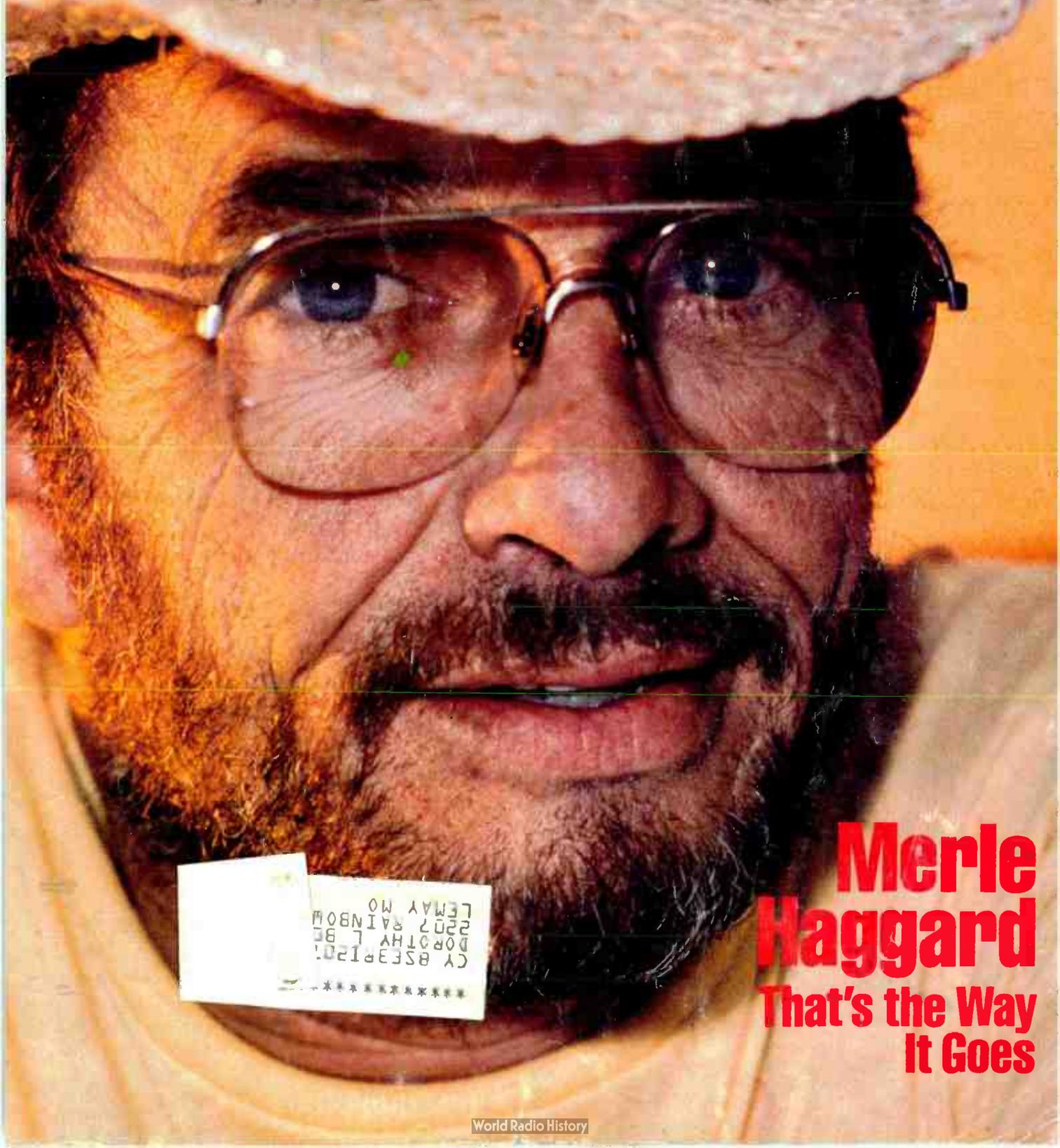


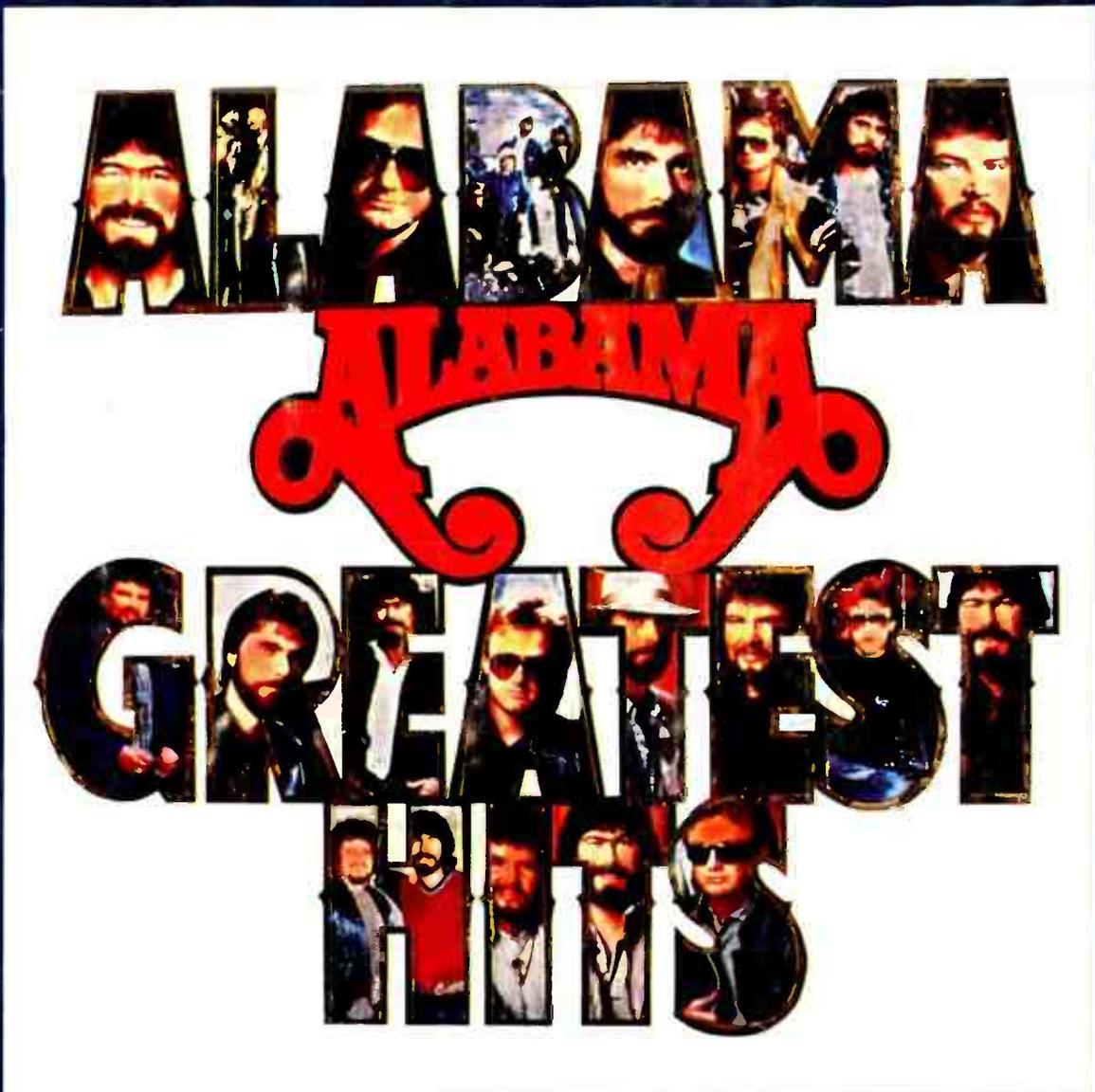
The Judds / Roy Clark / Vince Gill / Chips Moman's Memphis Revival

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 1984

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COUNTRY MUSIC™



2 Letters

News and views from you readers concerning Cash, Kristofferson, Conway, The Statlers, The Family Parton, Charley Pride, Johnny Rodriguez, Eddy Raven, The Judds and more.

15 People

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Roy's into airplanes, playing Vegas and Tahoe, and making movies with Mel: find out about it.

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Merle's so seasoned, it almost hurts. Now as always his music comes first, but he's in a good period, he feels fulfilled and it shows.

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Vince likes to clown around, but as a musician he's paid his dues. With one mini and one full album under his belt, he's ready to roll.

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A whole lot about past master, Marty Robbins, from Germany's Bear Family Records.

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66 Buried Treasures

Items from bluegrass, the birth of rockabilly and the heyday of trucking songs are featured in this month's column.

by Rich Kienzle

Letters

Cash and Company

Loved the story on Johnny Cash in your September/October issue. He is my ideal. I have a daughter in Nashville, the same age—so love him like a son.

When he entertains up this way, my youngest daughter and I always go to see him. He was at the Farm Aid show here in September, but heard he wasn't coming—so didn't go—but got to see him better on TV. I like the "Highwayman" song, also Waylon Jennings' new own, "Hello, John." I have two scrap books of Johnny, also 40 records. Country is for me. I was a country girl.

Madge Taylor
Champaign, Illinois

Hats off to Marty Stuart and to *Country Music Magazine* for a fine article and photos on Johnny Cash's Planet Earth Tour. It's always a pleasure to see Marty's articles and photos—he's a great talent and is certain to be bringing home an armload of music awards in the not-too-distant future.

Vicki Langdon
Denison, Texas

From Watson to Waylon —and Age Doesn't Wither

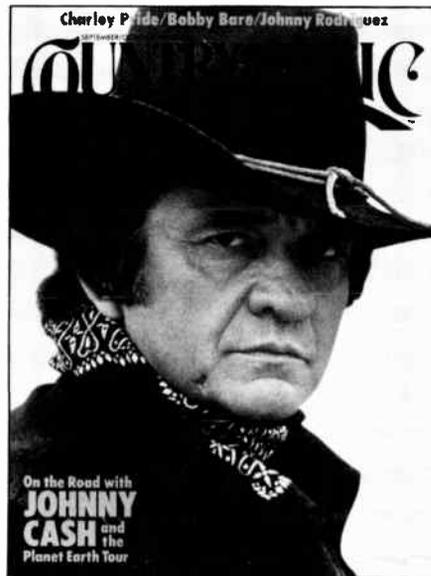
I'm writing this letter in response to Kristy Birkelbach's letter about Gene Watson in your September/October issue. Miss Birkelbach stated that she never knew that Gene Watson was in his forties because he looked so young and handsome. Age has nothing to do with looks.

Take Waylon Jennings. Waylon is closer to fifty than forty, and I think he is the handsomest man I've ever had the pleasure of looking upon.

I'm almost twenty-three years old, and I've been a fan of Waylon's since I was just a little girl. Personally, I think that the older he gets, the more handsome and sexy he gets. Jessi is one *very* lucky lady.

By the way, I hope to see an article about Waylon in your magazine real soon. Also, I hope this letter gets printed. It took me five starts on it before I managed to get Kristy Birkelbach's name spelled right.

Robin Blair
P.S. Do you know if Waylon has a fan



club or not? I'd like to know.
Johnny Cash says Waylon's too ugly to have a fan club.—Ed.

Kristofferson Rides Again

I really enjoyed the article by John Taylor in the May/June CMSA Newsletter about his Father's Day gift of getting to see and hear Kris Kristofferson and Billy Swan. Kris has been a love of mine for many years. He has written excellent music. I have suffered with him through his tribulations and gloried with him in his successes. I am delighted to see him looking and sounding so great.

I loved the show he, Waylon, Willie and Johnny put on last Christmas in Switzerland. Kris' wife, Lisa, is a darling. I was in Nashville last October and when my friend and I visited the Country Music Hall of Fame, I got down on my knees by Kris' picture and gave it a big smack so my friend could take a picture. And they say kids do dumb things! I'll treasure that photo.

Sure wish the Highwaymen could make another Christmas special, or any special. Isn't it great seeing them all looking so good now?

Doris Kuelz
Cherry Valley, Illinois
Why didn't you send the photo? Copies of John Taylor's story available in this office for \$1.50.—Ed.

I have been a fan of Kris Kristofferson since 1973. I was first introduced to his music when I was in Memphis, Tennessee, for a year. I would love to know how to join his fan club. Perhaps someone in his club could tell me where to get *Spooky Lady's Sideshow*. I am missing that one album. I must admit, though, that I would like to replace my older ones. They are wearing out from use. Is there a chance that his music will be put on disc?

Lisa, his wife, was due with their second child this past May. Was the baby a boy or girl? What did they name the baby?

I saw Kris at Hampton Beach Casino, Hampton, New Hampshire, in 1984. The performance was great.

Janelle Zuk
Newmarket, New Hampshire
Kristofferson's fan club address: c/o Jeri Smith, 200 Crescent Drive, Littlefield, Texas 79339. The baby was a boy, named Jody, their second son. The older one's Jesse.—Ed.

Kristofferson Unclothed

Your review on the *Highwayman* album in the July/August issue was an in-depth article. But as to your remarks on Kris... taking it back a few years, I didn't know who this "Kris Kristofferson" was. Someone recommended him to me, suggested I get the album *Songs of Kristofferson*. So I did. Well, let me tell you and others who don't think Kris can sing—have you ever really stopped to listen? He is a genius!

As for "comatose," that's your opinion, but if a poll was taken after one of his concerts, I'd bet you would be proven wrong. Talk about someone comatose—what about Johnny Cash? Comatose would be a good word for him. June Carter is more alive than JC.

And, yes, Kris can take his clothes off *anytime* in the movies.

There are so many out there who would be fans—and I hate that word—if the radio stations would play Kristofferson!

Virginia Davis
New York, New York
Johnny Cash says he and Kris are both too ugly to be comatose. You have to be handsome, like Willie.—Ed.

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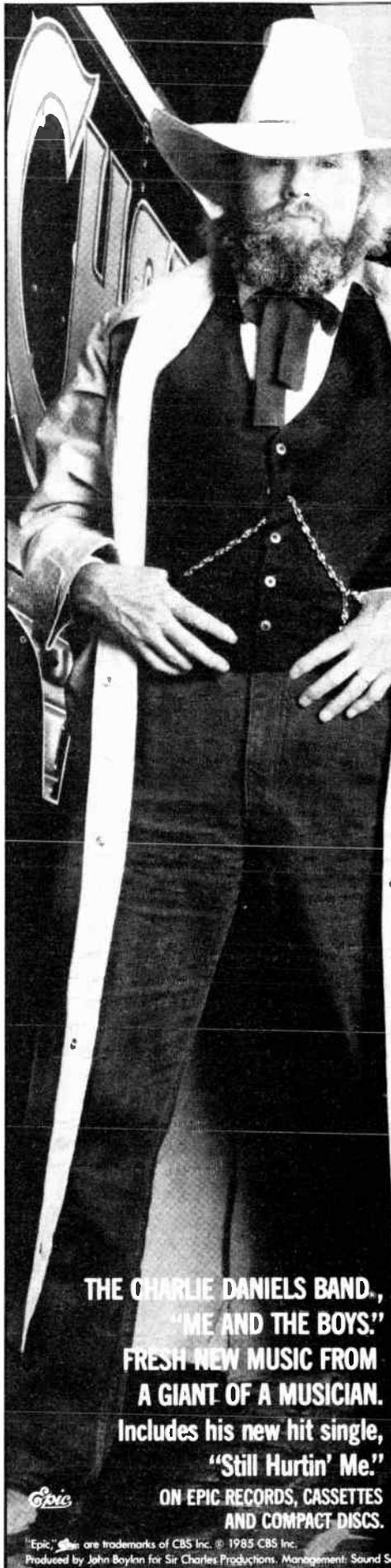
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Fan Fair

"Eye saw" and "Eye heard" a lot at Fan Fair, as reported in your People column in the September/October issue, but "eye failed" to deliver a word about the IFCO festivities that took place there—not even a crediting the IFCO show when using the photo of Gary Morris and son Matthew appearing there!

Shame on you who could totally overlook a show of the magnitude of our Friday evening festivities, offering stars the likes of Loretta Lynn, Charley Pride, Gary Morris, The Osmond Brothers, Connie Smith, Freddy Weller, Michael Martin Murphey, Judy Rodman, Darrell Clanton and Razzzy Bailey. Emcees were Charlie Douglas and Lee Arnold. Nashville Mayor Richard Fulton made an appearance to present the Metronome Award to Marty Robbins, accepted by his wife, Marizona Robbins, and son Ronnie. Barbara Mandrell was there to accept the 12th Annual IFCO Tex Ritter Award and to exchange little gifts with Loretta Lynn since both are celebrating their 25th year in the business of country music entertainment.

Can hardly believe *Country Music Magazine* ignored us, but we can assure you that we are now underway with plans for our 19th Annual Dinner and

Show for the next Fan Fair; already having confirmed some of country's foremost superstars to perform! The date will be Friday evening—that's *lucky Friday* the 13th of June, 1986!

By the way, the Loretta Lynn Fan Club Pow-Wow was a goodie, and we appreciate Hazel Smith's mention of that fact—and that Loretta was in her booth every day through Fan Fair week, with the exception of Friday when we close at two o'clock.

Loudilla Johnson
for The Whole Johnson Gang
International Fan Club Organization
Wild Horse, Colorado
Well, eye swear! Sounds like fun. Send us an invite next year.—Ed.

On June 1, 1985 I saw The Oak Ridge Boys in concert in Atlantic City, New Jersey. I was hoping for a front row seat, especially since it was my birthday, but they put me in the "back forty," which was very disappointing! However, The Oak Ridge Boys put on a great concert.

Then on the 12th we went to the Nashville Fan Fair for the first time and the Opryland fair etc. We wanted to see a taping of *Hee Haw* but missed that too, as no one seemed to know how to see the show. I'm sure there *must* be nice folks in Nashville, but the two times we've

been there people were *not* very helpful.

Then I saw a sign saying The Oak Ridge Boys would be at Fan Fair at 4:30 P.M., however...the sign did *not* mention that they'd be leaving at 6 P.M. So, after standing in line for one and a half hours, I did *not* get to see The Oak Ridge Boys again! And standing all that time is *not* easy for me, as I've hurt my feet many times and standing hurts me.

As a first time Fan Fair guest, I feel I need to advise other folks who are planning on going that it probably won't be what you believe it will. You must be very self-reliant, as there's not much help offered to you even when you ask. Fan Fair is *not* set up very well. More information brochures need to be made.

A friend of mine wants to see the Fan Fair next year, so I hope they're going to do a better job with it next year! Why do they close at 6 P.M.? For people who are visiting from out of town, well, they don't have very many days to stay. The Fair closing so early—doesn't help! It should, at least, stay open till 9 P.M. I know it must be hard on the stars, but Fan Fair is supposed to be a time when "regular folk" can meet their favorites, so how about making it better!

J.N. Richards
CMSA members had the benefit, this year, of hints on how to get around Fan



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Fair in the May/June Newsletter. Copies available in this office for \$1.50.—Ed.

Caught Conway at Fan Fair

I finally made it to Twitty City and Fan Fair. It was a trip I'll never forget. Got to meet Conway and had my picture taken with him. My dream finally came true.

Jean McKenney
Marlinton, West Virginia

Glad to hear the end of the story. Jean first wrote in about meeting Conway in March/April 1985.—Ed.



McKenney meets Twitty at last.

Nice Guy Crash Craddock

Really enjoyed reading about all the country stars in their booths at Fan Fair, in the September/October issue. However, I think you overlooked probably the nicest guy there. Billy Crash Craddock was in his booth signing autographs and taking pictures with everyone who came through the line. He takes as much time as anyone needs to take his picture with them or with his son. He never gives the impression that he is in a hurry—he's just one *super guy*.

I wonder where we could write to see if we could possibly get him to come to Jackson some time.

Gayle Pettie
Jackson, Mississippi

To reach Billy Crash Craddock, try his fan club: P.O. Box 1585, Mt. Vernon, Illinois 62864.—Ed.

Big Popcorn Bet on Little Brenda's Pop

I am hoping that you can clear up an argument between myself and a friend of mine. There is a pretty big wager involved—a whole bag of popcorn the next time that I take her to the movies.

She says that Brenda Lee's father is Marvin Rainwater, and I say she is as wrong as a football bat.

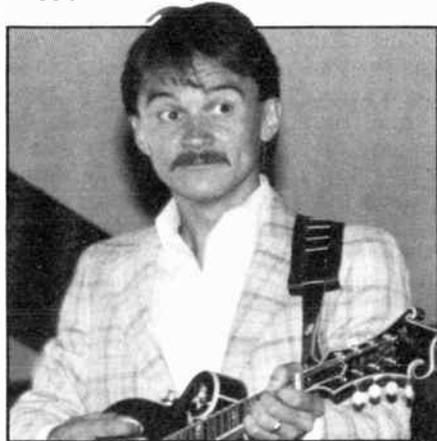
Please let me know as soon as possible

'cause I just love that buttered popcorn.

Forest Wines

Bridgeport, Washington

Maybe you should both buy each other a box of popcorn—here's why. Brenda Lee's stepfather was named Rainwater, but it wasn't Marvin. Her own dad was killed in an accident on the job and her mother, Grace Tarpley, remarried. Happy munching!—Ed.



Jimmy Fortune at Panderasa Park.

Stick With The Statlers

Can you stand another letter on The Statlers? I'm a new subscriber to *Country Music Magazine*, and I'm sorry to

Merle Haggard

Amber Waves Of Grain



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have missed the story on The Statlers, but I read the letters readers wrote in on the story and had to write myself in response to some of them.

First off, The Statlers are fantastic! I too saw them at Ponderosa Park near Salem, Ohio, on August 11, 1985. Yes, they do sign autographs, and you could take pictures at either or both of their two shows that day. I got a great picture of Jimmy, enclosed.

The Statlers are the ones who changed me from a rock 'n' roll fan to a total country music fan four years ago, when they were first introducing Jimmy. Jimmy is bringing new fans to the group and also to country music. Which, to me, is why they're hurrying to get out the gates at Ponderosa Park—they've got too much on their hearts, fans!

I'll be at Ponderosa Park next year if they are.

Deborah Bettis
Hanoverton, Ohio

Copies of the May/June 1985 issue with The Statlers' story and poster available for \$3.00 in this office, while supplies last. Nice pictures of all the boys.—Ed.

I love *Country Music Magazine*, and I love the letters and I have to agree with Illa Ward of Lincoln, Nebraska, and

Mrs. Belth of Bloomington, Indiana. Once a Statler fan, always a Statler fan. The Oaks are good, and Alabama is good, but The Statlers are fantastic. I miss Lew DeWitt also and hope he is much better, and I'm sure he will do fine even if he doesn't rejoin The Statlers.

The poster is on my wall, and long hair or short hair, they're all cute, talented and can sing anything.

Mrs. Rusty Keisling
Aitkin, Minnesota



Grandpa Jones and Hank Snow in Salt Lake City in the 1960's.

More Mail for The Statlers

In the September/October letters, Alan Meyers states that The Statlers are recording pop songs. Songs are not put into categories, singers are. Bing

Crosby recorded "Don't Fence Me In," but he was not a western singer. Slim Whitman recorded "Indian Love Call," "Danny Boy" and "Rose Marie." He is western.

Marge Belth is right about your description of Harold. I have always compared him to a basset hound. Cute. Another mistake made in the article was stating that Harold is the senior Statler Brother. I know Phil looks younger, but he is older. Bass singers tend to lose their voices at a younger age. So don't make Harold any older than he is.

About them not signing autographs, that won't last long. They care too much about their fans.

Vivian Chadwick won't send her picture of Lew. I'm sending one of Grandpa Jones without his makeup on. I've been trying to think of a way to get it to him. Hope you can do it for me.

Lorna Wuyts

Lyman, Wyoming

P.S. You may show it to the mailman. *We did. He loved it. We'll send it on to Grandpa Jones at the Grand Ole Opry. About Harold's age, he is the elder of the two Reid brothers, senior to Don—not the oldest of all the Statlers. As for that basset hound business, Harold's fictional name is Road-hog, not Road-dog!—Ed.*

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Jeanne Thompson and Lew DeWitt; Buck's pal Ruth Durham and Lew.



Here's Looking at Lew DeWitt

Lew DeWitt's concert at the Chesterfield Country Fair in Chester, Virginia, this summer was the greatest one I have ever been to. Lew DeWitt is truly one of a kind. A letter in the September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine* said The Statlers could use a fifth brother to complete their harmony. Maybe so, but Lew DeWitt does not need to be a brother to anyone when it comes to singing or doing a concert. He is perfect all by himself.

Lew not only posed for a picture with me, he dedicated a song to me during the concert. We had never met until that night, but he remembered me from a letter I wrote to him congratulating him on his comeback to music. He was very kind and gracious to all of his fans.

You can show this picture to the mailman, milkman, iceman or anyone else. I'm proud of it and glad to share it.

Jeanne Thompson
Hopewell, Virginia

Mailman's getting busy. For more on Lew DeWitt, see interview in November/December CMSA Newsletter. Copies available in this office for \$1.50.—Ed.

Why Statlers Don't Sign—Straight From Old Phil

I have been a lifelong fan of The Statler Brothers and have every album they have recorded. Needless to say, I was very surprised to read in your Letters columns of May/June and September/October and in your feature on The Statlers in the May/June issue that The Statlers no longer sign autographs after their performances. I wrote to Phil regarding this matter and am enclosing the answer I received:

"Following some of our concerts, we have long distances to travel to the next show. We feel that it is cheating some of our fans to sign autographs at some shows and not others. Also, to sign after each show impedes the progress of our sound and light people in their efforts to tear down and

load their equipment. They have to make considerable progress in these efforts as they have to be at buildings as early as 10:00 A.M. the next day. ... We value your loyalty and support very much. Without loyal fans and followers, an entertainer's career is very much in jeopardy. ... We treasure the support of all our fans and friends." The letter was signed by Phil Balsley.

We also saw Lew DeWitt at a concert in Virginia in July. As far as our family is concerned, he has never looked or sounded better.

Fred and Barbara Buck
Ft. Pierce, Florida

Thanks for your permission to print part of the letter from Phil.—Ed.

Songwriter Sticks With It

In the September/October issue Forest A. Cutler of Tucson, Arizona, wrote in saying that if any radio stations needed records, he would send a record, free, if they would write to him on the station letterhead. I will do the same.

Big Sound Records just recently released an album of new gospel songs (12 songs) which I wrote the lyrics to. The album is titled *That Special Man*. A song by the same title is on the album. Bob Rogers does the vocals. It is engineered by Sandy Stanton. The instrumental music is by Sandy Stanton's *Swinging Strings*.

Songwriters are an unpredictable sort of people. Some give up too easy, while others keep writing and hoping. I fit in the latter group. I started writing when I was a young mother. Now, I am a grandmother. So it doesn't happen overnight, but I have never thrown out any lyrics.

When Sandy asked me to do the lyrics for this album, I had no trouble coming up with 12 songs. I write other songs besides gospel.

Edna L. Towner
Aberdeen, Washington

For any radio stations interested, Edna's full address is 2216 Bay Ave., zip 98520.—Ed.

In Praise of Partons—Dolly, Willadeene and Stella

I just have to tell somebody about the best and hottest concert I've ever been to: Kenny and Dolly. This was a concert in New York City in late August. Dolly was making a special guest appearance as a part of the Kenny Rogers Show, which also included Mac Davis and Sawyer Brown. Now, believe me, I am no Kenny Rogers fan, but I just love Kenny and Dolly. The main reason I went was to see Dolly. I love her. She's a fantastic person. I have got to be her biggest fan.

Anyway, when Kenny started up



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THE NEWS—SPORTS | 312314 CHICAGO'S
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| 325704 MICKEY GALLEY
CHARLY McCLAIN
IT TAKES BELIEVERS | 321380 Barbra Streisand's
Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 | 324996 THE CARS
HEARTBEAT CITY |
| 327544 Statler Brothers
ATLANTA BLUE | 322933* EDDIE MURPHY:
COMEDIAN | 325266 BEST OF
DON WILLIAMS
VOL. 1 |
| 328559 MUSICAL MEMORIES
WITH LAWRENCE WELK | 325233 LIBERACE
LIVE WITH THE
LONDON PHILHARMONIC | 328237 RAY CHARLES
FRIENDSHIP |
| 330704 GEORGE STRAIT
DOES FORT WORTH
EVER CROSS YOUR MIND | 328047 Ferrante & Teicher
Concert For Love | 328302* TINA TURNER
PRIVATE DANCER |
| 331165 Paul Anka
Live | 328435 PURPLE RAIN PRINCE
AND THE REVOLUTION | 330738 PROFILES II:
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| 333708 THE KENDALLS
Two Heart Harmony | 330720 JOHN ANDERSON
GREATEST HITS | 333906 TAMMY WYNETTE
SOME FINE
WHEN WE TOUCH |
| 333989* B.J. THOMAS
AMAZING GRACE | 331215 JOHN CONLEE
"BLUE HIGHWAY" | 335018 ED BRUCE
GREATEST HITS |
| 335109 LEE GREENWOOD
GREATEST HITS | 334094 THE BEST OF
REBA McENTIRE | 335117 JOHN SCHNEIDER
TRYIN' TO OUTFIT THE WIND |
| 335299* CLEO LANE
That Old Feeling | 335000 GENE WATSON
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| 336230* "WEIRD AL"
YANKOVIC
DARE TO BE STUPID | 335026 BEST OF EXILE | 335976* AMY GRANT
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The tapes and records you order during your membership will be billed at regular Club prices, which currently are \$7.98 to \$9.98—plus shipping and handling. (Multiple-unit sets and Double Selections may be somewhat higher.) And if you decide to continue as a member after completing your enrollment agreement, you'll be eligible for our money-saving bonus plan.

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329649 MICKEY GILLEY Ten Years Of Hits	308049 CREEDEnce CLEARWATER REWIND - 20 GREATEST HITS Featuring John Fogerty
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314997 STEVE WONDER ONE OF THE GREATS HITS Original Musician - 1	324848 PRINCE 394841 1999
320705 BOB SEGER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND LIVE BULLET	318147 GEORGE JONES—TEN YEARS OF HITS
336396 BILLY JOEL GREATEST HITS VOLUME 1	336388 HANK WILLIAMS 396382 40 GREATEST HITS

"We've Got Tonight" after his solo performance, there was so much excitement in that audience it was almost unbearable. Everyone was whispering "This is where Dolly comes out" or "Here comes Dolly." And sure enough, when her verse came around, there she was, in all her glory. Everybody went crazy. We were standing up, people were clapping, there were whistles, people shouting, it was just great. I will never forget it!

On another note, I loved Dolly's sister Willadeene's book *In the Shadow of a Song*. It's a great story, and it's very interesting to see how different people lived. Even if I didn't like Dolly Parton, I would have loved this book. My 80-year-old Latvian grandmother also liked it. She said it was such a contrast to the awful things going on today.

Does anyone know what Willadeene's last name is? I don't think it's Parton anymore.

Chris Alksnis
Trumbull, Connecticut

Willadeene likes to go by Willadeene—that's all. Sorry we misspelled her name in People in the November/December issue.—Ed.

This summer I went to see Stella Parton at the Cowlitz County Fair. She did a

fantastic job. In fact, she gave such a wonderful performance that I drove 75 miles to see her a second time. I think she is going to do just as good as her sister Dolly, if not better.

Tracie Duver
Longview, Washington

Proud of Pride and Alabama, Too

I really enjoyed the interview you had with Charley Pride in the September/October *Country Music*.

I think Charley is the greatest singer that's in country music today or ever will be. If it were up to me, I would give him the country award every year. I know there are a lot of good singers out there but none as good as Charley. I have 15 of his records already and am still buying more. I have gotten to go see him twice and I shook his hand. That was my long-awaited dream. He is a very nice person.

I love country music. I can sing most any song and have written lots of songs, but I can't read music. I have never sold any of my songs. I still have them. I have had offers, but they wanted me to pay them instead of them paying me.

I also see there are a lot of grippers out there that are jealous of Alabama. I think they are great, too. Guess that's because I was born about five miles from Ft. Payne. Those boys are like my own

sons. So I say to Alabama, "Keep up the good work, boys." And to Charley, "You are my hero." I could listen to him 24 hours a day. I never get tired of hearing him sing. All I can say is, keep them coming, Charley.

Vela Powell
Roseville, California



Price catches Pride on stage.

Top Performer Pride

My husband and I had the opportunity to see Charley Pride in person this past July at the Stanislaus County Fair in Turlock, California. What a performance he gave! Both shows lasted an

COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE 1985 READER POLL WINNERS

Group Album Best-Seller

Alabama

Runners up:
The Oak Ridge Boys
The Statlers
The Judds
Exile



Album of the Year

40 Hour Week
Alabama

Runners up:
Atlanta Blue
The Statlers
Roll On
Alabama
Why Not Me
The Judds
Does Ft. Worth Ever
Cross Your Mind
George Strait



Group Concert Artist

Alabama

Runners up:
The Oak Ridge Boys
The Statlers
Exile
The Judds

Male Album Best-Seller

Hank Williams, Jr.

Runners up:
Lee Greenwood
George Strait
Merle Haggard
Willie Nelson



Single of the Year

God Bless the USA
Lee Greenwood

Runners up:
Baby's Got Her Blue Jeans On
Mel McDaniel
Mama He's Crazy
The Judds
Fire in the Night
Alabama
I've Been Around Enough
to Know
John Schneider



Male Concert Artist

Lee Greenwood

Runners up:
Hank Williams, Jr.
Kenny Rogers
Conway Twitty
George Strait



Female Concert Artist

Reba McEntire

Runners up:
Janie Fricke
Sylvia
Tammy Wynette
Dolly Parton





FarmAid crowd; Willie accepts TNN check from Paul Corbin; Loretta braves the rain.

hour and a half, and during the show he would let everyone with a camera come up to the stage and take as many pictures as they wanted to. Also, after the last show, he stayed and signed autographs and just visited.

He is truly remarkable. He goes from one song into another, non-stop. I can remember him 20 years ago when he was just starting out, and each song he records seems to get better. He is very popular in our area. We listen to his music being played on KRAK out of Sacramento.

Marge Price
Escalon, California

From Pride to Rodriguez

Now Charley Pride, he was a great person. I got to see Charley one time in person. I was little, and Mom took us to the state fair in Detroit, Michigan. I was born and raised in Motown. I love his music. I love his old songs, and a few of his new ones. It's true—because of all the new country talent, the older ones are taking a back seat. But they are never forgotten. Same with J.C. But Charley is still big enough to make a big comeback, starting with his old songs. Now is the time when history has been repeating itself. The oldies are coming back, old TV shows coming back, Cherry Coke is back. This year and next year will be the year to bring back nostalgia.

Look at Johnny Rodriguez. He's making a great comeback. He was great til he turned the wrong way. Now he's fighting his way back. I'm very proud of Johnny Rodriguez. My two oldest sons are 12 and 10. They could probably learn some good tips from him on not getting into drugs and things. They are Chris-

tian boys and I pray they stay that way. More on Johnny Rodriguez, please.

I thoroughly enjoyed this September/October issue. I've liked the other issues, but this is a great issue! I give you all a big hug. Keep it up! Renew my subscription, please!

Terrie Sisk
St. Louis, Missouri

OK!—Ed.

Real Man Rodriguez

I just finished reading "Rodriguez Plays It Straight," in your September/October issue, and I loved it. I saw Johnny in concert here in Shreveport recently. He looked real good. His voice was just as beautiful as I remembered it was. It takes a real man to realize that he has some serious problems and to do something about it.

Paula Kay
Bossier City, Louisiana

Fabulous FarmAid

God bless FarmAid and Willie Nelson. Everyone in America should bless Willie and all his helpers. They came to the aid of our great American farmer—Kris for the best in his songs, Tom T. Hall, George Jones, all the rock stars, Charlie Daniels, Loretta Lynn. Bless each and every one that did participate in the FarmAid program September 22. My dad was a farmer, all with horses, in the old days.

We all know this cannot be done overnight. We are on the way with people like Willie—as George Jones did sing, "Who is going to fill their shoes"—and the farmers' shoes also. God bless you all.

Mrs. Genevieve Crowder
Covington, Indiana

I think everyone should salute those artists who were on FarmAid. Especially some of the country performers. Merle Haggard's song "Amber Waves of Grain" is beautifully done, as is "American Farmer" by the Charlie Daniels Band. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's "Leon McDuff" really made you wonder if somewhere there really is a man like Leon McDuff. And Alabama had a beautiful letter from a farmer which they read and made a beautiful video out of.

You should do a story! FarmAid needs all the advertising it can get. It's such a worthy cause. I should know, I live on a farm.

Lisa Myers
Zanesville, Ohio

I'm so proud of those country music stars who are raising money for the farmers! I'm especially proud of Willie who organized it but all of them are to be praised for their efforts—Merle Haggard too.

I want to send some money to the farmers. Please send me Willie's or Merle's address so I can send it to them.

I wish they would advertise where people could mail in their money. Lots of people want to help.

Frances Le Croy
Anderson, South Carolina
Mail contributions to FarmAid to FarmAid, P.O. Box FarmAid, Champaign, Illinois 61820.—Ed.

Ravin' Over Eddy Raven

I was so glad to see the review on Eddy Raven's new album, *Love and Other Hard Times*, in the September/October issue. I agree with Kip Kirby's review completely, especially about Eddy's song, "We Robbed Trains." I had the

album before Kip's review and had already made my decision of a definite hit.

Eddy Raven has been one of my favorite artists for years, and I don't think he has gotten the credit he deserves. He puts on a dynamic show, has a terrific voice, writes songs that touch the heart, and his looks don't hurt either! Please give us fans more features on him with lots of pictures and his fan club information.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Eddy on his nomination by the CMA for the Horizon Award. To me, he is and will always be the winner.

Love ya, Eddy.

Vicki Stewart

Jacksonville, Florida

To reach his fan club, write Betty Edge, 1845 Burton Dr., Apt. 276, Austin, Texas 78741.—Ed.

What's Up with The Judds— John Conlee's Just Fine

John Conlee puts on a very good show. I saw him on August 27, 1985, at the Woodstock Fair. I was very impressed with him. I had always liked his songs and I still do, but now more than ever.

I was disappointed because The Judds were supposed to be there, but they were not. I have heard a couple of different reasons why. I would like to know the truth, along with many of my friends. I used to like The Judds, but I am not sure anymore. I am not sure if they deserve our truth and faith and our support. I will not know until I find out why they did not keep their commitment.

Linda Louise Hedrick
New Market, Virginia

For more on The Judds and whether success has spoiled them, see Bob Allen's article in this issue. According to Bob, Naomi Judd had food poisoning during part of their late-summer East Coast tour. Sounds like your fair and Mrs. Frank Furney's described below were both hit by the same problem.—Ed.

I live in a rural community of Pennsylvania where our fair has country entertainers perform yearly. This year we had outstanding shows by Boxcar Willie, Margo Smith and Michael Conway.

Also performing were The Judds. They give an un-enthusiastic, shortened, half rate show. Whenever this mother and daughter duo are interviewed on television or radio, they stress how success has not gone to their heads. This may be what they say, but certainly not the way they act. There was no signing of autographs between their shows or greeting the crowd.

Other years we have enjoyed performances by Bill Anderson, Sonny James,

Hank Snow and The Kendalls, among others, and were always well entertained. The Judds thought a rural fair was good enough to help launch their careers, but after a couple of awards, they tried to back out of their contract. Now we were only a nuisance stop on tour.

Mrs. Frank Furney

New Milford, Pennsylvania

Update on Murrel Counts

We had a short visit with my uncle Murrel Counts and the rest of The Jones Boys when George Jones and his show played the fair at Tulare, California this summer. It was so good to see all the



"Fox" fiddler Murrel Counts.

band and hear what they have been doing. All kinds of things happening—Mark, the drummer, just got married; Clyde Phillips, the lead guitarist, has been adding to his guitar collection. . . my dad Bill Counts even sold him one of his, and we had fun getting it shipped to Nashville; Ron, bass guitar, Tom, steel guitar, and Kent Goodson, piano, were all well and did their usual terrific Jones Boys Show.

Murrel did his "Fox on the Run" just like on George's new album. Nice to see he's getting recognition for it in your Letters column of September/October, and it's getting airtime on radio stations across the country. Of course, our family is very proud of him. By now, the whole band is beginning to feel like family, and even though we knew they had to be in Champaign for the FarmAid show, we hated to say goodbye.

Sue Barnhart
Ceres, California

P.S. Also saw Sawyer Brown again. Mark Miller said to thank you for the photo in Letters in the September/October issue.

Thanks for the update on Murrel and the new photo.—Ed.

The Difference is Steel

Hurray for Mr. Wilson and his letter about the steel guitar in the July/August issue—I heartily agree. I am also fortunate enough to know a great steel player, Mr. Leonard T. Zinn. Older fans may remember him with the

Faron Young and Ernest Tubb bands.

He has a music store here, and devotes his spare time to our weekly live country music show *Appalachian Jubilee* as music director and steel player in the Jubilee band.

The "steel" makes the difference!

Peg Stewart

Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

Maybe Mr. Zinn knows Carlos Minor, longtime steel player featured in November/December Letters.—Ed.

Bangin' on the Banjo, Searching for Scruggs

Has Earl Scruggs ever made any solo albums? If so, who would be likely to have them? I have a couple of old records of Earl and Lester Flatt, but the parts I enjoy the most are when Earl comes in on the banjo breaks.

Being brought up on black blues, rock and pop music from the 1950's on up, I've never been much of a country music lover. However, in the past couple of years, I have become a banjo addict, and for some crazy reason, it's now the only kind of instrument that I enjoy listening to.

Fortunately, I have in my possession a book written by Earl, along with his accompanying record that teaches some of the magic of his playing. My only regret is, out of all the pages of complete song tablature prepared by the master himself, I can't find the recordings of these anywhere!

It appears the popularity of the fivestring is trying to fade again, as was the case in the 1930's before Earl appeared and brought it back to life around 1945 on the WSM radio shows. I understand that, after that, his innovative style of picking caused a run on banjos and manufacturers had to tool up again to meet the demand!

Incidentally, what is Earl doing nowadays? Has he retired from public engagements? The last time I saw him was on the two-hour Beverly Hillbillies movie made several years ago.

For what he did for America's only native instrument, he should be in the Country Music Hall of Fame, right along side of Uncle Dave Macon and Bill Monroe!

Charles M. Mask

Fayetteville, Georgia

The CMA must have been listening—Earl was elected to the Hall of Fame this year. You might like his recent CBS album, *American Made—World Played*. We plan a feature on Earl soon.—Ed.

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

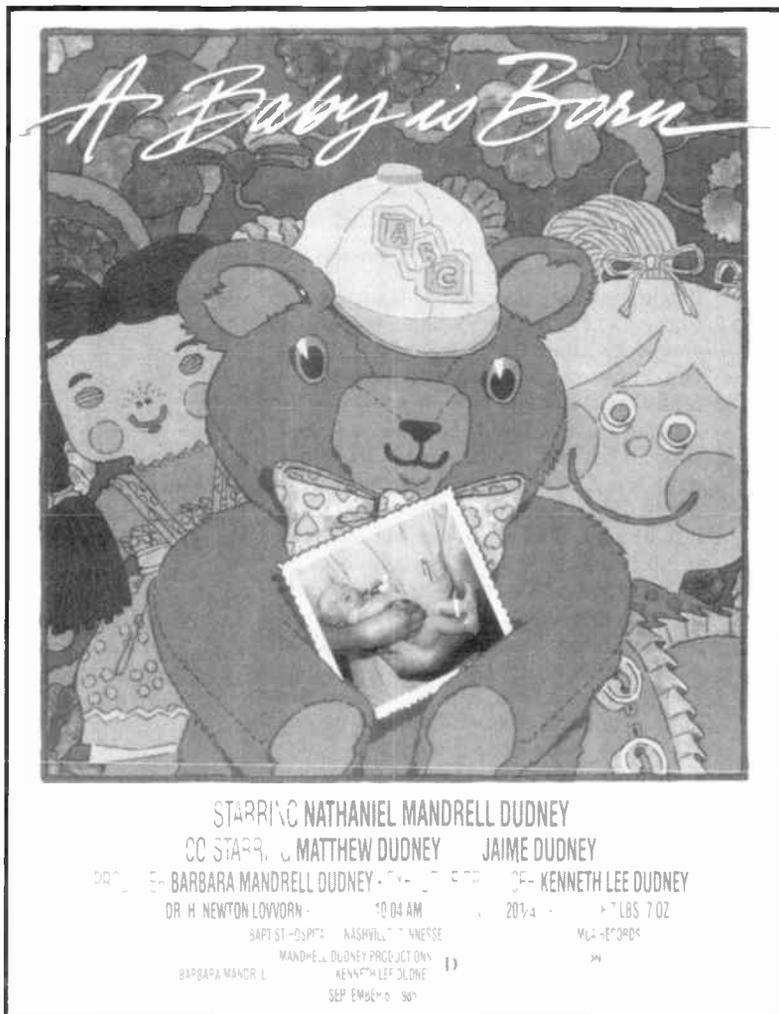
People

LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS WITH BARBARA AND THE MANDRELLS

Young Nathaniel Mandrell Dudney weighed in at 7 lbs., 7 ozs. on September 6, 1985, at Baptist Hospital here in Nashville. Time—10:04 A.M., delivered by Caesarian section. Hubby Ken stayed by Barbara's side and watched the entire happening. The 20¼-inch youngster caused quite a stir around Music City. The marquee at the Barbara Mandrell Museum read "It Is a Boy" moments after the arrival. The Barbara Mandrell Photomats proclaimed the same news. Hubby Ken took photos and held his wife's hand all during the event. Perhaps concerned and maybe frightened due to the fact that Barbara went into labor about two weeks before the scheduled delivery date, Ken came through like a trooper, according to bulletins from the Mandrell office. Mother and son were also doing fine.

Following the "Friday smiles," Monday morning headlines read: "Barbara Mandrell sues White family for 10 million dollars." The story went on to explain that the suit was in response to the accident a year ago which killed the young White boy, severely injured Barbara and hurt her two older children. The White boy's car struck Barbara's head on in Barbara's lane. As a result of the injury, Barbara has a steel pin a foot long in her leg. According to the newspaper report, Barbara instructed her attorney to go ahead with the suit. Following the publication of the story, letters of disapproval, to put it mildly, appeared in the paper, saying "Poor Barbara wants 10 million for all her suffering. What about the White family...their son is dead." Listen, to all of you detractors...you do not know of what you speak. The laws of the State of Tennessee left Barbara no choice but to sue these people or get nothing! Do you understand...nothing! And, Lord knows, she is due something. I don't want to depress Barbara, her family or her fans, but I wonder if she can walk without a limp. I doubt she will ever

Photomats, marquees and posters like this one carried the announcement of the arrival of Nathaniel Mandrell Dudney.



dance again, and dancing was a great part of her show.

These insurance companies are so rotten they almost force you to sue the other party to get what is due you. Case in point. On December 28, 1983, I fell on my mother's porch in North Carolina, badly broke my leg, and still limp at times. I went through mental stress that you would not believe. The only way I could have gotten anything from my mother's insurance company was to sue *my own mother*. This would have become a long, drawn out issue with my having to go to North Carolina to court to sue my widowed mother who is over 70 years old. I could not do that. Conse-

quently, I am still paying a hospital bill that in reality should have been covered totally by her homeowner's policy. If a stranger had fallen on those ice-covered steps, they could have sued and got their bills paid in full. Fans and friends of Barbara, please don't throw stones. We all live in glass houses. I could give you adages all day, but then Rochelle Friedman would have to spend a week instead of a minute dipping syrup from my copy, and she ain't got time to dip syrup for a week...Lordy mercy, the girl's got engaged, and it's all she can do to spoon out syrup for one minute!

But back to the Barbara issue... maybe she has more money than most

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

People

of us, but she has given more than most also, and not only in talent and songs. Barbara gives until it hurts for most any charity that comes along. She comes early and stays late. She's trying to walk again... please... don't kick somebody who is down. We are all bad about talking and not listening, but until you know all the facts on this one, it is best not to judge. Trust me... this is the *only* way.

TAKES MORE THAN A CADILLAC TO DRIVE MAMA JUDD CRAZY

You know those singing Judds have gone from nowhere to everywhere, especially now, with their CMA Awards. But did you know that Mama Judd says she really *tried* to keep herself a low profile around Music City, then went out and bought herself a vintage 1957 Caddie with tail fins and in aqua-blue. Guess which 1957 rocker she bought it from... Conway. The only car that would shine brighter or look more hillbilly is the orange Caddie that Waylon had during the hey-days of the outlaws—and that car honestly favored the orange-red sunset on a clear Tennessee evening. From what I hear, the aqua car fits Mama Judd to a crossed *t*. So now pretty Wynonna, also known as Baby Judd, and pretty Naomi—Mama Judd—can drive the boys crazy and drive the crazy car!

PARTY TILL YOU DROP OR GO HOME IF YOU CAN'T STAND IT

Another year brings another party. Bigger-and-better than ever was the second annual Harlan Howard Birthday Bash starring Big Daddy HH himself along with Rosanne Cash—I swear, that girl is beautiful—and her hubby Rodney Crowell. Before the party started, I spied Big John R. Cash and Waylon “By God” Jennings, and they weren't even on the list of guests! That's the kind of evening it was. Great folks just showed up and showed off! Waylon and Cash dueted on “Even Cowgirls Get the Blues” and sang backup with Guy Clark on the current WJ, JRC, WN, KK single “Desperados Waiting For a Train.” I told Emmylou Harris that she sings better and gets prettier every time I see her... the older she gets, the younger she looks. Course now, that could be because she's lost 300 pounds... her ex-husband! Also out enjoying the evening were MCA's Jimmy Bowen and his bride Ginger, BMI's Frances Preston in from New



Harlan performed some of his own tunes at his birthday bash and stars like our own Hazel Smith and Rosanne Cash (inset) showed up.

York City, plus Nashville's own—Broadway's finest—Roger Miller. Roger surprised us all by dropping by and singing, his delovely Mary by his side. Bobby Bare, too, was singing his arms off while his Jeannie looked to be enjoying the whole affair. Jerry Jeff Walker jetted in from Austin, pleased all in attendance and also had a ball. Thom Schyler, who's making himself quite a household name as a tunesmith, delighted the crowd, and Vince Gill made magic with his powerful vocals.

Course Harlan was so proud to see everybody. You could tell he was especially pleased that Waylon and Cash showed. I overheard John R. say to Waylon, pointing in Harlan's direction, “Just look at 'im. He's on top of the world.” And he was. I had to tell Harlan what his buddies were saying behind his back. Harlan brushed a tear and smiled. Young Clementyne Howard, who started school this year, was a real star that night in her long, stylish little-girl frock. Clemmie really was happy that Catherine Bach (*Dukes of Hazzard*) showed up with handsome John Schneider, who sang his heart out—country boy! Don't tell me that boy can't sing... and country at that. He thanked Bob McDill and Dickie Lee for the great song, “I've Been Around Enough to Know,” that went all the way to the top of the charts and into the hearts of the country music fans. McDill is hotter than a pistol and Dickie ain't doing bad. Neither is songwriter Troy Seals, who penned that great “Seven Spanish

Angels” that Ray Charles had out along with Willie Nelson. Course Troy Seals was at the birthday bash, as were John D. and Susan Loudermilk and the great Carl Perkins, who rocked on into the night with “Blue Suede Shoes.” Sharon White of The Whites and hubby Ricky Skaggs, who were on the road, sent their regards with love and happy birthday along with a basket of flowers as big as the Country Music Hall of Fame fountain!

Harlan was especially frocked for the occasion in a black tailored suit with gold metallic tigers painted on the shoulders. Tailored specifically for the evening by Vicki Graef, who also designed Sharon Howard's (Mrs. Harlan) mauve wool dress with gold leather music notes. Sharon's gown was a copy of a dress that Patsy Cline had worn on the Opry. The monies made by the event will go toward the Songwriter's Hall of Fame and to the Nashville Music Association. The NMA's share for the evening was about 20,000 big ones... not a bad haul for one night. I sat down and figured up that a show like it would've cost \$400 a ticket for that caliber entertainment. Best show of the year. Second to none. Billy Joe Shaver was spellbinding, singing his “I'm Just an Old Chunk of Coal” and a bunch more of his hits.

The man of the hour, Harlan himself, allowed as how it was no big deal—just a party—before cutting loose on “Tiger By the Tail” and “Pick Me Up On Your Way Down,” which laid the groundwork for this evening to be remembered. Hall

People

of Famer Pee Wee King joined his song-writing buddy Redd Stewart with his accordion. Together they performed their "Tennessee Waltz" to the delight of the crowd... and to their stuffed pockets from writing such a monster song. Dave Loggins sang his Lee Greenwood hit and also Kenny Rogers' next single, both of which he wrote. Karen Brooks looked slightly punkish, but very sexy, and sang as well as she looked, and Chick Raines performed the killer song, "Somebody Should Leave," that he and Harlan co-did for Reba McEntire. Dick Feller, Rhonda Fleming, Sonny Curtis, Steve Earle, Mike Reid, John Hiatt, and Larry Willoughby all performed some of their hits. The midnight hour was approaching, and that crowd still continued to boogie on down. Rosanne sang with John Hiatt, and she sounded like Tina Turner mixed with Patsy Cline. She just blew me away. A little past the midnight hour, the excitement level dropped a little, and Big Daddy HH told the crowd if they hadn't gotten 10 bucks worth by then, they weren't listening. Good night, Nashville. Good night, Harlan.

ACUFF MEETS ROSE

Country Music's King, Mr. Roy Acuff, has been feeling poorly again, hasn't been able to appear on the Opry or to visit with the fans at Opryland Park, where he has a home. Seems that one day Roy felt strong enough to go out, so he got on his golf cart, took his lawn chair and situated himself out of the sight of the tourists, but where he could still see them. As he sat down, he lost his balance, fell backward and hit his head on a water spigot. The injury required



The hitmakers.

COURTESY JERRY STROBEL



COURTESY THE WHITES

CHARMAINE LANHAM

eight stitches. Plus, because he takes a blood thinner, he almost bled to death before doctors could get the bleeding stopped.

Fortunately, Roy recuperated enough to go down to Atlanta for a baseball game on his birthday. Accompanied by Charlie Collins and Pete "Oswald" Kirby from his band and Bud Wendell, Jerry Strobel, Bill Carlisle and others, Roy traveled on a special bus so he could rest while on the way. He took in the ball game and shook hands with Pete Rose. Can't you imagine how thrilled the great Pete Rose was to meet the great Roy Acuff.

BIZNESS OF SHOW

They call it show biz. One could say there's no business like show business and I think one Ethel Merman did say it in song. There's a lot of reasons I am in show biz and Jerry Lee Lewis is one of them! Just returning from an overseas tour, Jerry Lee Lewis was in Music City taping *The Johnny Cash Christmas Special* and dropped in on his old buddy Ralph Emery at his TV show *Nashville Now*. During the interview Ralph mentioned Jerry Lee's trip to Spain and asked him how it was. The "Killer" explained. It seems that the audience got so excited, they wanted an encore, which he obliged, but they still wanted more. At that point, veteran guitarist James Burton raced off the stage, into Jerry Lee's dressing room, saying, "Man, I can't take this." Amazed, the Killer asked him what he meant... since Burton had played guitar with Elvis for 11 years. Even so, apparently he'd never seen nothing like that Spanish crowd.

Burton was ready to split!!

Now the story shifts to the studio stage in Nashville, where the "bizness of show" is about to be written, so you can read it! Just continue on! Another Emery guest on that same show/same night was T.G. Sheppard, who allowed as how he was learning Spanish because he had a hankering to appear in South America where Spanish is one of the prominent languages. Ralph leaned over, looked by T.G. at Jerry Lee, and asked, "Jerry Lee, do you know any Spanish?" The Killer answered, "Oh, a couple!" Needless to say the house came down. Ralph Emery totally lost it. All he could say was, "You never let up, do you, Killer?" And, thank God, he don't! And that, my friends, is the bizness of show!

UNIVERSAL DOLLY

A lot of us, including myself, sometimes take Dolly Parton for granted. It's not that she calls us at every break, no, it's that we just assume that she is ours! We need to re-evaluate how we look at her. Today, Dolly Parton—country music singer, million-selling recording artist, highest paid performer per week in Las Vegas—has homes in Los Angeles and Hawaii as well as in Nashville, is a movie star whose films make money and is one of the top money-making songwriters.

It now looks like Dollywood, the theme park in East Tennessee I told you about a couple of issues back, will be a reality around the middle of May. This business woman is also into real estate and Lord knows what else... the poor girl ain't "po' no mo'!"

I say all the above to say this: Porter

CLASSIC COUNTRY MUSIC

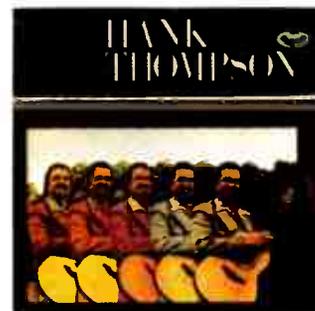
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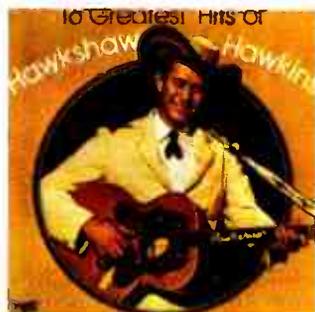
Albums Rated As Essential Collectibles

By The Editors Of Country Music Magazine

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THE BEST OF THE BEST OF HANK THOMPSON The man who stole the world's admiration. Included in this treasury collection of his hits is: Wild Side Of Life/Yesterday's Girl/Humpty Dumpty Heart/A Six Pack To Go/Whoa Sailor/Wake Up Irene The Older The Violin The Sweeter The Music/Who Left The Door To Heaven Open/Smokey The Bar/Honky Tonk Girl



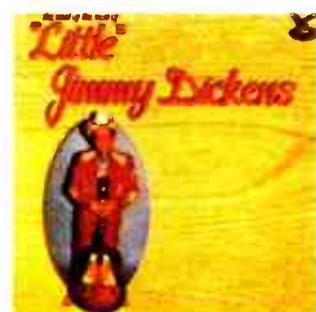
HAWKSHAW HAWKINS: 16 GREATEST HITS Featuring: I Suppose/Lonesome 7-7203/Sunny Side Of The Mountain/Little White Washed Chimney/I Love You A Thousand Ways/I'm Waiting Just For You/Teardrops On Your Letter/Dog House Boogie/Slow Poke/I Wasted A Nickel/Pan American/Barbara Allen/Be My Life's Companion/Silver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



COWBOY COPAS: 16 GREATEST HITS Featuring: Alabam/Signed, Sealed And Delivered/Beyond The Sunset Flat Top Guitar/Cowboy's Deck Of Cards/Louisian/Goodby Kisses/From The Manger To The Cross/Tragic Romance/Satisfied Mind/Cope's Wild Flower/There'll Come A Time/Sunny Tennessee/Waltzing With Sin/Filipino Baby/I Dreamed Of A Hillbilly Heaven. A classic collection of old time country.



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



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

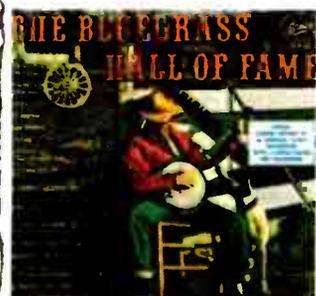
From The Pages Of Country Music Magazine

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

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

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

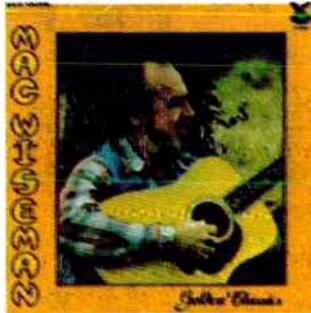
RICH KIENZLE, SEPT. OCT. 85
PAGE 67, *Country Music Magazine*



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



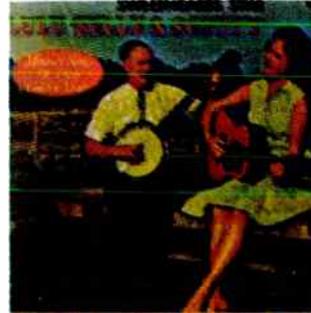
CARL SMITH: GREATEST HITS
In this album Carl sings better than ever, giving a warm new glow to these classic hits he created. Included are: Mr. Moon/Are You Teasing Me/Hey Joe/Deep Water/I Just Loved Her For The Last Time Again/You Are The One/Don't Just Stand There/If Teardrops Were Pennies/Take My Ring Off Your Finger/Kisses Don't Lie



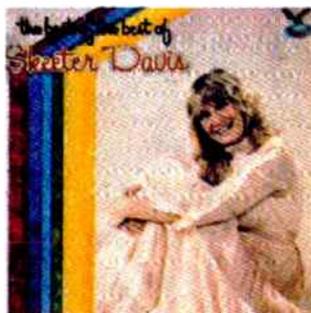
MAC WISEMAN: GOLDEN CLASSICS
This album is a compilation of some new recordings of the very best traditional bluegrass songs, plus some newer releases. Included: Jimmie Brown, The Newsboy/Goin' Like Wildfire/I Saw Your Face In The Moon/Barbara Allen/The Prisoner's Song/Johnny Cash & Charlie's Pride/Sweeter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



LULU BELLE & SCOTTY: SWEET-HEARTS OF COUNTRY MUSIC
Their style and songs made America think of them as close personal friends. Here's a sample: Homecoming Time In Happy Valley/Each Time You Leave/Have I Told You Lately That I Love You/Remember Me/The Brown Mountain Light/When The Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again/In The Doghouse Now/Sunday School/Sweet Lips/Mountain Dew, more!



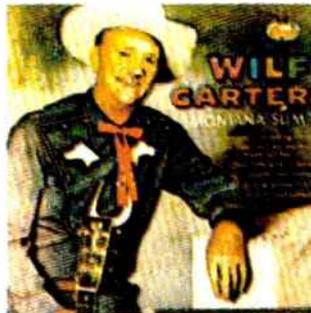
LULU BELLE & SCOTTY: SWEET-HEARTS STILL
More classic recordings, including: I Told Them All About You/First Whippoorwill Call/Molly Darlin'/Between You And Me/Bonnie Blue Eyes/(I'll Be All Smiles)/Try To Live Some (While You're Here)/Blue Eyes Cryin' In The Rain/When I Yoo Hoo In The Valley/Rocking Alone In An Old Rocking Chair/Sweet Evalena/Sunset Years Of Life. Why not order both.



SKEETER DAVIS: THE BEST OF THE BEST OF
A gracious star with a different sound, especially with harmony. Included on this great album are: Set Him Free/(I Can't Help You) I'm Falling Too/The End Of The World/I'm Saving My Love/Gonna Get Along Without You Now/I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know/I'm A Lover (Not A Fighter)/My Last Date With You/Bus Fare To Kentucky, more!



PATSY CLINE/COWBOY COPAS/HAWKSHAW HAWKINS: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN
Patsy: Lovesick Blues—Just A Closer Walk With Thee—There He Goes/Hawkshaw: I Suppose—Little White Washed Chimney—Sunny Side Of The Mountain—The Life Of Hank Williams/Cowboy: Wings Of A Dove—Cowboy's Deck Of Cards—He Stands Real Tall—Beyond The Sunset. A truly fitting tribute to some great legends.



WILF CARTER: "Montana Slim"
Many of the great old favorites of yesteryear and more. Including: Two Little Girls In Blue/Put My Little Shoes Away/Daddy And Home/One Golden Girl/Hey Hey Mr. D.J./Grandad's Yodelling Song/Lonesome For My Baby Tonight/Shoo Shoo Shoo She Lah Lah/Two Little Stars/The Little Shirt My Mother Made For Me



BEN COLDER (SHEB WOOLEY): GOLDEN HITS
There are few aspects of the entertainment field that this star has not been highly successful in. This album is another success story with tunes like: Easy Lovin' #2/Almost Persuaded #2/Detroit City #2/Little Green Apples #2/Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms/Don't Go Near Eskimos/Sunday Morning Falling Down/Games People Play/10 Little Bottles, and more!

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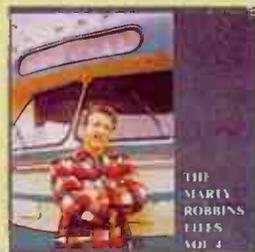
MARTY ROBBINS FILES, 1 (1951-1953): Tomorrow You'll Be Gone—I Wish Somebody Loved Me—Love Me Or Leave Me Alone—Crying 'Cause I Love You—Pretty Words—You're Breaking My Heart [While You're Holding My Hand]—I Can Get Along [Without You Very Well]—Just In Time—Crazy Little Heart—more!



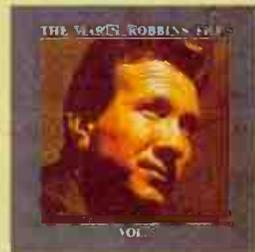
MARTY ROBBINS FILES, 2 (1953-1954): Sing Me Something Sentimental—At The End Of A Long, Lonely Day—Blessed, Jesus Should I Fall Don't Let Me Lay—Kneel And Let The Lord Take Your Load—Don't Make Me Ashamed—It Looks Like I'm Just In Your Way—I'm Happy Cause You're Hurtin'—Aloha Oo—more!



MARTY ROBBINS FILES, 3 (1954-1956): Call Me Up (And I'll Come Calling On You)—It's A Pity What Money Can Do—Times Goes By—This Broken Heart Of Mine—It Looks Like I'm Just In Your Way—I'll Love You Till The Day I Die—Most Of The Time—Your Heart Of Blue Is Showing Through—more!



MARTY ROBBINS FILES, 4 (1957-1958): It's Too Late Now [To Worry Anymore]—I Never Let You Cross My Mind—I'll Step Aside—Banquet Of Roses—I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry—Lovesick Blues—Moonin' The Blues—Rose Of Ol' Pawnee—I Hang My Head and Cry—Beautiful Ohio—All The World Is Lonely Now—more!



MARTY ROBBINS FILES, 5 (1958/1959/1962): A House With Everything But Love—Nothing But Sweet Lies—Baby I Need You [Like You Need Me]—Kow Ligo—Paper Face—Many Tears Ago—Address Unknown—Waltz Of The Wind—The Hands You're Holding Now—Shockles And Chains—Oh How I Miss You—more!



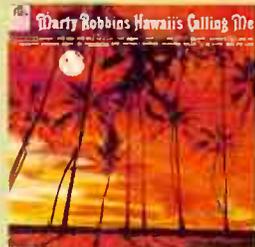
MARTY ROBBINS ROCKIN' ROLLIN', VOL. 1: Footprints In The Snow—It's Driving Me Crazy—Baby, I Need You [Like You Need Me]—Mean Mama Blues—That's Allright—Maybelline—Pretty Mamma—I Can't Quit [I've Gone Too Far]—Long Tall Sally—Singing The Blues—Knee Deep In The Blues—Pain and Misery—more!



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MARTY ROBBINS JUST ME AND MY GUITAR: The Little Rosewood Cosket—The Letter Edged In Black—Twenty One Years—The Convict And The Rose—The Dream Of The Miners Child—The Little Box Of Pine In The 7:29—The Wreck Of The Number Nine—The Sad Lover—Long, Long Ago—Beautiful Dreamer—more!



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People

Wagoner has been writing a book. According to rumor, the book, co-written by Ellis Nassour, titled *Hey Porter*, is either with a publisher or there's no such animal or it's in a bank vault and Porter has the key! Wherever it is, the book is about to drive the curiosity seekers out of their minds. According to one of the scandal mags, Porter tells "all," and "all" includes "all about Dolly." Apparently Porter reveals that he and Dolly did, in fact, have an ongoing relationship that was "going on" as well as "ongoing." He names some motel in Louisiana where Porter says the supposed affair started and claims that Miss Dolly penned a song about the incident... titled "Under the Magnolia Tree."

Now, I remind you, all this is about one of the most successful women in show biz. I have been waiting with amusement and glee for Dolly to answer Porter's claims and knew she would. Now it's happened. Her response, reportedly, is, "Some people don't believe half they read, and the rest of them will just think I had bad taste."

According to Nassour, who also wrote the biography *Patsy Cline*, Porter laughed when he heard Dolly's rejoinder and thought that she had handled the situation very well. Nassour adds that, since all the brouhaha, Porter thinks that some things in the story better be toned down before publication—this, of course, may make publishers *less interested*.

I'm sure not taking sides in this situation, but I don't think too highly of "kiss and tell." Porter is doing a lot of telling, so I hear, including tidbits about Tammy Wynette and others. Times sure are a-changing. Wonder what the Opry folks think of this? It will all come

out in the wash, as mama used to say. One thing I do know is that it won't hurt Dolly. I just hope it doesn't hurt Porter.

MORE DOLLY...

There is something mystic about Dolly, anyway. Everytime it seems that she is slipping from the sights of country music, she does something so *great* that all of us just lift her in our prayers. This time it was at the Ricky Skaggs concert at the Los Angeles Amphitheatre. Dolly came out and performed on stage with Ricky. Needless to say, the crowd loved it. And Skaggs, don't you know he just loved having Dolly onstage with him singing "Don't Step Over an Old Love" from his *Don't Cheat in Our Hometown* album. As he was closing the show with "Hallelujah, I'm Ready to Go," Dolly rejoined Ricky onstage, as did Michael Martin Murphey and Juice Newton. In the wings watching the hullabaloo were Charlie Haid and Betty Thomas of *Hill Street Blues* TV fame and the *Dallas* doll, Shalane McCall. Rumor mill has it that Dolly may be leaving RCA and country altogether to sign with Geffen Records out of New York City. Can you stand it! Leave the girl alone! She is ours! There ain't no pine trees, green grass or Smoky Mountains in Los Angeles or New York...and, don't you know, ain't no country girl ever found a "Tennessee Mountain Boy" in the hills of L.A.!

By the way, lest you forget, handsome Richard Dennison, guitarist and tenor singer in the Skaggs Band, is Dolly's bro-in-law, husband of pretty Rachel Dennison, who played sis Dolly's role in the TV version of *Nine to Five*.

32 YEARS LATER SHE SURFACES AS HANK'S ILLEGITIMATE DAUGHTER

The story I'm about to tell is 100% "some of 'em said." It sounds like a fairy tale and, Lord knows, it could well be. Here goes...Cathy Stone was born five days after Hank Williams' death. Apparently her mother took the child to Hank's mother, Lillie Stone. Lillie adopted the child, but as fate would have it, Lillie died two years later leaving the



Jett Williams—notice any resemblance?

two-year-old to the care of foster homes in the state of Alabama. Word is there was a "paper" that Hank had signed before Cathy was born, claiming parentage of the unborn child and asking that Lillie adopt her.

Seems Owen Bradley, the producer of those great Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn recordings, may have known about Cathy for some time. As a matter of fact, Bradley has been cutting tracks on the girl, who's using the pseudonym Jett Williams—her mother's maiden name, Jett, and her famed, claimed father's last name. Someone told me that Owen remarked, "She ain't no Patsy Cline, but she is Hank's daughter." Owen believes it's true, even though he can't prove it, or he would not have made that remark.

Now, after Lillie died, don't you know that Miss Audrey, Hank Sr.'s first wife and Hank Jr.'s mama, wanted no part of that little girl, and don't you know that Billie Jean, Hank's second wife, wasn't about to take care of no kid, either. That left Hank's sister, Irene, who didn't want no more of her brother's trouble on



Dolly surprised the audience as well as Ricky Skaggs when she took the stage.

COURTESY RCA

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People

THE STARS COME OUT AT NIGHT

During a recent Broadcast Music Awards dinner in Nashville, country music's finest were seen dressed in all their finery. These famed singers and their spouses enjoyed dinner and an awards show honoring songwriters who are affiliated with BMI. We're told that two of the couples shown here have more in common than their songwriting. Seems that both Bobby and Jeannie Bare and Tom T. and Miss Dixie met at an awards dinner some years back, so it was an extra special occasion for each of them. Wonder if this year's event set off any romances. Pictured clockwise are: Tom T. and Dixie Hall, Bobby and Jeannie Bare, Ricky Skaggs and Sharon White, Reba McEntire and Charlie Battles and Lee and Melanie Greenwood.



WICKI HOUSTON

her...so where did the child go...foster homes.

Why all this didn't come to a head in the past is beyond me. I swear, I never heard a word about this girl, not ever.

There's been speculation that Hank Jr. knew he had a half sister, especially since she lived for a time with his grandmother. But we must remember that Hank Jr. was only three when his dad died and five when his grandmother passed away. The big question in everybody's mind now is, where was she for 32 years or for 30 years, since Lillie died? From what I can gather, she claims she only found out about five years ago that she was possibly Hank Williams' daughter. Some say there were papers in Montgomery, Alabama's capital, that the courts had trouble clearing for her. If it took Cathy and company five years to uncover what she says was covered 30 years ago, it must have been pretty well buried. But how in heaven's name did a story like this remain hidden from the press? This I can't answer. It's so juicy!

If all this sounds like a movie, then

that's just where the story is headed. **Bernard Schwartz**, who made *Coal Miner's Daughter* (Loretta Lynn's life story) and *Sweet Dreams*, Patsy Cline's life story, bought the movie rights before Christmas 1984. No doubt the best kept secret in Nashville, but Hollywood already knew. Can you think of a better followup to Loretta and Patsy than Hank's illegitimate kid? There ain't one. Cathy or Jett reportedly has said that Hank Jr. just may as well admit that he has a half sister. If Hank's answered so far, no one has heard it. Waylon...oh Waylon...*"Are You Sure Hank Done It This-A-Way?"*

PERSONALS

A billboard on Gallatin Road in Nashville has **Merle Haggard's** pix in living color holding a glass of colored liquid. The caption reads: *Water's for Teardrops/Dickle's for Drinking!* 'Nuf said.

Sympathy to **Mel McDaniel** on the death of his father. And thanx to **Razzy Bailey** who, 800 miles away when noti-

fied, jumped in his bus and raced from Virginia to Georgia to fill in for his buddy Mel. And thanx to **The Judds** who stopped on I-40 West heading to Music City when they saw Razzy's bus broke down. The Judds squeezed all of Razzy's crowd in with them, and they made it safe home.

It's good to see **Barbara Fairchild** "up and at 'em" again. She is back in the battleground again, and if you want some great singing by a great singer, you can get in touch with Barbara through Hallmark Direction on Music Row.

Congrats to **Even Stevens** for his seventh million-selling single record. I remember when Even was sleeping—no—*living* in his car! The last time I talked with him, he was talking about buying an island near Barbados. Now ain't that a hillbilly thing to do! Also, I recall Even, **Eddie Rabbitt** and **David Malloy** doing sessions after midnight at the old Sound Lab Studio. This is called singing and dreaming, and these boys got theirs. Teasing you guys. You've done great.

People

TEN YEARS AGO

When we looked back to see what we said ten years ago in our magazine, we found that there were a number of interesting things going on in those days. Stars were shedding managers and searching for new partners. There were even changes in the music's sound. But one thing strikes us about all the controversy going on—then and now—that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Writer Martha Hume wondered what was happening to country music in her feature story "Country '76." She said, "Waylon's on the pop charts and so is Willie Nelson. For that matter, so are The Statler Brothers. Meanwhile, John Denver, Olivia Newton-John and Linda Ronstadt are on the country charts." Martha even went so far as to speculate that "... it looks very much like the country music which is selling now and will sell in the future may not bear much resemblance to what country fans have known in the past. Perhaps country will mutate into some modified form, just as country blues evolved in rhythm and blues and rock."

In Patrick Carr's cover story on Willie Nelson, we found that The Red Headed Stranger had some very strange ideas indeed: "It is now possible for Willie to record with Waylon or Kris or Leon. He's planning a whole Willie/Waylon joint album." *Can you imagine?* Willie also had some other interesting projects in the wind... "There's the issue of a *Red Headed Stranger* movie. 'If I had the money and any idea about how to do it, I'd be somewhere doing it right now,' Willie said." *Seems like the ole boy learned a thing or two in ten years.* And, almost as interesting, was the notion of Willie, Ray Price, Roger Miller, Johnny Paycheck and Johnny Bush getting together to do a couple of original Cherokee Cowboy dates. *How about a duet album, Willie?*

On the charts ten years ago the CB



craze was in full swing. C.W. McCall's "Convoy" was at Number One, followed closely by Dave Dudley's "Me & Ole CB" and Cledus Maggard's "The White Knight," with Red Sovine's "Phantom 309" bringing up the rear. "The White Knight" would eventually take over the Number One spot.

And, as usual, the stars were making headlines. Seventeen-year-old Tanya Tucker split with producer Snuff Garrett. The Pointer Sisters were on the CMA Ballot for Group of the Year. Jerry Lee Lewis opened a night club in Memphis and called it Jerry's Place. Billy Swan left Kristofferson's band to go out on his own. Glen Campbell was sporting an Afro. Elvis gave T.G. Sheppard a Silver Eagle touring bus. Earl Scruggs' Cessna 172 crashed at the Nashville airport. Earl suffered a broken ankle, nose and multiple head and facial injuries. Charlie Rich opened a Nashville franchise of Wendy's Hamburgers. The Grand Ole Opry celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Webb



A young Tanya.

Pierce won a lawsuit to keep his home open as a tourist attraction. Glen Campbell and his wife split, and Mac Davis and his wife were in trouble. *Do you remember what happened afterwards?* And, Miss Audrey, Hank Williams' first wife, died at age 52. And that's the way it was ten years ago in *Country Music*.



BABES IN ARMS

As reported on page 15 of this section, Barbara Mandrell gave birth to a new son recently. This is not the first time that the Mandrell/Dudney family has sent out photos of their new-born child. Jaime Nicole was born on February 23, 1976, and the proud parents sent out the top photo for the country music world to enjoy.



SHOW BIZ TODAY

Yes, that's John Anderson on the left. The man on the right may not be as familiar, but, he's as country as they come. He's our own Leonard Mendelson, Associate Publisher and more than ten-year veteran of this magazine. Leonard caught John's show at the Crazy Horse Steakhouse in Santa Ana, California and was invited to join John on his bus after the show, where they talked about many things, including Leonard's favorite country music magazine.

20 Questions with ROY CLARK

by Michael Bane



CAROL G. ANDERSON

Catching Roy Clark was never easy, and it's even less so these days. He's constantly on the road, and when he's not, he's in demand for television and now the movies. We were lucky enough to catch up with Roy just as his present string of Lake Tahoe shows was winding down. He was trying to wake up and thinking about his airplane.

Are you spending a lot of time in Vegas and Tahoe these days?

Actually, more time in Reno and Tahoe than Vegas. We're only doing Vegas once this year, opening on Thanksgiving Day. But we've been in Tahoe twice and Reno a bunch. There aren't many

acts who play Tahoe and Reno as much as we do. In fact, I'm calling everybody by their first names.

What's the difference between playing Tahoe and Vegas?

I think Tahoe and Reno are a lot better to play to than Vegas, at least from an art-

ist's perspective. People who come to Tahoe are...I don't know how to word it exactly. You don't have the pressure of Vegas. When you're on stage in Vegas, you can't overlook the fact that your audience may have just come from a Frank Sinatra or Sammy Davis Jr. or Wayne Newton show, and they're expecting the best in the world.

It must put a tremendous amount of pressure on you...

It's physically draining. I get off the stage in Vegas and I'm completely exhausted. For a long time I couldn't figure it out, then it dawned on me. It was just the pressure.

Are you still pretty deeply involved in aviation?

Right now I'm just redoing a Stearman World War II trainer from scratch. When it's done, it's going to be the best Stearman in the country.

Airplane restoration is a pretty involved process, isn't it?

Those things are so involved it's incredible. It's going to take a year and a half to have it done right. And, truthfully, I'm impatient when it comes to that sort of stuff. I thought of trading mine in for one that was already done. But with an old airplane, you're never sure of how the restoration was done unless you do it yourself. When we get through with the Stearman, though, it's going to be better than original. We're paying a lot more attention to detail than they did when it was built in 1943. Of course, they were a little busy then.

How many airplanes do you have now?

Well, just three. The Piper Tri-Pacer I bought in 1966, which was my first airplane—my first flying airplane. I got one to re-do, but never got it finished. Then I've got the Mitsubishi prop-jet I use to get to shows, which hopefully I'll be replacing this week with a full-bore Mitsubishi

jet. Me and "Nancy" will own it—you know, "Fi-nancy."

7 Do you still do a lot of your own flying?

Oh, not anymore. I carry a full-time pilot. I flew for three years by myself, but it really is a full-time job. Just the paperwork is a full-time job. I'd fly after a show, and I realized I'd be thinking of the last show or planning the next one. And I don't think it's wise to fly without your whole mind. I got caught in weather a couple of times, and after that I decided to get a pilot.

8 You are celebrating your 25th anniversary in show business. During those years you've emerged as one of the most, for lack of a better word, durable artists in both pop and country...

I used to think that the mark of success was when I could go into a store and buy something and then ask the price...

Can you do that now?

Yes, as long as I just don't go into any high-priced stores.

You just finished a film with Mel Tillis, *Uphill All the Way*. Tell us a little about that project.

We did it ourselves. I had that script lying around for 11 years and never got it off the ground. Then Mel discovered it independently and called me up. We had three investment lunches, got the crew together and filmed it. We just signed a deal with New World Pictures to distribute it.

What's it about?

It's set in 1916, and it's about two flim-flam men who try to get through life on their wits, although they don't have an overabundance of those. They're lovable guys, just drifting around trying to pick up money and odd jobs, as long as it's not too much work. We start out accidentally rob-

bing a bank, and in the end, we're heroes.

Who else besides you and Mel are in this thing?

Well, Burl Ives, Glen Campbell, Trish VanDevere, Sheb Wooley—no, it's not a musical, but me and Mel and Burl and Glen did the soundtrack.

Was it hard to do a movie on your own?

You know, that's the same question I asked. All we had to go on was the stories we'd heard, about how everything was over budget and over deadline; two months on one scene—things like that. With us, though, it went so smooth, so good, it was incredible. It went so smooth we've blocked out a sequel.

I seem to recall that when I talked to you several years back, you were explaining how you were going to get off the road so much...

Laughter. Well, I actually tried! At least, I made a small effort to do that. I'd set a schedule and somebody would come along with an offer I just couldn't refuse. I've always known life was either feast or famine. If I have to make a choice, I'll take the feast. I'm on the road about 220 days a year.

You were going to play more golf...

I do! I'm up to eight games a year now, which is up from nothing.

Is there a chance for you to do any recording at all?

As a matter of fact, I just finished one of those television albums, you know, to be sold on television. As it stands now, it's a two-record set, one of vocals and one of instrumentals. I went into the studio and re-recorded all of my old hits that I've lived with for so long.

You've never been a recording-oriented artist. How

was this studio session?

I felt more comfortable in the studio than ever before. I figure after 15 or 20 years of recording, I may be starting to get the hang of it. It's true that records took up the least amount of my time. I'd go into the studio after six months on the road, and it sounded like a war going on, all the little things you start doing in a stage show don't come off in the studio. So I played it safe, and it came out kind of stilted.

18 What's different now?

I don't feel the pressure of time. Used to be, I'd come in and have to select, learn and play the whole thing in five days. Now I feel relaxed. If it doesn't come off today, it'll come off tomorrow. Which, of course, usually means that it comes off today.

9 Your records don't really reflect the energy of your stage shows...

Yes, and a lot of that was my fault. It was my fault for not being familiar with that part of the business. I listened to

producers. They told me not to confuse the public, stick with one thing. I said that might work for some artists, but that it didn't work for me. I don't do any one thing great, but I do a whole lot of things pretty good. If they argued, though, I gave in, because I figured they knew the business. Well, I was right and they were wrong. Longevity has a way of proving your point.

0 What sticks in your mind most about the *Hee Haw* years?

The people. Grandpa Jones, who I first worked with when I was 15 in Washington. It seemed like fate brought us together, he was so much of an influence on me. When I was a kid working the clubs in D.C., one-third of my act was imitating Grandpa Jones, and it was very popular. I told him that when I was working a kitty, a hat in front of the bandstand for contributions, I probably made more money from his songs than he did. He said that wouldn't take much. ■

Not one to rest on past laurels, Roy, along with Mel Tillis stars in *Uphill All the Way*, a movie project they did on their own. (Opposite & right)



Restoring air-planes also keeps Roy busy. He owns three including this Mitsubishi.

CAROL G. ANDERSON

Merle

That's the Way It Goes

Music first—that's how Merle is, and that's probably how he'll always be. As he approaches the 50 mark, he can see he gave up a lot for his trade, he used life to make songs. But underneath his temperamental sadness, there's a river of fulfillment, running strong.



The Merle Haggard show at the Sarasota, Florida Civic Center is a nice, businesslike, premium-quality-country affair, the sort of show you'd expect from a man of Merle's taste and stature and experience. It's smooth, it's deceptively easy, and it's familiar in a special kind of way.

Maybe that's because like "You Never Even Called Me by My Name," the all inclusive tongue-in-cheek country song written by Steve Goodman, it has everything you really need in country music—trains, farms, prison, Mom, drinking, infidelity, and broken hearts by the dozen—but unlike Goodman's spoof, it doesn't have pickup trucks or other meaningless country-related objects, and in no way is it even remotely cute. Instead, it has something which was never a part of Goodman's song and is very, very rarely an ingredient in the kind of country show business Goodman was lampooning: the true soul and dignity communicated by an artist who really means what he is singing and really cares how it sounds, and that's all. Merle's show is the diametric opposite of the usual grin-'em-and-win-'em Dynamic Country Entertainer act; it's just the songs and the music quietly and expertly rendered, a steady flow of life's more than little ups and downs set in the classic mold Merle inherited from Hank and Lefty, then made his own.

To some people, though, such a show seems odd, out of place in these ain't-you-just-thrilled-to-be-country times. One young lady in the crowd, wearing an Alabama t-shirt, actually seems offended. "He's not very friendly, is he?"

she says to her older friend. "I mean, what's his problem?"

"He don't *have* a problem, honey," says her friend. "That's just the way he is, and *we* like it just fine."

A few more bars of Lefty's sad, classic "That's the Way Love Goes" drift by before the young woman continues.

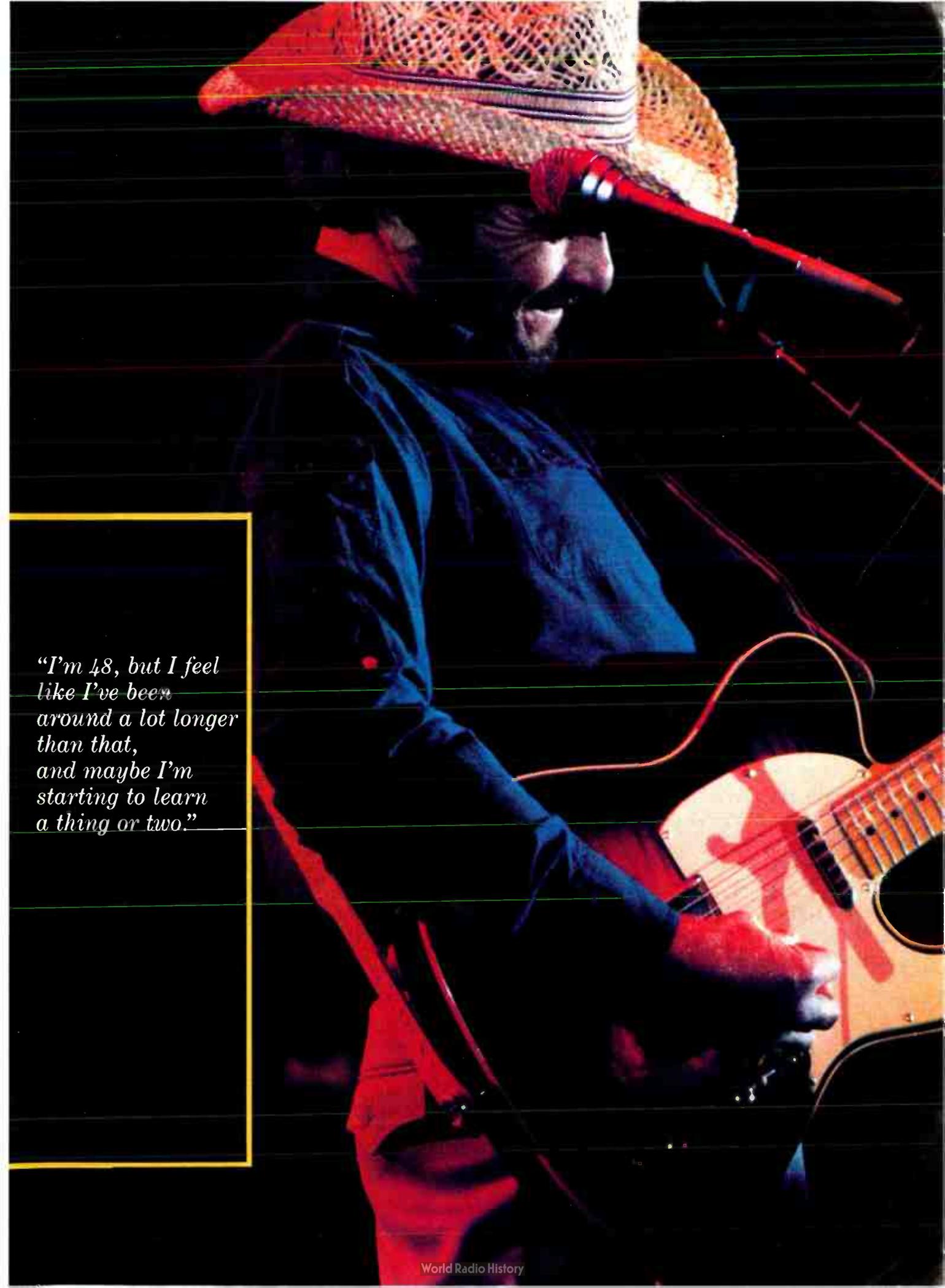
"Well, what *is* his problem? Is he some sort of big deal, or is he just depressed?"

"Honey, Merle's just a man," says the older woman, "and maybe he ain't so happy. But he comes out here and he plays for us no matter how he's feelin', and I think that's just beautiful. Now will you let me *listen* to him?"

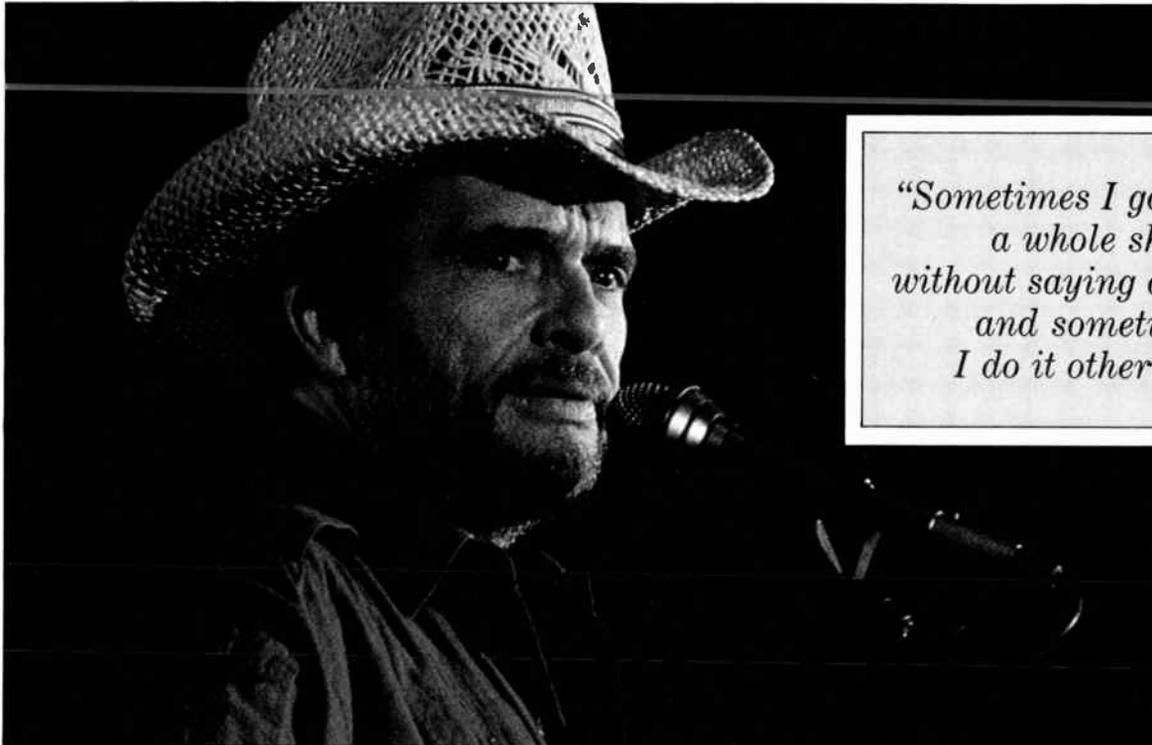
That lady, like most real country fans, knows the score on ol' Merle. Other country stars have risen and fallen in both career and personal condition—wild and crazy and hot as a firecracker one year or decade, shattered and shafted and cold as ice the next—but ol' Merle has always just hung in there on a sure, steady, powerful heading, straight down the main beam. He has always been successful (each of his albums since 1965 has sold around 250,000 copies, and there have been a couple that hit the 500,000 mark), he has always maintained his own impeccable musical standards, and he has always had (for want of a better term) his own "image."

That image belongs to no trend or movement or other pigeonhole. It is, rather, the impression of a quiet, thoughtful, solitary man, an outsider. This is true professionally: while Merle's music has always been absolutely

by Patrick Carr



"I'm 48, but I feel like I've been around a lot longer than that, and maybe I'm starting to learn a thing or two."



*"Sometimes I go through
a whole show
without saying anything,
and sometimes
I do it otherwise."*

straight, top-of-the-line, commercially successful hard-core country, he has never been a "country booster," a big man in Nashville, or any kind of competitor in the power and status games which occupy so much of the energies of many country music professionals. He has never aspired to be a TV star, nor gone out of his way to lobby for the lucrative embraces of the Country Music Association—and therefore he has never received anything like the general-public recognition or number of awards his real status has merited for many a year. He is, in effect, a self-contained musical phenomenon running a world of his own out there in the West, operating as he pleases with little regard for anybody else's trends, concepts, or ideas about what will or will not wash.

This sense of independence and isolation also emanates from Merle's "personal image." His rare interviews and the testimony of people close to him convey the impression of a loner and something of an introvert—a man who maybe thinks about his life too much, who regrets and misses a lot in himself and the world around him; a man in whom everything, even the opposite poles of stubborn pride and humorous irony, is veined with a steady current of well-considered sadness. In the business of maintaining balance through life, Willie Nelson is the guru of steely serenity, George Jones is the opposite, and Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash walk the very fine line, sometimes with little suc-

cess; Merle Haggard seems to move quietly but surely forward, sustained by the slow, cold comfort of the thinking man's blues.

You can feel grateful that this is so—it has made for some wonderful wee-hour music this past quarter-century, a lot of beautiful evocation of things gone by or slipped away or never attainable in the first place—but you also have to feel for the man behind the music. Being Merle Haggard has never looked or sounded like a lot of fun.

The songs say it all: the shame in "Mama Tried," the regret in "I Threw Away the Rose," the unease in half a dozen songs from "Ramblin' Fever" to "The Runnin' Kind," the sense of human values and a great society being frittered away that comes through in "If We Make It to December" and the recent "Amber Waves of Grain"—and most disturbingly, the personal despair bleeding from a song like "Tonight I'll Kick the Footlights Out Again."

In that song, recorded seven years ago, Merle's personal plight could not have been plainer: "I live the kind of life that most men merely dream of/I make my living writing songs, and singing them/But I'm forty-one years old and I ain't got no place to go when it's over... After twenty years of pickin', we're still alive and kickin' down the walls/Tonight I'll kick the footlights out, and walk away without a curtain call."

Tonight in Sarasota, just a few months into his fourth marriage at the age of 48, Merle walks away from his

show without a "thank you," a "good-night," or a curtain call, and I wonder how he feels.

The Strangers are backstage eating chicken when I am ushered into their presence. They are grousing humorously about their current activity—they get fed so much chicken on the road that Roy Nichols suggests *The Chicken Killers* as a title for the band's forthcoming album—while Merle concentrates on his food and details of the ongoing Farm Aid project to which he has committed a considerable portion of his time. He talks very quietly, grimacing frequently, and that long-hard-road-map face of his betrays the effects of too little sleep and too much work these past few travelling weeks. Behind the yellow-tinted spectacles he wears when not on stage, there are deep bags under his tired eyes.

The talk begins on the subject of Merle's Farm Aid work (his help in organizing last September's two-day concert in Champaign, Illinois, his plan to take a whistle-stop train full of musicians from Bakersfield to Washington, D.C. in April, and of course his recent "Amber Waves of Grain" single), and on this subject Merle's deeply felt belief in the working man's America comes immediately to the fore.

"We're concerned with the farmer, but we're also concerned with some other things in the country," he says, "like buying American. Let's quit worrying about El Salvador, and start worry-

ing about Texas and California. That's our basic theme—Americans for America. Let's keep the money over here, buy the food from our own farmers and send *that* to the hungry people over there. That way, we'll solve two problems. Why do we send our money over there so they can buy somebody else's grain, or even buy some sort of a weapon to use back at us? If we send 'em food, we're supporting our own people, and the worst those people over there can do is have a banana fight."

Obviously, the Merle Haggard of "Okie From Muskogee" and "Fightin' Side of Me" is still alive and kicking—but an older, wiser, and more experienced man is also with us. At the end of a to-and-fro about how much the Farm Aid project can really accomplish in the face of modern-day economics and an Administration which, when the chips are down, favors big business over family enterprise, Merle sighs deeply and admits that "Oh, hell, maybe there's nothing we can really do. Probably not."

But that doesn't stop him trying, even though his schedule is already crammed to capacity with paying work. Those bags under his eyes, and the fatigue which shows in his movements, are explicable by the fact that these days, Merle is working harder than he ever has. And the reason for *that* is not exactly inspiring: "I'm three million dollars in debt," he says. "I've had a lot of bad investments, bad marriages, things of that type, and it gets kinda expensive when you're paying eight or ten attorneys. It don't take long to eat up a few record sales. Then I've got the I.R.S. on my back for my taxes the last three years, and those people are a problem. They ain't even *nice* about it. I'm working it off and paying 'em, but I'm *still* three million in the hole."

Suddenly, though, he smiles broadly. "But hell, that's okay," he laughs. "That just means I'm in *business*, don't it? That's the way it's done. I'll borrow a little more money, and I'll be all right."

He shakes his head wryly, still smiling. "Sometimes, it seems to me like there are only twelve people in this whole country who pay their taxes, and half of them are country singers. Maybe we should do like Ernest Tubb did. Waylon and Willie and I wanted to do a benefit to help him with his tax problems, and he just said, 'Oh, hell, I've had that thing for a lot of years. It'll still be here when I'm gone. Don't you boys worry none about it.' So we didn't, and he upped and died on 'em, left 'em a few hundred thousand dollars short."

Merle chortles at the elegance of Tubb's solution and the memory of Tubb himself—E. T. was one of his very favorite people—and when I raise the point that he doesn't seem unusually per-

turbed by his own financial problems, he keeps right on smiling.

"Well," he says, "the thing is, I'm unusually happy right now. I know that's somewhat out of character, but damn if it ain't true. A lot of things in my life are going right for a change. Maybe that's why I'm out here working on Farm Aid, trying to help somebody else; I feel good about my own life."

The last time you read about Merle Haggard's progress in this magazine, the information came through the voice of Leona Williams, the singer/songwriter whose seven-year relationship with him ended in divorce a year ago. Leona painted a picture of a stubborn, unhappy man whose worst enemies were his lack of belief in himself and his unwillingness to trust people who genuinely cared for him. On at least one of these fronts, Merle seems to have undergone a change. He also has a new wife, Debbie, a woman some fifteen years his junior.

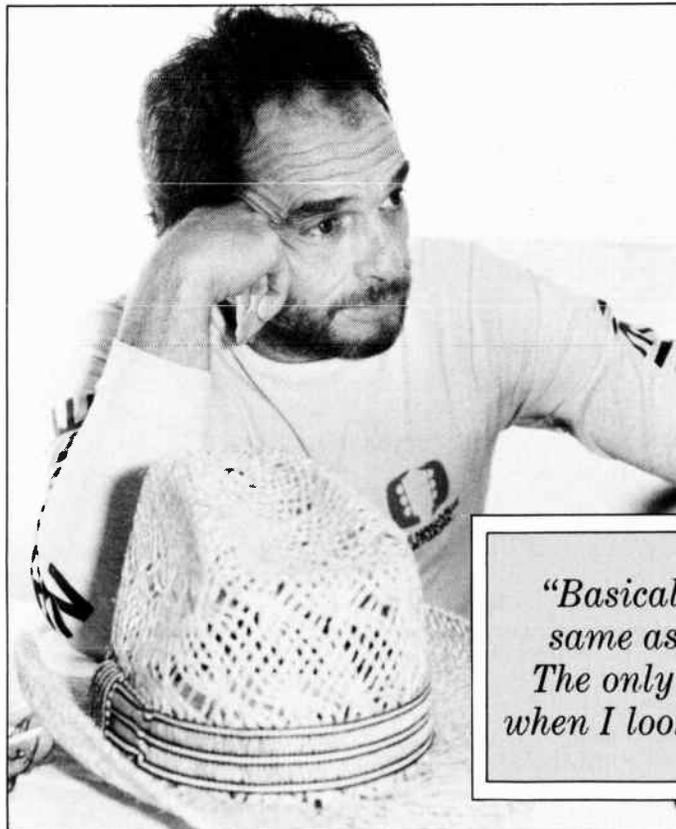
"It wasn't anything I made a big fuss about," he says. "I simply got married to a friend of mine. She's worked for me for a long time, and we really knew each other. It wasn't a big surprise for people to see us together, so a lot of people still don't know we're married. It's just a matter of fact."

Is this, I ask, the final union, a denial of Merle's oft-stated lack of belief in the possibility of a good, lasting marriage?

"Well, I don't know about a good *lasting* marriage," he answers. "I just take it a day at a time. It's very easy for people to get bored with each other. Things are apt to change, and they probably will; I don't understand how people can stay together for fifty years, but some people do. I get on my spouse's nerves pretty well after about four or five years. By the time the divorce is over, it's usually about an eight or nine-year span—but like I say, this girl and I are friends. If we fall out of love with one another, we can try to remain friends, not enemies."

So much for grand and dangerous passion, or perhaps the illusion of it which has snared Merle in the past; there seems in these remarks about his new marriage a certain fatalism, but also a pragmatic acceptance of some personal realities which might have helped to reduce the man's emotional anguish. And maybe that acceptance is, after all is said and done, the product of time: "I'm a grandpa now; this ain't dye in my beard," says Merle. "I'm 48, but I feel like I've been around a lot longer than that, and maybe I'm starting to learn a thing or two."

How about Merle's ramblin' fever, I ask. Does he still get that blow-it-all-off-and-hop-a-freight-train urge, the legacy of early years spent escaping from home, correctional institutions, and anything else that tied him down? No, he doesn't, he says. He's all right. Some-

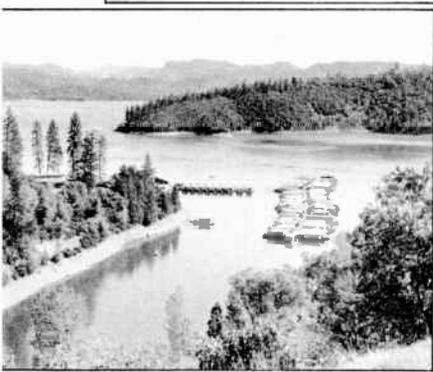


"Basically, I feel the same as I did at 18. The only difference is when I look in a mirror."



TROUBADOUR

Merle lives on his houseboat, The Troubadour, above, moored at his Silverthorn Resort on Lake Shasta, California, left, where fans can rent houseboats, hear Merle and The Strangers play in the resort nightclub when they aren't on the road, or fish, below, in Merle's annual bass tournament.



BOB ALLEN

times he misses the times when freight trains were still around to be hopped—"Railroads don't even move enough to make you look up these days"—but that's a different kind of feeling. It's sad, but it's not quite so personal.

The feelings in "Footlights" were personal, though. Is that dead-end, going-around-in-pointless-circles vision of life still with him?

"No—that's a 41-year-old feeling," he says. "I must have been going through change of life, the male menopause or something. A lot of people have those feelings, and I guess I'm no exception.

I'm out of all that now; I'm enjoying myself in my old age. I'm enjoying all the facets of the business, including performing."

So what about that young Alabama fan's impressions, and those of her older friend, at his show in Sarasota?

"Sometimes I go through a whole show without saying anything, and sometimes I do it otherwise," he says. "I don't strap myself down to a particular format, and therefore I don't spend half my time worrying about the show; I just walk out on the stage and let it flow. If I've got something to say, or something

funny I've heard, I'll relate it once in a while, but in the early years of my career I really got tired of stand-up singers talking half the time they were on stage. A lot of people close to me were real good 'entertainers,' and I saw them just kill themselves by *talking* all the time. They just talked themselves right out of a goddam career!

"So I just shut up. I figure that if the guy's got anything on the ball, people come to see him *sing*. The most important thing is to make the guitar and the vocal and everything sound right. People spend good money to hear music, and that's what you should give 'em."

Merle's somewhat dour "stage presence" is not, therefore, the product of some deeply personal depression: it is, rather, a matter of concentration, of pure attention to the music—and it may in fact be the very reverse of depression.

"Probably the happiest moments of my life have been on stage, playing music," Merle says. "I can be living a life with all kinds of problems, but when I step on stage everything is left behind. The stage is kind of a refuge for me, and it always has been. Over the years, I've climbed inside my music when things went wrong. I still do that. My music is where I really live."

And the music, as usual, is going well. *Kern River*, Merle's last studio album, achieved routinely extra-healthy sales figures, and was as careful and classic and complex an album as any he has ever created. *Amber Waves of Grain*, the current live album recorded in Lincoln, Nebraska, is an accurate reflection of just how well Merle and The Strangers play the road. Merle is also working on an album with Willie Nelson, and overseeing the re-production on digital equipment of some original Bob Wills/Tommy Duncan tracks for the forthcoming *Front Man* series of records. As usual, Merle seems more eager to publicize this project, a loving homage to his historical masters, than his own work. To him, "preserving that music forever" is a genuinely important and satisfying task.

He has little to say about the state of the music business and the musical form in which he works—except to note that "things in country music and the whole world seem kind of stable right now; nothing's really happening; it's a cold period, and they're gonna have a little trouble figuring out who to give their awards to next year"—but he is able to report that unlike many of his contemporaries, he is in no danger of losing his recording contract or having to eat crow in order to keep it. He's been scoring hit records consistently since 1965, and his material has never let him down. "I've got good songs in my hip pocket," he says, "so I know I'm all right."

Merle may live in his music in spirit, but his physical presence resides these days on a houseboat moored on the banks of Lake Shasta, California. He doesn't get to see it very often—that tax-hungry road eats up most of his time—but it is there that he likes to “lie around, trying to recharge my old guitar mind.”

He owns a general store across the lake where boaters can tie up and get what they need, he does a little bass fishing, and he likes to drive around the back roads, thinking about songs without the telephone calling him away.

He doesn't gamble anymore—he gave up that particular (serious) addiction some nine years ago—and neither does he smoke or drink nearly as much as a lot of people think he does: “I hold a lot of cigarettes, but I don't smoke many of 'em,” he says, “and I've never been a real hard drinker. I've had periods when I drank a lot, but it was kinda intentional drinking, not the habitual kind.” He eats a mostly vegetarian diet, with some chicken and fish (“I don't consume as much cow as I once did”), and he maintains his 21-year-old weight. “Basically, I feel the same as I did at 18,” he says. “The only difference is when I look in a mirror.”

The man in the mirror admits to some problems in his life, but says that “I can't say that my life has been anything other than grand. It's just been a great experience all the way. If I seem sad, I think it's because I've always been kind of a nostalgic person. I enjoy digging back through memories and bringing them to life in a song or just talking about them—but I've had a terribly interesting life, to say the least. A most unusual life. And I'm still living it. I've been in the business since 1961, ever since I got out of the joint, and it doesn't seem like there's any slowdown.”

“My character will probably pay in the end for not experiencing those soft and beautiful parts of life I've heard other people sing about in their songs.”

Other evidence of Merle's accumulated years comes in the form of four adult children. Kelly is a manicurist, but Marty and Dana and Noel all share their father's interest in music and the music life.

“It's a good period in our lives, I guess,” says Merle. “We're all healthy, and other than my mother passing away a couple of years ago, it's been a good period.”

I ask him how he feels about his kids being in the music life. He answers “Oh, fine—if they want to be,” but then he begins to talk about what it means to spend your life as a professional musician.

“The music business can be nice to you, and it can be awfully mean to you,” he says. “Sometimes it seems to rob you of a lot of things that life has to offer, things you would ordinarily take for granted. I gave up a lot of things; everybody has to if they want to sing for their feed. There's no such thing as having a home life. There's no such thing as being a real father. All those things kinda slipped away, and I never got a hold of them. My kids went from being babies to being grownups without me really knowing them. They miss that, and so do I.”

There is here a deeply ironic state of affairs. After twenty-five years of professional pickin', Merle has reached the point where he's still alive, but not having to kick down any walls. He has some-

where to go when his shows are over, and even if he didn't he probably wouldn't get all bent out of shape about it—but now it is not the ego frustrations of the “male menopause” which bring gloom and despair into his life, or the vagaries of love and hate and shame and jealousy which have inspired so much of his music. Instead, a more effective sadness enters through the realization that because of his single-minded attention to the business of turning all that emotion into music, then giving himself to the ramblin' fever the music life both creates and relieves, he has lost something important.

“Here I am easing into my evening years, and there still hasn't been anything like normal people have,” he says. “I'm going to miss those things. My character will probably pay in the end for not experiencing those soft and beautiful parts of life I've heard other people sing about in their songs.”

This is not a tragedy, though. Merle still says that writing songs is “like giving birth,” and that in his life, his songs are his children, separate characters which will live a lot longer out there in the world than their writer. And he still says that “life and people can't get me down; they ain't tough enough.” It's just that he made a deal with life when he committed himself to show business back in 1961, even if he didn't know it at the time, and now he is paying the price. That's the way it goes. ■

“My music is where I really live.”





Don Gibson Rockin' Rollin' (Extended 16 Song Collection): Pretty Rainbow/Tell It Like It Is (Both Previously Unreleased)/I Can't Leave/Oh Lonesome Me/Blue Blue Day/If You Don't Know It/Sea Of Heartbreak/Far Far Away/Sweet Sweet Girl, more! LP No. BFX15089 (No Tapes) (X)★



The Best of Jimmie Rodgers (Extended 20 Song Collection): Blue Yodel No 1/The Soldier's Sweetheart/Blue Yodel No 9/Waiting For A Train/Hobo Bill's Last Ride/Train Whistle Blues/The Brakeman's Blue's/In The Jailhouse Now No 2, more! LP No. NL89370/Cass. No. NK89370 (O)★



The Best of The Carter Family (Extended 20 Song Collection): Keep On The Sunnyside Little Darling Pal Of Mine/John Hardy Was A Desperate Little Man/Wildwood Flower Sweet Fern The Foggy Mountain Top Carters Blues/Wabash Cannonball, more! LP No. NL89369 Cass. No. NK89369(O)★



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

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The Best of Don Gibson (Extended 20 Song Collection): Oh, Lonesome Me/I Can't Stop Loving You/Gonna Give Myself A Party/Sweet Dreams/(I'd Be) A Legend In My Time/What About Me/Sea Of Heartbreak/Look Who's Blue/Lonesome Old House, more! LP No. NL89089/Cass. No. NK89089 (O)★



The Best of The Browns (Extended 20 Song Collection): The Three Bells/I Take The Chance/I Heard The Bluebirds Sing/Scarlet Ribbons/Would You Care?/Send Me The Pillow That You Dream On/Then I'll Stop Loving You/Oh, No!, more! LP No. NL89524/Cass. No. NK89524—(O)★

BOB WILLS
Papa's Jumpin' — The MGM Years
★ 5 LP Deluxe Boxed Set & 32 Page Book



Record 1: Silver Lake Blues/Little Cowboy Lullaby Closed For Repairs/Dog House Blues/Bubbles In My Beer/Neath Hawaiian Palms/Papa's Jumpin'/Don't Be Ashamed Of Your Age/Blackout Blues/I Want To Be Near You/Spanish Fandango/Sally Goodin/She's Gone/I Had A Little Mule/Go Home With The Girl In The Morning, many more!

Record 2: Keeper Of My Heart/I'll Have Somebody Else/Thom In My Heart/Playboy Chimes/Hop, Skip And Jump Over Texas/Texas Drummer Boy/I Mamed The Rose Of San Antonio/Ida Red Likes The Boogie/The Warm Red Wine I Ain't Got Nobody/Boothill Rag/Nothing But Trouble/Bob Wills' Square Dance, Part 1, 2, 3/Anything, and more!

Record 3: Mean Woman With Green Eyes/Santa's On His Way/My Little Rock Candy Baby/Jolie Blonde/Likes The Boogie/Pastime Blues/Faded Love/Awake But Dreaming/I Betcha' My Heart I Love You I Laugh

Record 4: Sittin' On Top Of The World/Silver Bell/The Last Goodbye/Hubbin' It I Can't Stand This Loneliness/You Always Keep Me In Hot Water 'Cause I'm In Love Three Miles South Of Cash In Arkansas I'm All Alone/I Won't Be Back Tonight/Steamboat Stomp/I Want To Be Waded Snatchin' And Grabbin' A Real Hot Needle, and more more!

Record 5: Trouble, Trouble Blues A Broken Heart For A Souvenir/Fallen Angel/She's A Quarter Horse Type/B Bowman Hop/As I Sit Broken-Hearted/Bottle Baby Boogie/I Want To Go To Mexico/I Hit The Jackpot (When I Won You)/A Maiden's Prayer Doin' The Bunny Hop/St. Louis Blues/So Long, I'll See You Later/Waltzing In Old San Antonio Texas Blues, more!

When I Think How I Cried Over You/I'll Be Lucky Someday/I Didn't Realize Rock-A-Bye Baby Blues/I'm Dotting Each "I" With A Teardrop, more!



Johnny Horton Rockin' Rollin' (Extended 16 Song Collection): Sal's Got A Sugar Lip (Previously Unissued)/Honky Tonk Hardwood Floor/I'm Coming Home/Tell My Baby I Love Her/Honky Tonk Man/The Woman I Need (Honky Tonk Mind)/The First Train Heading South, more! LP No. BFX15069 (No Tapes) (X)★



Marty Robbins In The Wild West Part 1: Big Iron—Cool Water—In The Valley—Running Gun—El Paso—The Master's Call—The Little Green Valley—Feleena (From El Paso)—El Paso City—A Hundred And Sixty Acres—Billy The Kid—They're Hanging Me Tonight—Utah Carol. LP No. BFX15145 (No Tapes) (X)★



The Best of Skeeter Davis (Extended 20 Song Collection): The End Of The World/My Last Date (With You)/I'm Saving My Love/(I Can't Help You) I'm Falling Too!/Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know/I Can't Stay Mad At You, more! LP No. NL89522/Cass. No. NK89522 (O)★



The Best of Connie Smith (Extended 20 Song Collection): Once A Day/Then And Only Then/Baby's Back Again/Run Away Little Tears/Ribbon Of Darkness/I Can't Remember/If I Talk To Him/You And You're Sweet Love, more! LP No. NL89523/Cass. No. NK89523—(O)★

FOR CMSA MEMBERS ONLY

MEMBERS POLL/JANUARY 1986

VOTE

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

Bought Any Good Records Lately?

- Did you buy any albums (records or tapes) in the last month?
 - Yes No
 - How many records? _____ How many cassettes? _____
- Which ones did you like best? List performer and album title.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

- To vote, list the numbers of your top 5 favorites from the Top 25, page 68.

Albums (list 5 numbers)

Singles (list 5 numbers)

<input type="checkbox"/>									
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Want a Free Fan Club Membership?

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

Been to Any Good Concerts Lately?

- How many concerts, stage shows, fairs, featuring major country stars, have you attended in the last 12 months? _____
- Who were the stars you saw?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Who Can Vote

Only CMSA members are eligible to vote. If you are a member, fill in your Membership Number _____.

If you are not a member, but want to join and vote immediately, fill out the poll, enclose your check for \$12 for one-year CMSA Membership (you get an extra year of *Country Music Magazine*, too.)

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



Marty Robbins

Bear Family Records in Germany has produced 17 Marty Robbins albums. These records have to be imported by air freight which accounts for the normal high price of \$11.98, but this month, CMSA members can buy them at \$8.98 each—that's 25% off. Use coupons on page 20 or page 51 to order. Write your CMSA Member's I.D. Card number above your name on the coupon and make your check for \$8.98 instead of \$11.98. Add the normal postage and handling. By the way, you may also order any of the \$9.98 items on pages 50 and 51 at the special member's price of \$7.98.



Bob Wills Rides Again

Why not some more from Bear Family? If you love Bob Wills, you'll love *Papa's Jumpin'*, a five-record boxed set plus a richly illustrated book. The songs are listed on page 50. Use the order form on page 51, write in your member's I.D. number and the special member's price of \$42.95. You save 17 bucks, nearly 30%.



Conway Twitty

Bear Family has also just released a brand-new-eight-record boxed set including 144 of Conway's recordings from 1956 to 1963, 23 never before released, plus a book loaded with great pictures of Conway looking *very* young and feisty. It's worth the regular price of \$99.95, but CMSA members get a whopping 30% off at \$69.95. Use the coupon on page 57 and write in your member's I.D. number.



Carter Family a Hit

Members are making the seven-record *Carter Family in Texas* set (reviewed on page 33 of the November/December *Country Music*) into a best-selling hit. This may be partly due to the special \$39.95 price (postage included) which saves \$30 compared to buying the albums singly. Send check to Country Music Society of America, Dept. 12, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016.

If You Are Not a Member: You may join and order from this page at the same time at member's prices. Just include a separate check for \$12 (one-year's dues, includes an additional year's subscription to *Country Music*) payable to Country Music Society of America and follow member's ordering procedure above.

CMSA Newsletter

NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRY MUSIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1986—EDITOR, HELEN BARNARD

REVIEWS & FEATURES

Fun and Frolic—'Tis the Season to be Jolly

What's more fun than chasing stars? That's what Fan Fair's all about. The stars love the fans' adulation and their enthusiastic support. So once a year, they're there to say "thank you." At least a lot of them are. "Thanks for your interest in my concerts, thanks for buying records, t-shirts, bumper stickers, mugs with my name on them. Thanks for sending me gifts and writing poems." It's hard work for the stars—hard work, too, for the fans, who

wait in line to see their favorites. But it's worth it. At least, that's what most people who write in say. Funny things happen, as in Dennis Devine's story of meeting John Schneider and Jay and Alan Osmond. Heartwarming things, too.

Games are good for a laugh, too, especially when it's cold outside—and comic strips and cartoons. This *Newsletter* contains contributions from members who responded to the call for original cartoons and drawings in March/April 1985.

In Country Music Heaven

Dennis Devine and Doris Langeneggar of Council Bluffs, Iowa, had a wonderful time at Fan Fair 1985. We're grateful to them for this report on their adventures, including something funny that happened at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant. Dennis is a big Johnny Cash fan.

A week in June 1985—to be exact, June 9th to 14th—will always have a special place in our hearts. Fan Fair for the first time. For those who haven't been there—go!

We arrived Sunday, June 9th, got our Hertz car, and that was the start of a fun-packed week. Part of the itinerary is as follows.

Monday morning The House of Cash Museum and June's antique shop in John's railroad station. John and June were on tour (darn). Ralph Emery's *Nashville Now* Monday night. The show won an award that night.

Tuesday Fan Fair, tour of the stars' homes, Country Music Hall of Fame, Minnie Pearl's Museum, Twitty City, back to the House of Cash, Opryland and more.

Wednesday Fan Fair, Jim Reeves Museum where we met Mary Reeves, Opryland Hotel and elsewhere.

Thursday Memphis, to Elvis Presley's Graceland, for a fantastic tour of his home and the spot where the King is at rest. I will never forget the feeling I had when I saw where Elvis is buried, beside his mom and



Jay and Alan Osmond, left and right, above, got a kick out of having their picture taken with Dennis Devine, center, of Council Bluffs, Iowa. None other than John Schneider is handling the camera. The laugh's on Dennis, who had no idea who he'd handed it to at the last minute. The tables turned, top, right—John Schneider with Dennis, taken by the Osmonds. Bottom, John with, left to right, Doris Langeneggar, also of Council Bluffs, and the waitress at the restaurant.



dad. We also stopped in Jackson, Tennessee, to see Casey Jones' Museum and "Blue Suede Shoes" Carl Perkins' Museum.

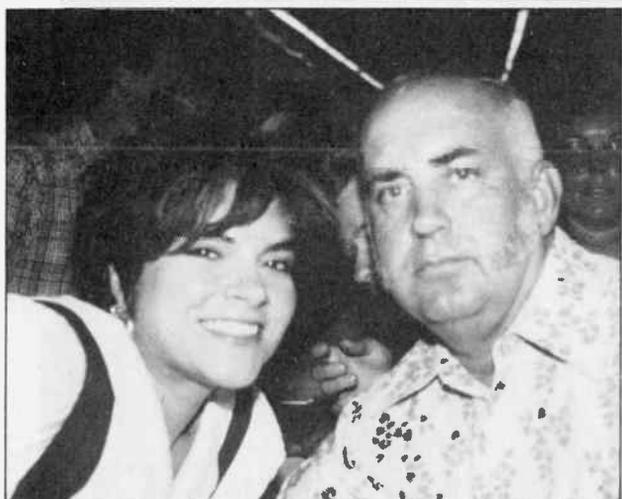
That night we were back on Music Valley Drive eating at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant when we looked over, and who was at a corner table by us but Jay and Alan Osmond. Everyone in the restaurant was whispering and trying to get up enough nerve to ask for an autograph and picture. I said to Doris, "If someone gets them up, I

will bother them for a picture. If not, I won't!" Just then it happened, someone got them up. It only took a second for me to walk the distance with Doris' camera in my hand. I was so engrossed in my quest that I did not have anyone to take the picture when I got there. So without turning to see who I was giving the camera to, I reached the camera over my shoulder and asked the person to please take a picture of the Osmonds and myself. At that instant every-

In This Issue

- Fun at Fan Fair
- Readers Create
- Autry Rides Again
- Collections

CMSA NEWSLETTER



In and around Nashville with Dennis Devine and the Cash daughters—Rosanne and Dennis at Rosanne's booth at Fan Fair; Tara, Kathy and Cindy Cash, left to right, with Dennis at the John and June Carter Cash International Fan Club breakfast, all dressed in black—by accident. Only Dennis' Johnny Cash look-alike shirt is really no accident. Dennis is a big Man in Black fan.

one in the restaurant started clapping and standing up. Who had I given the camera to? John Schneider! the country music and TV star! You can see the look of shock on my face in the picture.

The picture was over. I thanked Jay and Alan and walked over to tell John Schneider I was sorry, I didn't know who I had handed the camera to. He said it was all right, he was having fun. At that moment I handed the camera to Jay or Alan to take a picture of John Schneider and myself!

John had time to have pictures taken with Doris and a waitress at the Cracker Barrel too. What a tremendous bunch of people! All I can say is "Thank you" to Jay and Alan Osmond and to John Schneider for a great night we will treasure forever. This was only Thursday night in Nashville, and look what had happened to us already.

Friday morning At 8 A.M. at Heritage House in Madison, Tennessee, we had our John and June Carter Cash International Fan Club breakfast. Curtis and Alma Todd and Ray and Jeanne Witherall, co-presidents of our club, did a wonderful job for the breakfast. We met so many that morning—John's secretary Irene Gibbs, John's sister Reba Hancock, and three of John's daughters—Kathy, Cindy and Tara—all in black. We had met Rosanne at Fan Fair. Joe Carter sang "Eye of an Eagle" for us, which he wrote and John recorded on an album,

and a coon dog song. We met a lot of wonderful people, and we all wished that John and June were there.

Friday June 14th was Fan Fair all day—over 500 booths and so many, many stars, from Kitty Wells to John Schneider, and a very special booth to me, the John and June Carter Cash International Fan Club Booth! We went to the Grand Ole Opry for the 9:30 show that evening. Great seats up front and a very good Grand Ole Opry show with some very special people on that night.

Saturday Our last full day in Nashville, so we made the best of it. House of Cash, where I bought a belt buckle from John's collection, Twitty City where we had both our pictures taken with Conway, Willie Nelson and Family's General Store—we saw a beautiful Whiskey River Special van all painted up with scenes on it—and the Bill Monroe Museum. We sat on the porch of the Cracker Barrel Restaurant that night and thought over all the things we had seen and done.

Sunday at 9:50 A.M. we left Music City to come back home with enough memories to last a lifetime or at least until the next Fan Fair in 1986! Thank you, Nashville, Tennessee, for showing us the southern hospitality I have heard about for so long!

Dennis Paul Devine Sr.
Doris Langeneggar
Council Bluffs, Iowa

NOVEMBER 1985

Album and Single of the Month

Alabama *40-Hour Week*
George Jones "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes"

Members brought Alabama up from seventh place in the national Top 25 to award them first place honors in albums. Second is George Strait with his *Greatest Hits*, closely followed by The Statlers with *Pardners in Rhyme*.

George Jones' "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes" is the hands-down winner for November in the singles category, followed by a newcomer to the CMSA Winners Circle, Marie Osmond, singing "Meet Me in Montana" with Dan Seals. Alabama is in third with "Can't Keep a Good Man Down."

Votes count towards annual CMSA awards. Turn to For CMSA Members Only in *Country Music Magazine* for the January Poll.

Wonderful Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper

Readers enjoyed the feature on Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper in Legends of Country Music and wrote in to say so.

Thank you so much for the article on Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper in the July Newsletter. I've known them for 32 years, and no two finer people were ever in show business. Your story was excellent.

I saw Wilma Lee in Nashville last year at the Opry, and she was just as great as the first time I met her. When she sings a song, she lives it, and the people love her for it. Stoney was an honest and also a terrific person. The band isn't the same without him.

I hope some of our younger talent will follow in their footsteps.

Sarah Ellen Taney
Wapwallopen, Pennsylvania

My late wife, youngest son and I met Stoney in Nashville in early March of 1977, just before his untimely death on March 22nd. He and we three talked together for about an hour or so, and it was a pleasure to talk to someone like him—a real star—who was not in a hurry to walk away from his fans. Oh, don't get me wrong, he did have to get a plane to meet Wilma Lee, but he took time out to spend a little time with us. All of us appreciated this very much, and I will never forget it. I also think Wilma Lee is one fine lady.

Richard Collins
Boardman, Ohio

Good Luck Meeting Stars

Like Dennis Devine and Doris Langenegar, Elsie Sullivan of Sims, North Carolina, has good luck meeting stars. Elsie also was at Fan Fair 1985, where she got a lot done in a short time.

Thanks to Earl Thomas Conley's staff, I was able to be in Nashville for one day during Fan Fair Week, and to see the Music City News Awards. While there, I got to see several of my favorites, including Earl Thomas Conley, Vern Gosdin and Lee Greenwood. I visited ETC Enterprises and talked with some of Earl's staff. They were all very nice to me.

I was able to speak briefly with Vern Gosdin at Fan Fair. I'm also a member of his fan club. Needless to say, I think he is very good.

I also was able to talk with Mark Miller of Sawyer Brown. They are a *very good* new act. I saw them in concert twice this year



Elsie Sullivan of Sims, North Carolina, with two favorites, Vern Gosdin, left, and Mark Miller of Sawyer Brown, right. Elsie spent a day at Fan Fair.



with Kenny Rogers. They have *so much energy!* Have you seen them? They are fantastic!

I've had very good luck in my dealings with country entertainers. Nothing can change my feelings for my favorite music or my favorite singers. They may disappoint

me at times, but I still love them and the music they perform. The majority of them are very nice people. The ones I have been fortunate enough to talk with have been very nice to me.

**Elsie Sullivan
Sims, North Carolina**

Families in Song

The Loretta Lynn family and the Carter family, two families mentioned in the September Newsletter, have many singing members whose names were not included. We're grateful to members Ilamae and Don Edwards of Mentor, Ohio and Peggy Marsheck of Hendersonville, Tennessee for filling out the stories of these two famous families. Ilamae and Don Edwards are associated with the Loretta Lynn Fan Club and put out the Loretta Lynn Fan Club Ohio Newsletter. Peggy has been associated with the Carter family for over 10 years. All three are long-time readers of Country Music Magazine. Don gave all his original Country Music Magazines to some country-starved visitors from England a few years ago.

The Webb Family In "The Family in Song" in the September Newsletter you mention "Loretta Lynn and Crystal Gayle, two solo performers from the same family." That is correct; however, there is more to the singing Webb family than just the "most awarded lady in country music" Loretta Lynn, and the beautiful-voiced Crystal Gayle.

We attended Crystal Gayle's splendid show in Cleveland, Ohio, a few months ago. Peggy Sue Wright, an artist in her own right, was singing backup for Crystal and also doing some duet numbers. Peggy Sue is a sister of both Crystal and Loretta. She is not only a fine singer, but also a composer of hit country songs. Peggy Sue is a delightful addition to the Crystal Gayle show, not taking anything away from Crystal, but adding. She was well received by the audience.

Additional Webb family country music artists include Herman Webb, Loretta's



Crystal Gayle, center, of the Family Webb, with Don, left, and Ilamae Edwards, right, of Mentor, Ohio. The Edwardses love the whole family.



Maybelle Carter, center, with, left, her brother Doc Addington and cousin Carl McConnell and right, her three daughters, in the 1940's.

brother, and his performing daughter Hermalee Fields. Also Ernest Ray Lynn, Loretta's son, is again fronting her band, and at times her daughter Cissy is also on the show. There are others in the family that also have country music connections.

**Ilamae and Don Edwards
Mentor, Ohio**

The Carter Family Having been associated with The Carter Family for over 10 years, I know that no article on family

bands would be complete without an acknowledgment of their contributions to country music.

The legend of the original Carter Family can be traced to the time when Alvin Pleasant Carter and his brother Ezra J. Carter each—at separate times—crossed to the other side of Clinch Mountain and brought himself back a wife. Alvin Pleasant, generally known as "A.P." or "Doc," and Sara Dougherty were married in 1915, Ezra and Maybelle Addington in 1926. Maybelle was Sara's cousin. Both couples settled in Maces Springs, Virginia, and formed the singing group composed of A.P., Sara and Maybelle.

Maybelle and her husband were blessed with three beautiful daughters. The first was Helen, then June, and last, Anita. All were born with an abundance of talent.

Before she died, Mother Maybelle—with daughter Helen—was recorded by the Smithsonian Institution for their Folklore Archives, as part of their "Outstanding Women in Country Music" series. Two others honored in this way are Kitty Wells and Wilma Lee Cooper. Since 1972, Anita's daughter Lorrie and Helen's son David have appeared with them on the road, making three generations of Carters... truly the first family in country music.

**Peggy Marsheck
Hendersonville, Tennessee**
The third-generation performing Carters also include June and Carl Smith's daughter Carlene Carter and June and Johnny Cash's son John Carter Cash. For more on the original Carter Family, watch Legends of Country Music here in the Newsletter, where Kitty Wells and Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper have already appeared.—Ed.



Randy Owen by Carleen Wise of Plains, Georgia.



Parttime disk jockey, fulltime machinist and artist Mike Mackenzie of Pulaski, Virginia did Hound Dog, above, and Don Williams, below, right. Mike's on WPSK/FM on weekend mornings in Pulaski.

Former disk jockey, now artist Gene Larson, of Warm Springs, Montana, based this cartoon of Tom T. Hall on his experience interviewing Tom T. on radio.



"And it took me about *this* long to write 'Sneaky Snake.'"

Key to Say It With Country Stars: Hank, Ferlin, Little Jimmy, Tom T., Ricky, Jim Ed, Charley, Jonathan, Not King, Rich, Joe, Loretta, Karen, Freddy, Don, David, Mickey, Johnny, Jack, Merle, Del, Eddie, Marty, Conway, Ernest, Dolly, Tex, Bobby, George, Roy, Mary Kay, Charlie, Lester, James, Doris, Bandy, Kitty, Kay, Freddie, Johnny, Charlie, Clint, Bobby, Johnny, Mel, Mac, Slim, Whitman, Clyde, Donie,

Gene Autry

The annals of country music abound with tales of poor boys and girls who went from rags to riches, but no career exemplifies the wildest visions of the American Dream like Gene Autry's. It is the tale of a young Texas ranch kid who parlayed his success on record and on film into a huge empire, atop which he still stands, in his 78th year, as one of the handful of wealthiest men in America.

Yet it is not his fortune that we'll remember longest; it is his sweet, sincere singing style which is part of the warp and woof of American entertainment, and it is the genial, pleasant—yet always ready with his fists or six guns—character which he portrayed on radio, in the movies and on television, a character steadfast, unshakable, always for the right.

Orvon Gene Autry was born on a ranch near Tioga, Texas, on September 29, 1907, and moved to a spread near Achille, Oklahoma, as a youth. He was interested in a career in entertainment from an early age, and even joined a medicine show in his teens, but it was as a guitar-strumming blue yodeler—under the profound influence of the enormously popular Jimmie Rodgers—that Gene Autry first achieved success as an entertainer in the late 1920's.

Legend has it that Will Rogers himself first encouraged the young telegraph operator to seek a career in music; Autry knocked on a number of doors in New York before finally making his first, moderately successful, recordings in 1929. It was his 1931 release of "That Silver-haired Daddy of Mine," and his regular appearances on the *National Barn Dance*, that brought him national success, and he followed up "Silver-haired Daddy" with three of the most memorable songs of the decade: "Yellow Rose of Texas," "The Last Roundup," and "Tumbling Tumbleweeds," released in 1933, 1934 and 1935.

As hit followed hit, he was summoned to Hollywood, to appear in a cameo role—singing "That Silver-haired Daddy of Mine"—in a Ken Maynard film called *In Old Santa Fe*. He next starred in a serial, *The Phantom Empire*, before starring in *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*, the first of some 93 features for Republic, and later Columbia. Audiences nationwide loved the unpretentious cowboy with the unabashedly sincere voice, and the success of his films boosted record sales, and vice versa, a self-fueling

spiral which brought him enormous popularity.

His songs of the 1930's were firmly in the western mold he'd established on screen, and include many of the classics: "Mexicali Rose," "Back in the Saddle Again," "There's a Gold Mine in the Sky," and a host of others. Around 1940 he began a series of more country oriented hits, many written or co-written by Fred Rose, including "You Are My Sunshine," "It Makes No Difference Now," "Be Honest With Me," "I Hang My Head and Cry," "Tweedle-O-Twill," and "At Mail Call Today."

In the late 1940's, his career back in overdrive after World War II, Gene Autry changed styles again, and sold millions of records by introducing three children's classics: "Here Comes Santa Claus" in 1947, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" in 1948 and "Peter Cottontail" in 1949, all of which sell to this day. He accomplished these feats while knocking out eight feature films a year, covering the 48 states with personal appearances, and hosting the long-running radio show *Melody Ranch*, 1939 to 1956.

Available Albums

The Gene Autry Collection (Murray Hill M61072) a fine, four-record set, 40 songs, including "That Silver-haired Daddy of Mine," "Back in the Saddle Again," and eight previously unreleased recordings. List price \$24.95, CMAA members \$19.95, no cassettes. See *Country Music* November/December 1984, page 63, for a detailed review.

Gene Autry: Columbia Historic Edition (FC 37465) ten-song album (records or cassettes), jacket illustrated with rare photographs, includes "Don't Fence Me In," "Deep in the Heart of Texas" and "Tumbling Tumbleweeds." List price \$8.98, CMAA members \$6.98.

Gene Autry's Melody Ranch, four-record set, but this one, in addition to lots of singing, presents nine terrific stories, transcriptions of Gene's radio shows, like "Champion Saves Gene and Pat's Lives" and "Gene is Held Up and Robbed." Can't go wrong here, cowboys and cowgirls! Send check to: Country Music Society of America, Gene Autry, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. Add \$.95 postage for each item ordered.

Gene Autry always maintained that going from a half million dollars a year in income before World War II to a little over a hundred a month as an Army Air Corps pilot during the war was the single event which caused him to begin to take his business affairs very seriously. Nevertheless, one gets the impression he was shrewd and farsighted even before the war; he seems always to have been known as a clever man with a dollar. At any rate, the postwar period brought a series of excellent investments—diversified in oil, real estate, hotels, radio stations—which have grown handsomely through the years, and include his current and highly visible ownership of the California Angels baseball team.

Gradually this corporate empire began to occupy more and more of Gene Autry's time, although he did manage to star in over 90 half hour shows, and to produce several others, in television's early years. He eased out of films in 1953 with *Last of the Pony Riders*, as the novelty of the B-western was wearing off and the singing cowboy was yodeling his way into the sunset. He continued to perform and record sporadically into the 1960's, before settling into the role of fulltime businessman.

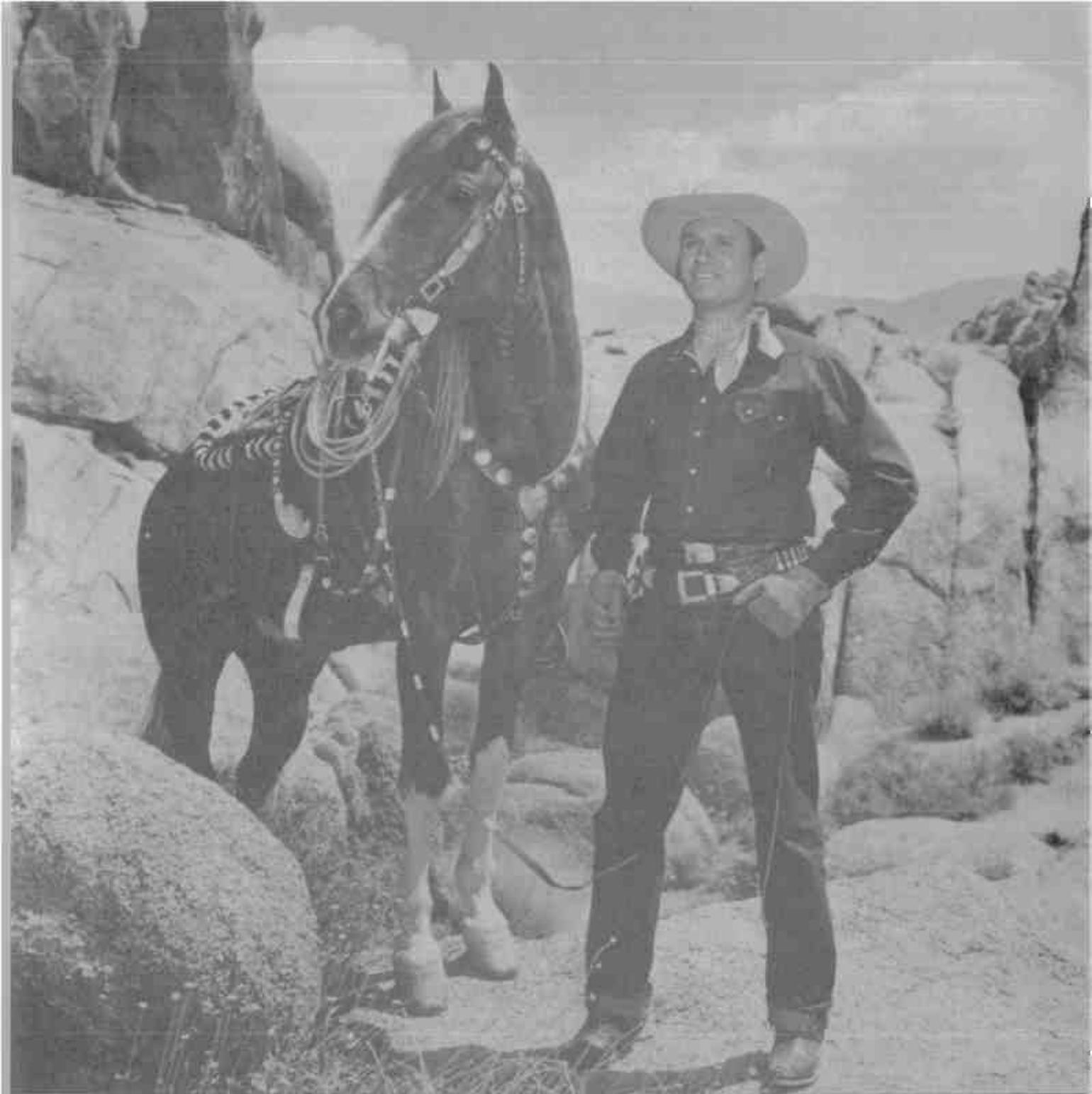
In retrospect, Gene Autry's accomplishments are astonishing: he was the first singer/actor to popularize the singing cowboy in film, he was a country songwriter of consequence, he was a record seller matched by only a handful in the history of recorded music, he is one of the most successful businessmen in America, and he is a cultural hero who brought an image of the West and Western music to the world.

On film and on records, Gene Autry's personality profoundly affected millions. Just ask some of your favorite country heroes like Johnny Cash and Waylon—they'll tell you that they went to the Saturday matinees and dreamed of being cowboys just like Gene, their hero. Unpretentious, sincere, straightforward, he commanded a soft-spoken immediacy with an audience, forged a bond of friendship and trust with them. Those who venerate the slick and showy have been at a loss, then and now, to explain Gene Autry's success; his blandness, his lack of dynamism are foreign to their value system.

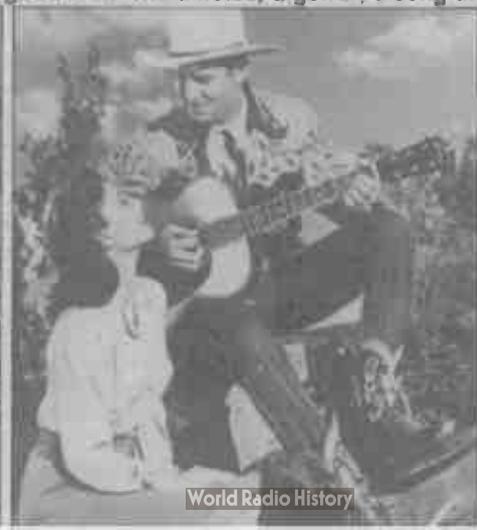
But Gene Autry had the knack of instant communication with us, the audience. Put as simply as possible, we liked him. We liked him a lot. Very, very few entertainers, despite resounding successes at one time or another, have had this magic quality, and Gene Autry, as farsighted as he was likeable, parlayed this magic into a living example of the American Dream.

It is an astonishing story; we may never see its like again. —Douglas P. Green

As leader of the singing group Riders in the Sky, Doug Green keeps cowboy music alive.



Gene Autry: A good man with a horse, a guitar, a song and, if need be, his fists.



COLLECTIONS

Collecting the Magazine

This month most people have something for sale. Contact these members directly if they have what you need.

• I have a collection of *Country Music Magazines*, as follows, for sale: 1972, September to December; 1973, February to December, no January; 1974, January to December, no October; 1975, January to December, no June; 1976, January to December; 1977, January to November, no December; 1978, January to April. These are in very good shape—64 copies in all. **Mrs. Ed Scanlan, R. 3 Box 34, Corning, Iowa 50841.**

• I have the following issues of *Country Music Magazine*: 1979, October, November, December; 1980, entire year, 10 issues, includes Johnny Cash Silver Anniversary issue; 1981, January through September; 1982, January/February Stella Parton issue; 1983, September/October issue; 1984, entire year, 6 issues; 1985, January through September.

I also have 37 issues of *Music City News*, September 1982 through September 1985; and the *Inside Country Music* Premier Issue, undated, published in 1982.

I would be happy to consider any offer anyone would like to make for any of the above.

I would also like to hear from anyone who might have any magazines, etc., with articles on Neil Diamond. **Barbara Schreier, 508 Fiot Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18015.**

• I have these back issues of *Country Music Magazine* available to sell: 1981, full year, starting with January/February issue and including the Hank Jr. "no date" issue; also January/February 1982 and January/February 1984 to present. **Donald H. Anthony, 505 Halsey Rd., North Brunswick, New Jersey 08902.**

• I have the following issues of *Country Music Magazine* for sale or trade: October 1976; April, May, November 1980; January/February, April, May 1981; September/October 1983; May/June 1984.

I need the following issues of *Country Music Magazine*: 1972, September through December; 1973, January through July; 1974, January through April, September through December; 1975, January through May, July through October; 1976, March through July, December; 1977; January through May, September, October; 1978, February, March, May, June; 1981, Hank Jr. issue. **M. Triplette, Rt. 2 Box 225, Branchland, West Virginia 25506.**

Information, Please

Contact these members directly if you have the information or items they need.

• Thanks to your printing my request in

this column, I received a number of letters and found the Rose Maddox record I was after. I wish to say thank you very much to all those who wrote me.

Now I have one more request. I am looking for a record by Roy Acuff called "I Heard a Silver Trumpet Blow." It's on a 78 by O.K. Records, but so far I cannot find it. Could someone out there help me, please. **Mary Wohlsein, P.O. Box 344, Washougal, Washington 98671.**

• I have heard this song a lot and I can't find it. It is a Paul Craft song, "Drop Kick Me, Jesus." I want it on a single. I have looked for some time for it. Please help me find it.

I would also like to see if I can get the song Boxcar Willie has done about a hobo. It is the last song that Jimmie Rodgers did, and Boxcar is using Jimmie Rodgers' guitar on it. I think it is so pretty. **Mrs. R. C. Stearns, 3002 40th St., Snyder, Texas 79549.**

For Sale

I have in my possession 52 records purchased in the 1920's and 1930's, such as "The Lightning Express," "Careless Love," "Midnight on the Stormy Deep," "I Am Drifting Back to Dreamland," "After the Ball" and many, many more.

If anyone is interested in a list of these old records, I will be happy to send one. I would like to sell them and also an old Silvertone phonograph by Sears. It needs repairs, but the cabinet makes a beautiful piece of furniture. **Ina M. May, 3729 38th Street East, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35405.**

• I would like to buy a cassette tape or album of *A Satisfied Mind* by Bob Luman. Also the following singles: "Western Union Wire" by Jimmy Payne; "The Violet and the Rose," artist unknown to me, but was on radio stations in the mid-1960's; a single by, I believe, Ernest Tubb—I am not sure of the correct title, but some of the words are as follows, "Oh La La, my La La, my true La La." Any information on above items will be appreciated. **Marge Bohn, 118 E. 10th, Winona, Minnesota 55987.**

• Does anyone have the words to the old song, "I'm My Own Grandpa"? If it's on record, we could send a tape to have it recorded if anyone's willing. **Betty M. Law, Box 347, Sherburne, New York 13460.**

• I am looking for the album *Take Me to Tomorrow* by John Denver, release date 1970 by RCA Records. If anyone can help, please write me. **Therese Minor, 7909 W. Mill Rd., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53218.**

• I am looking for pictures taken at any of the Elvis concerts. I would greatly appreciate hearing from anyone who has negatives

I could borrow. **Debbie Harrison, 600 Walnut Avenue, Colonial Heights, Virginia 23834.**

• Has anyone ever heard the song "Iwo Jima Isles"? It's probably on a 45 record. When I was discharged from the Army in 1946, I heard it once. I liked it very much—never heard it after that and don't know who it was sung by. **Russell G. Hamilton, P.O. Box 173, East Livermore, Maine 04228-0173.**

• I'm looking for a single that was released on RCA Records in September of 1979, "You Don't Miss a Thing," by Sylvia. If anyone has any information on how I can get this record, please write. **Leann Kaufman, 1902 Maple Rd., Port Huron, Michigan 48060.**

• Thank you for running my ad for back issues of *Country Music*. I received many answers. I would like to see if anyone can give me some information on the "Happy Rovin' Cowboy" theme that was used on Hank Williams' Health and Happiness show. A man by the name of Knowland was given credit for writing it. I would like to know if he is still living and if he really wrote it or bought it from someone else. I heard a lady by the name of Clara Rittenhouse of our hometown had actually written it. She is deceased now, and I am wondering where it did originate. **Larry Swedenhjilm, 33 Tionesta Ave., Kane, Pennsylvania 16735.**

• I have a Yaxx stereo set, model number M2685, serial number 268502766. I was given this set secondhand. There wasn't an operation manual with it. If one of you *Country Music Magazine* fans has this model and has the manual, if you would run me off a copy, I will repay you your cost and would appreciate it very much. **Gussie Norton, 821 McDade, Bossier City, Louisiana 71112.**

Pen Pals

• I'm a big Anne Murray fan. I've been trying to think of some way to get in touch with other Annie fans. Since she doesn't have a fan club, it's hard. I'd love to hear from any Anne Murray fans. Please write. I'll answer all letters. **Marie Sigler, 715 Jefferson Ave., St. Paul, Minnesota 55102.**

• I am a very big fan of John Denver, and think he is so handsome! I am sixteen years old and would love to hear from other John Denver fans my age or older. Will answer all letters. **Therese Minor, see address above in Information, Please.**

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

Vince Gill: Turned Loose

Vince may be a new name as a solo act, but he's a seasoned performer—he's worked his way through a wide range of bands and styles. Nashville looks hot to him, and he's ready to take it on.

by Bob Allen

At ten in the morning, Vince Gill, wearing corduroy slacks and a battered leather jacket over a football jersey, is slouched in a chair in the conference room at the Nashville offices of his record label, RCA. Yawning occasionally, he gulps a large Coke and munches peanut M&M's. His lanky frame seems to sprawl angularly in every direction as he slumps a little further in his seat and lazily offers some M&M's to a visitor.

But Gill's outward casualness can be misleading. This casualness, along with Vince's easygoing, puckish sense of humor and innocent-looking, almost boyish face, conceal self-assurance and constant watchfulness for any of the danger signals of artistic compromise. All these things lurk just beneath the surface of this 28-year-old ex-bluegrass, ex-rock'n'roll prodigy who is now trying to find a



home in the country charts for his soulful, country/rock-flavored music.

Gill has certainly got the goods to pull this off. He is a superb singer with a lilting, haunting voice that can breathe an enormous amount of emotion into a beautiful ballad like "Oh, Carolina," on *Turn Me Loose*, his debut RCA mini-LP of last year, or with similar ease, give a delightfully manic edge to a more driving upbeat number like Delbert McClinton's "Victim of Life's Circumstances" (on the same album). These talents earned him this year's Top New Male Vocalist award from the Academy of Country Music. Then there is his guitar-work. He can lay down searing, sharp-edged lead lines with his Telecaster electric guitar with precision and dependability.

He's certainly got the credentials too. Over the years, he's played in bands with Ricky Skaggs, noted fiddler Byron Berline, and "newgrass" prodigies like Herb Pederson and David Grisman. He's a former member of Rodney Crowell and Rosanne Cash's semi-legendary band, The Cherry Bombs. "Rodney and Rosanne are two of my best friends in the world," he laughs. "Rodney and I got drunk one night and spent the whole night tryin' to cut ourselves and become blood brothers. I don't know if we actually drew any blood or not, but the intention was there!" He has also gotten considerable encouragement and moral support from Emmylou Harris. It was she who brought him the song "Oh, Carolina" and sang harmony on it for his first album.

Before leaving the West Coast to set-

tle in Nashville, Gill was also the guiding force behind the rock group Pure Prairie League. That band had slid into semi-obscurity after not being able to follow up on its resounding 1975 hit "Amie." But Gill joined the group and almost single-handedly sang them back into the pop Top Ten with "Let Me Love You Tonight" in 1980 and his own "Still Right Here in My Heart" in 1981. Five of his original songs were included on the group's 1980 RCA album *Can't Hold Back*.

Before launching his solo career with *Turn Me Loose* in 1984, he sang and occasionally played guitar on records by Rosanne Cash — "Never Alone," a rousing duet that the two wrote together can be heard on her new *Rhythm & Romance* album—and on albums with Guy Clark, Sissy Spacek, Dan Fogelberg, Lee Greenwood, Bonnie Raitt and Reba McEntire. Along with noted bluegrass and newgrass practitioners Herb Pederson, David Grisman, Jim Buchanon and Emory Gordy Jr., who produced Gill's two RCA albums, he also participated in the critically acclaimed 1982 bluegrass album *Here Today*.

With his second RCA album, *The Things That Matter*, released earlier this year, Gill seems to have finally put a dent in the country market. "True Love," the first single from the new album, landed in the Top 30. The second, "If It Weren't for Him," a duet with Rosanne Cash, recently became his first Top Ten hit. His latest single, "Okla-

homa Borderline," promises to do as well. He's recently toured in Europe and Canada in support of the new album, and has already begun writing and gathering material for his next one.

But, he continues to approach success with typical caution. "Nine out of ten of the people I admire in this business are self-sustaining, in so far as they write most of their own material, and are good with their chosen instruments. In other words, they're more than just a pretty face up there singing the words to an empty country song," Gill explains as he thoughtfully munches another handful of M&M's and washes it down with a swig of Coke. "I've got to have it that way too, or I won't be satisfied, no matter how commercially successful I might be. I'd be embarrassed to tell you some of the songs I've turned down—songs that were later huge hits for other people. I knew they were hits when I first heard them, but I also knew they weren't for me. I won't do a song that doesn't feel right for me."

Gill's musical integrity and his perfectionism compelled him to spend months writing the material for *The Things That Matter*. He wrote or co-wrote all the songs except Dave Loggins' "Ain't It Always That Way." "If It Weren't for Him," a soulful duet with Rosanne Cash, was co-written with her; he wrote "Oklahoma Borderline" with Guy Clark and Rodney Crowell, who also can be heard singing on the track. Gill's distinctive guitar work is amply in evidence throughout.

The son of an Oklahoma City attorney, who is now an appellate judge, Vince grew up listening in equal measure to Bob Wills, The Beatles, and Buck Owens. "By the time I was a teenager, I was in a local bluegrass band, and we'd do things like take The Beatles' "Norwegian Wood" and "I've Just Seen a Face" and work them up bluegrass-style. But even way before that, I remember seeing Buck Owens and his guitarist Don Rich on *The Buck Owens Show*. They were two of the very first ones I remember liking as a kid. That great Telecaster guitar sound and that high two-man harmony you hear on all the great Buck Owens records, that real clean sound: to me, *that* is country music. A lot of the things I've done since then, like 'Victim of Life's Circumstances,' came out of that influence."

Gill enjoyed local fame, his first taste of the wild life of a musician, and even a regional hit single with an Oklahoma City band called Mountain Smoke while he was still in his last year of high school. "That was the most fun I've ever had in a band," he grins nostalgically. "We played tricks on each other. We were hysterical to watch on stage."

At age 18, Gill loaded his few posses-



Vince's "If It Weren't for Him," with Rosanne Cash, became his first Top Ten hit.

“That great Telecaster guitar sound and that high two-man harmony on all the great Buck Owens records, that real clean sound: to me, that is country music.”



Melodie Crompton

sions in his van and left Oklahoma City to seek his fortune as a musician. He ended up in Louisville, Kentucky, where he landed a spot in The Bluegrass Alliance, a noteworthy group with a solid reputation on the national bluegrass circuit, whose members then included Sam Bush and Dan Crary. A while later, he ended up in Lexington playing with Ricky Skaggs in a band Skaggs had just formed called Boone Creek.

“Ricky was trying to do then what he’s doing now with his records: playing bluegrass-style music with steel guitar and drums. Only back then, he was kind of lost. He wasn’t doing a very good job of it, and we weren’t getting many jobs.”

A call from fiddler Byron Berline and an invitation to join Berline’s band, Sundance, took Vince to the West Coast. “The stuff I’d been doing with the Bluegrass Alliance was music with a sort of contemporary ‘newgrass’ approach, whereas Byron’s forte was hotshot instrumental playing with intricate arrangements—‘rock n’ roll-bluegrass,’ in a sense.

“I loved it out there on the Coast,” he adds. “I suddenly started meeting all these great musicians who, before, I’d only heard on records. There were guitarists like Albert Lee and Larry Carlton who could play like you couldn’t believe. It really snapped my head around. It inspired me to start seriously woodshedding and improving.”

His stint with Pure Prairie League came next. In the meantime, he crossed paths with Rodney Crowell, whose song “Till I Can Gain Control Again” was already in Gill’s own repertoire. “Rodney’s the only male singer I’ve ever heard who can bring tears to my eyes,” he says affectionately. After his association with Pure Prairie League had run its course, Crowell asked him to join his band, The Cherry Bombs.

“The level of musicianship in that group was astounding,” Gill recalls en-

thusiastically. “I suddenly found myself playing with people I’d idolized since I heard them, when I was fifteen or sixteen, on Emmylou Harris’ early albums . . . Crowell, Larry Londin, Albert Lee, Emory Gordy Jr. They all knew exactly what they were doing, and if you didn’t stay on your toes, they’d lap you quick! I don’t think you could have found a better band doing that kind of music anywhere,” he recalls with mild wonderment. “And I got to be their lead guitar! The featured instrument!”

As a result of his close association with Crowell, Gill began making ever more frequent trips to Nashville to sing and play guitar on Crowell-produced recording sessions. When songs of his were recorded by Leona Williams and Leon Everette, he decided to move from the West Coast to Middle Tennessee. RCA’s Nashville A&R man, Tony Brown, was an old musical compatriot from Gill’s earliest days on the West Coast. With Brown’s help, he landed his contract with RCA.

“For me, musically, Los Angeles had dried up. It was a drag, and I felt my future was very limited there. The Nashville music scene was alive. It was a blast!”

The satisfaction of his musical instincts and also the sheer fun and excitement of it—these seem to be the guiding forces behind Vince Gill’s rise through the ranks. When he looks back on his career, it’s not his triumphs as an artist that seem to carry the most weight. Rather, it is those exuberant moments when he found himself reaching for a new level of musicianship, or communicating with an audience at some new level. But true to his rather happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care exterior—his casual dress and his nibbling M&M’s at ten in the morning—these moments often have a special Vince Gill stamp.

For instance, as he finishes off the last

of his M&M’s, he jokingly recalls the time long ago, back in Oklahoma City, when he and the band, Mountain Smoke, got stuck with the thankless job of opening for the rock group Kiss.

“The guys called me and said, ‘Come on down to the Civic Center and bring your fiddle,’” he laughs. “I got down there and saw the marquee outside that said ‘KISS’. I couldn’t believe it. Inside, they had the whole huge stage set up with a gigantic wall of amplifiers. I thought, ‘Oh no. we can’t do this!’” He shakes his head in disbelief as he lazily downs the last mouthful of chocolate-covered peanuts. “But we did. We went on in front of 5,000 screaming Kiss fans, and they *hated* us. It was the most hysterical thing you ever heard. Everybody in the whole place booed us. Not just some of them. *Everybody*. All five thousand of ‘em. I had a ball! I just started goofing. We’d do a song, and they’d boo us, and I’d say, ‘he affects the accent of a dumb yokel, “. . . Well, thank ya all very much! I know you loved that, so we’re gonna do us another little ol’ song here I know you’re gonna enjoy even more.’ We had no amps, except the bass player had this little two-foot-high showman amp—just this one little tiny amp sitting out in front of this huge wall of amps! It was just ridiculous!” he recalls gleefully. “I wish I’d gotten a picture of that! We did about five songs before we finally got booed off stage, and I mooned the crowd as we split. The reviewer in the local paper the next day was real nice to us. He wrote: ‘Local group Montain Smoke stood as much as they could stand. . . Upon his departure, guitarist/fiddler Vince Gill showed the crowd just what part of his anatomy they could *kiss*.’”

Gill leans back in his chair and roars boisterously. He crumples the empty M&M wrapper and hook-shots it into a nearby trash can. “Now *that* was a moment! *That* was a highlight out of my career!”

CHIPS MOMAN'S MEMPHIS REVIVAL



Clement, Phillips, Lewis, Orbison, Fogerty and Cash helped make Moman's dream come true.

Legendary stars, legendary producers, legendary backup singers and a pretty hefty studio band all got together for Chips Moman's new Memphis album. The veteran producer returned to his musical home and his heroes went with him. by Joe Sasfy



(Top & left) Sun Pioneers Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis were more than delighted to participate. For Marty Stuart (bottom right) it was a double honor when Carl Perkins presented him with one of his own guitars.

Music fans love to fantasize, so here's a juicy one for all you rockabilly nuts.

Imagine putting four legends of Memphis rockabilly, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison and Carl Perkins, together in a Memphis studio to sing. Imagine giving them a great rockabilly tribute song like John Fogerty's "Big Train From Memphis" and backing them with Memphis' finest studio band. Now imagine getting Sam Phillips and Cowboy Jack Clement, Memphis' great rockabilly producers, to add their creaky, rumbling voices to this priceless quartet.

Sound good? Let's keep fantasizing. Since John Fogerty wrote the song and built the sound of Creedence Clearwater Revival around Memphis rockabilly, let's invite him to join in. And let's ask Ricky Nelson and Dave Edmunds, a

1950's west coast pop star and a 1980's British pop star both inspired by rockabilly, to sing along. Just for country flavor, let's have June Carter and The Judds sing harmonies for this star-spangled rockabilly choir.

This fantasy may sound too good to be true, but on a Friday evening in late September, producer Chips Moman orchestrated just such an event at Memphis' American studio. When the more than twenty singers and musicians had finished their jubilant version of "Big Train From Memphis," the studio erupted in a spontaneous celebration. The next day an exhausted but still euphoric Moman gushed, "It was the highlight of my career. I've never worked in a situation that meant more to me. I couldn't believe when I woke up this morning that it was reality, not a dream."

Moman's "dream" began earlier in the week when Cash, Lewis, Orbison and Perkins entered the original Sun studio at 706 Union Avenue in Memphis and began working on a new album with Moman at the helm. This is where their careers began thirty years ago, where Elvis recorded his first singles, where "Blue Suede Shoes," "I Walk the Line," "Ooby Dooby," "Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On" and many more were born. When the four men got inside and Lewis began to bang out "Memphis," the modest eighteen-by-thirty foot room just seemed too small to be a birthplace of so many country and rock'n'roll legends.

Although Moman claimed, "This project couldn't be done anywhere else but Memphis," the four stars made it clear that Moman himself was the real key. "When Chips and I were working on the *Highwayman* album," Cash said, "we

Becky Evans, Toni Wine Moman, June Carter Cash and The Judds added the background harmonies.



“Some of us will record with Chips no matter where he goes.”

were talking about how great it would be to work together again. Some of us will record with Chips no matter where he goes.”

A fit and charged up Jerry Lee Lewis was even more effusive. “I’ve got my bankroll stashed with Chips,” the Killer began. “He’s my redeemer in this business. Without him, I’d just quit. This man went to Nashville and succeeded with Memphis musicians. Now he’s come back to Memphis, his first love, to help out his friends and get it going again.”

It’s true that the completion of this historic recording project was just a beginning. After working successfully in Nashville for twelve years, Moman has returned to Memphis, the city where he built his career during the sixties as a songwriter, guitarist and producer. With a new production company and a new studio in the works, this Cash-Orbison-Lewis-Perkins album is just step one in Moman’s plan to put Memphis back on America’s musical map.

“I think it’s extremely important for the record industry to get the input of Memphis, just like we need the input of

Birmingham, Atlanta and Detroit,” Moman explained on the eve of the project. “All we’re hearing musically these days is Nashville and L.A. A two or three-city music business isn’t enough in a country this size.”

By returning to the funky, down home confines of Memphis’ Sun and American studios, Moman was also seeking some of the freedom and spontaneity, the good groove, that characterizes the classic Memphis sound. During the week, Moman would record twelve songs with his four stars, including four quartets. With little preparation, Moman and his artists worked together harmoniously, sharing a spirit of warmth and generosity that reflected how closely these men’s lives and careers have been intertwined.

Two studio vignettes really sum up this extraordinary emotion-packed recording event. One day Carl Perkins turned to Marty Stuart, a young picker from Cash’s band who had just been signed to Columbia and was helping out on acoustic guitar. Perkins said, “I heard you just got signed to Columbia. Well, you’re going to need something,”

and handed Stuart one of his Fender Stratocaster guitars as a gift.

Not surprisingly, another of the most dramatic events involved the memory of Elvis Presley. Cash, Perkins, Lewis and Orbison had sung a gloriously uplifting version of a gospel ballad called “Remembering the King.” They then disappeared into the mobile recording unit with Moman to listen to a playback. When they came out, it was obvious all five men had been moved to tears by the song.

he day after these sessions were over, a bleary-eyed Moman plopped down in my room at the Peabody Hotel and sorted through the details of recent events and his rich career. It’s not surprising that these latest sessions were emotional events, because Chips Moman is a gut-spilling, soulful character whose thirty-year career has been shaped as much by his heart as by his abilities. It’s obvious that he has never quite adjusted to a record industry ruled more by businessmen than music men. Nonetheless, his achievements in pop, rock, soul and country music loom large.

As a songwriter, Moman wrote or co-wrote soul standards like “Do Right Woman” and “Dark End of the Street,” the Grammy-winning “Another Somebody Did Somebody Wrong Song,” and Waylon Jennings’ outlaw classic, “Luckenbach, Texas.” As a guitarist, Moman headed the great Muscle Shoals band responsible for a number of Aretha

Franklin and Wilson Pickett hits. As a producer, Moman has scored big with Elvis Presley's "Suspicious Minds" and "In the Ghetto," Merilee Rush's "Angel of the Morning," Willie Nelson's "Always on My Mind," Waylon Jennings' "Luckenbach, Texas" and Willie's and Merle's "Pancho and Lefty." And that, music historians, is just scratching the surface.

hips Moman was born and raised between LaGrange and Warm Springs, Georgia, but left for Memphis at age fourteen because, in his own words, "I didn't want to work in the cottonmills." He began playing in various bands backing rockabilies like the Burnette Brothers, Warren Smith and Gene Vincent. His first real taste of studio experience came when he travelled with the Burnettes to California, where he got to work with Stan Ross at Los Angeles' famous Gold Star studio.

Upon returning to Memphis in 1959, Moman helped build the famous Stax studio on McClellmore Avenue and produced the label's early hits by the Markseys and Carla Thomas. But as Stax grew, Moman was pushed out of the action. To keep himself going, he turned to producing other rhythm and blues acts.

"For a period of time there," Moman recalled, "I was so depressed that I lost my house and started drinking. I was cutting records, a lot of them hits, for anyone who came along with \$20. Finally a guy came by and said to me, 'Man, I just got signed and they told me there was this great producer that would cut

my records for \$20 and a bottle of whiskey.' I never drank anymore after that. When they came back, I said my fee was \$5,000 a day, and what amazed me is they paid it."

It was after leaving Stax that Moman built the American studio where he produced hits like the Gentrys' "Keep on Dancin'" and Sandy Posey's "Born a Woman." It was at American that Moman built the incredible studio band—Reggie Young (guitar), Bobby Wood and Bobby Emmons (keyboards), Gene Chrisman (drums) and Mike Leech (bass)—that would be responsible for an amazing 75 national hits from 1968 to 1970. Neil Diamond, Dusty Springfield, B.J. Thomas, Brenda Lee, Joe Tex and many more, including Elvis Presley, would come to Moman's American Studio in search of the Memphis sound.

"I'm really proud of the Elvis sides," Moman admitted. "I know I got him to give performances that he hadn't matched in a while. It was a battle with his entourage, though. Once I got his crowd the hell out of the way, Elvis became a total professional and easy to work with. One on one, he was a great guy. But with that entourage, he became a different guy."

In 1972, after failing to win any recognition for himself or his band within the Memphis music community, Moman got mad, tore his studio apart and moved to Atlanta. Three months later he was in Nashville working as head of Warner Brothers operations. But he quickly left that to get back to creating music. "After I quit," Moman remembered, "I did 'Somebody Did Somebody Wrong

Song.' Then I cut 'Luckenbach, Texas.' I've never done a lot of sessions in Nashville. I cut a lot of stuff in Texas."

During Moman's stint in Nashville, he seemed to attract outsider artists like Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings. "I think it was natural that we ended up together," Moman said proudly. "They are left field guys, and I am too. I wouldn't have worked much if it was up to the record companies. It was the artists themselves that kept me working."

Despite the hits and awards, Moman's frustrations with Nashville multiplied. He hardly minces words about the reasons for his return to Memphis. "No matter how good a record you make in Nashville," he maintained, "if it's not right in their bag, you can't get anywhere with it. I don't think anyone who loves different kinds of music could stay there and be happy. When Johnny Cash was in Memphis, he was more than a country artist and so were Lewis, Perkins and Orbison. When they went to Nashville, their careers suffered musically. They even had Cash, this great American star, cutting funny songs like 'A Boy Named Sue.' Now Cash's music is serious again. He's got the fire in him."

Moman's voice began to rise, to gather a fire of its own as he continued. "I came back to Memphis so I won't have to cut the same old stuff that just fits into a slot for some record executive who thinks he's an expert because he played trumpet in his high school band. I came to Memphis for the freedom to do any kind of music I want to. Freedom's what I'm going to find here. This is an anything goes music town." ■



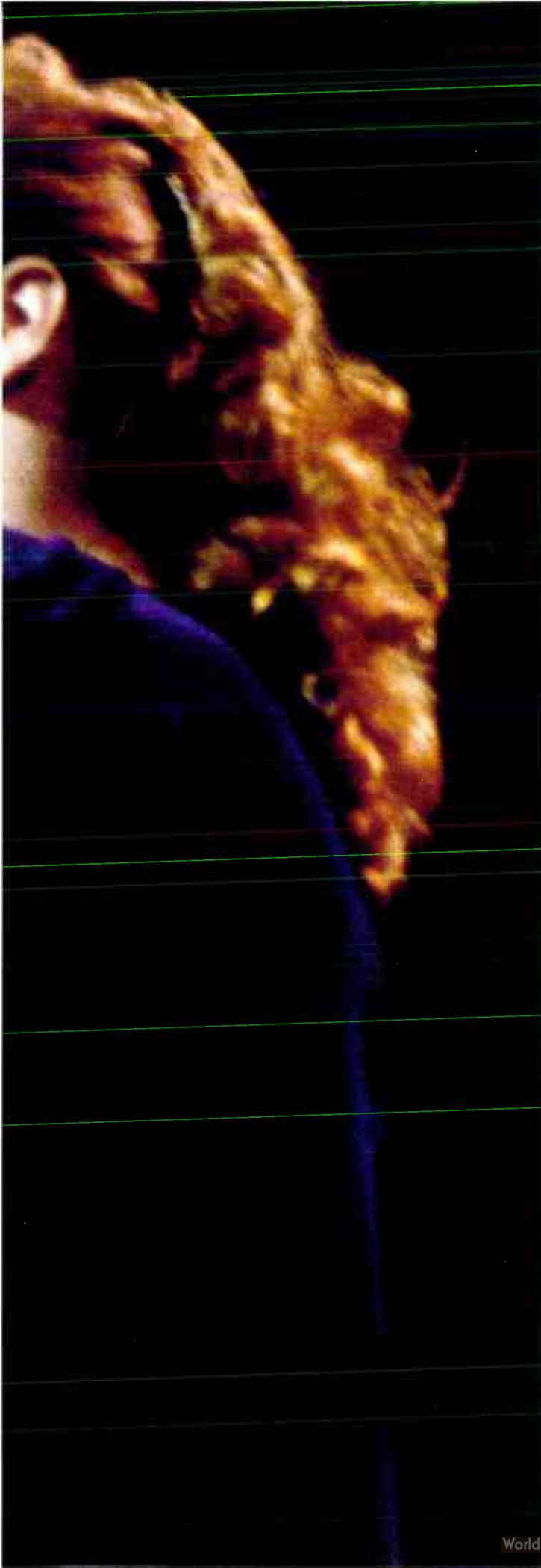
The artists worked together harmoniously sharing a spirit of warmth and generosity that reflected how closely their lives and careers have been intertwined.

The Judds

Two Down Home Gals Ease Into Their Cinderella Slippers

Living together and working together would tear some people apart. But this mother and daughter team is learning to live with life on the road and the pressures that come with success.

by Bob Allen



It was to nobody's surprise that The Judds—mother Naomi, 39, and daughter Wynonna, 21—walked away from this year's Country Music Association Awards Show with both the Group of the Year and the Single of the Year laurels.

The Judds' rather startling ascendance in the past two years has been a welcome and revivifying spark on an otherwise somewhat dreary country music landscape. The overwhelming public acceptance of their music has been like a tonic to an industry recently demoralized by dwindling record sales and an apparent loss of musical direction.

Were it not for the sheer exuberance, the charmingly quaint yet infectiously contemporary quality of their duet sound—not to mention their attractive, vivacious stage presence with its overtones of mother-daughter novelty—it would be hard to explain The Judds' "double" Cinderella story, their almost immediate acceptance into the hearts and imaginations of the American public. As *Newsweek* put it: "They're a middle-America fantasy come to life, a which-one-is-the-mother pair right out of a TV commercial."

It hasn't even been two years since the release of *The Judds*, their debut RCA mini-LP. But during that time they have passed commercial milestones and garnered a level of critical acceptance that eludes many veteran artists. Now that they've opened shows for Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, George Jones, The Oak Ridge Boys and The Statlers, it's hard to believe that only a year and a half ago, they made their professional debut in nerve-racking, trial-by-fire fashion, in front of 9,000 people in Omaha who were waiting to see the Stats.

Since early 1984, this mother and daughter team has won a Grammy, a CMA Horizon Award (for that year's most promising newcomers) as well as Top Vocal Duet and Single of the Year (for "Why Not Me") awards from the Academy of Country Music. They've earned a gold record for a half-million sales on *Why Not Me*, their first full-length album, released in 1984, and as of this writing it is approaching platinum (one million sales). No fewer than four of their singles—"Mama, He's Crazy," "Why Not Me," "Girls' Night Out," and "Love Is Alive"—have reached the Number One spot. This is a feat particularly unusual for a group so new to the spotlight. Top that all off with the fact that their newest album, *Rockin' with the Rhythm*, was greeted with orders for more than a half million copies when it was released.

Like the public, the big-city critical establishment quickly sensed something authentic in The Judds. "So refreshing, so imaginative it's hard to believe their music was fashioned in the predictable polyester confines of Nashville's country music industry," wrote Joe Sasfy of *The Washington Post*, when reviewing *Why Not Me*. "Seamless, flowing harmonies... in a warm tapestry of acoustic instrumentation... the rich liquid vocals of daughter Wynonna are marvelously unaffected, her sultry stylings casually touching on blues, jazz and rock... lusciously melodic and indivisibly pop in the most natural way."

For Naomi and Wynonna themselves, the sensation of such overnight success has been something akin to being

“We’ve had to come head-on with a lot of issues that other mothers and daughters never have to come to terms with.”

—NAOMI

“It’s been real hard work, and it’s meant being away from home.”

—WYNONNA

“It’s like tying two cats’ tails together and throwing them over a clothesline.”

—WYNONNA

“A lot of this has been like a dream.”

—NAOMI



“We’re professional partners now, and there’s a career at stake.”

—NAOMI

washed up by a tidal wave or swept into the eye of a hurricane.

“We’re just as surprised as anyone when these things happen,” Naomi insists, a bit too meekly, from behind dark glasses. “We don’t count on or expect anything.”

“A lot of all this has been like a dream,” adds the elder Judd, who sometimes has a breathy way of delivering such lines that makes you think maybe she already knows how good they will look in quotes. “For a long time I kept my Grammy award and my CMA award right on the table by my bed so that when I woke up, I could reach over and touch them, just to make sure it *wasn’t* a dream.”

These dramatic changes in their lives have been compounded by the fact that Wynonna—who was born the very week that her mother graduated from high school in Ashland, Kentucky—and Naomi are, in fact, two radically different human beings in both temperament and outlook. Nonetheless, they now find themselves thrust together, day and night, on stage and off, at a point in life when most mothers and daughters and fathers and sons are in the final stages of learning to lead separate lives and to shed the last vestiges of the emotional umbilical cord.

“This past year has been the most wonderful but also the most difficult year of my life,” explains Naomi, the more philo-

sophical, subdued and inner-directed of the pair. “It’s been very painful in so far as Wynonna and I have had to grow and make personal changes in our relationship to each other. We’ve had to come head-on with a lot of issues that other mothers and daughters never have to come to terms with.”

“Yeh, it’s difficult,” admits Wynonna, who despite her immense talent, still often displays the gum-smacking impulsiveness of a child; and who seems to, at once, rail against her mother’s quiet domination and almost desperately seek her approval. “It’s especially hard when you’re literally forced into being together all the time, like we are. It’s like tying two cats’ tails together and throwing them over a clothesline.”

It was not too many weeks before their triumph at the 1985 CMA Awards Show when I caught up with The Judds. This particular balmy afternoon they were in suburban Maryland, one of many stops on a long hard season’s worth of touring. They had per-

formed just the night before in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where they’d opened for Don Williams. They’d used the several hours’ road time from there to their next stop, in Columbia, Maryland, to catch up on their beauty rest.

At that point, they’d been on the road for nearly a month. As they climbed off the bus in front of their hotel and blinked and yawned in the midday brightness, both looked a little frayed around the edges. I immediately noticed that their hair is now done in identical shades of red—a deft touch, which, if it was there before, I never noticed. They did, in fact, almost look as if they’d been washed up by a wave, on some strange shore.

“What state did you say we were in?” Wynonna inquired of no one in particular as she got her bearings and headed for the hotel lobby with her pet English terrier, Loretta—named after Loretta Lynn—in tow. “I’m gonna get a male and name him Conway!” she giggles.

In Massachusetts, where they’d played just a few days earlier, they’d known both pleasure and devastation. They’d managed to catch a performance by powerful folk/blues singer Bonnie Raitt, who is one of Wynonna’s musical heroes. Raitt also used the stage that night as a platform to sing the praises of the duo from Nashville, as have other musical opinion leaders like Emmylou Harris, whose fiancé Paul Kennerley

contributed several songs to The Judds' new album, and Gail Davies who recently called Wynonna "the greatest country voice since Patsy Cline."

Unfortunately Massachusetts was also where Naomi came down with a rather severe case of food poisoning from eating raw clams. After a day or so spent hooked to a hospital I.V. unit, the former nurse and once aspiring-country-physician had not completely recovered by the time they reached Maryland. She had yet to eat her first solid meal.

As they mingled tentatively among members of their roadcrew beside the bus, wearing dark glasses, they helped unload their own luggage and got used to having their feet on solid ground after the long ride. You could almost feel their homesickness and fatigue.

In order to ease the long-distance loneliness of a life lived between a series of points on a road map, efforts have been made to give things a semblance of family atmosphere. Naomi's mother from Kentucky had come along with them for a few days and was busy doing Naomi's laundry for her. Wynonna's boyfriend from Nashville had also joined them temporarily.

With their day beginning at two in the afternoon, they had about 45 minutes to shake themselves into the waking world and begin a long afternoon and evening's schedule of autograph sessions, a sound-check, a record company-sponsored barbecue, and of course, the show itself. The two of them settled down to spend those minutes in a hotel conference room nibbling on room service sandwiches and sipping tea. Outside the window, paddle boats floated soundlessly by on a man-made lake complete with lily pads. Here and there the sun began to break through the clouds left by morning thunderstorms. Naomi went to turn on the air conditioner, hit the wrong knob and turned on the heat instead. Wynonna fussed at her, and she got back up and hit another knob and once more got the cool air flowing.

It is Wynonna who seemingly has had to make the greatest adjustment to their new life in the fast lane: write-ups in *People* and *Us*, swapping autographs and mutual admiration with Huey Lewis, being pawed and adored by fans, and having her every move chronicled by the Nashville papers, no matter how embarrassing—like recently when she lost her American Express card at a Music City nightspot. Particularly unsettling have been persistent questions for both of them from interviewers about their mother-daughter squabbles, about their love lives, about their finances.

"Their questions used to be so rudimentary," says Naomi, more with

bemusement than irritation. "You know: where were you born, who were your musical influences. Now, they're all centered around men, money and personal lifestyles."

"They ask me things that I wouldn't normally tell anybody," says Wynonna. "They ask me things that I, personally, don't like to sit around and talk about. Like, 'what was the biggest fight that you and your mother ever had?' Sometimes I have trouble keeping my sanity when they hit me with those. I know sooner or later they're going to throw some at us that we're just not ready for.

"I never imagined that a recording career could be this hard," adds Wynonna with a sigh. Unlike her mother, who has engineered their success with shrewd, close-to-the-vest calculation and sheer determination, Wynonna does not have the benefit of the 18-year age advantage her mother has on her. At times, she seems truly shaken by her new status as a country star.

"Sometimes when things have gotten really rough, I've had to remind myself that this *is* really what I wanted," sighs the younger Judd who, despite having recently come of age, still has the fidgety, unsettled adolescent charm of one who has trouble sitting in the same chair too long, or who is forever losing the keys to the family car. "It's been real hard work, and it's meant being away from home, from my grandparents and my boyfriend, for all but two or three days out of the month.

"Sometimes I really do get kind of scared by all this," she admits. "Like, what am I doing here? Why am I not at home tucked into my own bed? Why am I not doing something I'm more sure of?"

Their biggest adjustments, both Naomi and Wynonna admit, have been to each other—the old cats-with-their-tails-tied-together analogy. They've often lost their composure and had their most heated confrontations in some rather harrowing situations.

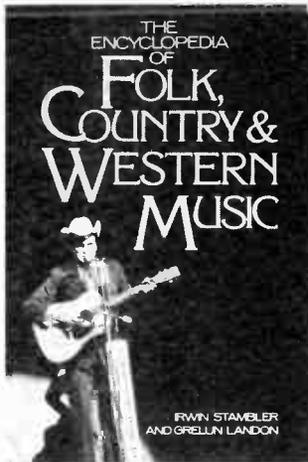
There was, for instance, the time Wynonna got a two-hour leave from tour duties in Springfield, Missouri, to attend a fraternity party with some friends she'd run into. It was agreed that she would return at a designated hour so the two-bus tour entourage could begin its long trek to the next show in another state. When she returned twenty minutes late—tardy enough to potentially derail the crew from arriving in time to safely set up for the next show, there was Mama Judd standing in the bus door in her pajamas, lying in wait for her daughter with a rather enraged look on her face.

"We fought for hours," Wynonna recalls. "There had been a lot of things building up, a lot of similarly frustrating situations leading up to it. It happens about once a month, we'll have a big blow-out like that."

"When it happens, it's so hard to separate the personal from the professional," adds Naomi in a voice intended to soothe the potential familial fires that one senses can easily be stirred by mere discussions of such untimely incidents. "Like for instance, say we're about to go on stage in front of ten thousand people in a coliseum, and she can't find the pants to the one stage outfit she has with her, and I start coming down on her for lack of responsibility. On the one hand, I, as a mother, have to step back and remind myself that, good grief, this kid is only twenty-one years old. But on the other hand, we're also professional



They credit producer Brent Maher for helping them keep their down home sound.



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partners now, and there's a career at stake. It's a... a very complicated relationship we have."

"Yeh," drawls Judd, the younger. "Sometimes she gets on my case and it just backfires. Like if I'm wearing a stage outfit, and she comes up to me before the show and tells me it doesn't match... if somebody else, like our road manager, told me that, I'd go change it. But if she tells me, I'll probably wear it all week long!"

"But," the protective mother-mastermind adds with a consoling look at her daughter, "she's done really good when you consider that this last year she's had to grow up in front of all America. I mean, there aren't many twenty-one-year-olds who are ever interviewed by David Hartman on *Good Morning, America* and asked about their innermost thoughts. And even though I may get on her case from time to time, I *dare* anybody else to."

Life has changed in other ways too for the two of them. Home, even on the rare occasions that they manage to get there, is not what it used to be. After being robbed while away at work and again while on tour, Naomi was finally forced to abandon her longtime residence in a beloved 100-year-old Victorian farmhouse near Franklin, Tennessee. For the time being, she's living in a one-bedroom condominium much closer to town. Wynonna, who actually flew the coop some time ago, has now got her own place—a one bedroom apartment that's conveniently just a mile or so down the road from Mom. (Despite all the awards and adulation, Wynonna insists the only accouterment of success she's been able to afford so far is a new BMW 735. Naomi recently bought a vintage 1957 Cadillac from her good buddy Conway Twitty.)

Somewhat remarkably, it was under such conditions of adversity and unsettledness that The Judds recorded their new album, *Rockin' with the Rhythm*. While most of the music on their first two albums was completed in the more unharried days before they became a performing act, the sessions for the new album had to be sandwiched into a hectic road and television schedule. "We were on the road so much, we actually ended up spending our days off in the studio to finish it," says Naomi. Add to this the frustration of Wynonna being sidelined from singing for several weeks with persistent and acute allergies. "I had to take two shots a week and all that crap. I really got depressed and frustrated about it."

Remarkably, the two of them acquitted themselves with flying colors, even in face of the exceedingly high standard they set for themselves with their first



"I put a few things in a higher key and did some things that were different from anything we ever tried before."

—WYNONNA

two albums. *Rockin' with the Rhythm* is a masterful piece of work that fulfills and enlarges the promise delivered by *The Judds* and *Why Not Me*, their earlier albums, and it embraces a wider stylistic range. The material is paced carefully from semi-rockers like "Cry Myself to Sleep" to soul-searching ballads like "Dream Chaser." Songs like "If I Were You" not only showcase Wynonna's remarkable vocal prowess, but also harken back to a less pretentious era in country music when the likes of Patsy Cline and Jim Reeves dominated the juke boxes.

"I'm really proud of this new album," says Wynonna. "I really tried to stretch out as a vocalist. I put a few things in a higher key and did some things that were different from anything we ever tried before, a few that are out of left field."

Credit must also go to producer Brent Maher, who has consistently done such a tasteful, subtle and almost flawless job of transferring The Judds' unique sound to vinyl. It makes this part-time critic cringe to think of the tragedy that might have occurred if the duo had fallen into the clutches of any number of tin-eared Music Row producers whose musical sensibilities seem to have become

encased in plastic. Avoiding the usual wailing-wall shrill steel guitars and cotton-candy drippiness of Lawrence Welk strings, Maher has thus far opted for a more low-key, acoustic-oriented approach. His light-handed arrangements never detract from the essential fluidity and power of the vocals themselves.

Namoi smiles, "I just want to tell everyone in the world about Brent and Don Potter," The Judds' studio band-leader, guitar player and co-arranger. "Those two create such a healthy environment to make music in. There's no threat, no embarrassment, only constructive criticism. We all accept each other totally. We have closed sessions, nobody drops by on us. Just the four of us actually create the entire album ourselves."

"We do demos with just two voices and guitar. By the time we bring the other musicians in, we have the songs all worked out... as well as the basic attitudes and the basic rhythms to them," adds Wynonna. "That's very important, because if you end up letting someone make a song just a little faster or a little slower, it can literally end up giving the song a whole different attitude from what you started out with."

By now, the clouds outside over the artificial lake beyond the hotel suite window in Maryland had dissipated. It was midafternoon, and the sun was beginning its descent. It was time for The Judds to pull themselves together, go apply the makeup and step back into another long day in a long season's worth of career-building activities. As they were about to leave, the talk turned to the capriciousness of fame and the unpredictability of a career in music, where everything—popularity, record sales, musical tastes—seems to run in cycles, in spells.

"We've got an edge on a lot of entertainers who maybe have gotten into this because they were emotional orphans or had undemonstrative families, so they seek the mass applause," Naomi observes philosophically.

"Wynonna and I will always have each other and we'll always have our music," she explains. "That's a source of emotional security and unconditional love. And I guarantee you, if we ever lose our RCA contract, we'll go back to singing in church, just like we used to back in Kentucky."

"You know the song 'Dream Chaser' on the new album," she continues. "We purposely made that the last song on the album because it sort of says a lot about what is happening to us now, and it hints of a sequel. Because we're still out there. Still chasing our dreams." ■

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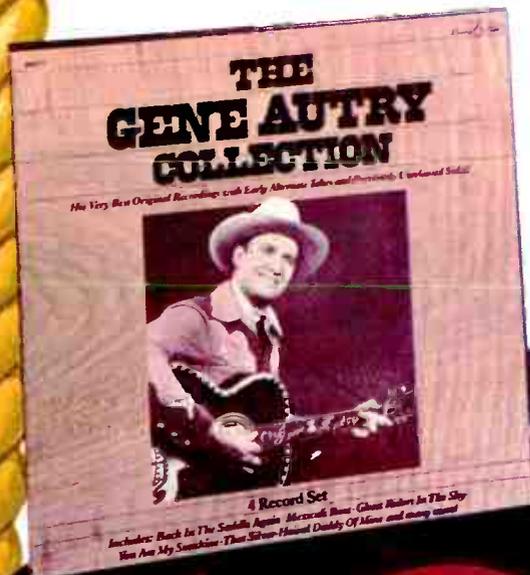
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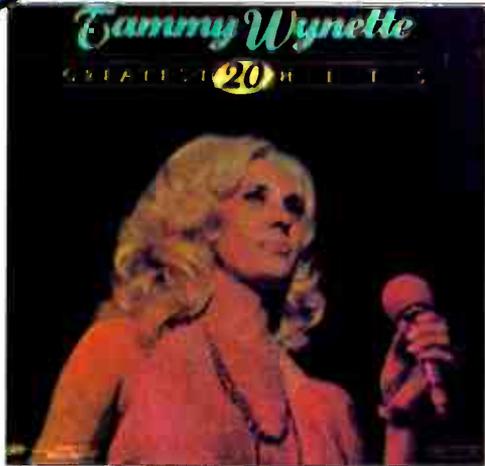
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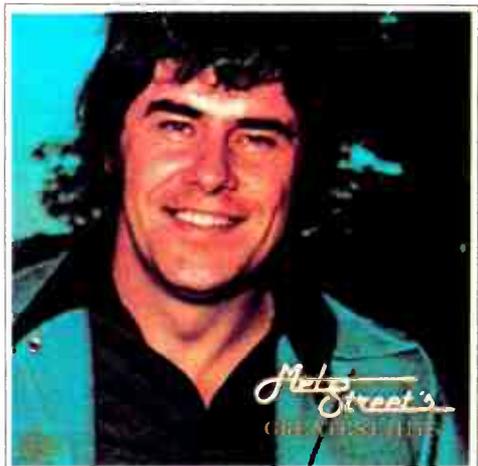
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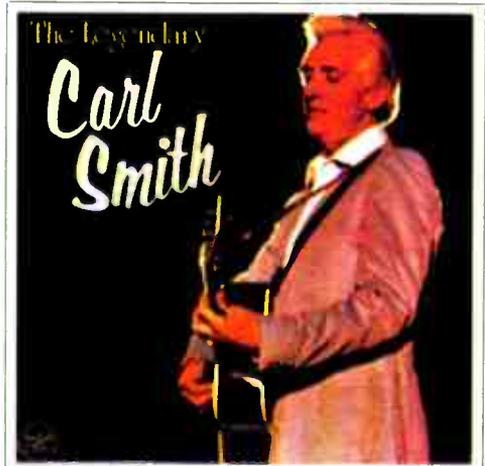
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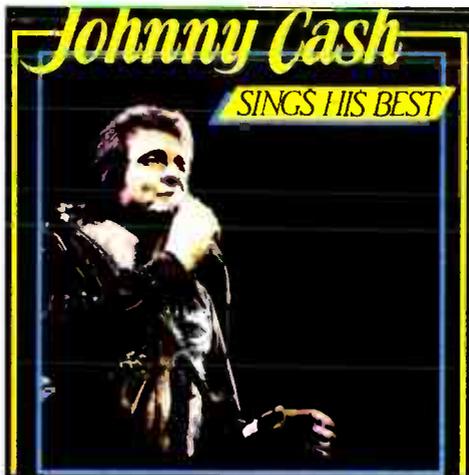
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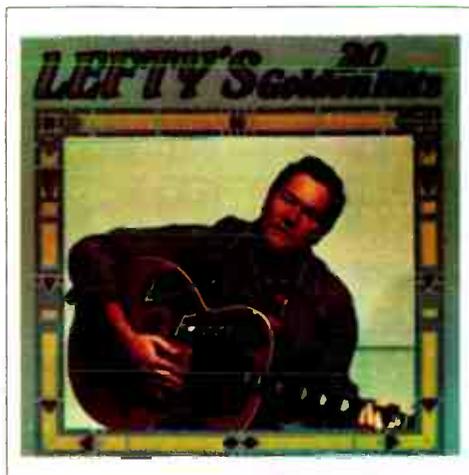
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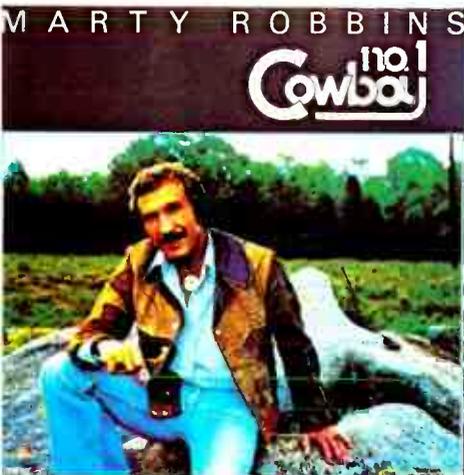
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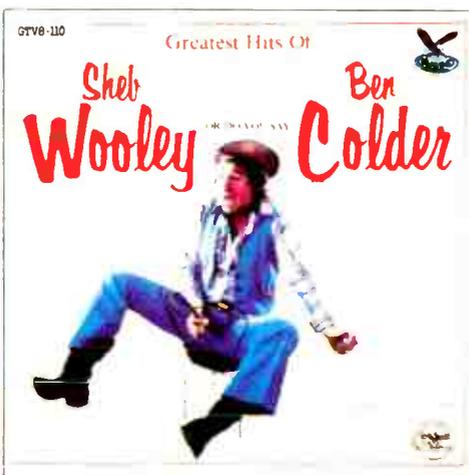
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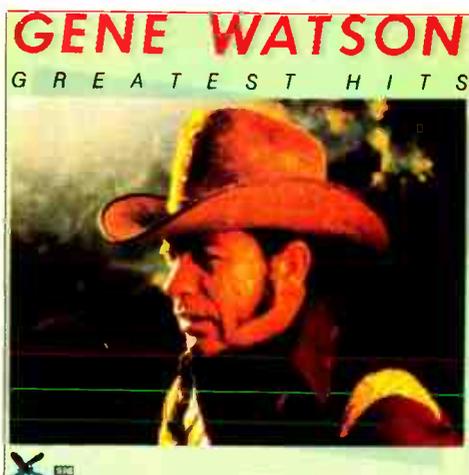
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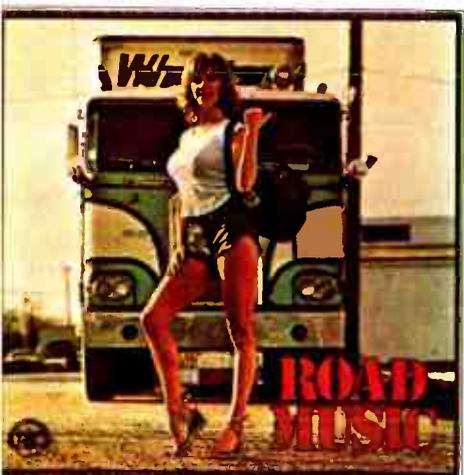
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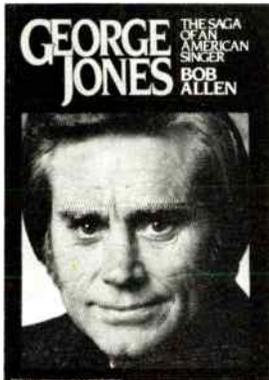
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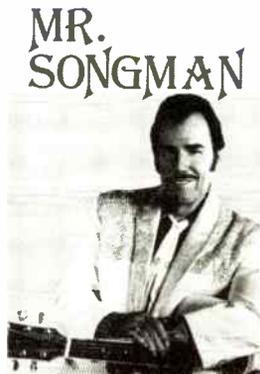
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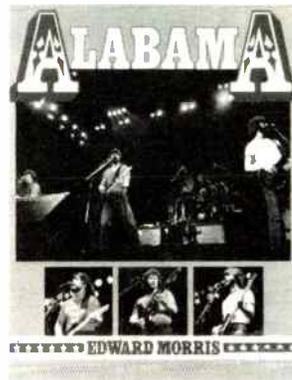
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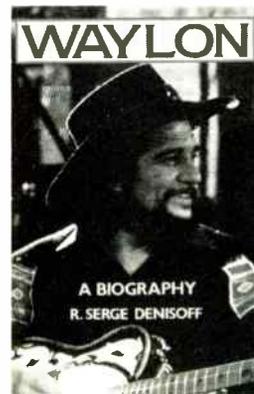
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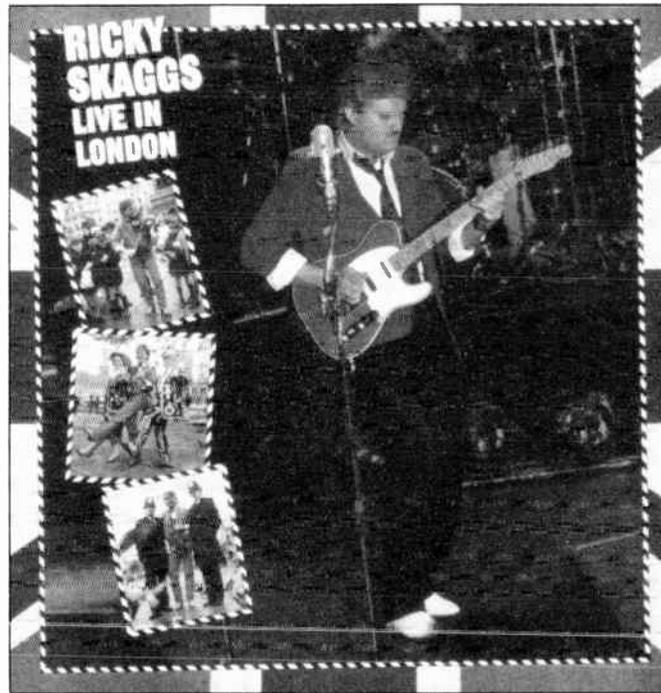
Record Reviews

Ricky Skaggs *Live in London* Epic FET 40103

Five years ago Ricky Skaggs was just on the verge of seeing his musical visions realized after years of dues-paying. Today he's the hottest thing on the charts. And there's more to it than that. Ricky is now a symbol of crossover's decline in the face of revitalized, from-the-gut music. He proved "hillbilly" country still sells, and, along with John Anderson, paved the way for Reba McEntire, George Strait and the traditionalists' triumph at this year's CMA awards.

What is it about Skaggs' appeal? Well, plenty of us know exactly what he's doing. We've either grown up on this music or, as I did, sought it out years ago as an alternative to rock 'n' roll. We see it as an old friend to whom we've returned, but millions have never heard anything like it and to unaware young people, Skaggs' music is fresh, new and even *unusual*.

On this album Skaggs covers the gamut from Bill Monroe ("Uncle Pen") and Flatt and Scruggs (the encore of "Don't Get Above Your Raisin'," sung with Elvis Costello) to Western Swing ("She Didn't Say Why"), modern traditional (Albert Lee's swirling and underrated stomper "Country Boy") and vintage 1950's Texas honky-tonk (Ray Price's "I've Got a New Heartache"). Peter Rowan, ex-Bluegrass Boy, was the source for the austere, new/old ballad "You Make Me Feel Like a Man." The material, be it new or old,



fits Skaggs like a glove, which has been true on every album he's released, and which explains the excellence of them all.

In addition to the fine material you dare not ignore Skaggs' band, which was one of Nashville's best from the day it organized. Personnel have changed somewhat—steel player Bruce Bouton has left since this album was recorded—yet the band's gotten better over the years. Some traditionalists think country bands should play crude, corny and sloppy in order to sound authentic; these guys prove that notion is hogwash.

In fact, the greatest country bands, from The Texas Playboys to The Texas Troubadours, The Cherokee Cowboys and The Strangers have all featured sophisticated, versatile pickers, and Skaggs'

boys are right up there with the best of them. They remain both authentic *and* modern on everything from "Cajun Moon"'s accordion to Bobby Hicks' scintillating swing fiddling—on "She Didn't Say Why"—to Bouton's dizzying solo on "Country Boy" and the witty quotes from other songs amid Gary Smith's piano breaks.

Yep, 1985 was a year of triumph for those among us who were sick of seeing album credits that included four dozen synthesizers and the Nashville String Machine on the back of so-called "country" albums, and melodies ripped off from 15-year-old James Taylor tunes. The radio stations still need guidance, populated as they are with 25-year-old disk jockeys who know more about Van Halen than Leroy Van Dyke. The point is, however, *country*

country is back with a vengeance, and as this album proves, there's *nothing* corny about it.

—RICH KIENZLE

Merle Haggard *Amber Waves of Grain* Epic FE 40224

The first thing that gets me about *Amber Waves of Grain* is how it *sounds*: right here with me, even through my much-abused-and-never-that-hot-to-begin-with, Jap-reject, low-tech excuse for a stereo, just as if I were really sprawled out in that mythical fifth-row-center seat the promoters of "live" recordings always guarantee they'll sit me in.

Yup, that's right: damned if this time it isn't true! I'm in the Holiday Star Theater in Merrillville, Indiana. Or the Bob Devaney Sports Complex in Lincoln, Nebraska; I don't really know, I can't tell which track was committed to tape in which one of these internationally famous *outdoor* recording spas.

Of course, this is not in itself a desirable state—"being there." You may not like being where you are after listening to a couple of tunes from many more country acts than I'd care to even think about—but again, no problem *this* time around: we got Merle and the full-house version of The Strangers—plus, big-name girls like Tammy Wynette and Janie Fricke on backup vocals—and as anyone who knows enough about country music to venture a valid opinion will tell you, it just doesn't get any better than that.

It really doesn't. I've said

Record Reviews



this before, but I don't mind repeating it: Merle and The Strangers are far and away the best country road band in the world, 100% pure in both intent and execution, modest in dress and demeanor, cool as ice and hot as Hillbilly Hell. When I say that *Amber Waves of Grain* sounds good, then, I mean that a) it's beautifully recorded, and b) the music is worth all the trouble a beautiful live recording takes.

And, well, the quality just keeps on coming. Merle has made this album a tribute to the American farmer in which the song "Amber Waves of Grain" is the keynote but not the whole ball of wax; the album has thematic continuity all the way. "Amber Waves" leads into a medley of "Tulare Dust" and "Mama Tried" and "The Farmer's Daughter," which in turn leads into a medley of "The Okie From Muskogee's Comin' Home" and "Okie From Muskogee" itself—the latter a lovely, jazzy, playful rejuvenation of that choleric old chestnut, a perfect adaptation for an era in which the hippie/redneck wars have taken on the simple nostalgic charm of irrelevant antiquity. Now we're all pulling for the

embattled independent farmer (unless we happen to own agribusiness stock or work for the U.S. Government), and we can all shed a tear or two for the vanishing values Merle caresses sadly with his fine, free songs.

It doesn't really matter that not all the songs are specifically about farmers. Many of them, like "Mama Tried" and "Okie," are by now so ingrained in rural American culture (God only knows how much wheat has been harvested with them as the radio soundtrack) that they themselves are part of the vanishing landscape; others, like "Gone with the Wind" and "I Wish Things Were Simple Again" mine a more general (or personal) sense of loss, the painful resistance to change which is part of all of us all over the country and the world.

But it ain't all gloom and nostalgia—and maybe you really can't stop progress. Maybe you shouldn't even try. Merle closes his album with "American Waltz," a nice clear tribute to the brains and brawn which built this strange and mighty nation (like he says, "it couldn't have happened anywhere else").

This song tells you that Americans settled the country and built the farms and plowed the wilderness, but they also built the Model T and landed on the moon (chewing up large portions of the land in the process), and what really matters is that they did it all in freedom. Pass it on, says Merle, pass it on...

And another thing. Despite the weighty topics being addressed here, *Amber Waves of Grain* is not a ponderous album. There is of course the heady delicacy of The Strangers' picking to lighten the mood, but there is also the mood of Merle himself. This is the new, not-so-blue, lightened-and-brightened Merle Haggard delivering these songs. He's a supple, jazzy, lightly swinging, easy-singing critter, more flexible than he has been in the past, and he makes fun music.

—PATRICK CARR

Conway Twitty *Chasin' Rainbows* Warner Bros. 25294-1

I mean, the Conway Twitty Music Machine is a hell of a thing. I have this vision of some huge Rube Goldberg creation hiding in Studio B or somewhere, and once every few months Conway Twitty moseys in, scratches his nose and flips a switch. The machine chirps and whirs, makes funny noises and pumps smoke out of all sorts of unlikely places, shakes and shimmys and shudders like a pack of rockabilly singers snorting No-Doze, and then—presto!—a Conway Twitty album rolls out on a hidden conveyor belt.

This is not necessarily bad, either. In fact, the Conway Twitty album is typically immaculately produced (Conway usually does the honors, this time along with Dee Henry and Ron Treat), the music selection is flawless (although on this particular

album I'd argue with the David Gates song "Baby I'm a Want You," but to tell you the truth I've hated that song for years, so my opinion here probably doesn't count). And, most of all, Conway, the singer, delivers. Let's face it—the man always delivers. He is an amazingly consistent artist, and *Chasin' Rainbows* is no exception to his usual high standard of work.

The thing I like best about this record is that it's country to the core. In fact, the best songs—"Lay Me Down Carolina," "True, True Love Never Dies"—feature The Whites singing their usual beautiful harmonies, and "True, True Love" has a nice bit of dobro from John Hughey. There are a couple of ballads in here that I'd have tossed out—"What's a Memory Like You (Doing In a Love Like This)," for instance—but that's just because I've heard Conway do so much better. I also like "The Legend and the Man," which is a horrors-of-the-road song akin to D.A. Coe's "Another Pretty Country Song" and any number of other ballads. But Conway's magnificent voice pulls it off. I gotta admit, Conway Twitty could probably sing the Nashville phonebook and make it sound like "Your Cheatin' Heart" if he wanted to. This man is an important national resource.

—MICHAEL BANE

Charlie Daniels Band *Me and the Boys* Epic FE39878

I really don't know how to take this new Charlie Daniels album. I've really been a fan of ole Charlie throughout the years. He's always been a master of painting the Southern landscape, and that's a landscape fraught with ambiguity, dark dreams and violence. I grew up in the South, and I think I'm just about the last generation to say that truthfully. As a

nation, we are more homogenized than we were 50, 30, even ten years ago. The blender of mass media and popular culture has not been kind to the uniqueness of the South. In order to step into the brave new megaworld, we've had to turn away from our ghosts, from our haunted past, to an extent from our "outdated" Elizabethan sense of honor. Charlie always triumphed not with the old ways, but with the old ideals.

He still does, but *Me and the Boys* is a different sort of album, maybe a step removed from the hard-edged grit of the Southern bar circuit where Charlie cut his teeth. Moreover, *Me and the Boys* is a country album, an unabashedly country album, with its roots closer to Nashville than to Memphis or Macon or Muscle Shoals.

Of the songs on the album, I think I like the title cut, "Me and the Boys," best. It conjures up the past without getting lost in it, and for a band that's been together as long as The Charlie Daniels Band, getting lost in the good old days is a clear and present danger.

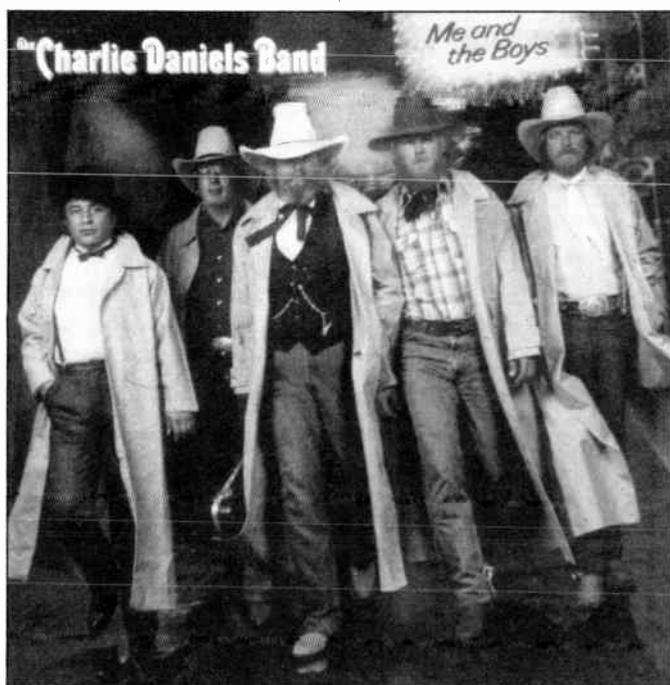
Charlie touches all the

familiar bases—"M.I.A.," his anthem from FarmAid, "American Farmer"—but without the fire that I've heard from the band before. This is Charlie's first album in three years, and I get the feeling he's exploring new things, stretching in new directions. He's in good voice, and, as usual, the band—Tom Crain, Fred Edwards, Charlie Hayward and Taz DiGregorio—is excellent. He's got a lot to say, and despite my reservations about the record, I'm glad to have old Charlie back.

—MICHAEL BANE

David Allan Coe
Unchained
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David Allan Coe, with his gypsyish/biker stance and his often brash musical candor, has always been a singular and eccentric presence on the country scene; always slightly ahead of or behind his time. To my way of thinking he's always had much more in common with the free-wheeling poetic sensibilities of an earlier generation of so-called



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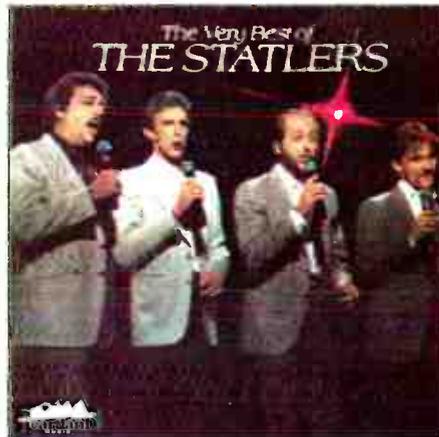
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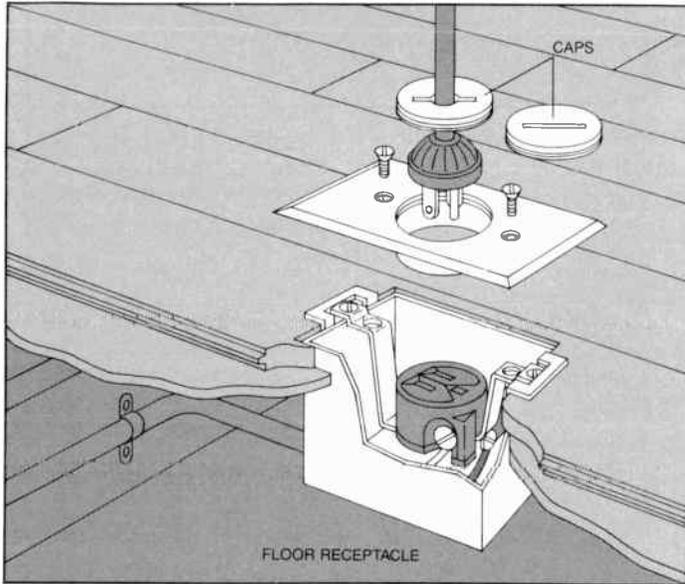
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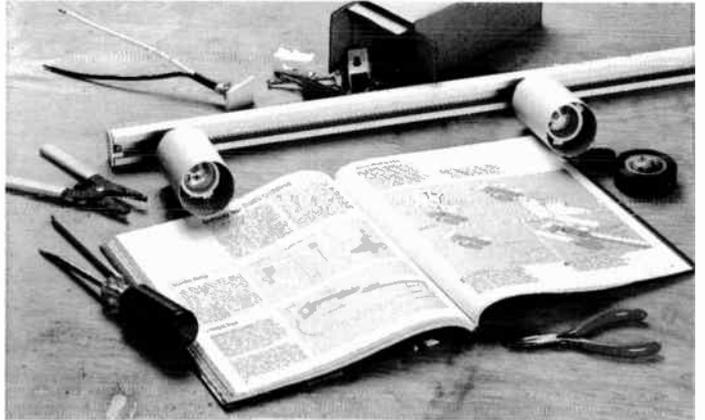
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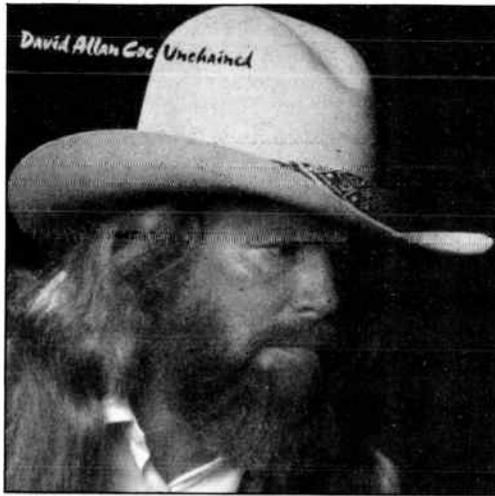
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"folk singers" like Bob Dylan, Ramblin' Jack Elliot and a younger Jerry Jeff Walker than with any other current country singer.

A complex and chameleon-like character, Coe has been, at various times, articulate, profane, comically self-aggrandizing, bitterly self-mocking, darkly cynical, and even abrasive and disparaging towards his own audience. And it is just this wildly inconsistent, rough-around-the-edges quality that has perennially relegated him to the out-of-the-mainstream status of cult figure. In fact, it has only been in the last couple of years that he has finally heeded the call of commerciality and smoothed out his presentation enough to score with his first Number One singles, "Mona Lisa Lost Her Smile" and "The Ride." Ironically, in the wake of this chart success, Coe came through in 1985 with *Darlin'*, *Darlin'*, a lackluster album from which the rowdy, mysterious Rhinestone Cowboy of old seemed missing.

Unchained, his latest album, marks a welcome return of the unpredictable, off-the-wall and cunningly eccentric David Allan Coe of old. Practically every song—even though Coe wrote only one of them—reflects his skewed perspective, his eclecticism and his enduring sense of personal outrage. The tunes run the never-pre-

dictable Coe gamut from sardonically countrified laments like "Ain't Worth the Powder (To Blow Me to Hell)" and Coe's own "He Has to Pay For (What I Get For Free)"—which is about just what it sounds like it's about—to more rock-tinged musical epistles like Hoyt Axton's "Snowblind Friend" or the Dylanesque (lyrically obscure) "Even After Forever."

What's most endearing about Coe is his compulsion to go after the unusual or unexpected, to follow his own off-center instincts, even at the cost of top-ten commerciality. Mind you, the result is not always successful. Thank you, David, but I don't need to pay \$8.98 to hear your version of the oft-recorded "Unchained Melody" or Neil Young's similarly well-worn "Southern Man." Nor does it always yield Top Twenty material. But on the other hand, it does give us Coe choosing unusually provocative songs, like Bobby Braddock's "Would They Love Me Down in Shreveport" or J. Bolotin's haunting "The Fiery Death of Willy Bodine." These are songs that it is hard to imagine any of Coe's contemporaries, except possibly Hank Williams Jr., taking on.

Coe may indeed, as the title of his album suggests, be newly *Unchained*. But he's also—glad to say—relatively *unchanged*, by his recent commercial triumphs. On this

record the rough-hewn, sometimes shocking irreverence and irascibility that have always been at the center of his charm remain delightfully and effectively intact.

—BOB ALLEN

Johnny Cash *Rainbow*

Columbia FC 39951

In his liner notes to *Rainbow*, Cash makes it plain: it's the songs, not the money or the fame or any of the other myriad thrills of the music business, which keep him keeping on. "Every once in a while a song comes along for me that gives me a boost," he writes. "This has been the key to my continuing to enjoy performing after 30 years... I forget the miles and the years, and that song and I become one."

Hence "Here Comes That Rainbow Again," Kris Kristofferson's tiny scene of everyday human benevolence set somewhere out on the road in the presence of a wide-open looming middle-American sky—storm clouds coming and a scent of rain in the air as the characters do their brusque but courtly little dance of kindness. It's a lovely song, perfectly vivid and cunningly scaled for everyman and everywhere in the land of the American heart, and it's easy to see why it gives Cash

"a boost"; it has his kind of real-life human detail, his kind of morality-in-the-moment, his kind of weave of small acts in the spell of a greater spirit.

Hence also John Prine and Bobby Braddock's "Unwed Fathers," another thrilling splice of (this time) painfully accurate detail and poetic flow. The song is about the plight of a teenage unwed mother deserted by her lover, and Cash comments that although "it may be depressing to some of you," what it says "needs to be said for women." Well, good for him—his album is likely to get a little more exposure than Prine's wonderful *Aimless Love*, from which the song was taken—but the disclaimer really isn't necessary; "Unwed Fathers," like most of Prine's recent work, gets by just fine on beauty and craft and truth alone.

So, oddly enough, does another cunning tune, Bobby Emmons' and Paul Davis' "Love Me Like You Used To." Cash has been so far out on a (tense, original, adventurous) limb of this own choosing for so long that his easy treatment of this compelling little country-conventional word-play of a song has surprising charm. He chooses a kind of intimate, deadpan late-night reading over the straight tragicdramatic approach for which most country singers would have opted, and it really works, it's very human. I almost like it better than the "heavier" material on *Rainbow*.

What works on "Love Me Like You Used To," however, doesn't really come across on the album as a whole. *Rainbow* is full of great or good songs, but somehow or other Cash's singing of them doesn't sound "boosted." Frankly, it sounds sort of weary, a little dulled. You can hear this lack of something most clearly on John Fogerty's "Have You Ever Seen the Rain?" and Prine's "Unwed Fathers." Cash's takes on these songs are of course different from

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their writers', but curiously, they are also a *lot* less moving—and this lack of emotional power, a kind of woodenness runs all through *Rainbow*.

The cause? I don't know. It might have been something unknowingly wrong in the

creative chemistry of the sessions (with *Highwayman* producer Chips Moman at the helm), or a conscious decision to underplay the material, or any of a host of unguessable other factors, but Cash's liner notes give what may be a clue, and so does *Rainbow's* first

song—its opening message, placed before "Rainbow" itself.

The song is "I'm Leaving Now," a brisk and somewhat bitter kiss-it-all-off-and-go-where-the-wild-goose-goes number written by Cash during an Australian tour, and

while it seems to be addressed to a woman, Cash tells us that it is in fact about "the system" and the road. Now, I don't know about the road, but "the system" has not been sending much reward (or even much respect) in Mr. Cash's direc-

Hits or Misses?

Kenny Rogers

The Heart of the Matter
RCA AJLI-7023

B. J. Thomas

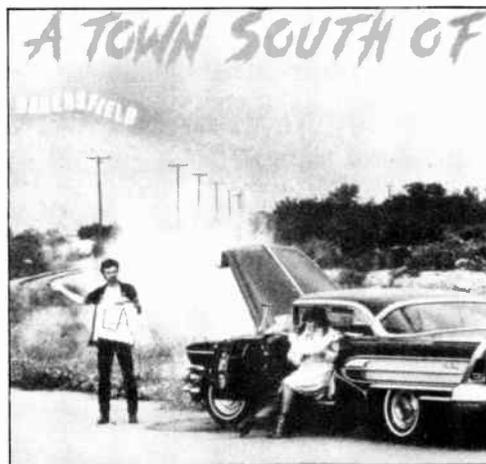
Throwin' Rocks
At the Moon
Columbia FC 40157

Larry Gatlin & The Gatlin Brothers

Smile
Columbia FC 40068

Various Artists

A Town South of Bakersfield
Enigma 72059-1



Kenny Rogers must hate predictability. That would explain why he switches producers as often as he switches styles.

For his fourth RCA album, *The Heart of the Matter*, Rogers enlisted the services of veteran producer/arranger George Martin, best known for his creative brilliance with The Beatles. There's a rumor that through Martin's involvement, Paul McCartney was inspired to contribute a few originals for this album, songs which Kenny then turned down. If that seems surprising, remember that McCartney has inflicted upon the world some of popdom's most trivial tunes; and Rogers doesn't need triviality at this juncture of his career. Still, in view of several of the

songs that apparently *did* make it onto this album, one wonders what McCartney had that was less entertaining.

Not that this is an inferior album; it's just that Rogers' deal with RCA is out of New York, and he obviously isn't prepared to overlook the pop effects of that contract. So country takes a decided back seat here, even though the artist's voice is noticeably taxed by two or three of the more strenuous arrangements.

The album was recorded in Paris and Los Angeles, using guest musicians like flautist James Galway, soloist on "The Best of Me," keyboardist David Foster, who produced Rogers' 1984 album *What About Me?*, and Toto's Steve Lukather.

Ironically enough, it's a pop songwriter, Micheal Smotherman, who delivers two of the album's most

authentic moments: the stunning title cut, and another called "Tomb of the Unknown Love." "Tomb of the Unknown Love" and "The Heart of the Matter" are the kinds of songs on which Rogers excels. They don't strain his vocal abilities, and the simplicity of the lyrics gives him room to add personal touches. When Lee Greenwood first appeared on the scene with "It Turns Me Inside Out," some people thought he was trying to imitate Kenny Rogers. Now it's Rogers who often sounds like Greenwood, with pronounced quavering on the last note of a line or verse.

Smotherman may be responsible for these two high-lights, but he's also indirectly responsible for contributing the album's most ill-advised attempt by Rogers, a Tower of Power-styled number called "I Don't Wanna Have to Worry." It's an embarrass-

ment to all concerned as Rogers tries to... what? Who knows? It's painfully obvious that he doesn't have the ability to carry off a rock arrangement like this, although Martin comes up with a wonderful track just in case.

Most of the songs follow in the footsteps of "Morning Desire," the first single released off the album: pleasant, easygoing pop affairs that neither startle nor intimidate. Rogers fans who are willing to grant their hero forays into non-country styles will forgive the weaknesses here. Country fans looking for great Kenny Rogers performances—or rock fans wanting the real McCoy—probably won't.

Throwin' Rocks at the Moon is B.J. Thomas' first album in some time. It's a welcome reappearance, with Thomas choosing New York

Record Reviews

tion these past many moons, and that may be getting a little tiresome; he concludes his liner notes, in fact, with the words "So who knows, maybe I'll sell hundreds" (of records).

That's a joke, of course—he's pretty much guaranteed

to sell thousands—but he wouldn't even joke about the issue of commerciality (or, more to the point, recognition) if it weren't buzzing around in his mind, bothering him, and that makes me wonder: did Cash perhaps feel as if he was singing these great

or smart or beautiful songs in a vacuum, sending them out there in a bottle to people who might never get to hear them, or might be only half-listening if they did? And could that not have taken something away from the energy he felt at the studio microphone?

Again, I don't know. All I really know is that there is a sense of something not quite right about this album which depresses me. I care a lot about Cash and what he never stops trying to do, so I hope this feeling is all in *my* head.

—PATRICK CARR

by Kip Kirby

producer Gary Klein to infuse some missing excitement and electricity into his recording. Klein, who worked with Dolly Parton during her transition from country to pop, is equal to the challenge, playing to Thomas' long suits instead of drowning him in orchestration.

Thomas is an expert singer. He has a deft, persuasive touch with lyrics, a way of making phrases resonate fluidly and unaffectedly. Unlike Rogers, he sounds totally comfortable with pop-bordering-on-rock arrangements; even in his earliest "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" and "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" days, he was one of the few Nashville acts who was convincing in a pop-country setting.

His is the perfect voice to convey the beseeching urgency of Carole King and Gerry Goffin's "Don't Go Out On Me," his the ideal delivery for a soaring ballad such as "We Almost Had It All" or "The Part of Me That Needs You Most." At the same time, Klein's sophisticated arrangements avoid the pitfalls of spiraling orchestration. The result: a balancing act requiring real rapport between artist and producer. In this case, the elements work, and *Throwin' Rocks at the Moon* makes for pleasurable listening.

•
Smile is Larry Gatlin's first album release since a publicized rehabilitation pro-

gram last year reclaimed him from drugs and alcohol. He's obviously put a lot of thought and expense into recording this project. The result seems disappointing, and the disappointment's hard to accept.

What went wrong? One possibility is that, consciously or otherwise, Gatlin desperately desires to be a pop star, and that he wants each album to carry him closer to that dream. What other explanation is there for an album so misdirected?

Experimentation is fine if it works; the problem here is, it doesn't. In spite of the fact that the album was recorded in three different parts of the country, using an all-star cast of players and producers—including Los Angeles jazz-rock guitarist Larry Carlton, Toto's Jeff Porcaro, BeeGee members Barry and Maurice Gibb, Chips Moman and many more—it comes across as an exercise in self-indulgence. Couldn't anyone have mentioned to Gatlin along the way that he didn't have any hit songs here? Couldn't someone have asked him who is supposed to buy this music?

The album's first single—and one of the few country numbers on the package—is Gatlin's heartfelt "Runaway, Go Home." It, at least, has feeling behind it, even if it hasn't been successful on the charts. But the other arrangements, for the most part, are sterile and strangely antiseptic despite expensive instrumentation and

classic Gatlinesque harmonies. Even Larry's duet with Roy Orbison on the Gatlin-Barry Gibb composition "Indian Summers" falls flat.

This album has a major identity crisis. And until Gatlin makes up his mind to go back to writing great country songs—or totally throws in the towel and learns to record pop hits—he is likely to continue leaving audiences feeling confused and cheated.

•
Bakersfield, California, is famous for the music of Buck Owens and Merle Haggard. Between Bakersfield, which lies to the north, and Los Angeles to the south, there is an entire community of new, young California country artists struggling to make a living in clubs and bars. Because these acts aren't in Nashville, they are generally overlooked by major labels, regardless of their abilities.

An independent album called *A Town South of Bakersfield* on the Enigma label could change this injustice. Producers Dan Fredman and Pete Anderson have put together a 10-cut compilation featuring some of Los Angeles' best-known country hopefuls. It's a striking package, recorded on a shoestring production budget of \$5,000 with old-fashioned black and white covers. If the technology is basic, however, it has an appealing rawness which sets off the energy and creativity of the acts it showcases.

Included on *A Town South of Bakersfield* are Rosie Flores and Albert Lee ("Heartbreak Train"), Billy Swan ("Baby, I'll Show You"), the Lonesome Strangers ("Lonesome Pine"), Katy Moffatt ("Love and Only Love"), the Eddys ("Big Big Love"), Dwight Yoakam ("I'll Be Gone"), Tin Star ("Happy Hour"), George Highfill ("Waitin' Up"), Kathy Robertson ("I'm Not Over You"), and Reach For the Sky ("Same Old Fool"). At the time the album was recorded, none of the acts had a major label deal. Since then, Dwight Yoakam has been signed to Warner Bros. in Nashville, and Albert Lee is recording an instrumental album for MCA Records. Moffatt and Swan have both had label deals in the past. The project's purpose is to call attention to these acts, signed or unsigned, and make people aware of their existence. Given the creativity and originality of this package, *A Town South of Bakersfield* may turn out to be a very successful endeavor—and possibly launch several deserving careers.

It's a gem, worth owning for its homegrown merits and for the chance that it could one day be a collector's item. Those who want to get in on the ground floor can order *A Town South of Bakersfield* from Bakersfield, P.O. Box 5176, Sherman Oaks, California 91413-5176. ■

The Essential Collector

Marty Robbins: The Legend Continued

One of the most important—and successful—reissue projects is Bear Family's 17-album series summarizing most of Marty Robbins' Columbia material. Whether they run chronologically through his recording sessions, as in *The Marty Robbins Files, Volumes 1-5* or examine one particular style of Marty's music, as in *Rockin' Rollin' Robbins, Volumes 1-3* and *In the Wild West, Volumes 1-5*, their cumulative effect drives home Robbins' amazing versatility. Some artists try many styles and master none; others excel only in one, but do it better than anyone. Robbins, on the other hand, mastered literally *everything* he attempted.

A good chunk of Marty's Nashville pop/rockers dominate *Rockin' Rollin' Robbins, Volume 3*, a collection of uptempo tunes from 1959-1965. Leading off with the appealing and previously unissued alternate take of



"Ruby Ann," dating from 1962 and totally different from the released version, the album reaffirms that had Marty wanted to concentrate on rock in the 1950's, he would have equalled the best. "No Signs of Loneliness Here" (1963) is a churning country rocker loaded with working class boredom, and "Teen-ager's Dad" (1963) is the lament of an old loser out of step with the kids.

In the Wild West, Volumes 1-5 compile most of Marty's brilliant Western ballads, the beautifully crafted miniature plays that began to appear in



the late 1950's with "El Paso" and "Feelena (From El Paso)," laid in the Old West, to "El Paso City" and "The Cowboy in the Continental Suit," dating from the 1960's and 1970's and set in modern times.

Many of these 67 songs were on his series of western albums, while others were on singles or never released. Most of them are in the gun-fighter/romantic spirit of "El Paso," yet some of the most fascinating among them fall outside this pattern. "Man Walks Among Us," *Volume 2*, a haunting Robbins original

from 1963, looks at the development of the modern west from the viewpoint of the region's wildlife. Two unissued 1966 cuts on *Volume 4*, "Yours" and "Adios Marquita Linda," sung in Spanish, are equally fine.

This is a lot of cowboy music to digest at one sitting, but taken as a whole this body of work remains among Marty's greatest achievements. Few of the songs are bad; the best have become classics; and even the weakest are at least entertaining. His sound on these records was clearly defined, combining Nashville sound production, those haunting, tight harmonies and beautiful nylon string guitar—some of it played by Grady Martin, though personnel aren't often listed—and the romance (if not always the reality) of the Old West is more than done justice. If you don't want to spend the money for all five *In the Wild West* albums, *Marty Robbins, No. 1 Cowboy* is a good 20-song, double-length album, including "El Paso," "Big Iron," "Cool Water," "Tumbling Tumbleweeds," "Streets of Laredo," and 15 other cowboy classics.

Buried Treasures

Re-issues, Rarities and the Hard-to-Find Rockabilly, Truckers and Bluegrass

There have been two important country instrumentalists named Arthur Smith, one being "Fiddlin'" Arthur Smith, longtime Opry favorite, the other being Arthur "Guitar Boogie" Smith, who began his career in the late 1930's and wrote the classic number "There's More Pretty Girls Than One." "Guitar Boogie" Smith was the first great single-string country guitar soloist, and "Guitar Boogie" his 1945 recording, became the first country instrumental to sell a million copies. He later wrote "Feudin' Banjos," better

known as "Dueling Banjos," featured in the film *Deliverance*. Some of his best early work was recorded on transcriptions in 1945, about the time he cut "Guitar Boogie," which he'd written in the Navy.

Rockabilly authority Colin Escott has recently compiled a collection of those rare transcriptions, released on *Jumpin' Guitar* (Relaxed Rabbit 425). Smith was working as a studio musician when these tracks were recorded in Washington, D.C. Playing a Martin acoustic guitar, he romped through material

ranging from "Stompin' at the Savoy" to "South" and the frantic "Blue Boogie." The original "Guitar Boogie" isn't included, but the version presented here is more energetic. Anyone who appreciates early rockabilly can listen to Smith in these performances and hear the roots of Carl Perkins, the Rock-A-Teens, Frank Virtue and most other rockabilly guitarists.

A decade's now passed since a truckdriver chic, a spinoff of the CB radio craze, swept the country. The first feature I wrote for this magazine was a trucker records feature that appeared in November 1975. The whole thing's history by now, but British RCA's 20 of the Best series has a noteworthy album, *Keep on Truckin'* (NL 89023), that delves into

little-known RCA trucker material.

Some artists are obscure ones, like Bud Brewer, who hasn't been heard of in years. Juice Newton appears with her old Silver Spur band, performing "Roll On, Truckers." One gem, long unavailable elsewhere, is Terry Fell's 1954 original of the trucker standard "Truck Drivin' Man," originally recorded for "X," an RCA subsidiary label. Nat Stuckey's "Caffeine, Nicotine, Benzedrine," co-written by Gary Stewart, is an anthem to substance abuse in the interest of making time. A few oddities show up, like Norma Jean's 1968 "Truck Driving Woman," among the first songs to deal with the Woman behind the Wheel. Combine this album with some Starday/Gusto reissues of the same type that are

Pieces of Your Heart is a catch-all album, dominated by Robbins ballads from the 1960's, with eight of the 12 tracks previously unreleased. Beginning with his 1966 hit rendition of Gordon Lightfoot's modern folk number "Ribbon of Darkness," which Marty made his own, the album runs through songs like "Too Far Gone" and other early 1960's pop-flavored ballads that show that Marty could have enjoyed a great deal of teen success had he wanted to pursue that market.

Two of the unissued numbers are among the most interesting of the entire series. "Ain't I Right," a 1966 political number he was known to have cut, is Robbins as Rambo. A steaming pro-Vietnam anthem complete with name-calling and blunt anti-Commie blasts, it makes "Okie From Muskogee" sound absolutely wimpy. "In My Own Native Land," cut in 1963, takes a different tack, protesting foreign aid to hostile nations. One can understand Columbia shelving them, considering their potential for causing even hotter controversy than

Johnny Cash's "Ballad of Ira Hayes." If nothing else, they reveal the depth of Marty's political conservatism.

He delved deep into Hawaiian music for two albums in 1957 and 1962, respectively, and again did an astonishingly fine job. One, *Song of the Islands*, reproduces his 1958 Columbia album, which contains such Hawaiian standbys as "Song of the Islands," "Sweet Leilani," "Beyond the Reef" (done in Ray Price "shuffle" style) and, of course "Aloha Oe." One oddity is the country ballad "Crying Steel Guitar Waltz," originally cut by Jean Shepard in the early 1950's. Hawaiian as both this and its companion album are, the musicians are members of Robbins' regular touring band.

Hawaii's Calling Me reproduces his 1963 album, with several added tracks. The reproduction of the original cover is beautiful. Several of the songs were penned by veteran Nashville steel player Jerry Byrd, who played on most of the album. Byrd is now one of Hawaii's most acclaimed steel players, having quit Nashville in the

1970's. Only "Hawaiian Wedding Song" and the title track are well-known, yet the combination of old and new is seamless. Grady Martin, as usual, is on hand with his nylon-string guitar, along with a vocal chorus. Less traditional than the earlier album, this one, with its combination of Byrd, Grady and Marty, is downright hypnotic. Anyone who judges Hawaiian music by the Dean Martinish mumblings of Don Ho will be startled by how good these two Robbins records are.

As usual, Bear Family has done an exemplary job of packaging. The 17 Robbins albums they've issued over the past three years would make an outstanding boxed set. Any hardcore Robbins fan should get them all. Like the Lefty Frizzell box, it's the type of collection you could hand down through generations.

Much was made of Willie Nelson's *Stardust* pop album in 1980, but Marty was there first with that idea, too. About 1962 he recorded *Marty After Midnight*, a set of a dozen pop standards. A small jazz group and muted

background chorus provide the backing as he croons his way through "Misty," "I'm In the Mood For Love," "Pennies From Heaven," "Summertime," and "It Had to Be You." You might think that, in trying songs best sung by Mel Torme or Tony Bennett, Marty bit off more than he could chew. That turns out to be no truer than saying Tony Bennett couldn't sing "Cold, Cold Heart," which Bennett took to Number One on the pop charts in 1951.

The sophistication of the material didn't faze Marty a bit, and the bluesy "Looking Back" is particularly right up his alley. The whole album, which for some reason Bear Family did not reissue as part of their project, is a pleasant surprise. Far better than mere cocktail lounge music, it spotlights an unusual side of Robbins. We have reviewed individual albums from the Bear Family series in *Buried Treasures* in the past two years and always received enthusiastic response from readers. Now that the series is complete, we want to let you know that they are available. For details, see the box below. —RICH KIENZLE

easier to find, and you have a good chunk of the best trucker material available, aside from the classics by Dave Dudley and Dick Curless.

Bluegrass reissues, except for those on Bill Monroe and Flatt and Scruggs, have lagged somewhat behind the Lefty Frizzell, Bob Wills, and other collections that have appeared over the past year or so, but County and Rebel Records have made a significant dent in this material with their respective reissues of vintage 1950's recordings by Jim and Jesse and Mac Wiseman.

Wiseman's *Early Dot Recordings, Vol. 1* (County CCS 108) assembles the best of his 1951-57 bluegrass sides. Wiseman sang with Bill Monroe through 1949, then

left him in 1950 to join *The Louisiana Hayride*. Wiseman added a twin fiddle honkytonk sound to broaden his appeal to mainstream fans though bluegrass remained the heart of his music. Numbers like his own "Dreams of Mother and Home," "Going to See My Baby" and "I'm a Stranger" may satisfy both country fans and bluegrass

purists, as could his rendition of the old pop ditty "Rainbow in the Valley." In 1957, Wiseman became a Dot producer but eventually came back to performing with hits like "The Newsboy Jimmy Brown"—which certainly belongs on any future *Volume 2*. Wiseman's approach made him the Ricky Skaggs of his time. He's not often seen in

that light, but this collection makes his contribution clear.

Jim and Jesse McReynolds were and are among the finest mainstream bluegrass performers of all time. Rebel's *Air Mail Special* (Reb 851) brings together a dozen of their first recordings for Capitol, dating from 1952-55, which show off their keen harmonies and Jesse's spectacular cross-picked mandolin, years ahead of its time, sounding as it did like Scruggs-style banjo—Jesse uses a skillfully maneuvered flatpick, not fingerpicks. "Are You Missing Me" and "I'll Wear the Banner" are standouts among the earliest examples. Interestingly enough, the fiddler on the 1952 session is none other than the Sonny James—he plays pretty well, too!

—RICH KIENZLE

How to Order These Albums

Marty Robbins: All 17 of Bear Family's Marty Robbins records (no cassettes) are available from Nashville Warehouse and can be ordered from either page 30 or page 33 of this issue. *Marty Robbins: No. 1 Cowboy* on either records or cassettes can be ordered from page 51. *Marty After Midnight* (\$9.98) can be ordered from us at the address below. (no cassettes).

Buried Treasures: Arthur "Guitar Boogie" Smith's *Jumpin' Guitar*; is \$9.98 (no cassettes), British RCA's *Keep on Truckin'*; Mac Wiseman's *Early Dot Recordings Volume 1*; and Jim and Jesse's *Air Mail Special* are all \$9.98. on records and cassettes. Send check to Country Music, 450 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. Add \$1.95 for one album, \$.95 for each additional.

TOP 25

Albums

1. Ronnie Milsap *Greatest Hits Vol. 2*
2. Rosanne Cash *Rhythm and Romance*
3. Alabama *40 Hour Week*
4. George Strait *Something Special*
5. Gary Morris *Anything Goes*
6. Hank Williams Jr. *Five-O*
7. Exile *Hang on to Your Heart*
8. The Forester Sisters *The Forester Sisters*
9. W. Jennings, W. Nelson,
J. Cash, K. Kristofferson *Highwayman*
10. Lee Greenwood *Streamline*
11. The Statler Brothers *Pardners in Rhyme*
12. Earl Thomas Conley *Greatest Hits*
13. The Bellamy Brothers *Howard & David*
14. Nitty Gritty Dirt Band *Partners, Brothers and Friends*
15. George Jones *Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes*
16. Marie Osmond *There's No Stopping Your Heart*
17. Willie Nelson *Half Nelson*
18. Sawyer Brown *Shakin'*
19. Soundtrack *Sweet Dreams—The Life and Times of Patsy Cline*
20. Kenny Rogers *The Heart of the Matter*
21. The Judds *Why Not Me*
22. George Strait *George Strait's Greatest Hits*
23. Hank Williams Jr. *Greatest Hits—Vol. II*
24. Ray Stevens *I Have Returned*
25. The Judds *Rockin' with the Rhythm*

Singles

1. The Statler Brothers *Too Much on my Heart*
2. Lee Greenwood *I Don't Mind the Thorns (If You're the Rose)*
3. Earl Thomas Conley *Nobody Falls Like a Fool*
4. The Bellamy Brothers *Lie to You For Your Love*
5. Mel McDaniel *Stand Up*
6. George Strait *The Chair*
7. The Judds *Have Mercy*
8. Ricky Skaggs *You Make Me Feel Like a Man*
9. Gary Morris *I'll Never Stop Loving You*
10. Hank Williams Jr. *This Ain't Dallas*
11. Kenny Rogers *Morning Desire*
12. Janie Fricke *Somebody Else's Fire*
13. Sawyer Brown *Betty's Being Bad*
14. T.G. Sheppard *Doncha*
15. Rosanne Cash *Never Be You*
16. Jimmy Buffett *If the Phone Doesn't Ring, It's Me*
17. Gail Davies *Break Away*
18. Nitty Gritty Dirt Band *Home Again in My Heart*
19. Reba McEntire *Only in My Mind*
20. Dan Seals *Bop*
21. Johnny Lee *They Never Had to Get Over You*
22. Eddie Rabbitt *A World Without Love*
23. Don Williams *It's Time for Love*
24. Gene Watson *Memories to Burn*
25. Willie Nelson *Me & Paul*

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4	9	14	19	24
5	10	15	20	25

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