usually leave the design and selection



Lucy Adams puts some finishing touches on a dress for Dolly. "She likes plenty of butterflies and rhinestones on her clothes."

A vintage record sleeve for Willie Nelson's 'Face of a Fighter' is leaning against a wooden fence. The sleeve features a black and white portrait of Willie Nelson, looking down with his hand near his face. The title 'WILLIE NELSON FACE OF A FIGHTER' is printed in white at the top. The sleeve is resting on a bed of straw or hay.

WILLIE NELSON FACE OF A FIGHTER

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**When Mr. Blackwell named
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"Then I talked with Loretta who said,
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and Angie Dickinson, I'm not worried.'"**

of fabric up to her. "Some of those shiny fabrics can't be worn for lots of work in the outside fairs," she said. She uses fabrics that will hold up well under the weight of rhinestones and repeated dry cleanings. "Most of my customers want their clothes cleaned," she said. "They don't have time to wash them, even though the fabrics usually are washable."

Stage clothes don't reflect current fashion trends, so Patsy doesn't bother reading fashion magazines. "Some of the stylish things aren't really that flattering anyway," she said. She finds the casual way some of today's performers dress on stage "disgusting," preferring to see them in "pretty clothes."

Although jeans and tee shirts work for

some people, they aren't in keeping with Barbara Mandrell's image. Her fans are accustomed to seeing her in fancy stage clothes, and she likes clothes with lots of sparkle. "I think my fans expect me to look different than they do," she said. "A friend of mine, Merle Travis, once told me that when a person has paid to see you perform, by golly, you ought to look like a show business personality, and not some girl who just got up out of the audience. I really believe that."

Barbara also believes shows should be visual as well as audible. "You can hear a record at home," she continued. So she added an element of visual surprise to her concert dates this year. She starts the shows in a long evening dress, then goes

through a complete costume change during a seven-second black-out. "This is done by wearing a tight jumpsuit under the long dress," she explained. "When the lights come on, you can just hear the people say, 'Aaaaaah.' It makes for a nice change of pace."

Long dresses are a change for Barbara anyway, because she never wore them in concerts before this year, except during her pregnancy. "I'm so fiesty on stage and play a lot of different instruments and I feel better in pants," she said. "I'm just not the stand-there-and-hold-the-microphone-and-try-to-look-pretty type of performer."

Barbara has complete confidence in Patsy Sledd's tastes, and usually gives her a free hand in designing her clothes. Patsy picks styles to flatter the figures of her customers, believing, "if they've got a figure, it needs to be shown." Barbara's small hips have to be accentuated, and she likes clothes with waistlines. Because of her size, though, she can wear almost anything. "I try not to accentuate Margo's hips," Patsy said. "Helen Cornelius likes the sweet, feminine look, Dottie West (another customer) likes jeans and halters and Tammy wears a variety of things."

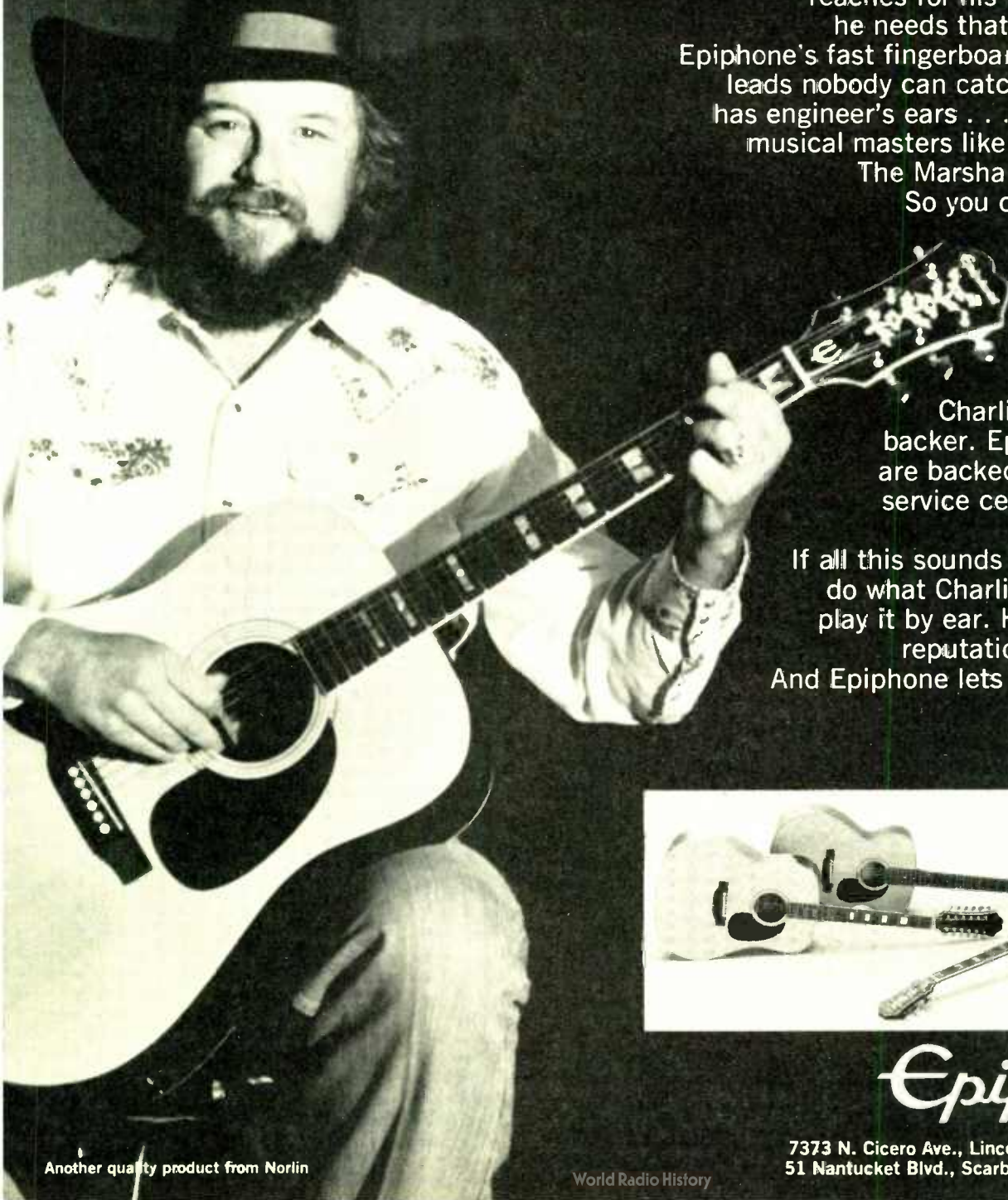


A performer herself, Patsy Sledd has a special feel for what her customers, including Barbara Mandrell & Dottie West want.

In another Nashville suburb, similar to the one where Patsy lives, Ruth Kemp has a shop behind her carport, where Larry Gatlin, Ronnie Milap, Cal Smith, Stella Parton, Dolly Parton's band members and sometimes Dolly herself go to be measured and fitted. A small, pleasant woman, Ruth doesn't think of herself as an image-maker. She has only been in the tailoring business four years, and still is awed by the steady stream of entertainers that passes through her doorway. The night of this interview, she had several Gatlin albums lying about her shop. "I brought them out here to get him to sign them when he came by today, but I was too embarrassed to ask him," she confided. "It's real exciting work, meeting these people and knowing them on a personal level, and it has all happened so fast."

Ruth worked several years in boutiques doing "creative things" before mutual

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"We also use body measurements to get the correct fit," Lucy said. But she refused to reveal Dolly's most outstanding measurement. "I'm sworn to secrecy." She will say though that Dolly can't buy clothes off the store racks, because "she's so hard to fit."



Larry Gatlin & Stella Parton are only two of the performers for whom Ruth Kemp designs.

friends recommended her to Dolly Parton. She made some of Dolly's band uniforms, working with Lucy Adams to coordinate them with Dolly's clothes. Dolly sent sister Stella and Ronnie Milsap to Ruth, and word-of-mouth led Gatlin and Cal Smith to her shop. "Dolly's been real good to me," she said, pausing to arrange the flowers the entertainer had sent her recently.

Years of making shirts and pants for three growing sons (she also has a daughter) helped to prepare Ruth for tailoring men's clothing. She has taken seminars in pattern making, but she's mostly self-taught. "I've studied sewing books like other people would study languages," she said. One thing the sewing

books didn't teach her was how to take a man's inseam measurement without showing embarrassment. "The first time I did it, I could feel the blood rushing to my face," she said. "Now, I just ask them to hold the top of my measuring tape, while I hold the bottom. But I prefer them to bring me an old pair of pants that are the right length," she said.

Like Judy, Lucy and Patsy, Ruth frequently gets calls from customers while they're on-the-road, forcing her to work nights to meet their deadlines. Once, Gatlin called from a local store to ask if she could alter a ready-made suit that night. He had been invited to sing for President Carter and had to leave the next day. "Larry has small hips and I altered sever-

al things for him before I started sewing for him," Ruth said. "He knows exactly what he wants. Once, he bought some ultra-suede (at \$40 per yard) and brought it to me to make some vests. He used to wear simple vests and pants, without all the stonework. He's changing his look now, and he's wearing sailor pants with button flies, and silk shirts with Mandarin collars, gathered sleeves and long cuffs."

One customer who doesn't want rhinestones is Stella Parton. "She doesn't want anything to make her look like Dolly," Ruth explained. "She likes crushed velvet, which gives her a rich look without the stones. I have to cut her jackets off at the waist, because she's so short and long coats would only make her look shorter," she said. "Ronnie (Milsap) likes satins, to catch the lights. Usually, it's his wife I'm pleasing."

Milsap's philosophy about stage clothes parallels that of Barbara Mandrell. "I believe people come to concerts to see things removed from everyday life, and I want my costumes to reflect this view," he said. "All my costumes are tailored especially for me, and they all have some type of personalized design on them." Some of Ronnie's outfits have musical notes on them, one has a piano keyboard and another has a goat, because he is a Capricorn. Ruth once made him and each band member a gangster-style suit, following the theme of his RCA "Hit Man" promotion campaign.

Milsap pays from \$500 to \$600 for each of his suits, and Stella's clothes range from \$250 to \$375. "I don't do anything for less than \$150," Ruth said. She would love to see Cal Smith in a beige suit, but he won't wear anything but blues and lavenders. "His band wanted to surprise him with a hot pink suit for Christmas, but when I showed him some pink fabric, he just didn't like it," she said. "He has a white Harvey Krantz suit he's worn only once," she added, in the exasperated tone of a wife who can't get her husband to throw away his old Army shirt.

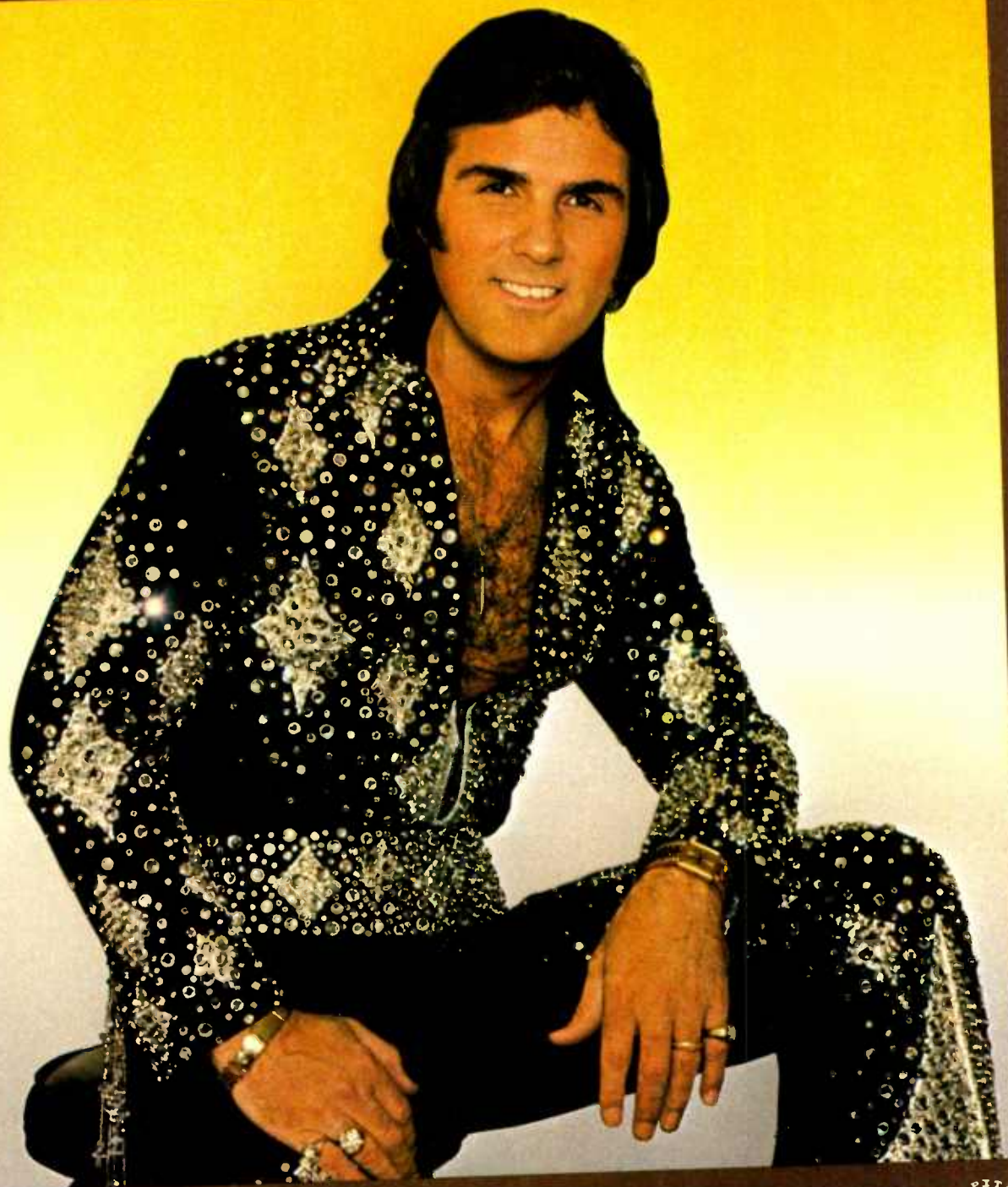
So next time you are blinded by the glare of lights bouncing off Dolly or Loretta's rhinestones, or feel Tammy's gown is a little too low-cut, remember all the work that went into making those clothes. And remember, too, there's no business like sew business. ■

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Teddy Bear

Red Sovine's first gold record was a real surprise. "Teddy Bear is the best thing that ever happened to me."

by **BOB ALLEN**

Woodrow Wilson (Red) Sovine had no sooner taken the stage of Nashville's darkened War Memorial Auditorium when, from out in the 25th row, the call came in:

"Play *Teddy Bear*!"

"What's that?"

"*Teddy Bear*!"

"We're gonna do it!" Red cocks his head affirmatively to one side as the audience shows its approval with a hearty round of applause. "But we got some other things to do first!" With that, he opens with *Phantom 309*, the unforgettable story of the ghost trucker. The Saturday night audience is rapt as Red, looking tall and somewhat stately in a gray leisure suit, runs through the long narration, his clear baritone voice booming out through the PA, his intonations carrying all the subdued fervor of a Fundamentalist preacher on Easter Sunday.

No one, since the death of his friend and mentor, Red Foley, has carried on the tradition of the narration in country music as consistently or successfully as has Red Sovine. All the way from *Little Rosa*, (a mournful tear-jerker which he recorded with Webb Pierce in the early fifties) right up through *Giddy-Up, Go!* (another story-song that has undoubtedly put lumps in more throats than anything since Skippy Peanut Butter) to *Phantom 309*, (a modern truck-driving classic) and *Teddy Bear*, Red Sovine has proven himself to be a musical story-teller of the first order—the excess sentimentality and watery eyes notwithstanding. He has talked his way through more hit records than just about anybody else around.

Still, the fans from Toledo out in the 25th row are restless: "'*Teddy Bear*!'"

And finally, it's *Teddy Bear* time. Another wave of applause sweeps through the auditorium, and the steel guitar begins to weep softly as Red steps up close to the microphone: "*I was ridin' on the outskirts of a little southern town, tryin' to reach my destination before the sun went down. . .*"

Before Red has gotten through the five-minute, ten-second-long saga of the crippled CB'er, a few snuffles can be heard in the front rows, and a few Kleenex are poised ready in clenched hands. For the finale, Red works his own voice into an emotional pitch that threatens to break

into a sob: ". . . I'll sign off now before I start to cry. . . May God ride with you. . . 10-4 and goodbye!"

The modest one-story home where Red has lived for the past 12 years, lies on a quiet side street in an unassuming Nashville suburb. There are no guitar-shaped swimming pools or life-sized glow-in-the-dark statues of Hank Williams here; just a small mailbox with "W.W. Sovine" on it. Red's Volkswagen bus sits out front on the well-manicured lawn, and behind the house sits a larger touring van which in the morning will take Red and his two-piece band to a show in mid-state Pennsylvania. It is furnished, of course, with a CB radio. (For the record, Red Sovine *does* own two working CB's, and *did* drive a truck for two years, hauling Burger Beer between Cincinnati, Ohio, and his hometown of Charleston, West Virginia.)

Until recently, Red's long musical career had been something short of illustrious. By his own admission, he has had just enough hit records to keep him in the business, but something short of whatever it takes to penetrate that exclusive, precarious orb of success loosely referred to as stardom. Still, Red has no regrets. The 'ole music business has afforded him an opportunity to do what he considered most important over the last couple of decades: to do a proper job of raising, feeding and educating his four kids, all of whom are grown-up now, and happily settled into college or (nonmusical) careers of their own.

Red's own venture into show biz officially began in 1948, when he left a \$15,000 a-year job as superintendent of a hosiery mill in Eleanor, West Virginia. ("It was a good job," he points out. "That was like \$50,000 a year in today's money!") With his wife and kids in tow, he drove down to join the Louisiana Hayride in Shreveport. Instead of the Hayride, for a fraction of the money he'd been making in West Virginia, he got a ten-minute spot on an early morning radio show. ("My family thought I was out of my mind, and after I'd been down there for three months, I thought I was too!")

Things brightened a little when his friend, Hank Williams left his job at

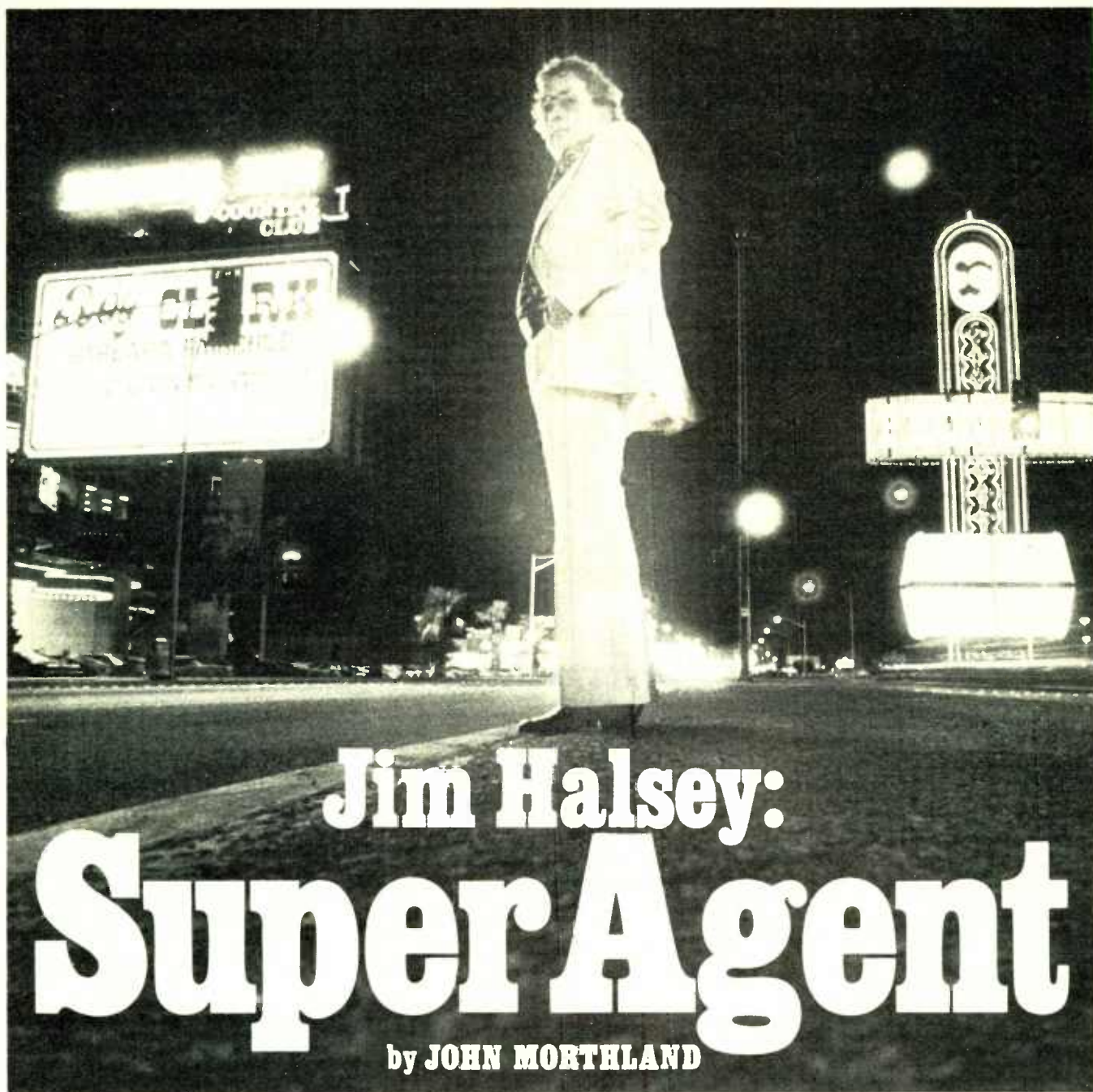
Radio WSFA in Montgomery, Alabama, and helped Red land the job as his replacement. Again, in 1949, when Hank left the Louisiana Hayride to join the Opry, it was Red who was called to fill the slot he left vacant. ("For six years, I was to the Hayride, what Roy Acuff is to the Opry: anything good that come in, I got it!")

That same year, Red, with the help of publisher Fred Rose, cut his first record in Nashville, and he claims he was still so poor, he didn't even have a record player to play it on. In 1955, still without a hit record, he joined the Opry, and that same year he recorded a duet with his old friend, Webb Pierce called *Why, Baby, Why* that went to the number one spot. ("But Webb was hotter'n a firecracker back then, so he got all the credit!")

The next two decades for Red Sovine were marked by all the setbacks and comebacks common to so many musical careers: a hit record here and there, a short but lucrative TV and radio career, a repossessed house, a whole string of different record labels, a continuous go-round of personal appearances, and finally *Teddy Bear*, the only million-selling record to come out of Nashville in 1976. For Red, it was his first gold record: quite a pleasant surprise for a 58-year-old, grandfather of 12, with nearly three decades in the business behind him.

"*Teddy Bear* is the best thing that ever happened to me," Red smiles as he leans back in his cushioned rocker, speaking the clear, avuncular voice that has been immortalized on his records. "I didn't figure I'd ever get a gold record! I figured I'd done aged, and the best years had gone by. I mean, at the point when I found *Teddy Bear*, I just wanted to get a top-ten record so I could get some road work. It's unbelievable!" he shakes his head, "some-thin' like that makes ya so happy, ya don't know what to do!"

For Red, who—aside from the successful re-release of *Phantom 309* in 1974—had spent quite a few years in the limbo of the artist-with-no-hit-record, *Teddy Bear* brought some welcome changes. Overnight, he found himself in demand for national TV appearances, and he found that the price he could command for one-nighter's suddenly doubled, or even tripled.



Jim Halsey: Super Agent

by JOHN MORTHLAND

Why is Roy Clark the highest paid performer in country music despite the fact that he rarely has hit records? How come you can hardly turn on the TV these days without seeing Mel Tillis? Why did the Oak Ridge Boys switch from sacred to secular music and become an a classic show biz "overnight success" after years of struggle? Why did Tammy Wynette leave the booking agency of which she was one-third owner?

These four disparate artists (and more than a dozen others ranging from Don Williams to Jana Jae to Freddy Fender to Johnny Tillotson to Donna Fargo to Hank Thompson to

Minnie Pearl to Roy Head) have one thing in common: all are managed and/or booked by Jim Halsey.

At 47, Halsey represents the absolute pinnacle of a new breed of country music entrepreneur. In contrast to the fast-talking, back-slapping, cigar-chomping character of old, there is nothing flashy about him except a few pieces of gold and turquoise jewelry. He dresses in nondescript western sport clothes and speaks in a soft monotone. He's the kind of guy that tends to recede into the background at a dinner involving more than about three people. Even his senior vice president describes him as

"dull," and Halsey considers the word so apt that he uses it to describe himself.

Halsey will sometimes say he is a salesman, plain and simple, and he operates like any other salesman except that his product is country music performers. He disdains the trend-happy, take-the-money-and-run attitude that has always been common among moguls in all areas of show business, and as a manager/agent, he feels his job consists of more than booking dates for his artists and making sure they are paid. Halsey builds long-term careers, using all available resources from hit records to (most significantly)

television exposure, and for that his company collects 20 percent of his clients' earnings. It is a meticulous, and sometimes cold-blooded, process, this building of long-term careers. When a new client signs, Halsey sits down and tries to plot out the client's career in six month blocks for the next 18 months. This consists of projecting the goals he hopes to reach, and when they have been achieved, he will sit down and formulate new ones. Judging from his track record, Halsey gets results—and he has done so while largely ignoring the country music industry in Nashville. Halsey works out of Tulsa, Okla.

He is the man most responsible for opening television up to country music performers, and Las Vegas too. He put top client Roy Clark into the Soviet Union. When he took on Hank Thompson as his first management client in 1951 after a few years promoting shows in his native Independence, Kansas, Halsey's first step was to break open the Midwestern big-band ballrooms for western swing. Today, he has almost a complete lock on the Midwestern fairs and rodeo circuit; those bookings (about 400 a year) account for roughly one-third of the Jim Halsey Co.'s total bookings.

In addition to his management and booking activities, there are publishing companies, a couple radio stations, a Tulsa Opry show, a new production company (White Buffalo) and small record label (Cyclone) which a lot of Nashville companies fear will grow into a large label and drain off talent. Halsey has a piece of *The Buddy Holly Story*, and is involved in three more film projects as backer or producer. He puts on an International Music Festival which serves as a showcase for his acts and is attended (expenses courtesy the Halsey Co.) by promoters, press, deejays, talent buyers, and television and record executives. At this point, he is active in nearly every phase of show business except Broadway musicals.

Halsey doesn't miss an angle. The music festival, an outgrowth of an industry ranch party he used to hold, costs him a bundle of money, but his losses are more than wiped out by the future bookings it brings his clients. When he sponsors a Country at Carnegie Hall show in New York, it gets taped for broadcast over the Armed Forces Radio Network, a live album is released, and highlights of the show appear on airline music programs. All of this means more exposure for his clients.

It has made him—as well as his top clients—fabulously wealthy. He won't say how much the Halsey Co., of which he is 72 percent owner, is worth, but he will point out that this year Clark will gross some \$7.5 million, Tillis will gross about \$3.5 million, the Oaks will do about \$2 million,



Halsey's managed to spotlight Roy Clark as the highest paid performer.

and those are the bookings for just three of his biggest clients.

For all this, Halsey will also look you right in the eye and calmly insist, "I have very little interest in money or anything material. I love the thrill of making it, but that's just kind of a game. Too many people equate money with success. To me, success is when I complete each individual project; that fulfillment is where the excitement is, and it just so happens that in what I do, if you're successful, it brings money. But there are plenty of other people not in this type of profession who are still very successful at what they do. A woman can be a very successful mother or housewife, for example, and there's no money in that, but it doesn't take away from her success."

It is about 9 A.M., and Halsey is sitting in his office, which is decorated with American Indian art (which he collects, along with antique cars). His huge carved desk sports a plaque that reads THE BUCK BOOMERANGS HERE, and the bookshelves are filled with *Who's Who* and works about Indian culture, the Soviet Union, and show business. Halsey's 37-person staff occupies the penthouse of a new office building overlooking the freeway in southeast Tulsa, an oil-rich city booming even by Sunbelt standards. The Halsey Co. took these offices six weeks ago, but because he spends most of his time on the road, this is only the fifth time Halsey has seen them.

Normally each day begins with a sales meeting at which the staff, with the aid of computer readouts, will discuss bookings, record deals, and the like. At another meeting in the late afternoon, progress reports are made and loose ends

tied up. That's being shelved this day, and so the office is already in full swing. Remarkably, there is no great flurry of activity, no panicky shrieks followed by hurried flights down the hall to consult someone else, no tension. Halsey's staff is largely as calm and low-key as he is (also like him, few smoke or drink). But the lights on the 20-button phone keep flashing, and there's a steady stream of voices over the intercom. Johnny Tillotson is stuck out in Lake Tahoe at a new hotel that can't open on schedule; should we require he be paid for his time anyhow? Will Roy Clark be doing Gershwin with the Salt Lake

City Symphony? Someone from the firefighters ball is trying to sell tickets. Patty Roberts (Tulsa evangelist Oral's daughter-in-law) has some good secular tunes she'd like to bring in for a hearing. Canadian songstress Colleen Peterson is due in today to talk business possibilities. Dick Howard, the senior vice president who heads up the L.A. office and handles most of the TV bookings, is also flying in, along with special projects vice president Larry Baunach, who runs the production company and record label in L.A.

Some of Halsey's detractors—and he has his share, especially in Nashville—swear that

Halsey assists Barbara Fairchild in ironing out details before showtime.



Howard is the key to the whole operation, that without him Halsey would be nothing. Howard is the one who can wheel and deal with the big city television moguls normally so hostile to country music, these critics say, and Halsey himself is lost in that world. Whether or not that is true, there is no disputing that television exposure is what makes the Halsey Co. so attractive to an increasing number of artists, and television is Howard's baby. But long before he hired Howard (in 1973) as the first full time country agent specializing in TV, Halsey was concentrating his own efforts on the tube.

"Even back in the early fifties I could see how important TV was, because it was a phenomena that was sweeping the country. And it's still the most powerful thing there is," he says. For Halsey, that meant working everything from local mid-day shows to network specials and the talk shows. When he hooked up with Roy Clark in 1960, Halsey felt he'd finally landed the kind of totally inoffensive, all-around entertainer that's ideal for TV. Their efforts in this direction paid off with a 1963 *Tonight Show* guest slot, and Clark has since graduated to guest host. He paved the way for such other Halsey clients as Freddy Fender, Mel Tillis and Don Williams to get their shots on this most prestigious of shows.

But for the most part, right from the beginning there was great resistance to country music on television—it just didn't have broad enough ap-

peal, Halsey was continually told, it was too corny to survive in the ratings battles waged primarily in urban markets. But slowly, as country has become more pop and pop more country, TV has become more receptive. And Halsey's artists have been major benefactors of that change because Howard has been right there in L.A., hustling on their behalf every day.

Howard recalls being on the set of the *Tonight Show* one day shortly after Ronnie Milsap was named CMA Entertainer of the Year. Milsap's people had called requesting a slot on a future show, and were told the *Tonight Show* "doesn't present that kind of music." At the very moment that conversation was going on, Don Williams was taping a song for the show.

"The thing is, television, especially the talk shows, doesn't have a lot of room for singers, and that's doubly true for country singers; if they want a singer at all, they'll go for one with more broad-based appeal, because they have to please so many different people," Howard explains. "So you have to convince them your artist has that appeal, and it's mostly a matter of educating them, and being persistent. With all due respect to Ronnie Milsap's organization, I think I could get him on the *Tonight Show* eventually, but he can't get on now because there's no continuing effort, there's no building the relationship with program coordinators. I socialize with these people. We're friends, over and beyond business. I go to their homes and they come to mine. There's relationships that go back a long ways, be-



Dick Howard (left with Tillis and Halsey) heads the L. A. office.

cause I've been in Hollywood 15 years. My phone calls get taken, and get proper attention."

Howard and Halsey met around 1967, when, after a variety of different jobs in television, Howard was working as an agent for General Artists Corp., and was responsible for Halsey's client list. He also shared Halsey's belief that certain types of country music were quite palatable for the mass TV market, and that television, in turn was the cornerstone of a long-term career for an entertainer. Or, as Howard puts it, "Jim and I agreed right away that our philosophy was television, television, television."

"Because once someone is seen on television, he assumes a stature that only the biggest crossover record can otherwise give him," Howard continues. "I know there's such a thing as overexposure, where people start getting bored with seeing you all the time, but you really got to go a ways to hit that mark. Meanwhile, each time you appear, there's an increased public awareness of you that will build your career and increase the price of your personal appearances. It pays



Halsey confers with Diana Pugh.

off much more importantly than money. A Roy or a Mel loses money by coming out to Hollywood to do television, but what it does further down the line in terms of public awareness more than makes up for that."

What this means is that an artist need not rely on hit records to earn his bread and butter. About a year ago, Fender hit a soft spell on the charts and the hits weren't coming like they had been. But television exposure remained good, and so there was no significant drop in his overall earnings. Tammy Wynette states flat out that she went with Halsey because, "Jim can establish you as an artist in areas where you can work next year even if you don't have a hit record. Others are just conscious of working right now, of getting you more dates. They don't think ahead to what you're gonna do next year if you don't have the records you've had this year."

Hence, Halsey thinks nothing of cancelling a one-nighter that pays five figures in order to have an artist do a choice television show for a couple hundred bucks. Though Clark (who makes \$35,000 a night on personal appearances) is country music's highest paid artist as a result of this policy,



Halsey, who rarely sees his own office, scans the Tulsa skyline.

Tillis is probably the most dramatic example of how it pays off.

When Mel signed with Halsey nearly four years ago, he was grossing about \$400,000 yearly. Under Halsey, he now commands \$20,000 a night for personals and has pushed his yearly gross to about \$3.5 million. And his record sales have not changed much during that period—nearly all the increase is due to television.

Halsey himself, like Howard, worked in Los Angeles, at GAC, for a while; he considers the experience a turning point in his career. In 1965, he was envisioning country music as the international force it has since become, and felt the road would be less rocky if there was a major agency such as GAC behind him. So he signed on as vice president, taking his four clients (Thompson, Clark, Pearl, Wanda Jackson) with him. But again, most of the agency considered country regional music with no mass market, and Halsey couldn't convince them otherwise. He never got to see through most of his schemes, and left in frustration after a year to concentrate of rebuilding his own independent agency.

Halsey returned to Kansas, where he stayed until the Tulsa move in 1971. Still, the year in Hollywood had been fruitful in some respects. Not only did Halsey solidify his relationship with Howard, who would prove so crucial when he later opened L.A. offices for the Halsey Co., but he also got his first real education in show business. "Before then, I'd been sorta on the outside of the business, knocking on the doors trying to get in," Halsey notes. "At GAC, I learned areas of negotiation, the art of negotiation, from the masters of the business."

Much of Halsey's reputation derives from his strength as a negotiator. Though most negotiating has now been delegated to subordinates, he still personally negotiates some of the biggest deals for his clients, especially the Vegas bookings, which he regards as being almost as important as television. And it is as a negotiator that Halsey's mild personal style has served him best.

Diana Pugh, who began with Halsey 12 years ago as a

17-year-old secretary and is now an executive vice president, recalls being initially "really frightened of Jim. When Jim deals with people, he doesn't have a lot to say, so he draws them out," she continues. "Then he has the upper hand, because they've come to him."

"I may not be the best salesman in the world, but I believe in my product and so I'm persistent. I'm not one of those people that goes in and razzle dazzles," Halsey muses. "But I think the balance of everything is built into integrity... the best deal is one that's good for both parties, not one where you've maybe taken unfair advantages."

One man who's dealt often with Halsey is Jim Foglesong, Nashville division president of ABC Records, which has nearly half of Halsey's artists



"I have very little interest in money or anything material," Halsey says. "I love the thrill of making it...that's just kind of a game."

on its roster. "There are not a lot of listeners in the world today, but Jim is definitely one. That's a technique."

"When somebody just listens, it encourages us to talk more, and when we talk more and more we eventually put our foot in our mouth. And he's there to capitalize on that."

"But Jim is also very fair. He doesn't expect an unreal deal for himself. And for somebody who likes to make money and have money, he's very laid back."

Foglesong went on to say that, "In the tremendous surge of country music over the last ten or so years, I'd say Jim is the most forward thinker in the industry."

Halsey would probably consider that the greatest compliment of all. In his mind, all he's ever sought to do from the

time he broke Hank Thompson into all those Midwestern ballrooms to today, when he's booking Roy Clark into Russian stadiums, is expand the market for country music.

"I not only believe country music is universal, I believe it's international. So it's almost like a crusade to me to prove that I'm right, and I have proven that I'm right," he says. "I have always felt that country wasn't relegated to any one geographic section, it wasn't relegated to any one economic stratum."

This, Halsey feels, is what Nashville fails to perceive. He only visits Music City two or three times a year—most of his time on the road is in Vegas, New York and Los Angeles—he feels the outsider there, and he is often regarded as an interloper. Ultimately, his money speaks as loudly there as any-

ville. Yet we're not Hollywood agents either. We're kinda somewhere in between, and we can really get the best of both worlds. We maintain our country roots yet we can also get the pop bookings."

Another reason they get the pop bookings is that so many of Halsey's acts play the brand of country music that leans towards easy listening. He says that convincing the Oak Ridge Boys to switch from gospel to country-pop was the only time he ever influenced the musical direction of any of his acts, but he clearly feels best working with the kind of family-oriented, middle-of-the-road performers that, some charge, are taking the country out of country music. It's a charge he can live with easily.

"There will always be a market for the hard-core country music, but there will also always be the purists who resent any modernizations," he suggests. "Maybe on the one hand country is not as pure as it once was, and I think we have contributed to that, but on the other hand, if it's performed honestly, it has the same appeal, and to a lot more people than ever before."

That's why the emphasis for the last three years has been on international expansion. Aside from Clark's upcoming tour of Russia (which, unlike his first, won't be under the auspices of the State Department) and Halsey's own Tulsa International Music Festival in November, his top priority right now is a show he'll be presenting in January at the Cannes, France, convention of MIDEM, the international music business association.

"This will be the first country music festival they've had there, and I hope this is the major breakthrough to open up country music to Europe on a big scale," Halsey says. Out the office window behind him, the sun is setting on Tulsa, and he removes his glasses to wipe sleep from his eyes, then continues. "Do you realize there are 330 million people in Western Europe? Why, all you have to do is get a small fraction of them interested in what you're doing, and..."

He doesn't finish his sentence. But then, he doesn't really need to. ■

When Dolly Parton burst onto the Nashville scene more than ten years ago, she excited everyone with her natural talent. Still, few would have believed the breadth of her vision or shared the depth of her determination to go beyond the narrow limits which many country performers accept as "country music." Now, she has shown us all what she has always known... that her music can only be called Dolly Parton music. Perhaps no other artists, of this musical generation, except Cash and Dylan, have the awesome writing and performing talent necessary to make this claim. It is fitting then, that Dolly has won this year's Country Music Association Award for Entertainer of the Year, an honor bestowed by the people within the Country Music industry, including her peers and friends. Dolly has reached the top, but no one should doubt that her vision, determination and talent will take her still "higher and higher." This article, which follows Dolly's journey from the mountains of East Tennessee to the heights of her profession, is adapted from a new Country Music Magazine Press book by Alanna Nash. Published by Reed Books.

DOLLY

by **ALANNA NASH**

The Parton family remembers the birth of the fourth child, Dolly Rebecca, in the wee hours of January 19, 1946, as an unusual occasion. "It snowed the night she was born, then the sky turned bright blue the next day," older sister Willadeene told a journalist years later. "All the neighbors came from miles to see the new baby.

She was the most beautiful baby I'd ever seen, the first in our family with blond hair and fair, ivory skin." Dr. Robert F. Thomas, whom Dolly was to immortalize in her song bearing his name, delivered the baby at home, a log cabin known as the Ken and Martha Williams place, on Pittman Center Road. Lee Parton had no money to pay him. "He was paid with a sack of corn meal," Dolly tells with a twinkle in her eye. "We used to grow our own corn. We'd shell it, and Daddy would take it to the mill. So that's what I cost—a sack of meal. Too bad it couldn't have been flour. He'd'a had more dough!"

Although Dolly often jokes about her family's poverty ("Most people have three rooms and a bath. We had four rooms and a path. Sure we had runnin' water. When we'd run and get it!"), Lee and Avie Lee's existence was always a struggle. In the younger children's early years, Lee sharecropped wherever he could, and the family moved often. But their's was hardly a home without joy, a great deal of it derived from the music sung and played there, Avie Lee Parton singing the old folk songs and ballads she'd learned from her grandmother, and Lee Parton picking his banjo to his children's delight.

The family sing-alongs stand out in each Parton child's

memory as some of the happiest hours of their lives, and out of the twelve Parton children, seven are working now or at one time worked as professional musicians. The influence of the gatherings seems to have been especially strong on Dolly, who had begun singing at the tender age of eighteen months. Before she was old enough to start school, she was hearing melodies of her own invention in her mind. Soon she began hearing the words, too, and fashioning them together with a few chords she deciphered on the guitar. "The first song Dolly ever made, she was seven years old," Mrs. Parton has often said. "She came in one day and said, 'Will you write it down for me?' I've still got it, but I won't let her have it. She has a copy of it, but I've got the one that was written down at the time she made that song."

"I've got thousands of songs, boxes of songs," Dolly told me. "I never forget a melody and I seldom forget the words if I've sung it more'n three times." Then, as if for proof, she breaks into *Little Tiny TassleTOP*, one of her first efforts, a song she wrote for the corn-cob dolly her father made her: "Little tiny tassleTOP/You're the only friend I got/Big brown eyes and corn silk hair/How you make me smile/Little tiny tassleTOP/I love you an awful lot/Hope you never go away/Cause I want you to always stay." The childish nature of the song was atypical of those years. Dolly has told reporters. Most of her songs centered around tragedies, such as loved ones dying in the wars, or at least concerned subjects far too heavy for most seven-year-olds.

Despite the seriousness of those thoughts, Dolly's early involvement in music appears to have been motivated more by escapism than by the need for creative expression. If reality





carrying her higher and higher along with it, to a place of permanence, a place where millions of people would know and love her, and she would make them happy, just by being herself. There, little Dolly Parton figured, she would be a Star. Late Saturday nights, when she was supposed to be asleep, Dolly would lie awake in bed and listen to the Grand Ole Opry beamed from Nashville, 200 miles across the state. Electricity had not yet come to Locust Ridge, and Dolly had to strain her ears to hear the high-pitched moans of the singers over the whistle and crackle of her daddy's battery radio. But when her fantasies took over, she heard it loud and clear, and she was up on the WSM stage with Hank Williams and Patsy Cline. "Someday I'm gonna be on the Grand Ole Opry," she told her daddy the next day before church. And as her mind ran over the solo she would sing in her grandfather's Church of God assembly that morning, she paused to wonder if some day a new artist might stand on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry and think how proud he was to be standing where Dolly Parton once stood.

Neither of Dolly's two grade school teachers had the slightest inkling that Dolly would be famous one day. "We didn't think that about anybody," says Archie Ray McMahan, who taught Dolly in the first grade. "We just wanted them to do well. At that time, very few children from that community went to high school." When the question is put to Tillman Robertson, Dolly's second grade teacher, he shakes his head. "I'll tell you," he says, "for Dolly to have come out of there, well, that girl should be commended. Not enough credit's been given her, and she made it hard. The family had the necessities of life, but that was all. Had nice clothing, and the mother kept

meant sleeping four and five to a bed ("and it didn't matter if you'd stopped wetting 'cause somebody else was gonna pee on you anyway"), a fantasy world was infinitely preferable. There, in her own private little fairyland, Dolly was more than just a poor farmer's daughter. There, she would have the money to buy

the pretty things she had yearned for in vain. There, she would be a fairy princess who lived happily ever after. And if her fantasy world offered only temporary escape, if, when the music stopped, she was still a poor little girl in a hand-me-down dress, even then she began figuring a way that the music would go on forever,



'em clean, and they had plenty to eat. They were not paupers, just good poor people like the rest of the people lived up there. Just exceptionally good, nice people. Dolly was a fine kid. Don't know as I had to get after her about anything at all."

And little Dolly knew just how to keep Robertson fond of her. Early every morn-



ing, Robertson would send all the children in the early grades to the blackboard to practice their printing and cursive writing, starting Dolly off with the form, "My name is Dolly Parton," and then switching to "Dolly Parton is my name." As Dolly completed each sentence, she'd turn around to seek the approval of her teacher. Each time she did, Robertson winked at her. And Dolly would wink right back. "Boy, she could wink the keenest of any kid I ever saw," Robertson says. "She'd



pop right back at you and wink. Always had a little knack of wit, of humor. You could never get anything on her."

Robertson says Dolly was never a show-off or loudmouth in his class, but she did nonetheless do things that distinguished her from her classmates. Such as the times she took the red crayons from her pack and applied them, lipstick-like, to her mouth and cheeks, an early sign of her fascination with color and makeup which was to figure so prominently in her '70s look "It was comical to me," Robertson recalls, smiling, "but I didn't say anything about it, except maybe to brag on it a little."

He did not find Dolly's singing comical, however. "I didn't think of her as a special child, but I knew she had an exceptional voice, a different voice," he says.

"I'm not leaving country," Dolly says (at left with Loretta Lynn and Roy Clark). "All I want is a chance to do everything..."

"Her mother told me her tonsils bealed [swelled] and bursted and affected her voice. I don't know if that had anything to do with it, but she was a good singer. I'd take my old guitar up there, and we'd sing. Dolly didn't sing any more than the rest of the kids did, but everytime you wanted a group to sing, she was ready."

Robertson didn't intend to stay long at the Mountain View school, but he realized he had a smart group of kids, children with potential who really needed someone to work with them, to take them places and show them things. And he set out to help them. Every other year, he took the eighth grade 200 miles to Nashville to see the Grand Ole Opry. Since the children seemed to enjoy music and singing so much, Robertson often took them down to the *Mid-Day Merry-Go-Round* radio program in Knoxville. Local grocer and politician Cas Walker broadcast a show from the same place every

day, and Robertson soon had his kids singing on Walker's program. At Christmas and the end of the school year, Robertson would take the gang down to appear on Walker's TV show. To Dolly, it was the beginning of a dream come true. In a few years, she would become a regular on the show, a job she would hold until she was graduated from high school and moved to Nashville.

In her spare time, Dolly made demonstration tapes with her uncles Louis and Bill Owens—Claude Tomlinson at WIVK in Knoxville mastered the sessions. Tomlinson remembers that there was no problem in recording Dolly. She usually got everything on one take. The problem was with Bill. "I always had trouble with Bill, mainly on rhythm. He'd always get messed up, and we'd have to do more retakes." Tomlinson says Bill and Louis pushed Dolly hard. "They recognized talent and they knew if she ever got to the

big time, they'd be involved. But I think Dolly did a lot more for her cause than Bill did. I wasn't on top of the scene all the time, but that's what I hear. I know what Bill has said he has done. Of course, it's an ego thing with some people if they've been involved with someone who makes it really big. They might forget just how much they did, but Bill worked hard."

One thing Bill did was drive 13-year-old Dolly 200 miles over to Nashville so she could appear on the Grand Ole Opry. "My Uncle Bill had an old car with the side caved in," Dolly laughs today. "We'd save up enough money to go back and forth to Nashville, trying to get somethin' goin', because he believed I was gonna be a star, and I was fool enough to believe him. So we'd take out every time we'd get a chance. We'd sleep in the car and clean up in fillin' stations. First time I was on the Opry, I went with the intentions of

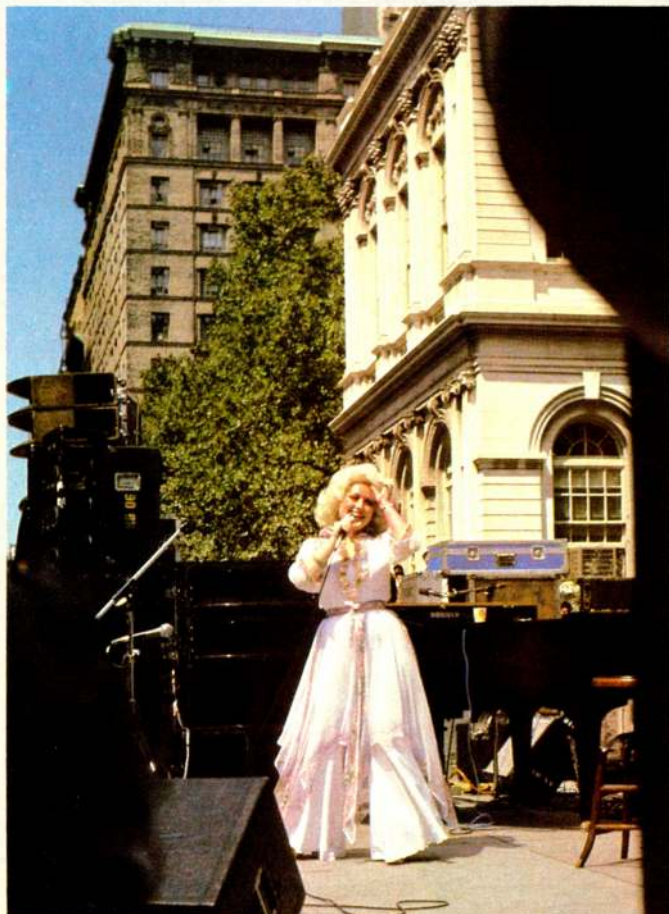
DOLLY PARTON IN NEW YORK

She's been described as being "nothing less than magnificent." And when Dolly Parton descended upon the Big Apple—to perform at a sold-out concert at the Palladium this past August—those words indeed rang true.

During her two-day love affair with

the City of New York, Dolly entertained at a free noon-day concert on the steps of City Hall to the cheers of some 5,000 fans and lunch-time onlookers. Before the festivities, however, Mayor Edward Koch presented Dolly the Key to the City. "This is a very special day for all

New Yorkers," the Mayor said. "What can you say when one of the most fabulous and exciting singers in the world agrees to give a concert for the people of New York? I want to thank her for the special free concert she is giving this afternoon. And as a memento of her



bein' on. Nobody ever told me that you couldn't do anything you wanted to do. I just always thought, 'Well, all you gotta do is just go there and if you sing well, you can be on the Grand Ole Opry.' Gettin' the nerve was probably the hardest part, but we were always blessed with more nerve than sense anyway. But we came to Nashville and went backstage and tried to talk to everybody. Ott Devine said that I was too young, but now I know it was just rules—you can't just walk in and be on the Grand Ole Opry. But I didn't give up that easy. And my uncle and me kept talkin' to everybody backstage, worryin' 'em to death, I'm sure. But finally, Jimmy C. Newman gave me his spot. He had done one spot and he had a second comin' up. I don't know why he did it—out of the goodness of his heart, I suppose, but it's somethin' I'll always remember and thank him for because I feel like he played a part in my career to

some degree. So he let me go on, and I sang a George Jones song and got an encore. I thought, 'Boy, this is just great!' Then I got another encore. I thought that was even greater! It was just more than I could really believe."

Although Newman believes he let Dolly take his second spot because "her name must have been on the list and we were running out of time," Ott Devine says Dolly must have gotten to perform for the very reason she remembers—because Newman let her. "Her name was not on the list," Devine says. "I turned her down because we had a policy against using children that age. You had to be eighteen years old, an adult. She just sneaked in there with Jimmy."

If appearing on the Grand Ole Opry fulfilled one of Dolly's dreams, she was to realize another when she went down to Lake Charles, Louisiana, to cut a single for Goldband Records, an obscure local

blues-oriented label. The A-side featured a tune Dolly had written called *Puppy Love* ("I'm old enough now to kiss and hug And I like it! It's puppy love!"), a teen tune with a rockabilly beat. The B-side featured a country song that Dolly and her relatives called *Girl Left Alone*, which dealt very self-consciously with the debt a young girl owed society for her sinful behavior: "I'm a girl left alone, there's no hope for me/I'm tossed to and fro like a ship on the sea/There was a mistake and now I will pay/For those who still love me, I must go on this way."

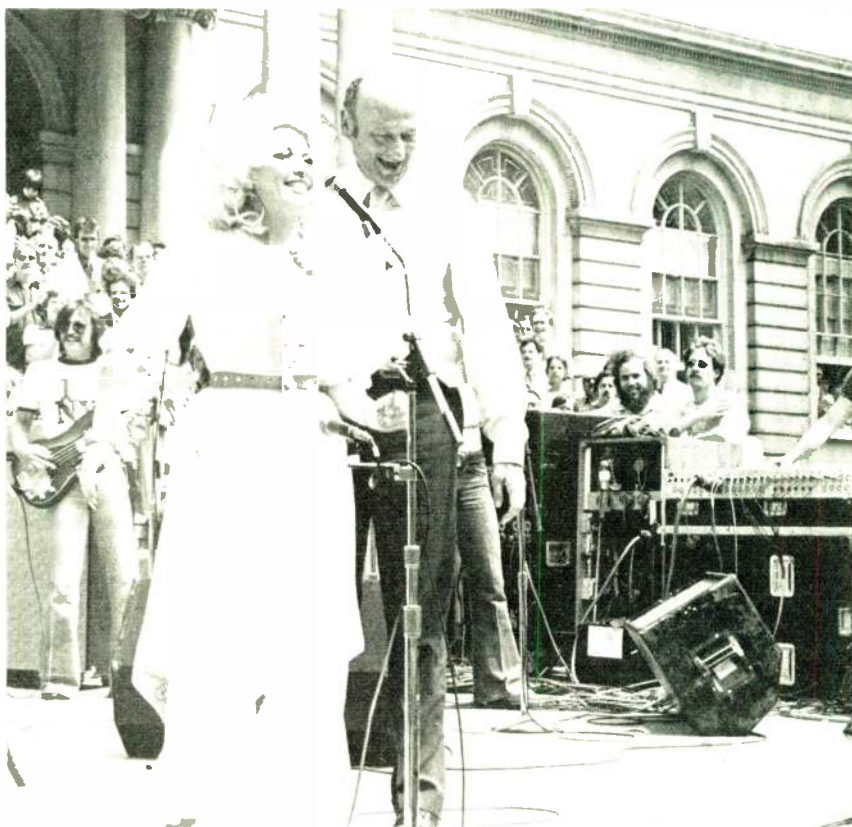
Dolly often sang songs of her own composition, or songs she wrote with Louis, Bill and her aunt Dorothy Jo, when she appeared on Cas Walker's programs. Bud Brewster a musician on the show, says Dolly's songs were ahead of their time. In fact, "she probably wrote a lot of the things she's doin' now back then in the very beginning. That type of stuff wasn't

visit to the City, and as a token of our appreciation, it's my pleasure to present her the Key to the City of New York. But it's also the key to our hearts...because all New York loves you, Dolly."

In proclaiming her thanks Dolly explained to one and all that New York "is the center of the world and I just want to personally thank the people here who have done so much to help me on my way." Dolly then proceeded to kiss the (blushing) Mayor and followed with her concert which included songs from her latest certified gold album *Heartbreaker*.

Before closing, Dolly held an impromptu "People Press Conference"—a way of saying thanks to all who've contributed to her becoming one of this nation's most outstanding artists. Asked if her well-endowed figure was in fact all hers she replied: "I don't think anyone else would claim it, so I have to." Getting on to a more serious note though, Dolly explained to another fan "that I really don't think I'm a superstar, yet. I want to do movies, more records and get bigger and better."

The next evening Dolly gave what has to be classified as one of the most powerful personal performances ever seen in New York. Before the nearly 4,000 hard-nosed, tough-to-please New Yorkers including journalists, photographers, celebrities, editors, executives...plus a throng of rock-oriented kids, street crazies and even some Dolly-impersonators...jammed into the Palladium, Dolly was in complete control. Unlike the rock/pop show, including duets with Eddie Rabbitt, she had done in New Jersey only a few days before, Dolly selected a straight country and gospel show for her citified audience...and knocked them right out of their seats. *Jolene*, *Coat of Many Colors*,



Mayor Ed Koch, along with 5,000 other New Yorkers, welcomed Dolly at City Hall.

My Tennessee Mountain Home...then a gangbusters tribute to the State of Tennessee in a medley starting with Chuck Berry's *Memphis*, then the *Tennessee Waltz* and finally a driving rocker version of the bluegrass, *Rocky Top*. The rest was full of rich Dolly Parton songs such as *Applejack*, *The Wild Moor*, *Me and Little Andy* (you could have heard a tear drop). And, while the crowds loved her last two album title songs, *Here You Come Again* and *Heartbreaker*, she pulled

them right out of their seats with *Two Doors Down* and then...absolutely blew them away with an inspired *Down from Dover*. All of which proved what we already knew: she needs no gimmicks (even though she always says her looks are a gimmick to get attention).

Still, she obviously likes the way she looks and so do her fans. That night at the Palladium, however, she could have been a flat-chested brunette in Army fatigues and it would have made no difference.

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goin' over all that much back then. Dolly's songs had so much down-to-earth meaning to 'em, and the music that was goin' over then was light-hearted stuff. Dolly wrote about basic home-type situations."

Brewster also recalls that Dolly was quite a versatile performer and that even then, she demonstrated a fondness for the music she has adopted of late. "We played show dates at schools and things back then, and she would go and sing and be in comedy routines with us. Dolly was always a show person. Even though she was bashful, you wouldn't know it when she was on the stage, because she was just so vibrant that it just covered the shyness right up. She sang a song called *I Love a Tall Man* a lot. That was the first song she sang on the show. And she sang a lot of hymns, done 'em just terrific. Between shows, we'd rehearse songs that she'd written, or she'd play the piano and sing. Back then rock and roll was big. I think if she'd had her druthers then, she'd have been in rock and roll. She was a real great fan of rock and roll. And she could sing it. Believe me, she could sing it! Brenda Lee

was definitely one of her favorites, naturally, and she was a big fan of Connie Francis. We sang *Everybody's Somebody's Fool* a lot. She liked songs you could bounce along with a little bit. Dolly was just a natural," Brewster says. "Everybody knew it. It was no secret. It was just a matter of waiting until she grew up and could do it. Another musician on the show and myself tried to steal her away from Nashville right before she left. In fact, I've still got the demonstration tapes we made. Everybody knew Dolly was gonna make it big."

"I always looked at Dolly more or less like she was my own," Cas Walker rasps in a voice that is painful to hear. "She's the most unusual person I ever met. In just every way. Now musically, she can play a guitar fine, or she can sing and don't have to have a guitar. She can join in a whole band a-playin', or she can sing in a quartet, or sing a country/western song—she's a natural country singer—and turn right back next and sing *The Old Rugged Cross* and you'd think she's just reachin' right over into heaven. She's actually a miracle singer. There's just a

few of 'em, you know. I haven't seen many people just like Dolly. I mean, everywhere you turn her, she's right, you know. Anything you assign her to do, she'll work at it and, be the best at it in a few days. I've seen her come an hour before the show to do a number she was gonna do, and she'd just keep doing it over and over. She's got a lot of determination. But I'll tell you," Walker says, leaning in close, "I believe if Dolly hadn't a-made it as a singer, she would have always had good character, 'cause she stood up against all odds. If there was ever anything wrong, it was way down the line, and I just want to think there wasn't."

What Walker means about Dolly standing up "against all odds," is that little Dolly Parton matured physically just about the time she joined Walker's show as a regular, at age ten or eleven, according to one of the show's musicians, although Walker puts it a little later than that. "She grewed up pretty fast," he says. "When she was thirteen, fourteen, she was as big as she is now. That was kind of a hard thing to accept. I still wanted to call her 'Little Dolly,' but she got to be big Dolly, you know." And while Walker fought to keep her in pigtails and little checked gingham dresses, Dolly was experimenting with make-up (her Aunt Estelle gave Dolly her first tube of lipstick) and with wearing wigs, according to Bud Brewster. "She was always hep on wigs," Brewster, a handsome, easy-going man, says. "She wore wigs—I mean, she *loved* 'em. With her real hair, it was always teased into a bouffant, after she got about twelve or thirteen. And then sometimes she'd put a big long fall back there and let it hang down her back. She liked them high heels, too," Brewster continues. "And, of course, tight dresses. Real short. She was like fifteen years old, then, but I've got pictures of her from that time, and you'd swear she was twenty-five. I'll tell you something else. She could do the Twist back then as good as anybody in the world. She was great! Oh, could she dance! And she enjoyed it, too. She just had a good time. That's all she seemed to worry about."

Naturally, any girl with all that going for her was bound to attract a large segment of the opposite sex. And that's what worried Cas Walker.

"I went along on a lot of show dates I wouldn't have went on, but she was fourteen or so, and I went to keep her from bein' out there with a bunch of tush-hogs," Walker says. "Those tush-hogs—and there are a lot of 'em in country music—weren't safe to be around women. Just couldn't behave themselves, and I never would let Dolly get out with those kind of people. She might not appreciate that, but it's the truth. Her mother knew it, and her aunt knew about it. Dolly rode with me all the time up in the front seat. Still, even though she's pretty, men don't advance on Dolly like they would most



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Two fine talents in country music: Dolly and Ronnie Milsap at taping of her TV show.

young girls that pretty. I think it's because she kinda holds herself up by usin' the Lord's name a right smart. It's kind of a byword with her, but I think it helps. . . well, she does it in a way that you almost know she's religious, you know.

Not that Dolly really needed Walker to protect her on those long rides home. From what the show's musicians say, Dolly has always known how to take care of herself—and how to get what she wants. "We had twelve or fifteen men and boys on the show," says Bud Brewster, "and you know there's always somebody smartin' off. But she'd always take it good. You could tease her, and she'd always laugh about it. And she knew how to handle 'em. She asked one of the boys to play something with her one time, and he said somethin' smart to her, and she turned right around and threwed it back at him real heavy." She said according to Walker, "You'll pick for me, and you'll be glad to pick for me when I get through with what I'm gonna do. I'm goin' straight to Cas Walker." Brewster says the dialogue went "something like that. But," and he blushes a little in remembering, "it was a little more, well, it was a little stronger than that!" Actions such as that today prompt Walker to recall that Dolly "was as independent as a hog on ice. She stood her ground and didn't let nobody push her around. She's amazing how she gets along with people. She's actually got no bad enemies. She don't want to hurt nobody, but yet she don't want nobody to hurt her. She'll stand up—I mean, she'll stand up like a bantam, if she has to. Couple of times I wanted to say somethin' to her about those short dresses, but she's the kind of person that you're a little hesitant to say anything to, you know, 'cause she's got a temper. I don't believe she ever got real mad at me, but she has at someone else, and she would have at me if I hadn't taken sides with

her. Still, I've seen her when I knowed that she could shoot me, but she'd just look a hole through me."

As unusual as she appeared to be to Cas Walker, Dolly was considered just an average, ordinary girl by most of her high school classmates and teachers. "If you had walked in my class then," says Mrs. James Householder, Dolly's American history teacher, "she would have looked just like everybody else. She just did her thing. She was a very normal, giggly little girl with a tremendous sense of humor."

Of course, Dolly was not ordinary or average. She may not have been voted anything in high school, but she'd been a

Anyone who sang corny country songs on a hick show like the Cas Walker "Farm and Home Hour," was hardly to be taken seriously as a musician. Or, actually, to have her music shown any respect at all. Especially anyone as backwoods as Dolly.

local radio and TV star since she was ten, she'd appeared on the Grand Ole Opry and she'd cut a record. Not only that, she was going to be a real Star, and her first year of high school, she let anyone who was interested know that one day she was going to be an Opry regular.

And that did not sit so well with a good portion of the students and teachers of Sevier County High School. For a number of reasons. One former student remembers that then, probably as now, Sevier County High School was attended by city students and by country students,

each with their own cliques. Many of the country kids thought Dolly was something special. They'd seen her on Cas Walker's programs, and they crowded around her when she brought her guitar to school and sang her own tunes, some based on actual happenings in the area, others culled from her imagination. "She could just look at something—nature or something happening on the street—and make a song out of it," one classmate recalls. "And she always sang from the heart." Still, some of them made fun of her behind her back, probably out of jealousy. And many of the city kids wouldn't have been caught dead listening to country music. It was, after all, the early '60s, and rock and roll was the going thing, with country at a low ebb. In 1964, when Dolly was still getting up at four o'clock in the morning and going over to Knoxville to appear on Cas Walker's show, the Beatles had taken America by storm, and any kid who was cool at all preferred that music to anything else. Anyone who sang corny country songs on a hick show like the Cas Walker *Farm and Home Hour*, where three weeks before Easter, a man sat on a "nest" full of "eggs," hatching them into chickens for all the children in the audience, was hardly to be taken seriously as a musician. Or, actually, to have her music shown any respect at all. Especially anyone as backwoods as Dolly Parton. "Most people just laughed at her," remembers Ruth Rolen Green at whose 16th birthday party Dolly played and sang. So, after that first year, and for the next two, Dolly kept quiet about her plans for the future and about appearing on TV over in Knoxville.

And the more they laughed, the more determined she became. Each day when Dolly came home from school, she worked on her songs. And she and her Uncle Bill continued to send demo tapes to Nashville publishers. Her perseverance paid off, when Tree Publishing not only signed her to a writer's contract, but arranged for her to record a song she and Bill had written, *It's Sure Gonna Hurt*, for Mercury Records. The record went nowhere.

Still, it got some airplay, particularly in Knoxville, where Bill and Dolly hand carried it to the radio stations. At WSKT, they met Bobby Denton, now operations director at WIVK. The two hit it off well, and since he knew what a thrill it was for Dolly to hear herself over the radio, Denton would call her and tell her what time her record would be played. Later, when he moved over to WIVK, Denton frequently saw Dolly and her uncle at station sponsored events. "I remember one time we did a swimming party and show at Whittle Springs," Denton says, "and Dolly and Bill came out. When they did *What'd I Say*, Dolly hit the high notes fine, but Bill sang flatter than a pancake." He laughs in remembering. "After that I got to be friends with her, and we had a

few dates."

Dolly's Aunt Estelle says Dolly didn't date much, and Mr. and Mrs. Parton told a national tabloid that Dolly had time for dates when she wanted them, but she just "didn't want them very often. It wasn't that the boys weren't after her. Dolly just wouldn't take time away from her music. She'd break a date in a minute if a singing job came along."

Some of the girls may have felt a little uneasy around Dolly because of the way she looked and dressed. "She had a nice build for a high school girl, she *really* did," Bobby Denton remembers. But Dolly's friends are in conflict when recalling how her look of the early '60s compares with her current vogue. Ruth Green says Dolly "hasn't changed at all, as far as personal appearance. Looked just like she does now." Denton, on the other hand, says, "I don't think she's changed a lot, except for her dress. She kept a pretty low profile then," he adds when asked if her clothes accentuated her figure. "People used to say, 'Well, she's got such a small waist. (One student remembers Dolly measuring her waist at seventeen or eighteen inches.) She used to wear a lot of jeans and blouses. I remember one time, she wore a lot of ruffles, but most of the time it was jeans and blouses. And her senior year, she started wearing a lot of makeup. But she was very, very beautiful. Got a tremendous complexion."

Dolly today without her wig is a rare sight. Last year, while shooting the photo session for *Country Music* magazine's cover story, Leonard Kamsler asked Dolly if he might get a shot of her without her wig. Dolly appeared stumped for a second. "I'd have to think about it," she said. "See, that's my gimmick. Me without my wig would be like Liberace in overalls. The public has come to expect me to look a certain way, whether it's in style or not. They don't want to see me in faded jeans, braless, with no makeup and my hair combed straight back. It'd be a letdown to 'em, although I often look that way at home. That's not the character they've come to know."

Dolly, who has been known to say one thing one day and the exact opposite the next, told another reporter only a few months before, "Lots of people see me without my wigs. But I fix my own hair about the same way, and if I tease it and puff it all up, it looks the same. I have a lot of hair. Not quite this much, but almost." She says it takes her about thirty minutes to get completely dressed in her professional Dolly costume, or to become her Dolly "character."

Dolly had ample opportunities to display her talent at school her junior and senior years. Ruth Green recalls that "back then we had chapel, where all the kids would gather in. Dolly often sang religious songs at that; I know she always liked *How Great Thou Art*. She said she felt God had helped her through her

trials. I can remember her singing at Christmas chapel service, and how the radiance just bounced off her." And Jack McMahan remembers that Dolly sang in a number of assembly programs and talent shows in school.

But there were occasional setbacks to Dolly's blossoming. "Different teachers would be in charge of different assemblies," Jack McMahan her homeroom teacher says. "Sometimes they would use talent from their own homeroom or talent from other parts of the school. Dolly worked for different teachers scattered through a period of time." But not all the teachers in Sevier County High School loved Dolly's voice or thought she really had enough talent to be presented to the entire school. Tillman Robertson recalls

"It's almost been like my life has been planned for me . . . I'm a hard worker and a positive, firm believer. As a kid, I knew I would have this, that I would be here."

that Dolly was set to appear on one school program when several of the teachers objected, saying she couldn't sing well enough."

But, Dolly was persistent and confident. So, on graduation day, she went over to the Sevierville radio station to tell her friends goodbye and announced in firm, clear tones that "I'm going to Nashville tomorrow, and I'm never coming back 'til I make it." That night, she became the only member of her family to ever be graduated from high school, quite an accomplishment for a girl who came out of an area where anyone who had gone through the eighth grade was thought to be "highly educated." The family considered it important enough to pose with Dolly in her cap and gown after the ceremony.

Dolly was as excited and eager as she could be to get to Nashville, where her Uncle Bill and his family had moved two weeks earlier. But as she climbed aboard that Greyhound with her pasteboard suitcase full of dirty clothes (no time to wash them in the haste to get gone) and her folder of songs, her thoughts probably revolved as much around her family as they did her future. They were, after all, the best family in the world. There was Momma, of course, who had worked so hard on that little coat all the kids had laughed at, and who had tried to teach her children—the last being Rachel, born when Dolly was 14—the difference between right and wrong. And there was Daddy, who had worn out pair after pair

of work boots seeing to it that his family had enough to eat. And, of course, there were all her brothers and sisters, starting with Willadeene, who, when she was no more than a child herself, had worked in the school cafeteria for twenty cents a day or a hot lunch, always taking the change and spending it on candy for the little ones at home. Dolly may have thought also of the nights she and the other kids spent listening to their mother tell ghost stories, about ol' raw-headed Bloody Bones who was waiting outside to get any of the children who cried.

The younger kids had been irritating sometimes, and had often made so much noise that Dolly couldn't concentrate on her songs. But they were just doing what kids do, and though they'd often "fight and scratch," they never had misunderstandings to the point that they didn't speak to each other. Even after a big argument, they'd never leave each other without saying, "Well, I love you."

Suddenly, the big, chugging motor of the Greyhound fired up, and Dolly gazed out the window for a final look. There on the pavement stood her whole family, crying and waving goodbye. As Dolly felt the tears welling up in her eyes and streaming down her face, she thought that her heart would surely break. Still, the long coach snaked its way out of the station and crawled onto the highway toward Nashville. Every other mile, it seemed, Dolly wondered if maybe she hadn't made a mistake and wished that she could turn the bus around and go home to the people who loved her. But she knew also that she wouldn't be happy once she got there. She had a job to do, a destiny to fulfill. There really was no choice.

"It's almost been like my life has been planned for me," she told journalist LaWayne Satterfield years later. "I'm a hard worker and a positive, firm believer. As a kid, I knew I would have this, that I would be here. All I ever asked of anybody and of life, is a chance."

Dolly hoped she find it in Nashville.

On her first day in the big city, she found something else, though—something she wasn't really looking for—the man who would eventually become her husband, Carl Dean. Since the day they married in 1966, only a handful of people in Nashville have ever seen them; he and Dolly keep their private and professional lives totally separate.

Because Carl is such a mystery man—steadfastly refusing to be interviewed or let his picture be taken up until just recently—a lot of people in Nashville surmised that Dolly invented him. The idea of saying he existed when he did not, they figure, is that she would have the protection of the image of marriage, without having to be bothered by the curtailments a real marriage involves. According to them, Carl Dean is nothing but a figure in Dolly Parton's fantasy world.

I am here to tell you that he is real.

In the winter of 1976-77, *Country Music Magazine* assigned me to do a cover story on Dolly. A few weeks after I flew to Waco, Texas, to catch the first night of her tour with Willie Nelson, Dolly was to visit me in a Nashville hotel suite for our interview. I had been told that Dolly was a guard dog about her privacy, that she had never and would not "commercialize" her home by allowing a reporter there. I was flabbergasted, then, when Sim Myers of RCA phoned to tell me that Dolly had changed her mind and would see me at her home. "I hope you realize what a rare treat you have in store," Myers said.

On the day we scheduled to meet, Dolly had just returned to Nashville from five weeks on the road. While she was gone, her family had moved into a lovely English Tudor home on Woodmont Blvd., one of Nashville's better addresses. She and Carl had seen the house before she went on tour. Dolly had told a lot of people—including her Aunt Estelle (whose husband built the Brentwood house with Carl's help in 1973) that she moved into town because she believed in something in the soil or the well-water supply on the farm was making her ill. "Really, I just never did like that house," Dolly told me as she handed me a glass of orange juice. "We're just renting this one till we buy another. We'll probably just stay here, though." To the British music paper, *Melody Maker*, Dolly said, "The farm is just too big for me. I'm not a fool, and when I can see that something is not working I let it go. We thought it would be our dream house, but the rooms were too big, the ceilings too high. The rooms never did surround and cuddle us the way a home should." Although she had said, "Once you walk in the house, you're part of the family," Dolly let me know that she really did not like the idea of doing the interview at home and she especially didn't like photographer Leonard Kamsler making a studio out of her living room, pushing all the furniture to one side and leaving his equipment there overnight. She had suggested it only because she had a lot of work to do, getting the new house in shape, and didn't want to spare the time it took to go out and meet me. When we left she said, "Come back anytime, as long as it's not business!"

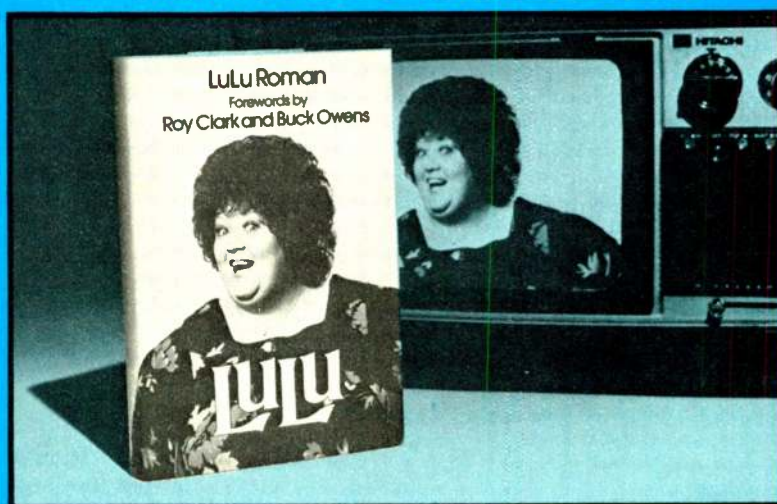
The interview took place in her living room, a large, beamed-ceiling room filled with red velvet Victorian loveseats and sofas, red oriental rugs, white marble-topped tables, a beautiful old piano and gold-framed pictures. It's a room in which Lillian Russell could have entertained Diamond Jim Brady with ease. In one corner there was a bric-a-brac cabinet containing a \$2 bill with Dolly's picture on it, a ceramic sea captain, a china figurine of two angels kissing, a tiny gold slipper, a guitar pin, a glass piano with a raised lid and matching harp, and a

couple of glass dalmations. A large, ornate Bible lay nearby, and an old photo of Avie Lee was displayed on a table. On one wall hung a portrait done from the famous "Coat of Many Colors" photograph of Dolly at nine, complete with flowing tears. Next to it hung an oil painting of Carl at about the same age. There were butterflies everywhere: ceramic butterflies with music notes and "Love Is Like a Butterfly" carved on their bases, real butterflies mounted and hung on the wall, and downstairs, where Dolly had many of her countless writing awards on display, there was even a special chair in the shape of a guitar with a butterfly on the back. Dolly had had it made for the

stage. Most of the butterfly mementoes are gifts from fans. She gets literally thousands every year, yet her former guitarist Tom Rutledge says she keeps them all.

"You can't ask me nothin' I haven't been asked before," Dolly said, setting a cup of hot chocolate before me. But before I switched on my tape recorder, she asked if I'd care to hear *New Harvest ... First Gathering*, which had not yet been released. With that, Dolly got up from one of the rugs, took off an album by the Ozark Mountain Daredevils and replaced it on the turntable with a test pressing of her own. As we sat together listening, Dolly sang along on the first cut, *Light of a Clear Blue Morning*, slapping

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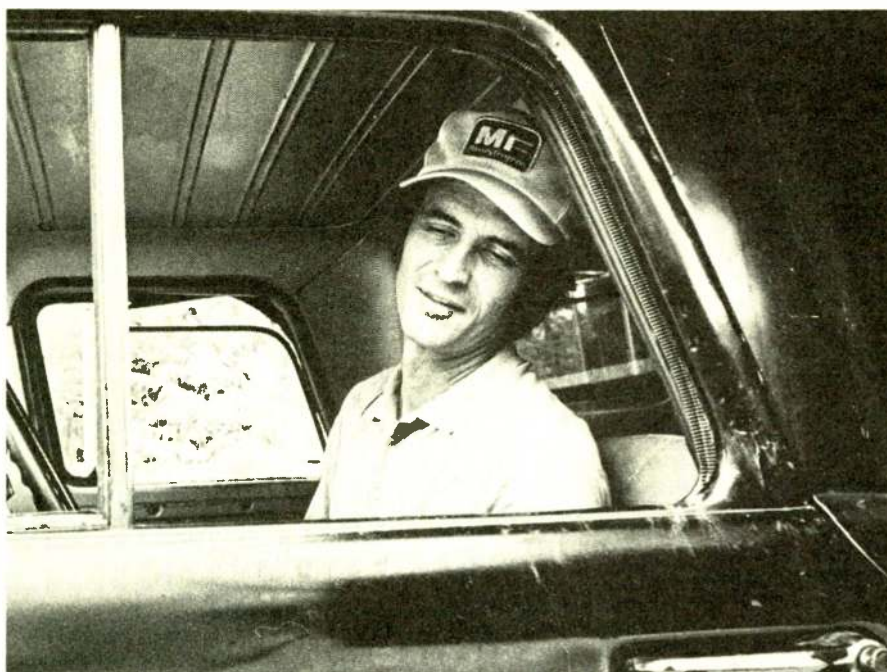
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"He's just the most precious thing in the world," says Dolly of her husband Carl Dean (pictured above). "He's the only thing that remains untarnished in this business."

her thigh to the beat, her foot popping up reflexively on the off beat. Before I knew it, the tonearm had made its way through five wonderful songs, the likes of which I had never heard from Dolly Parton. "You want to hear the second side?" she asked. I did. "Well, before that," she said, "Carl is here—he's workin' outside—and I want him to come in and fix the fire. But he doesn't want to hear my record, so we'll have to wait."

Dolly went outside to get Carl, and I waited eagerly for their footsteps. "I don't want to be interviewed," I heard him say in a rural accent as Dolly brought him in through the side porch. She told him he wouldn't be—as much a warning to me as assurance to him. In a moment he stood in the living room, looking shy and uncomfortable in the presence of a stranger. Still, he was friendly and polite and after a little hesitation, took my outstretched hand. Tall and thin bordering on gaunt, he was dressed in blue jeans, a flannel shirt, an old Army jacket, work boots, gloves and a blue wool cap. But he was still ruggedly handsome, and as he tore apart boxes to feed the fire, he turned and looked at his wife as if she were the only woman in the world. It was February, the dead of winter. Carl had a cold and the sniffles and gave that as the reason he wouldn't be eating at the table with us when Dolly told him she'd invited me to stay for some of her famous spaghetti. "I'll just tell him you're a friend," she had said, since the Deans rarely socialize and never entertain. I wondered if he didn't just feel funny having me in the house or if he was afraid I might try to question him.

As Carl continued to fix the fire, nobody said much of anything, and I sensed a strain; Dolly seemed a little

nervous and tense. "Here, Daddy, you want my chocolate?" she said, handing him her cup. I thought she might be trying to pacify him—here it was her first full night at home in more than a month. At that time he almost never traveled with her and had yet to attend one of her concerts. And here she'd agreed to let a stranger encroach on the little time they had together.

If I felt I was trespassing, the feeling faded as Carl reappeared several times, usually to bring Dolly and me something to drink as we taped late into the evening.

"He (Carl Dean) loves me good and all, but I'm really not his favorite singer. We have a great relationship and he's a wonderful person, but he's not my biggest fan."

"Y'all growing roots?" he asked at midnight. With each successive visit, he was more at ease, more likeable and charming.

On that first encounter, however, Carl disappeared all too soon, and when he was out of earshot, Dolly got up and flipped *New Harvest*. . . *First Gathering* to side two. "He's good as gold, really," she said as the music began. "He just doesn't want to hear the record, 'cause we're both so emotional. He'll put it on and listen to it sometime when he's here by himself, and if he likes it, he'll tell me it's pretty good. I bought him a video tape recorder,

and he tapes me every time I'm on TV, but he won't watch it unless he hears I done good. You know," she adds with a little girl's smile and giggle, "He loves me good and all, but I'm really not his favorite singer. We have a great relationship and he's a wonderful person, but he's not my biggest fan. He likes bluegrass and hard rock music."

I tell Dolly I'm especially glad to have met Carl, since some people think she made him up. "I know that's a big rumor," she says with a small self-satisfied grin, lending some credence to a statement that a friend of hers has made to the effect that Dolly loves to be mysterious. "He's a real mystery person to the public. That's good, though." She decides she shouldn't have put it like that. "I mean, that's fine with us, and fine with him. He loves me good, and my career bein' separate from my marriage is perfectly natural for us. We like it that way. It's too right and too natural and too comfortable and too secure for it to ever be anything else."

Shortly before our interview, a magazine had printed a short item that indicated the reason Dolly and Carl were so certain their marriage would work out was because they lived together first for two years. "Oh, I didn't live with him!" Dolly gasps when I bring it up. "I made the mistake of sayin' that out of country innocence. What I said was, 'We've been together twelve years, married for ten.' I meant we *went* together. Now, I especially don't like things like that, because my marriage and our relationship are sacred things to me. He's just the most precious thing in the world. He's the only thing that remains untarnished in this business. And then people will take what little information you're willing to give. . . ." She looks genuinely hurt and disappointed. "Maybe I made it sound like that," she adds, "but if I did, I didn't mean to. If I cared enough about somebody to live with 'em, I would care enough about 'em to marry. But, I can't say. We married young. I don't know what I would have done had I not married when I did. Not that it would matter whether we did or not, because we loved each other. But we didn't, and I don't like that, sayin' I lived with my husband two years. I'm just a bit old-fashioned in my beliefs about things like that. It almost embarrasses me to think that somebody would think I did that."

If that sort of gossip bothered Dolly, her years as Porter Wagoner's girl singer and partner were to inspire much harsher words than any spoken about Dolly and Carl. Part of it probably came from the excitement the couple generated on stage.

Of course, Dolly herself had been causing excitement ever since she arrived in Nashville and signed with Monument Records and Combine Publishing. Journalist Bill Littleton, now of *Performance* magazine, recalls "Dolly was already on

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- 1.) Do we have a fan club?
- 2.) Where can we buy your older albums?

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—VOTE ELVIS NO.1 IN DESERT ISLAND POLL Swamped With Mail—

Loretta, Dolly, Waylon and Johnny Cash Round Out Top Five

Country Music Magazine recently asked readers, "What five records would you take with you to a desert island?"

After tabulating over 15,000 votes, (there's still a half a room full of mail to be opened), it was clear that Elvis Presley was the overwhelming, all-time favorite among you readers, getting twice as many votes as anyone else.

Loretta Lynn placed second in the voting, followed very closely by Dolly Parton, third; Waylon Jennings, fourth; and Johnny Cash, fifth.

The top 50 vote getters are listed below. Some interesting names appear, such as Hank Williams, the Bee Gees, Barbra Streisand, Chuck Berry, and many more, because we asked for "all-time favorites" and not just current performers, and choices were not limited to "country music."

We asked Country Music staff members to pick the 25 artists they thought would

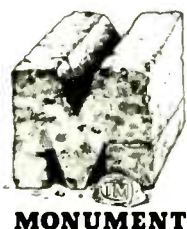
fan, you don't like other kinds of music. The results certainly prove that view wrong, with 20 names on the top 50 not being "country."

Some readers, naturally, have a narrow interest. Several selected five George Jones records as their all-time favorites; or, Roy Acuff, Hank Williams, or whoever.

But the majority listed a non-country performer for at least one out of their five choices. For example: one ballot

listed Larry Gatlin, Rod S. Oak Ridge Boys, Bee Gees, Eagles. Another picked George Jones, Barbra Streisand, Dylan and the Mormon Choir...that's right.

One of our favorites was a clearly did not want to get in desert island. The collection hoven's Ninth Symphony, His Greatest Hits, the Beatles, Elton John, and Tammy Wynette.



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COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE READER POLL

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 1. Elvis Presley | 18. Glen Campbell | 34. Ernest |
| 2. Loretta Lynn | 19. Eagles | 35. Tammy |
| 3. Dolly Parton | 20. Bee Gees | 36. Bill Mo |
| 4. Waylon Jennings | 21. Linda Ronstadt | 37. Debby |
| 5. Johnny Cash | 22. Don Williams | 38. Marty I |
| 6. Larry Gatlin | 23. Chuck Berry | 39. Mel Til |
| 7. Waylon Jennings & Willie Nelson | 24. Beatles | 40. Roy Cl |
| 8. Barbra Streisand | 25. Barbra Streisand/ | 41. Johnny |
| | Don Williams | |



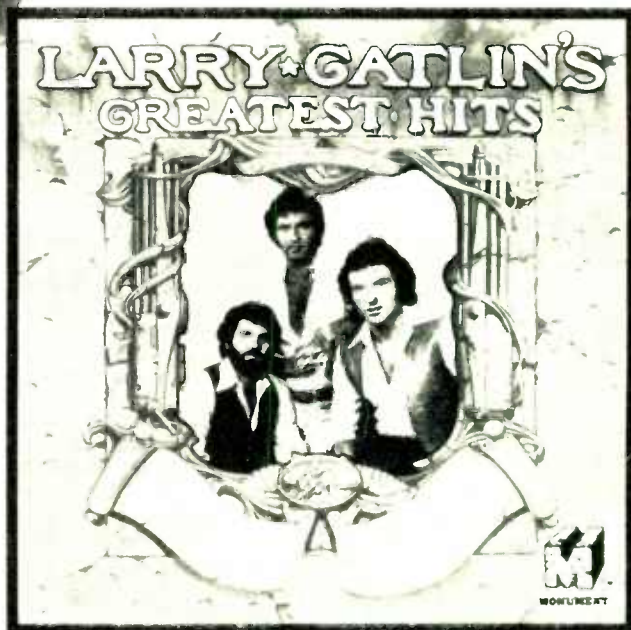
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LARRY GATLIN'S GREATEST HITS

Monument when I moved to town, and one of the very first realizations I had when I got here was whatever was going to happen concerning this girl was going to be big," he says. The vibes were so strong, I'm trying to think if there's been anybody else that it was that evident about, and I'm not sure there has been.

Everybody you ran into was talking about Dolly Parton. *Everybody*. They all had a Dolly Parton story, they all knew her, and everybody had been to lunch with her. It was like the town had adopted her, and she was the fair-haired child. Every time you'd turn around. There was no way to stop her. It was going to happen."

Porter Wagoner was, at this point, up a creek. His girl singer, Norma Jean, had gone home to Oklahoma to get married and settle down. He'd tried out a couple of girls for his road show, but none of them had really worked out, and here it was time to begin production on his nationally-syndicated television show. He'd been auditioning a lot of girls when he called Bob Beckham at Combine. "He said he'd seen Dolly and had been watching her and really liked her," Beckham remembers, "and wondered if she might be interested in taking Norma Jean's place. Well, of course, at that time, Lord, that was a *real* break," Beckham adds, almost reliving the drama. "I tried to be cool about it, and I probably blew it. I said (here he goes into a deep voice), 'Well, I don't know...'"

One version of the story has it that Dolly wasn't told why Wagoner wanted to see her (and another has it that Wagoner called her himself at home), but assumed he'd taken interest in a couple of the songs Bill had dropped off at his office. In actuality, Porter probably wanted to check out Dolly's authenticity.

More than half of his appeal was the way he stood up there in his spangled suits and stared a sincere hole in the camera, tellin' his good friends and neighbors about the miracle powers of Black Draught. Whoever took Norma Jean's place was going to have to sell Cardui tablets with the same sincerity—and believability. Then, too, he had to make sure they complemented each other physically. Would they look good together? More importantly, would they sing well together? Porter liked duets. They'd boosted his career in the past, and *Satisfied Mind*, which he'd sung with his back-up men had been the

"I was fortunate to get the chance to work with Porter. It taught me many, many things. I learned from Porter pretty much how to work an audience. . . I learned, if nothing else, the things I didn't want to do by seein' it first hand."

Song of the Year in 1955. And then in 1962 he'd recorded a duet album with Skeeter Davis. Of course, that hadn't worked with Norma Jean. They hadn't really been a "team;" she'd just been the girl singer on his show. It would be good to have a team, he thought, especially with a girl, a girl who looked and sounded good—but not too good, because he, of course, would remain the star. It was, after all, his show.

Porter also liked the fact that Dolly could write. The day she came over to his

office, he was especially taken by a song she sang him that she'd written one day on the riverbank while Carl was fishing, a tune about everything being beautiful. "This song told me so much about her," Porter would later say. "I knew if a person could sit down and write a song like that, they'd have to have a real soul inside 'em." Without much deliberation at all, Porter asked Dolly to join his show.

"You can imagine how fast I said yes," Dolly was to tell the *Village Voice* years later. "I was goin' from horse relish to hot dogs about then." There was a charisma between Porter and Dolly that has never been matched," says LaWayne Satterfield. "I don't think there have been any two people in country music who had the charisma they had. When he came on stage, he played to Dolly. He turned her on, and she turned him on. Then together they turned the audience on. It was a three-way feed. The audience was totally captivated and caught up in it. There was a magnetism you could feel. There'll never be another show that had the ecstatic effect that Porter and Dolly's had. There was always an excitement about them. Even backstage at the Opry, when they came in, it was like sparks jumping from a hot wire."

Neither Porter nor Dolly will talk much about exactly why they broke up, but in many ways Dolly felt she had outgrown Porter—that she had learned as much from him as she could. With her uncanny knack of knowing exactly when to move on, Dolly knew she was ready to become the big star she told people she always wanted to be.

"I don't know what information you have on this," Dolly says, shifting positions on her Oriental rug and letting out a big sigh. "I'm sure it wasn't much information that came from me. But I'm sure there are stories all around. We just reached a point where it was necessary for us. It was only smart business for me to try to go ahead, because I felt I had gone as far as I could with any group. I just wanted, while I was still young, to try some of my ideas and plans that I came from the mountains to try and never had a chance to do. I was fortunate to get the chance to work with Porter. It taught me many, many things. Some lessons I learned the hard way, but even still, I learned, and I learned a lot from Porter. I did. I learned what to do and what not to do. I learned how to be, and how not to be, where you deal with the public and your career and with business affairs. I learned from Porter pretty much how to work an audience—I mean the things that please an audience." She sighs again, heavier this time. "I don't really know what I learned from Porter," she says, sounding frustrated and pent-up. "Like I said, I learned, if nothing else, the things I didn't want to do by seein' it first hand." She pauses. "You'll kill me with this tape." She pauses again. Then she laughs



There was a certain charisma between Dolly and Porter Wagoner that will never be matched.

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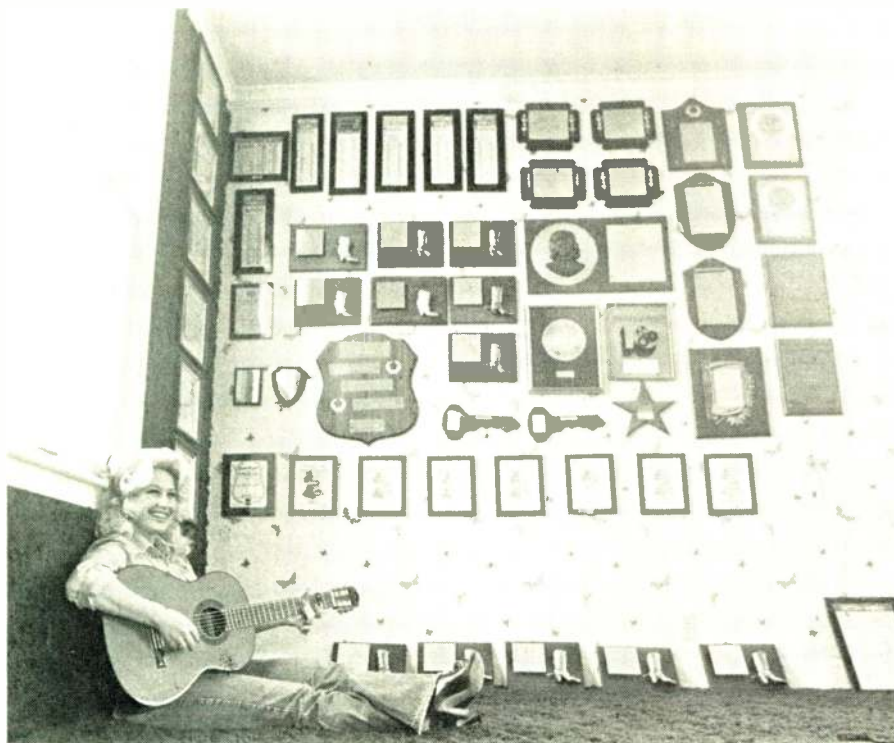
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Dolly strikes an informal pose in a room exhibiting her many awards and honors.

a sad, short laugh. "Oh, I guess not," she continues. "Honesty never hurt. What I started to say was, if nothing else, I learned what I didn't want to be like. Half of this is for you, and the rest you know what to put in the book. I don't think the public should know all the personal things about you. I wouldn't ever tell, anyway. I'll tell some, though.

What she and Porter will both talk about concerning their split is their conflict in the recording studio. "This day and time," Dolly says, "you can be what you want to be, especially musically, and if you don't venture out to try to be what it is you want to be, then you are a fool. You've served no purpose in life; you have failed as a person if you don't try what your heart says to do. That is, unless there are things bigger that hold you back, like wives and children and husbands and all. But if you do have a chance to do everything you can do and you don't do it, like I said, you're a fool." I ask who held her back. "It wasn't a matter of holding me back, necessarily, but working in an organization with other people, it's unfair to try to put your own ideas on somebody who is head of an organization, say like me and Porter. When he was producing me, I got some of my ideas across and the big part of my ideas were written in the songs, you know, the arrangement ideas and all. But there was so much I wanted to do, and he heard it so differently that we just couldn't agree on so many things. It just took away the joy of me recordin' the song at all. Because then it wasn't what I created it to be. It took somebody else's personality. That's hard to explain to people who aren't writers. But I'm just sayin' that without Porter, at least I can

write the songs and get them down the way I hear them."

If Dolly felt she was "trapped" in her relationship with Porter, "I think that was the part she was talking about," Porter says. "But I feel like that trap was pretty nice to her. There were no complaints during the beginning of the show. I didn't set the trap to catch her, y'know. It was set in a very humble manner of 'Would you help me get my career started, because I'm a country girl from East

"I can understand how people could have made anything out of our relationship, because I think we were so involved in business, so involved with each other personally. . . It was almost like we depended on each other too much."

Tennessee who's trying to get a career started in the country music business as a writer and a singer." So if anyone was trapped, it might have been me. Because to me that's pretty good bait there. That'll catch a purdy big pigeon in your trap."

Dolly has told me there's no question I can ask her that she hasn't been asked before. So I ask The Big One: "People say you and Porter were lovers." A mild cardiac seizure registers on Dolly's face. "We were lovers," she says, repeating my words, not certain she has heard right.

"Uh, we were lovers of music, and I suppose we had one of the world's most unique relationships," she begins. "We were not lovers as you know lovers. But it really wouldn't have mattered whether we were or whether we weren't. Like I say, it was a strange kind of relationship, hard to explain to the public. It was a love of its kind. I think it was more of a . . . ummm, I never had that one before. Oh, I've heard people thought we were married and all that. In fact, when we split our business, I mean, when I left the show, people would come up and say, 'I really hated to hear about you and Porter gettin' a divorce.'" She laughs a taut laugh. "But anyway, I don't know how I could put our relationship into words. We got very angry at each other over workin' things. There was a . . . well, really, all I want you to write is that we were not lovers, but we loved each other. We were lovers of our music and of our work.

"But in all truth, I tell you what—I can understand how people could have made anything out of our relationship, because I think we were so involved in business, so involved with each other personally. Porter had no family, and when we were workin'—you live together on the road. All the boys in the group are like your family. You're closer than you know. So close that you know each other's moods, you know certain things that bug you. But it was almost like we depended on each other too much. We were so involved in so many things that we had no separation from each other. To the point where we would even resent each other bein' involved in other things, mainly because we had ourselves tied so much into that. This probably sounds crazy, and I've never tried to explain this before, but it was almost like if somebody else . . . well, he was so involved with my songs that if he criticize my songs and also praised 'em, I'd get angry and hurt, knowin' both sides. But like, if say, he really was knocked out over somebody else's writin', or really almost like he was ignorin' mine, and it wasn't jealousy like lovers, but I don't know. Kinda like a jealousy. It was like, well, how can he criticize my songs so, and then make such a big deal out of somebody's else's? And then if I liked to hear somebody else sing, or if I was really close to somebody else, it was almost like jealousy. But anytime that you give that much of yourself to somebody and you're as involved as we were—we experienced the joy and sorrow of all the things. We fought in the studio, or at least there was bad times, but we also knew the joy of the same song that we might have fought over when it become a hit. But we didn't have enough separation, which is why it got to be too much for both of us. Got to be *extreme* pressure. And like I say, it was a relationship that would be very hard to explain." Most people believe Porter was in love with Dolly. "Maybe he *was* in love with me," she says. But it was a love of its

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kind. It was not a love that could ever be shared, if he was."

Today, Dolly's songwriting skills are a lot more polished than they were during her very first days with Porter too, but even then a lot of people were impressed by a variety of Dolly's talents.

"I heard her years ago, when I was only into country music a little bit—before I went over the deep end—and I was amazed at her voice," Emmylou Harris says. "The first time I heard it, I said, 'Who is that?' I immediately went out and bought everything of hers I could find. As a singer, I could appreciate her voice and her style, and I did some of her material. I have just about all her records from the days she was with Porter. I like those early recordings a lot. They're very charming, very simple, with just the straightforward guitar. She's very influenced by the mountain sound, with the banjos and the real strong melodies. I just think she's a marvelous writer," continues Emmylou, who used to wear a Dolly Parton T-shirt. "I mean, if nothing else, she's a marvelous writer, and an incredible singer, but then she's also amazing because of the way she can keep all these aspects of her life together and follow her career. Just to know someone like that is very inspiring. She really is. There are very few people who come close to her as a song craftsman. I mean, a song like *To Daddy* has such a punch line that you want to say, 'Hey, that's not fair! You just set me up and knocked me over with that one.' To me, it's like an O. Henry short story. She sets you up and then whammo—she turns it all around. When I first heard it my lips were trembling, and I was afraid I was gonna make a scene." (Dolly is fond of turn-about and surprise endings. Aside from *To Daddy*, she used them on *Travelin' Man*, *Robert*, *I Get Lonesome By Myself*, and *Chas*, the latter

song containing a surprise middle, too.)

The fact that people of such artistry as Emmylou Harris love her work must please Dolly a great deal. "It's always a thrill when people do your songs. It's a great compliment," she has said. "The great thing about music is that it's something people relate to." Many people who know Dolly well say she takes her writing far more seriously than it may appear. "People don't realize how serious a songwriter she is and how much writing means to her," Jo Coulter says. "It's her way of expressing a life and she *has* to have it. She really needs it."

"My writing is personal to me. It's my self-expression. It's me. I want to be remembered as a good songwriter and stylist and as a person who added something to this world."

"I feel like anybody can sing, but not everybody can write," Dolly explains. "My songs tell how I feel. I get more out of writing than singing. My writing is personal to me. It's my self-expression. It's me. I want to be remembered as a good songwriter and stylist and as a person who added something to this world. If I had to choose, I guess a lot of people can sing better than me. I'd choose being remembered as a songwriter, because my writing is something I take great pride in. Like I say, that's totally me." If that's true, then, the lyrics of her songs must be

Dolly Parton quotes, showing her the way she really is and thinks. "A big part of 'em are, yeah," she answers. Then a mysterious smile crosses her face. "You'd be amazed at the ones that are."

The process by which Dolly writes is really quite extraordinary, her friends say, and she confirms it. "I'm not a disciplined writer at all. I'm strictly an impulsive writer, and I write from inspiration. I get my ideas from everybody. When I feel this need to write, it comes out of my heart and soul. Because I get moods, great moods, weird moods." She laughs. "You know, really inspired moods, and I just get real involved in what I'm doin' and I can't stop. I've stayed up as long as three days before—well, at least *two* days, and *into* the third day before I could really make my mind stop enough to rest."

Apparently those creative storms are sights to behold. "Her writing is automatic," says a former member of her band. "I mean, she'll sit down with the guitar and the licks just come and the words fly right out of her mouth. I'm not kiddin' you. She just sits down and writes them. There's no tellin' how many she'll write once she starts—ten or twenty, maybe. And when she gets in that writing mood, forget about talkin' to her, because she's mesmerized. You ask her a question and she don't know what you're sayin', she's so into her writing." The actual writing may be automatic, but Gordon Stoker, leader of The Jordanares, says the way Dolly comes up with ideas is purely intellectual. "Dolly's a good thinker. She thinks a lot. She's constantly trying to think of an idea for a song. While she's talking to you, she's standing there trying to think up a song. Of course, it's paid off for her, too."

I ask Dolly if it's true that's she written as many as twenty songs in one day. She pulls herself up abruptly, as if I have bruised her dignity. "Yes, I *have*!" Then she decides I meant no harm. "I tell you, a lot of people don't believe that. They think it's a lie, even people who write. But I'll tell you something even better than that. Out of those twenty songs I wrote, fifteen of 'em have been recorded. Because when I get on a real wild streak, look out! Now it depends on the nature of the song. Up-tempo is easier for me to write, with simple words. But anyway, twenty is the most I've ever written in a setting." I ask which came out of that session. "Well, I never really tried to break it down, but there was a song—what's it called? *Take Me Back*?—that goes 'I can still remember Monuma washin' on a rub board/On the back porch while us kids played in the yard?' Yeah, that one. And let me see, let me think. Well, the song on *New Harvest*, *You Are*, came out of that batch."

Take Me Back and *You Are* were recorded two years apart, and yet *You Are* does not sound two years old, lending credence to Dolly's insistence that she'd



Eddie Rabbitt presents Dolly with "his mask" at recent party held in her honor at Studio 54.

always written pop songs, but she was not allowed to record them as she wanted.

"Right now I'd have to look on some of the albums for titles. I'd know 'em if I saw 'em. But I can't really judge, 'cause I haven't recorded five of 'em yet. I'm sure they'll be recorded," she adds when I ask if she thinks they really will be, my tone perhaps implying that they might not be up to quality. "I usually don't stop on a song until I'm done with it. And when I'm done with it, it's worth recordin'. It just so happened that during that time, I was doin' an album, and you have a tendency — I was recordin' and Porter and me were doin' duets, so it just so happened that I recorded I guess ten of those because they were newly written and fresh on our minds, and we were in the process of recordin'. But I often write ten and twelve and fifteen, eighteen," she continues. "Sometimes I don't write but three or four." Suddenly she dissolves into giggles, catching me completely off-guard. "But I got so excited when I got inspired because I just *can't wait* to see what I come up with!" she says, reliving the experience. "Really, I *do*! I got real excited! I just think, 'I wish this was day after tomorrow, so I'd have all these on tape and know what all I can come up with.'"

Dolly, who has no technical music training, sings her songs into a tape recorder, and someone else writes the lead sheets.

"My lyrics and melodies always fall together. I just start right out with both at the same time." A common fault in country music, I say, is that oftentimes the music doesn't match the lyric. A man will sing that his wife has left him, his dog has died, his Cadillac has been repossessed, he has two weeks to live, and twenty-eight cents in his pocket—all to a wonderfully happy up tempo and a major key when he's trying to arouse sympathy in the listener. Does Dolly ever have problems finding the right melody to complement her lyrics? "I have one song that I think is a terrific lyric, the title and ever' thing," she answers. "But I've got this melody—and it's good—but it's too simple for the words. It just doesn't match. And I have one song that's real up that is a real sad thing, but I guess it's just got its own sound."

"I have been to Dolly's house when she was writing and I don't think she would really know I was there," her seamstress Lucy Adams says, echoing what the former band member has told me. "I wouldn't mind it because I knew what it was. When she's writing, she's living what she does. If she writes a happy song, she's happy. If she writes a sad song, that's the sad part of her."

Interesting, Dolly has often said that writing is therapy for her, "better than a psychiatrist, 'cause I'm able to put the hurtin' thing into my songs and then they don't hurt me any more. I get the world to share it." But at the same time she says

she is almost never unhappy or sad, the majority of her songs are sad in nature. "I'm not a down person," she insists. "I really have a real happy nature. I truly do. There've been times that it's been rough. *Lots* of times it was rough. But I always knew that it would smooth out. I've never got so far down I just couldn't see somethin' else. Now, I've been down, but I ain't never been out. If I didn't like the road I was walkin' on, I'd start gradin' another one. I'd try to find me a path through the woods and take a short cut. Take a detour. But that's life. If I do have a negative side, I don't know it. I just don't have a negative attitude or negative thoughts. I wake up every day just thinkin' it's gonna be a real good day. I go to sleep at night thinkin' 'Tomorrow's gonna be a good day.' I *do*. And if somethin' happens, it surprises me, usually. I love people, and I love life, and I love the joy of livin', and I love the magic of music, and I love the fact that I'm able to make music, that I'm able to create somethin' in the form of a song. Because it's like a gift I can give to people. And the only times in my life that I've ever been sad was because other people were not willing to let me be what I truly was, the person that I really am."

The person that Dolly really is demands that she express herself in a variety of musical styles. As a result, she has drawn a lot of criticism in the last two years

from people who claim she has "left country."

"I'm not leaving the country," Dolly says, twisting the six or seven rings stacked up on her fingers. "All I want is a chance to do everything I want to do in life, which is the same thing every human being wants. Most people don't get to do a whole lot because they ain't brave enough to try. Well, I'm a pretty brave little number, and I'll try. It's as simple as that." I ask if she considers everything on *New Harvest... First Gathering* country. "Oh, no, no, no! But I consider everything on that album *me*. Country is what you make it. I'm a country person. I love to be country. I'm glad I was brought up just like I was. I love the old traditional country. I sing it often and in my show."

"You see, country and gospel music are my favorite music, but I like other music as well, and in order to not get left behind, I will keep up with the times the best I can. Plus I have a lot of creative ideas—things you wouldn't classify as just country music, what you'd think of as old country music, with fiddle and flatop—even though I would do that very thing in an album. But I can do things like *Light of a Clear Blue Morning*, which is just so totally me—my thoughts, my feelings. Like I say, I'm having to fight for something I already *have*! So what I'm gonna do is just do the best I can at writing songs and recording them. I'll do my best at

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Dolly with Mick Jagger at recent N.Y. party.

everything I do, and if the people like it, then that'll make me real happy. If they don't, that'll make me real sad. Everybody wants me to do something different. So in order not to get confused myself, I just do what I want to do for me.

"I cannot be bitter. I cannot be resentful, and I can only defend myself because I know myself. I will still do what I felt I had to do, and that's everything I could do. Because I am a gifted person. I am not necessarily great, but I have a gift and I think it would be wrong for me to not try to exercise what talent I might have and to do with it whatever I can, to reach as many people as I can. There are other people in the world besides the ones I grew up with. But I will always be here, and I will always be able to help country music in many, many ways." I ask how. "Well, by becoming as big as I can in the music business and the entertainment field, and then by doing things like I did on the Johnny Carson show, when I know that at times there have been people on there that have really downgraded country music, or people who said they were not country. Like Buddy Rich comes on there sometimes, and he says country music is music with no class and all that, which makes me furious! You talk about country music in a bad way and that's like sayin' my momma is a whore! Them's fightin' words! So I think I'll help it by sayin' things like, 'I love country,' and that I'm proud to be part of it, and I'm proud of Nashville, and that I think country music is a music with a lot of class. It's ordinary stories told by ordinary people in an extraordinary way. I want to be able to walk out on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry and have people say, 'Well, you know, I saw her on so-and-so, and boy, she's still on the Grand Ole Opry.' Well, I am proud to be on the Grand Ole Opry. I love it. I would like to take it with me everywhere I go. And I do. I would never walk out on the Grand Ole Opry or on Nashville. I hope they'll always let me be a member, because that is something I wanted to do all my life. If I walked out on the traditional country and the people

I love most, like the Grand Ole Opry, that would be like turning your back on your momma and daddy, when they have been the ones that's raised you and took care of you. Well, I could talk forever, but the best thing to do is just let the people see."

Dolly wants no labels put on her music. But if it has to have one, she says she will always call her music country. "Because I *am* country, don'tcha see? Now, a lot of people would be furious with that. I'd call it country because it's me. But I really prefer to call it Dolly Parton's music. Why should it have a label? But I would stand up for country, and if somebody said I was in rock 'n' roll and we were in a discussion and they said, 'Well, you can't say that last album you cut was country,' I'd say, 'You may be right as far as what *you're* talkin' about country, but because I'm country, it's country in my mind.' Oh," Dolly sighs, exasperated. "I don't know what I'll say. I'll just have to say whatever is right. If it's good music, people are goin' to buy it. If they don't like it, they ain't gonna buy it even if it is country. It's just as simple as that, really. It's like politics, and it shouldn't be."

While for a time Dolly was criticized hot and heavy in Nashville for her change of direction, at least one man, Fred Foster, of Monument Records, Dolly's first real mentor, had hoped for years that Dolly would try to be all that she could.

Among the many suggestions Foster made to her about her career, were "cutting some pop records with some really contemporary-type pickers, cutting material as of today and not yesterday," and finding management outside of Nashville, preferably in Los Angeles. "I mentioned two or three firms to her," Foster says, "including the one she's with today." Above all, Foster kept asking Dolly, "Why are you confining yourself to that country road? Why not go all over the place? The country people will still love you."

Foster told her most of that twelve years ago. Today, of course, she is doing

just that. Several people in the music business have commented they thought Dolly always knew where she was going, but they've added they thought she probably wasn't sure of how to get there. Fred Foster just may have been the one who mapped out her route. The last time Foster talked with her was just after she cut *Here You Come Again*, her first platinum album. "You know," she told him, "you were the one person who always believed in me, believed that I could do all these things. I believe it myself now."

How would Foster have directed Dolly's career had she stayed with him? "Dolly thought she would be very good country and that was it," Foster begins. "I would have gotten her as hot as she could become country and I would have crossed her over about '66, and she would have become a universal artist, sort of like Johnny Cash or Elvis Presley. I would have had her taking time out long ago to write dramatic things—plays, motion pictures scripts and scores," Foster continues. "I would have had her acting, too." (In May 1978, Dolly signed a motion picture deal with Twentieth Century-Fox. She said then that she would probably write the story line for a film in which she would play herself.) And finally, Foster says, "I would have insisted that she throw away the wigs and the rhinestones. Maybe not throw them away, but get to the point where everyone would have known she was reverting to a childhood fantasy or doing it to be camp." ("I don't look like this 'cause I don't know no better," Dolly told me. "That's my gimmick.") Of late, she has been wearing shorter, more natural-looking wigs and conservative costumes and street clothes.) "She would have been dressed as a universally-appealing talent should be—tastefully," says Foster, "so that everybody in all walks of life would like it and not be offended. You see," he sums up, "Dolly has no boundaries but time. If she has enough, she can do it all."

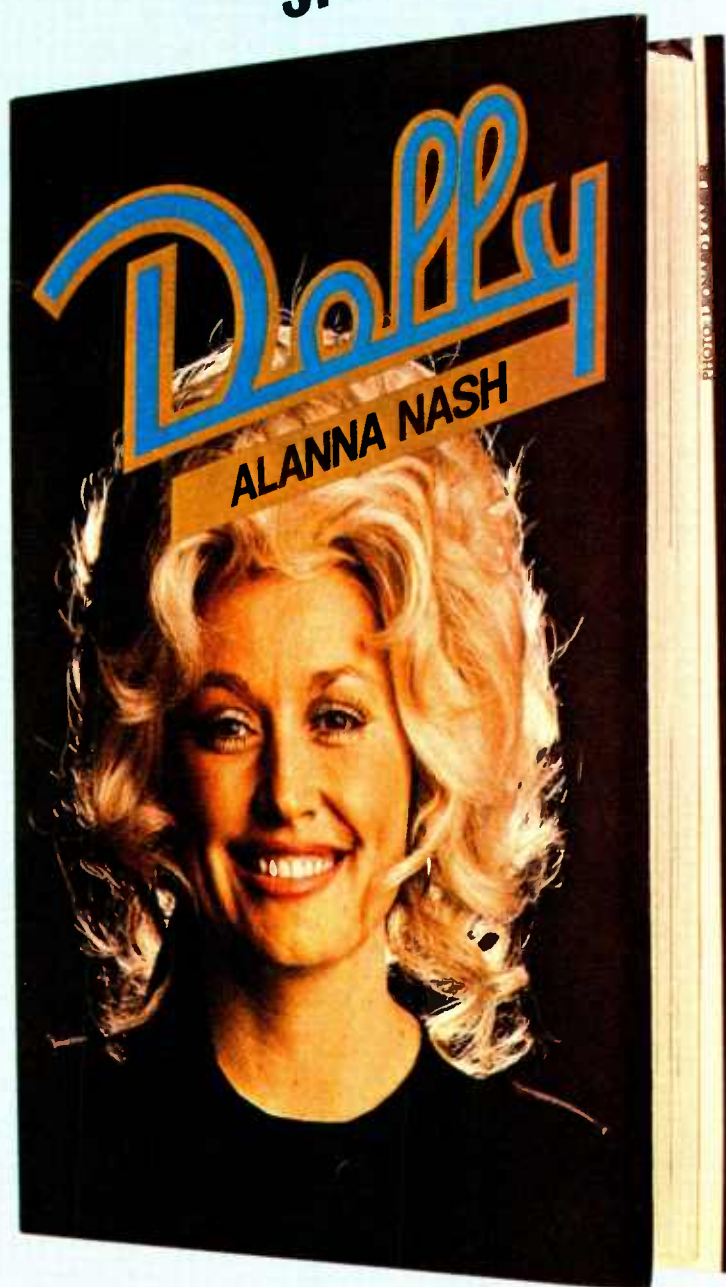
"Maybe... Dolly, you've said of yourself that you live in your own imagination, that sometimes you remind yourself of a fairy tale," Barbara Walters told her. "I want to try a fairy tale on you... Once upon a time there was a little girl from the Smoky Mountains. Her name was Dolly Parton..."

"She lived in a small town in the mountains," Dolly picked up, knowing the story well... which she loved, because it was a comfort, because she knew there was love and security there, in her family. But she was a child, very curious. And she wanted all the things that she had always been impressed with. Like the fairy tales of Mother Goose stories and Cinderella and the lost slipper. Well, I guess she kinda wanted to find the other slipper in sort of a way so she worked hard and she dreamed a lot. And one day, it came true. She was a fairy princess and she lived happily ever after..."

DOLLY

THE NEW
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STORY OF

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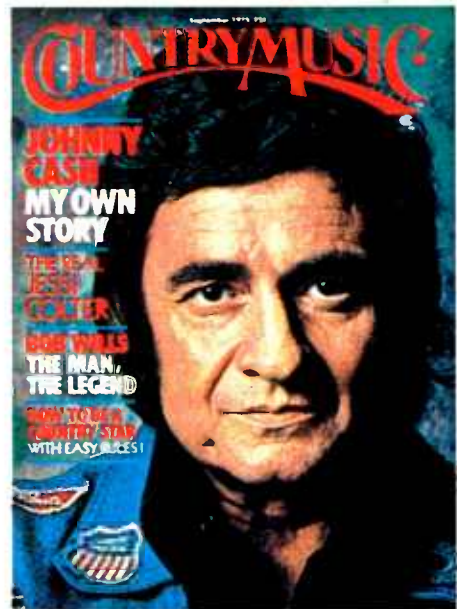
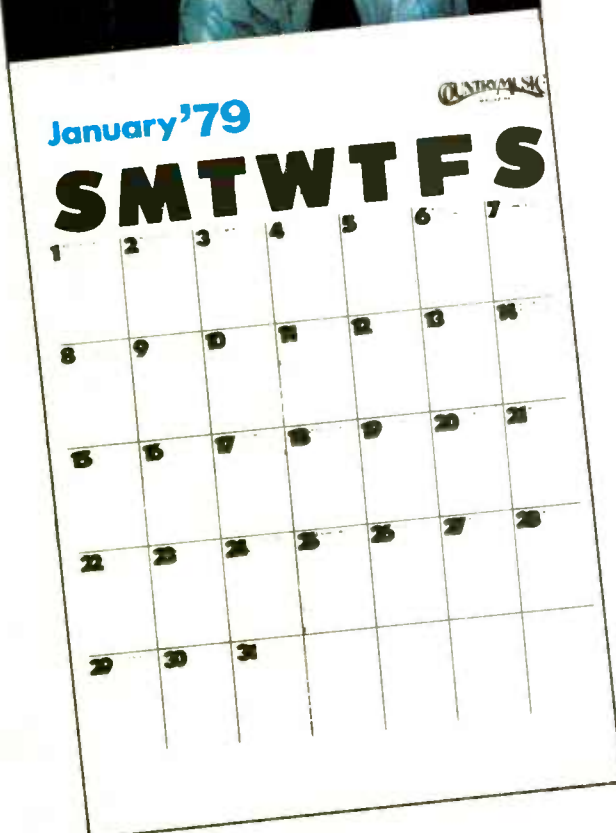
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Records



Waylon Jennings I've Always Been Crazy

RCA AFL1-2979

Central to any discussion of I've Always Been Crazy is the question of how close an audience really wants to get to a performer and how much distance the performer wishes to maintain. Our best singers have always woven a web of dreams of fantasies which ultimately told true tales of us and our neighbors: universal stories of love won or love lost or love unattainable, stories with which we, all of us, could identify.

When singers have stepped out of this neutral persona to sing of themselves and their lives, the results have most often been painful or embarrassing. Jimmie Rodgers' *T.B. Blues*, perhaps country's first such song, was both. George and Tammy's recent excesses are among the most current. On the other hand, this approach can also at times be revealing and ironic—extraordinarily moving, when successful.

I've Always Been Crazy strives, of course, to be the

latter, but too often is instead the former. Most of the album is plainly autobiographical, though many listeners (like me) will fear they are not hip enough to catch all the references strewn purposefully about, as obvious as some of them are.

Unless you're totally into the macho Jennings outlaw image, you're bound to find *Don't You Think This Outlaw Bit's Done Got Out Of Hand*, *A Long Time Ago* and the title song unbearable, unrelenting outlaw posturing—vainglorious, artificially inflated, without a trace of tongue-in-cheek.

But Waylon's tributes to three influential men in his life work rather well. Johnny Cash's *I Walk the Line* is slower and phrased more movingly than the original; Merle Haggard's *Tonight the Bottle Let Me Down* is a direct lift from a fine original, and is full of the same reckless honky tonk energy. Waylon's Buddy Holly medley—*Well All Right/It's So Easy/Maybe Baby/Peggy Sue*—has some fine moments, and is recorded with the original Crickets, even though the dark underpinnings that define Waylon's image and music seem at odds with the cheery optimism and blithe spirit that characterizes Holly's music. Finally, standing head and shoulders above everything is a Tony Joe White song called *Billy*, which is simply the most moving, devastating combination of song and performance I've heard all year. A simple tune and a simple tale, it cuts deeply and swiftly to the bone.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN



Carl Perkins Ol' Blue Suede's Back

Jet KZ35604

This is what rock and roll used to sound like, before Pablo Cruise got ahold of it. It's stoking, boiling, gutbucket, raw—delivered by a man who

was there at the start.

Culture suffers when legendary figures reach the point where everyone starts wondering, "What's he doing now?" In such cases, whole generations come to maturity without any knowledge of their heritage. Indeed, it has been two decades since Carl Perkins, son

of the only white tenant farmer on a large Mississippi plantation, rode the charts with *Boppin' the Blues*, *Blue Suede Shoes* and others.

While *Suede*, Perkins' calling card, is included here, this new album is not a rerecording of his greatest hits. But the material is familiar: new ver-

sions of old hits by such other primal rockers as Bill Haley and the Comets, Little Richard, Chuck Willis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, and Fats Domino.

It's interesting to note that the sidemen are all contemporary Nashville studio pickers—men like rhythm guitarist Jerry

85

87

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body laughed and said, "He sure does." "I don't have too many aspirations," she continues, becoming serious, "but that's something I'd like to do more of, is write."

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The Entertainers Of Country Music

It is memories, more than anything, that make up this long-standing bestseller. Each one of its 105 photos will remind you of some special song, story or event. There is the last show at the Ryman Auditorium and the first show at the new Opry House; Bob Wills at his last recording session and the first Willie Nelson picnic. Some are scenes you will never see again: Ernest Tubb and Hank Snow backstage at the Old Ryman jamming with friends; Hank Williams, smiling over a Mother's Best Flour bag; a genial Tex Ritter. There are bluegrass festivals, Opry shows, performers at work and at home—a kaleidoscope of faces, moods, feelings, people.

I Saw The Light

I SAW THE LIGHT is the unique book that tells the story of Hank's life and music by revealing the deep rooted spiritual side of this superstar that few of us knew. Through such classics as "Jesus Is Calling," "I Saw The Light," and the dozens of other sacred songs by Hank, you'll see a strongly religious man and begin to really understand his battle with alcohol and drugs, and what he tried to say through his music. It is truly a unique book.

Watermelon Wine

At last, there is a book that focuses on country music at the gut level. Author Frye Gaillard digs deep into the soul of country music and comes up with a clear picture of the poor, confused, fun-loving people and the songs that help them cope. WATERMELON WINE is a new inside look at the lives and music of Waylon, Willie, Dolly, Hank and the rest of Nashville's headliners. You'll see them all as they really are and not as some would have us believe. There are even complete lyrics to 55 of the greatest all-time country hits. You love it.

Homes Of The Stars

Here is one of the most unique and colorful over-sized paperbacks ever done on the stars of country music. Now, through beautiful full color pictures you'll visit 23 homes of Nashville's country elite—Chet Atkins, Johnny Rodriguez, Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, Tom T. Hall, and Tammy Wynette just to mention a few. Now you'll get a first hand look at how these superstars live, plus learn a little about their success from the brief biographical sketches on each. But there's even more, 138 photos of the top headliners of country music—many in full color. If you take your music serious, you will not want to be without this great book.

The American Country Hymn Book, Vol. 1

It's 192 pages, packed with the words and music to 100 of your favorite spirituals. You get such classics as: Why Me/Let Me Live, I'll Fly Away/Oh Happy Day/Great Speckled Bird/Help Me/Love Lifted Me/On The Way Home, and 92 more. This is the biggest alltime selling gospel songbook, and one you shouldn't miss.

Country Hymn Book, Vol. 2

Volume one in this set was so popular that Word Records has recently released this, volume two. You'll find the words and music to 100 more of your favorite gospel hits, including such classics as: Beautiful Savior/Climb Every Mountain/America, The Beautiful/Faith Of Our Fathers/Fill My Cup, Lord/Precious Memories, 100 immortal hymns in all.

Roy Acuff: The Smoky Mountain Boy

Country music's steadily rising star is at its zenith, and Roy Acuff is its undisputed king. The journey of Acuff from his humble origins as the son of a Baptist preacher to the pinnacle of a fabulous career is traced in this warm-hearted biography by an author who has spent over 20 years as a dedicated Acuff fan and collector of Acuff memorabilia. Drawing upon personal interviews with Acuff's friends, family, associates, and with the star himself, she creates a living portrait of the "dean" of the Grand Ole Opry. The book is profusely illustrated with 16 pages of photographs, primarily selected from the never-before-shown Acuff family album. There's even a 15-page discography of Acuff hits.

Elvis Songbook

For Elvis fans, this is a must songbook. ELVIS ELVIS ELVIS is 100 of "The Kings" best hits, all arranged for voice, piano and guitar. Here is just a sample of what you'll find in words and music: All Shook Up/Blue Suede Shoes/Can't Help Falling In Love/Crying In The Chapel/Don't Be Cruel/It's Now Or Never/G.I. Blues/I Want You, I Need You, I Love You/Heartbreak Hotel/Hound Dog/Love Me Tender/Return To Sender/We Call On Him/Cindy, Cindy/Good Luck Charm, plus 85 more big hits.

Singers And Sweethearts

Here is the revealing picture-filled story of today's 5 super ladies of country music. All from poor backgrounds, now millionaires, all firmly planted in their careers as well as home lives, you will see them here as never before. It's Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, June Carter Cash, Dolly Parton and Tanya Tucker, all in one of the most unique books of the year. Yes, SINGERS AND SWEETHEARTS is a candid portrait told on 150 exciting pages, with 136 photos. It's the real women behind the images—what excites them and frightens them; what they feel about each other and themselves. It is must reading for every fan.

The Outlaws

Country Music was respectable. If you wanted to get down, you kept it to yourself. Then, a handful of accomplished musicians decided to break the rules. They struggled and fought and Nashville called them "outlaws." Then they won, and today stand on top of the country music charts, performing their special brand of music. THE OUTLAWS is the book that tells the fascinating story of this unique revolution, from the early philosophy sessions in Nashville's pinball arcade to the sun-baked mayhem of Willie Nelson's Picnics in Austin. But more than this, it's a behind-the-scenes look at the rebels who brought about the change—Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Jessi Colter, Tompall Glaser, Jack Clement, and David Allan Coe. Author Michael Bane presents these headliners as they really are and as they fit into the outlaw revolution. It's 160 great pages with hundreds of rare photos.

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Complete Works of Hank Williams

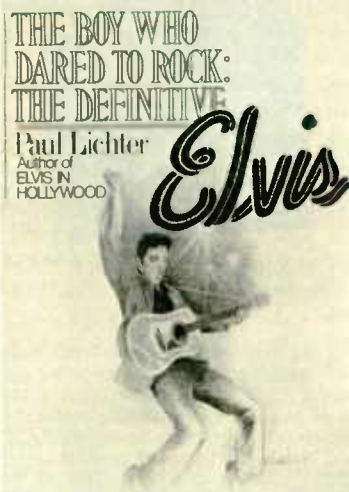
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The Illustrated Encyclopedia Of Country Music

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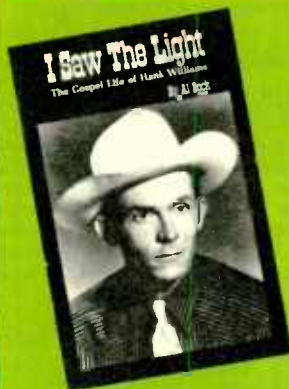


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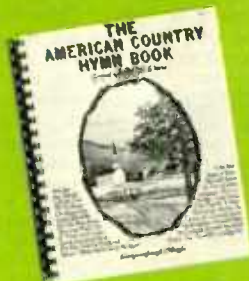
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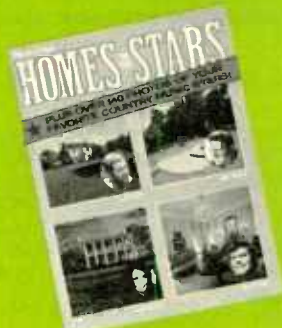
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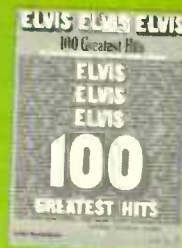
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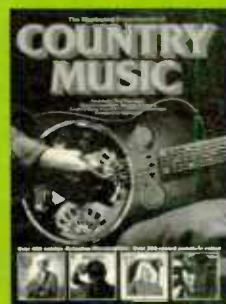
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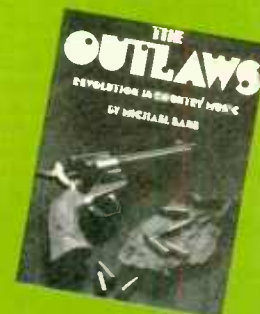
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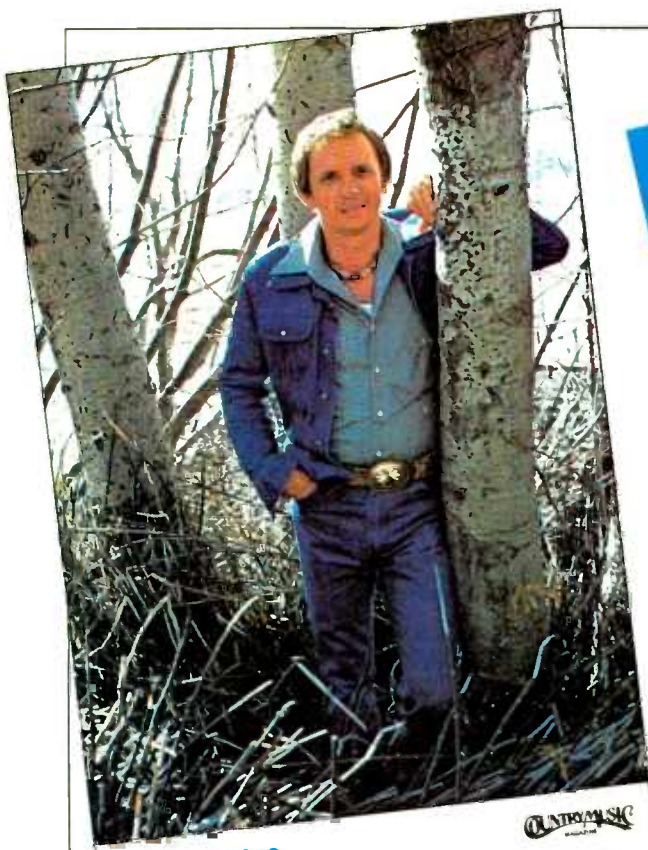
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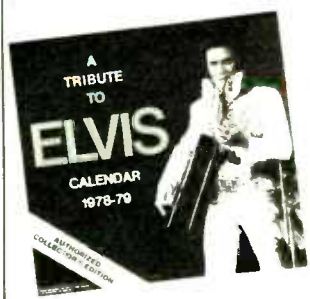
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....Send me 1 Country Music Calendar for only \$5.95 (\$4.95 plus \$1 post. & hand.) (G31)

ORDER MORE THAN ONE & SAVE:

Send me Country Music Calendars for only \$3.95 each plus \$1 post. & hand. (YOU MUST ORDER MORE THAN ONE TO GET THIS DISCOUNT!!!!) (G31)

DON'T FORGET THESE:

Send me ... Elvis Commemorative Calendar(s) at only \$3.95 each plus \$1 post. & hand. (G131)

Send me ... Official Star Wars Calendar(s) at only \$4.95 each plus \$1 post. & hand. (G218)

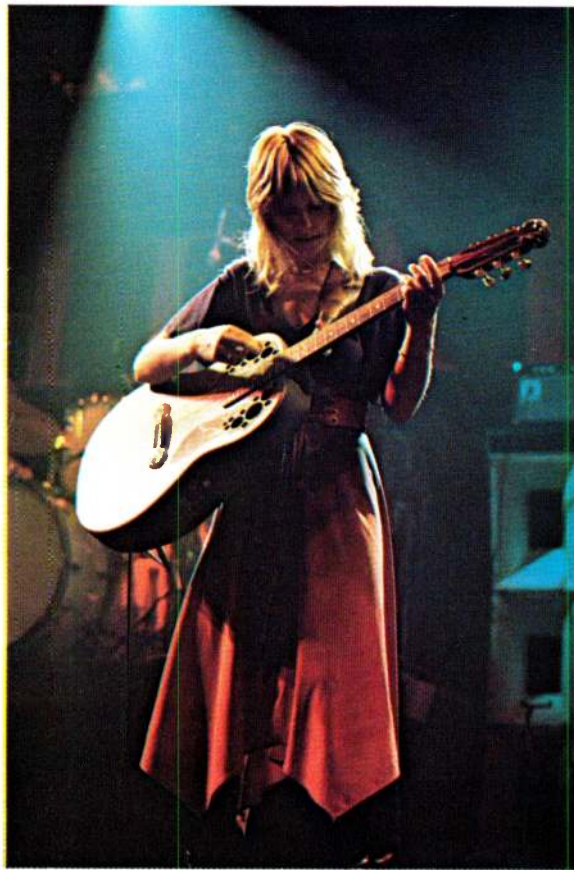
Enclosed is my check/m.o. for \$..... N.Y. and N.J. residents add appropriate state sales tax. Canadian orders add an extra \$1.50 post. & hand. No Other foreign orders will be accepted.

MO128



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