February 1979, $1.50

Songwriter

The Songwriter As Producer

Plus, Interviews with

- Joel Diamond – Engelbert's Producer
- Gary Osborne – Elton's New Lyricist
- ATV's Marv Goodman

Tom T. Hall Talks a Love Song about Songwriting

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Songwriter

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• Songwriter Interview: Tom T. Hall — Page 24

The Story Teller of Harper Valley and Fox Hollow shares a jug's worth of insights. Plus: Tom T. takes pen in hand to tell how he wrote *I Love* and *Old Dogs, Children, and Watermelon Wine.* **by Laura Eipper**

• Engelbert's Main Man — Page 18
Producer Joel Diamond tells you everything you want to know about writing for the Last of the Romantics.
by Lou Stevens

• Elton's New Lyricist — Page 14
Who's Gary Osborne? Gary Osborne explains.
by Harold Bronson

• ATVs of Publishing — Page 16
ATV's Marv Goodman tells what he listens for, and who you should get to listen to you in this latest "AGAC Askapro" offering.

• Songwriter As Producer — Page 36
Knob-twirling tips from our resident studio wiz. **by Bob Safir**

ELSEWHERE . . .

Cover illustration by Neil Boyle

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Melody Lines

Re the Bryants

Dear *Songwriter:*

You did a job on my heart with your Boudleaux and Felice Bryant interview (December issue). I have failed hundreds of times with my music, mailing it all over the country, but they have given me new hope. I will start again today!

John Logan Jr.
Newark, N.J.

Kudo from Karmen

Dear *Songwriter:*

I thought your jingle issue was super and I give special thanks to you for your article about my contribution to the jingle business.

Steve Karmen
Bedford, N.Y.

Mysterious Melodies, Cont.

Dear *Songwriter:*

In the November "Melody Lines" under the subheading "Mysterious Melodies," the writer asks if there is anything available to aid her in pinpointing tunes she is not sure are her own inspiration as the work of someone else. I know of something that just might help: It's a very thorough, 640-page book called "A Dictionary of Musical Themes." It includes over 10,000 themes of the most important instrumental works of all time, plus a Notation Index that enables the reader to locate and identify any melody. It's available for $7.50 (not a bad price!) from: Preferred Choice Bookplan, Publisher's Central Bureau, P.O. Box 10299, Des Moines, Iowa 50336. It was offered as part of the current monthly bulletin, but I'm sure inquiring writers could buy a copy without having to join the book club, as this clearing house also puts out a separate bulletin. This particular book clearing house has some very excellent music reference books from time to time, and I don't believe enough people are aware of its existence.

Lisa Wilkinson
Anaheim, Calif.

Nashville or L.A.?

Dear *Songwriter:*

My husband is finally open to moving us and our two small children (ages 6 and 3½) to a music center so that I can go for it as a songwriter. It's taken a lot of years of frustration, postage and publishers who've said things like, "There were some songs on your tape that almost made it . . . You need to work with a smaller publisher who can give you personal attention . . ." to convince him that it's the right thing to do. Now that I've gotten this far I don't want to make a mistake and move to the wrong place! My question is this: If I am a country-folk type of singer-songwriter (on the order of Kris Kirstofferson, John Denver and Dolly Parton) would it be best to head for Nashville or should I play it safe and just come to L.A.?

Los Angeles is a big, smoggy city with an earthquake in its future (although it does have mountains and rocks which my husband the climber would like to be near). It's also so-o-o far from New York and my family, although of course that's not the major consideration. But then again, Nashville is probably comparatively limited and what if I don't fit in there? My husband is also afraid that Nashville will be too provincial. The big problem here is that we simply can't afford to make an exploratory trip to either place . . . it's either pick up and go, or stay put.

Frankly, I sort of lean towards Nashville myself, because for one thing it seems that the publishers are more centrally located. As a mother of such young children it's important that traveling time be kept to a minimum; I'm not in a position to spend a lot of time on nonessentials. If we went to the L.A. area Larry would want to live outside of the city in a suburb somewhere and it might take me an hour or more just to get to L.A. Also, Nashville sounds like it would be more family oriented and sensitive to my problems in that area than big impersonal L.A. Oh dear, I'm so confused! Can you comment?

Judy McMillan
Boulder, Colo.

How can we — you've got our heads spinning! Seriously, Judy, we don't think you'd be making a mistake in moving to either Los Angeles or Nashville — professionally speaking. Personal considerations are another matter; you and your husband are just going to have to sit down and decide where you and your children will be happiest. But don't overthink. There's a little saying we've picked up that goes like this: perfection leads to procrastination . . . leads to paralysis. Good luck to you, and write when you resettle!

Q&A: *Submissions*

Dear *Songwriter:*

How long should you wait for a reply from a publisher whom you've sent demo recordings to? I have seven songs tied up and am anxious to send them elsewhere if these publishers intend to just sit on them.

Dottie Rossi
The Dalles, Ore.

Sharps and Flats

by Alex Granado

Neither the law or good manners require that you sit on your songs until you hear back from publishers, record companies or potential cowriters. A publisher, in fact, expects that you are submitting your songs elsewhere simultaneously.

Q&A: *Instrumentation*

Dear *Songwriter:*

I write songs as a hobby. I am interested in getting lead sheets and demo records made, but I do not play a musical instrument. Can a lead sheet or demo record be made from a cassette with voice only? If so, whom do you recommend?

J.K.
Oceanside, Calif.

Many top songwriters, with no knowledge of music whatsoever, create melodies in their heads. Many musicians will tell you that these melodies can be played against various chord progressions, but there is a risk that those progressions can alter the melodies. Because of this, it is difficult for a demo or lead sheet service to create a product from a cassette recording with voice only.

What we recommend: Find a guitarist or pianist in town who can play along with you, with the understanding that he/she is helping you to orchestrate — not compose — the song. That way you can fiddle around with chords until you hear what you hear in your head. Then make your home cassette recording with your friend and send it along to the lead sheet or demo service.

A Pressing Problem

Dear *Songwriter:*

As all songwriters, I spend a considerable amount of money on records — mostly albums. I have been quiet about the quality of pressings that have been pushed on the consumer by the record companies long enough.

Today, I bought the new album by Olivia Newton-John on MCA Records. There are pops and clicks throughout the record. I'm not judging MCA on the basis of one record. The new album by Elton John had the same problem, but not as serious. My sister bought a copy of the new album by The Who. Same problem.

If the record buyer is expected to pay as much as six or seven dollars for these albums, they could at least be listenable. But what really gets me is that the music industry keeps improving the equipment used to record these albums, only to have them pressed on chopped liver.

I think record buyers should write letters to responsible publications such as yours and start giving the record companies a hard time. Until the record companies shape up and start giving us records that are worth the outrageous prices that they ask, we are going to have to simply start returning the records and keep returning them until we get a decent copy.

Dick Loftin
Tulsa, Okla.

Advice on Advice

Dear *Songwriter:*

Re your advice to Matt Riedel in the December "Melody Lines," on the matter of tape mailings, marking the packages "Special Fourth Class Rate" is good. But postal regulations require the items to be further identified as "Sound Recordings" or "Sheet Music," etc.

E.K. Berry
Folsom, Calif.

A Content Malcontent

Dear Sir or Madam:

I totally agree with the views of Ted Harris, as stated in his November "Nashville Byline" column. It is appalling, the taken-for-grantedness of immoral and suggestive songs that are published and performed over the airwaves today. Since radio and TV waves belong to the public, we should complain to the FCC.

Not only the content of songs but the grammar is terrible. No wonder our young people can't speak or write with any degree of culture, education, etc. The schools, even if they tried, would find it difficult to overcome "the platter patter" of the DJs and the "She *don't* love me any more" bit; or Don't *It Make My Brown Eyes Blue.* I like the latter's content, but its grammar is incorrect.

Rev. Howard West
United Methodist Church
Osceola Mills, Pa.

Guitar Groupie

Dear *Songwriter:*

Just a note to tell you I'm getting more out of your new "Guitar Workshop" column than from any other guitar and music book I've studied. The December column, on chord progressions, was really terrific. Keep it up!

David Baugher
Damascus, Md.

Song Sung Blue

Dear *Songwriter:*

Immediately after reading the December "Lyric Workshop" column by Hy Glaser, I took his advice and wrote the following lyric to the music of Cole Porter's *I Love Paris.*

I WRITE LYRICS

I WRITE LYRICS when I'm happy.
I WRITE LYRICS when I'm sad.

I WRITE LYRICS when I'm dining at a bistro.
I WRITE LYRICS when I'm dancing at a disco.

I WRITE LYRICS like no other —
And I think they're really swell.

I WRITE LYRICS
Don't know why I WRITE LYRICS —
Because they never sell.

I, too, apologize for my lyric. But my thanks go to Mr. Glaser for his suggestions (had I read his advice a year ago, perhaps my lyric would have had a happier ending!), to *Songwriter* for printing such helpful articles, and to Cole Porter for his music and the word "swell."

Dorothy M. Taylor
Houston, Tex.

Songwriter

Publisher/Editor: Len Latimer

Managing Editor: Rich Wiseman

Art Director: Bill Reid

Advertising Director: Eric Gaer

Staff Photographer: Scott Windus

Contributing Editors: Maggie Cavender, Al Kasha and Joel Hirschhorn, Pat and Pete Luboff, Joe Reed, Jill Williams

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Next month in

Songwriter

Stephen Bishop

"I was very pushy, I got a lot of people aggravated. I was so determined to make it because I knew I can't do anything but write songs."

Free Verse

Good news for you Bay Area songwriter/performers from fellow San Francisco singer/writer **Tim Dawe:** "I have recently become entertainment manager of the Ghirardelli Wine Cellar in Ghirardelli Square," he writes. "This is a fine club which has featured acoustic music for 10 years, two to three acts a night.

"Up until now, San Francisco, which has always had its share of great musicians and songwriters, has not had a decent songwriters showcase. I intend to remedy that situation by initiating one on the first Tuesday of every month."

Tim's showcase began in January. He invites would-be participants to contact him at the Wine Cellar on Monday nights (415-776-5021), when he holds "invitational auditions."

Also . . . "A Night at the Wine Cellar," which Tim produced live at the club, was released in December. The album, which is available at the club, includes performances by a dozen local artists, including **Billy Roberts** (writer of *Hey Joe),* **Good Morning, Timothy & Mrs. Pickens** and others.

* * *

Rob Sanford, our "Guitar Workshop" columnist, has brought an interesting book to our attention. It's called "Psychology of Music," is written by Carl E. Seashore and published by Dover Books, 180 Varick St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

What especially perked our attention are Seashore's "12 Rules for Efficient Learning in Music." We've summarized them below:

"1) **Select your field of interest.** Knowing exactly what is to be learned is the first stage of mastery. . . .

"2) **Intend to learn.** This means a firm decision to give continuity of effort until mastery is learned. . . .

"3) **Trust the first impression.** You will save enormous time and effort. . . .

"4) **Classify: Learn by thinking.** Thinking is meeting new difficulties with deliberation and solving them. . . .

"5) **Colutivate concrete imagery.** One of the most outstanding characteristics of a musical mind. . . .

"6) **Build larger and larger units.** The best rule for learning in general is to learn one small specific thing at a time. . . .

"7) **Practice only by recall.** Memory is like a friend; trust him and he will be true to you. . . .

"8) **Rest economically.** The command to rest is fully as important as the command to work. . . .

"9) **Recognize what is learned and express it in action.** Let music function in your life. . . .

"10) **Review in cycles.** Should tend to eliminate the nonessential and let the permanently valuable stand. . . .

"11) **Build each new acquisition into a habit.** No one acts musically until the techniques have been shoved back into the subconscious where they take care of themselves as habits. . . .

"12) **Learn at your own level** . . . so that the task that you undertake is neither too easy nor too hard."

It all sounds very sensible. "Psychology of Music," at $4.50 per paperback copy, is available from Dover.

Zinger of the month: If one wished to win a high jump, he would find one man capable of jumping eight feet. A record executive would hire eight men capable of jumping one foot.

Who's Who

by Pat & Pete Luboff

NASHVILLE

Rusty Jones, director of public relations
American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers / ASCAP
2 Music Square West
Nashville, TN 37203
(615) 244-3936

Other Offices: New York, Los Angeles

Rusty Jones is a native Nashvillian, who once played trumpet in high school and worked his way through law school playing banjo in the U.S. and Europe. Rusty studied copyright and entertainment law at Memphis University, where he was president of the Student Bar Assn. at Memphis University. After graduation in May, 1977, he worked for the public defender in Memphis and the Sheriff's Office in Nashville until August, 1978, when he joined ASCAP as director of public relations and assistant to the executive regional director, Ed Shea.

Rusty's job includes membership activities such as going to concerts and clubs seeking new members, speaking at the more than 17 colleges in the Nashville area to inform students of ASCAP's existence and purposes, and providing services to members. He says, "I encourage songwriters to ask a lot of questions, especially when it comes to joining a performance rights society, since the greatest part of their incomes comes from that source," he says. "It's a very important decision, so they should find out as much as possible before making it.

"ASCAP is the only performance rights society that is owned by its songwriter and publisher members. The society licenses the users of music and distributes the incomes to its members. ASCAP is governed by a board of directors, consisting of 12 songwriter and 12 publisher members. The board is elected by the members, so the general membership has a lot to say about what ASCAP does. We are *not* a publisher, please *do not* send tapes. If you want to know more, please contact the ASCAP office nearest you."

LOS ANGELES

Jason Schwartz, president
Jason Ink Music / BMI
349 South Lafayette Park Place, Suite 323
Los Angeles, CA 90057
(213) 383-0720

Also: Survivor Productions and Survivor Records

Jason Schwartz's first lesson in the music business was a hard one. He was taken for a tidy sum of money by a lady who claimed she needed the money to produce him. He learned the error of his ways, but too late. Still, he was bitten by the music business bug.

In 1976, Jason met David Campbell, arranger for Linda Ronstadt and Jackson Browne, and went to work for him as secretary and music contractor. Jason went on to independent contracting and then independent production for Denver's Diamond and Dach and space rock group Wondertron.

Jason Ink Music publishes *Stardust Road,* written by Don Gere and just recorded by Hawaiian artist Shari Lyn. Shari also cut *A Little Chance If Any,* which Jason cowrote with Jim Drennen. Jim, David Doyle and Jay Wolfe, all veterans of Melanie's band, have formed their own band, the Diamonds. Jason is producing demos of the group.

Jason is looking for strong ballads and uptempo songs that have crossover potential, "Songs with a variety of uses. A good song stands up in any style. Send no more than three songs on a cassette of reasonable sound quality, with lyric sheets and a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your tape returned.

"The music industry today is using a lot of old tunes. New writers should try to work on the basics of songwriting, a good melody and lyrics that tell a story or make a theme statement — not just 'boogie, boogie, boogie' or 'dance, dance, dance.'

"I don't need an elaborate demo. A good publisher can recognize a song in a simple form. The major publishers have staff writers and take few songs off the street. A small independent can help you grow by giving feedback and opening up communications between people who need tunes and writers who need outlets."

SKY FOREST, CA

Jay Senter, president
Hampstead Heath Music Publishers - ASCAP
Captain Crystal Music / BMI
P.O. Box 223
Sky Forest, CA 92385
(714) 337-2802

Also: C.C. Records, Inc.

Jay Senter started out as a record coproducer 10 years ago. Acts he has independently produced include Graffiti, Puzzle, Brethren, the New York Electric String Ensemble, Spencer Davis, the Hello People, Bobby Vinton and Wayne Newton. Jay produced the huge hit by Helen Reddy, *I Am Woman,* and was producer and copublisher of Sammy Johns' smash, *Chevy Van.*

Hampstead Heath publishes the songs of Steve Eaton. His *Rag Doll,* the B side of Simon and Garfunkel's *My Little Town,* was recorded by Art Garfunkel on the *Breakaway* album, was a single for Sammy Johns and has been covered by five more artists. Steve also wrote

continued on next page

All You Get From Love Is A Love Song, the Carpenters' single.

Jay has been working with writer/artist Bill LaBounty for eight years. 1978 was Bill's year for getting his songs recorded: three cuts on the Michael Johnson album, two cuts on Frankie Valli's album, one on Shaun Cassidy's, and covers by Mary Clayton, Randy Crawford, Clint Homes and Marci Levy.

"I listen to everything personally," says Jay. "I may not listen the day I get it, but I will in time. If I feel there is something workable, I let the writer know. You may send a maximum of three songs on cassettes only with typed lyric sheets and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of the tape. I'm interested in songs with mass appeal. If it doesn't have a great lyric, I don't think it'll be a lasting song. Or, the lyric can be so simple that it appeals to everybody. Like every publisher, I'm after that great copyright in the sky.

"If you believe in your ability, don't ever stop writing. If you keep working on your material, you're bound to catch a hit. Keep doing it until you get it right. The longer you do it, the closer you get every time."

NEW YORK

Andy Hussakowsky, president
MRI Music / ASCAP
161 West 54th Street, Suite 601
New York, NY 10019
(212) 265-6420

Also: Music Resources International Corp.; MRI Productions

Andy Hussakowsky graduated from college in 1967 and went straight to work as an agent for Universal Attractions while he attended graduate school at Pratt. His varied music business experience since then includes a two-year stint as national promotion director with Peer Southern; eight months at United Artists as their general professional manager; two years with Stereo Dimension/Evolution as East Coast sales promotion manager, where he negotiated the Lighthouse deal and broke the Top Five record *One Fine Morning;* a year with Sam Goody's retail; and over two years as national promotion director for Sussex Records.

In 1975, Andy started his own company. He managed writer/producer Greg Diamond, who, through Diamond Touch Productions, was responsible for the Andrea True Connection's No. 1 hit *More, More, More.* Greg also produced Ian Lloyd, lead singer of Stories; Gloria Gaynor and Bionic Boogie albums on Polydor; and Starcruiser and George McCrae albums for TK Productions. And placed masters and was involved in the production or publishing of David Morris on Buddah, Chubby Checker on Amherst, Bumble Bee Unlimited on Sky, and Glen Bachover on Country International.

MRI Productions has signed a deal with disco writer/arranger/producers George Lagios and Pat De Serio; and with Duke Williams and the Extremes, formerly on Capricorn.

Andy is looking for masters and demos in any commercially viable style such as country, R & B, rock and roll or disco. Demos should be on 5" or 7" reels ¼ track stereo or on stereo cassettes. Send no more than three songs and include lyric sheets and a self- addressed, stamped envelope if you want your tape returned. Los Angeles writers may send tapes to Steve Brodie at MRI's L.A. office: 1100 N. Alta Loma Road, Suite 1, Los Angeles, CA 90069. MRI represents Max's Kansas City in New York and Andy is open to hearing from groups who want to play that club.

Andy says, "All any songwriter has to do is write one great song. Continue writing. Don't go on resubmitting the same songs for months if you're getting no results. Be realistic, the song may be wrong, it may need rewriting or maybe you should go on to something new."

MUSCLE SHOALS

Ron Ballew, president
Widget Publishing / BMI
Midget Music Co. - ASCAP
P.O. Box 2446
Muscle Shoals, AL 35660
(205) 381-1300

Also: Widget Recording, Inc. (16 track); Widget Productions; International Widget Recording, Inc., Widget Records; Singing Wire Music / BMI

In 1969, Ron Ballew was approached by some songwriters and asked to build a small demo studio for them. He researched the idea and, in 1970, built and opened a four-track studio and started his publishing company. Two years later, he expanded the studio to 16 tracks, making it the second such studio in the Muscle Shoals area. Right after the expansion, Ron recorded Elektra group, Sailcat. He was executive producer of their Top Ten single, *Motorcycle Momma,* and Top 50 album of the same name. He opened Singing Wire Music for the songs of Sailcat's writer member, John Wyker. For more than two years, the studio was tied up exclusively by Motown producers Terry Woodford and Clayton Ivey. In 1975, Ron resumed producing, signing writers, and building his catalog. Widget writers include Stephanie Brown, Terry Skinner, J.L. Wallace and Lonnie Ledford. In 1976, Widget entered the country field, with Ron's production of the Wonderfuls. In 1978, producer Snuffy Miller brought Conway Twitty's daughter, Joni Lee, to the Widget studio to make demos. Ron is now publishing all the songs on Joni's upcoming album, and C.W. McCall's next single, the title cut from his January album, "Wheels of Fortune."

Currently, Ron is developing country pop female artist Brandy. He's also working on concept development for Universal Matrix, a music career developer for groups, writers and artists.

Ron normally does not accept unsolicited material. He is making a special exception for *Songwriter* readers for *this month only.* You may submit up to three songs that you "honestly believe are hits." Demos can be on 7½ ips reel to reel or cassette tape. Include lyric sheets and a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your tape back.

Ron says, "I suggest songwriters play a current hit single on their record player and then run the tape they are about to send and ask themselves honestly, if they were producers, would they just as soon record one as the other. If so, send if to me immediately! I think new writers should meet and talk to successful writers, if they can get that opportunity. Ask them for critiques, learn from their experience. Writers are where the strength of the whole industry begins."

We're delighted to announce the arrival of Paladin Luboff, born to Pat and Pete December 17. Our new "contributing editor" was on the phones the next day, helping mom and dad research their column.

Musical Chairs

The L.A. Melee

Eddie Levine, Blue Note Records' national promotion director and general manager for six years, has been promoted to the post of vice president and general manager. . . . Unlimited Gold Records President Barry White has chosen **Frank Wilson** as his assistant. . . . **Veronica Brice,** formerly west coast publicity director at Warner Brothers, is now vice president and general manager of RFC. The label is distributed by Warners. . . . **John Schuch** moves up from packaging coordinator for marketing services to the newly created position of West Coast assistant manager, A & R administration, CBS Records. . . . **Steve Love** started with ATV Music in New York as a professional manager, moved to L.A. in 1974, was appointed executive director in 1977, and just became president of ATV Music. . . . Elektra/Asylum Records promotes **Mark Hammerman** from west coast director to national director, artist development. . . . **Marty Wekser** leaves Paul Simon's DeShufflin' Music Group, where he was general manager, to fill the newly created position of west coast manager, writer development, ATV Music. . . . **Cheryl Benton** was assistant to Steve Bedell, the vice president of Casablanca Records and FilmWorks Music Publishing, before her recent appointment to their professional manager post.

Bites from the Big Apple

A & M Records has promoted **Gail Davis** to associate director of artist development. She was their regional merchandising director before joining the artist development staff in the fall of 1977. . . . **Vince Aletti,** who was disco editor and discophile columnist for Record World, is now vice president, A & R, of RFC Records. . . . **Jerry Jaffe** changes hats at Polydor from national director of promotion to director of artist development. . . . **Marv Goodman** leaves Chrysalis (Who's Who, October 1976), where he was general professional manager, to become general manager for ATV's New York operation. He is the subject of this month's "AGAC Askapro" rap, which can be found a few pages on. . . . **Frank D'Amico** has moved from the professional manager's post at Earthshaker Music to the job of East Coast general manager for the Chrysalis Music Group.

Flash from Nashville

Jimmy Bowen is now vice president and general manager of Elektra/Asylum Records. He left a similar post at MCA. . . . Capitol Records has named **Lynn Shults** vice president of their country division. Previously, Lynn was director of operations for United Artists Records. . . . **Frank Jones,** who had been vice president at Capitol for four years, has moved to the new Nashville offices of Inergi Records as their vice president and general manager.

Running Hot and Cold . . .

In Florida . . . **Amy Bolton** joins the expanded professional department of Sherlyn Publishing Company, a division of TK Productions in Hialeah, as assistant professional manager. She has worked for Dick James Music and United Artists Music. In Canada . . . **Martin Onrot** joins Infinity Records as the new vice president and general manager. Martin has over 15 years of experience in all phases of the Canadian Music industry and is a founding director of the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

— Pat & Pete Luboff

Al Kasha
and Joel Hirschhorn

How Exaggeration in Titles Sells

Titles, as we've mentioned in the past, should be visual. They should give an idea of what the overall lyric is about and should also, whenever possible, be short and to the point. A hit title generally suggests what kind of song is about to unfold, whether fast, slow, dramatic or comic.

An examination of a group of key hit songs of the 70s points out another, even more significant trait of effective titles: they burst with emotion. They never merely describe an emotion, they exaggerate it.

Take *Blinded By The Light* (Springsteen). The hero isn't distracted, disturbed, confused — he's *blinded.* This might sound overblown if used in everyday conversation, but songs thrive on that kind of intense imagery.

In *Torn Between Two Lovers* (Jarrell/Yarrow), the heroine doesn't examine her alternatives with analytical clarity. She is ripped apart by her conflict. The melody is soft and gentle, but the words are urgent.

I'm Stone In Love With You (Creed/Bell) is emotionally powerful. Take out "stone" and you have "I'm in love with you" which is cliched and ordinary. Consider, *Nights Are Forever Without You* (McGee). There is little drama in "Nights are long without you." "Forever" alters the emotional flavor. Nights are not literally forever; they may be lonely, they may drag on depressingly, but they end with the first ray of sunshine. But nights like those described in this song can seem like forever, and that extreme word projects the yearning attitude.

A recent song by Shotgun, *Love Attack* (Steels, Talbert, Casey) is another demonstration of frenzied emotionalism. "Don't hold me back," cries the hero, "I'm in the middle of a love attack." Spoken without music and in a realistic situation, the character would sound as if he were having a dangerous physical seizure, but when the sentiment is wed to music, the excitement is forcefully conveyed, and not at all ludicrous or laughable. This is also true of *Love Hangover* (Sawyer/McLeod), which likens a romantic feeling to a hangover, one which the heroine doesn't want cured.

Only Women Bleed (Cooper/Wagner) is anything but a passive statement. The theme of a woman spending her life to please her man outraged feminists, but it certainly caught the public ear. If the title had been "A woman needs her man," there would probably have been little or no reaction.

One striking word in an otherwise simple, familiar title can transform it. In *I'd Really Love To See You Tonight* (McGee), the "really" is what matters. It sounds sincere and pleading, and adds humanity to what might otherwise have been just another lyric line. "I'd love to see you tonight" lacks the sensitivity and passion. The same process is at work with *I Honestly Love You* (Barry/Allen). "I love you" is all very well, but we've heard it. The "honestly" adds an individual and poignant touch.

Most rock and roll titles border on hysteria. Eric Carmen writes, *Never Gonna Fall In Love Again.* He has just erased love from his entire future. Kenny O'Dell goes effectively overboard with "Too much is not enough." *Nothing Ever Hurt Me (Half As Bad As Losing You)* (Braddock) says that arthritis, appendicitis, Bright's disease, gallstones and bleeding ulcers aren't nearly as painful as the loss of a loved one. Another song features a hero that will always *Turn To Stone* (Lynne) when his lover is gone. A love object is rarely just sweet or charming or lovely, she is stupendous, *More Than A Woman* (Gibb brothers).

Vibrant words create emotion. Consider *Love Is Alive* (Wright), *Everlasting Love* (Murphy/Wolinski/Belfield), *Baby Don't Get Hooked On Me* (Davis), *Bridge Over Troubled Water* (Simon), *Cold As Ice* (Jones/Gramm), *Jungle Love* (Turner/Douglas).

Song titles and lyrics are not ordinary conversation, because even though they come from the lips of one singer, they are meant to represent some universal collective need or feeling. A song has only two and a half or three minutes to make its point, and those three minutes must be musical melodramas. There's no time for subtlety or shading, because the program director expects to be assaulted by emotion when he hears a new record. One way of insuring immediate attention and setting a stage for the drama to follow, is to create a title that overstates and hammers home its message. In the context of a pop record, that melodrama will seem perfectly appropriate and natural.

People have been writing songs together since music began, but the value of collective thinking in songwriting has never been as important as it is in today's market. Artists like Elton John, Carol King, etc. have always known and used valuable lyricists, but now we find solo writers like Neil Diamond and Kenny Loggins collaborating with others like Alan and Marilyn Bergman. The competitive pace of today's industry requires the top notch material that collaborators can produce.

Until now, finding a compatible collaborator has been a hit-and-miss process involving friends, classified ads in local papers and trade magazines, or names placed on bulletin boards in music stores. The amount of time spent searching and failed attempts at collective work have made it all seem impossible. Until now. Until ***Collaboratory***.

WHAT IS COLLABORATORY?

Collaboratory is a computer organization operating on a national basis that brings songwriters, lyricists and composers together using a unique songwriter's profile. Created by a psychologist/songwriter, this profile is designed to help you analyze what you write, how you write, where you stand in relation to other songwriters, and who is best suited to collaborate with you in writing songs.

WHAT CAN IT DO?

First, when you join ***Collaboratory*** you will receive the names and addresses of ten of the most compatible writers suited to your personal selection. If you choose to collaborate by mail, your names will represent the ten most compatible writers in the country. However, if you prefer, the ten most compatible local writers will be made available to you.

Second, when you join ***Collaboratory***, your name will be placed on file for three months for compatible others to contact you.

Third, when you join ***Collaboratory*** your name will be available to artists, entertainers, and groups who will contact you for valuable original material during the three month period.

Fourth, the songwriter's profile will enhance self-awareness of your songwriting habits, the repeated contact with compatible others will expand your horizons, and your increased productivity will put you on the road to success in the music business.

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Finding the Key at Juvenile Hall

by Doug Thiele

"Yeah, I belong to the Eighth Street gang and I'm in for assault with a deadly weapon. I'm having a problem coming up with the right music to fit my lyrics; see the meter makes it hard to. . . . " A scene from a new situation comedy? No, something a lot more serious: the conversation is real, part of an unusual series of conversations heard by staff members of Songwriters Resources and Services during performance and songwriting workshops we conducted at Central Juvenile Hall, in Los Angeles.

SRS has always been involved in bringing music to communities in and around Los Angeles. Over the past two years, we've presented five Festivals of New Music, which brought the works of new songwriters to the public. With each new festival, energy and enthusiasm grew, as well as attendance, and in August, 1977, we were able to negotiate a grant from CETA (the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) through the City of Los Angeles, which allowed us to hire two "Festival Coordinators."

The CETA Title VI grants are the government's way of trying to get artists, including songwriters, into the job market by helping agencies hire them and train them for employment in the "private sector." The result for SRS was that its staff almost doubled, and the success of future festivals was insured. The new CETA grant, beginning August, 1978, has made it possible to bring our services into communities where no such services had been dreamed of, let alone offered. We all know that songwriting has become very popular, and that there are now literally millions of songwriters in America, so we were about to offer education and support to would-be songwriters in communities where such a head start would really help. We chose to start with two community centers in the Latino community, and Central Juvenile Hall.

Central Juvenile Hall is a detention facility near downtown Los Angeles where kids involved in anything from shoplifting a bag of chips to kidnapping are locked up. Even though wire-mesh glass has replaced steel bars here, and the walls are colorful, this is a jail. The atmosphere is pretty repressive; the kids and their small rooms are constantly searched, and their activities are constantly restricted. It takes a long time to get from one end of the complex to another because, of course, all the doors are locked.

The kids themselves are not what you might expect to find; some are pretty tough, having packed a whole lifetime of songwriting experiences into a few years, but most are just kids in trouble. We were there to teach them the songwriting tools in a series of classes which began with a class taught by Gelsa Paladino in performing, followed by a class in writing songs, taught by myself.

You have to realize that other than a choir which was disbanded, music didn't exist at Central Juvenile Hall before SRS arrived. It came over the radio and TV airwaves from time to time, but the kids didn't participate. There are four pianos at CJH, two of which are not accessible to the kids and the other two of which are restricted from use in many

cases. So this is not a place which is extremely conducive to the craft of songwriting.

Because the average length of stay at CJH is short (many are transferred to another detention center and others are released), we prepared ourselves for two weeks of intense, action-packed classes. We weren't disappointed.

Each day's workshops began with us unlocking or being buzzed through a maze of doors past waiting areas, hallways and down long corridors lined with cubicles, and gathering up kids from different units of the hall as we went. Though the first week's workshop was held in a "day room," the rest were held in the auditorium, which serves as a general activity room, movie theater, basketball court and gym.

Breaking the ice was a tough proposition, and it fell on Gelsa Paladino's shoulders. The kids are distrustful of new activities, even though they wanted the classes and signed up for them in droves. Obviously, a lecture series wouldn't work in this situation. Gelsa felt that the voice/performer's workshop would give the kids an opportunity to ham it up, have a good time, and learn something in the process.

At first, the going was rough. The kids spent the first three days testing limits, bickering and showing off to each other and learning little. They weren't used to the freedom of being able to express themselves without being threatened, but, by Wednesday of the first week, they began to trust the process and they set up their own rules of conduct in the workshop. It wasn't a perfect solution, but it allowed the kids to show their enthusiasm for music.

Gelsa bought sheet music and brought a little cassette recorder as well as a small amp, and the kids did the rest; of course, they knew the songs . . . they knew the right vocal inflections and they loved the chance to ham it up. By the end of the week they were asking how to get into the next workshop and suggesting that the courses be extended so that they could keep working. One of the kids performed her own song at the Performer's Workshop, and she and another girl went on to the Songwriting Workshop.

By the time the second week of workshops had begun, there were over twice as many kids signing up as could attend. The auditorium became a sanctuary where kids could express what they really felt . . . and where they could create.

The songs they wrote were wonderful. They were about love and drugs and freedom and, not surprisingly, about Central Juvenile Hall: "And when I finally get out of this place/I'm goin' straight back to the human race." When nobody came down on them for saying just what they felt, the floodgates were opened and the songs poured out. It's true that they weren't technically proficient (though there was one girl who had a terrific style), and the structure left something to be desired, but ideas flowed like water.

One girl who was there on a very serious charge started writing lyrics outside the realm of her experiences; somewhere along the way she got the idea that she had experiences worthy of songs. She started writing and hasn't stopped since. At the end of the workshop she said, "I don't know, it seems like everywhere I look there's another song waiting to be written."

Songwriter Doug Thiele is president of SRS.

Gary Osborne: Elton's New Lyricist Shedding His 'Who's He?' Image

by Harold Bronson

Gary Osborne did not just step out of a School for Famous Songwriters to co-write Elton John's latest LP, "A Single Man." Nevertheless, it's been a varied career for the 29-year-old Englishman. Comparatively undercover, too, explaining the chorus of "Who's he?" from press and public alike when his name appeared in places previously reserved for Bernie Taupin, Elton's lyricist for 14 albums.

Who's Gary Osborne? The congenial and energetic Osborne is only too happy to fill us in as he settles into a plush couch in the living room of a friend's Beverly Hills home. He's in America for a month to do interviews, and this one, at least, is destined to be blessed by the form of Elton John — in cardboard — peering over Gary's shoulder.

Son and nephew of conductors in London and South Africa and a brother-in-law of Kenny Jones, the Who's new drummer, Gary says he felt born to the breed: "As a little kid I knew I wanted to be a songwriter. But my dad made it a point that I should do something in addition to writing songs."

He did as a teenager, after collaborating with producer Tom Springfield on the Seekers' *On The Other Side,* a moderate hit in England. He fiddled with acting, worked at a publishing firm, apprenticed on the A&R staff at RCA (helpful, because "I got paid to learn about the studio"). In the early 70s, he hosted a rock star interview show for the BBC, and began singing backup on recording sessions. "I sang mostly commercials," he says. "But I did sing on some Rod Stewart and the Faces songs, lots of David Essex tracks, and on *Sugar Baby Love* by the Rubettes. That one sold four million worldwide — I got paid $60."

Osborne teamed up with fellow backup singer/songwriter Paul Vigrass and together they strived for their share of the spotlight. The two Vigrass and Osborne albums (one on Uni, one on Epic) fared poorly, though, and their band (featuring Peter Wood, who later co-wrote Al Stewart's *Year of the Cat),* eventually folded.

As one door was closed, another was opened, as Gary began to get covers on his tunes. Anne Murray recorded *Children of My Mind;* Millie Jackson, *Making the Best of a Bad Situation;* and

Jennifer Warnes, *I'm Dreaming.*

But it was Kiki Dee's rendering of *Amoureuse* that caught Elton's ear. "That was a song written by Veronique Sansoon. It was in French, and I wrote English lyrics. Elton heard it and recorded it with Kiki, and it became an English hit.

"It was an important record. It was her first hit, Elton's first as a producer, and Rocket Records' first as a label (Rocket is John's company)."

As it turned out, the record was also important as it connected composer John with lyricist Osborne — who had to feel good, finally, about his chances of making it (after all, "There must be 10 good tune writers for every good lyricist").

But John and Taupin were still collaborating at the time and Gary found that his career wasn't yet in full throttle. After signing nonexclusively with Irving Music, he realized the limitations of that sort of publisher: "They were a good company, but they had too much to work with.

"This is what would happen: I would write a song and if a Helen Reddy liked it she would put a hold on it (so that she could record it first) for six months. In the meantime, the publishing company would take on another 200 songs. So if a Helen Reddy decided she didn't want to record the song in the end, it was quickly forgotten." During that period, Osborne speculates he wrote about 50 songs — mostly with Richard *(Mandy, Looks Like We Made It)* Kerr — "half of which," he still maintains, "are coverable, and a quarter of which are hits."

Ah, but destiny called. Through writing more songs for Kiki Dee, Osborne developed close ties with Elton. When John and Taupin parted company, Elton asked Osborne to collaborate.

For Gary, who prefers to write while walking ("I live in Regents Park, an affluent area not too far from an impoverished one. I like to get out of the house — away from the phone, the kid — and just be a noninvolved observer"), it was an adjustment working with Elton. He mostly confined his walking to the studio.

"Most of the songs for 'A Single Man' were written in the studio," he says. "While we were taking a break, Elton would make up a melody on the spot. While he was teaching the parts to the musicians, I'd do a rough draft of the lyrics. *Georgia* was written that way in about 45 minutes."

But Gary relished the challenge: "I tend to force myself to write fast, rather than sitting around waiting for inspiration. I want to make the lyrics sound good and suitable to the singer without showing how clever I can be with pretentious imagery."

"I view writing songs as solving problems," he continues — like, 'How do I say this in three lines?' On *I Don't Care* I had other lyrics, but when Elton began singing 'I don't care' over and over, it sounded better than the lyrics I had for the part."

"A Single Man" is dominated by love-related themes, what Osborne considers his specialty. Sometimes it's love affairs gone wrong, like in *It Ain't Gonna Be Easy:* "Here, too much truth proves too dangerous because most people can't handle it." Then there's *Madness,* anything but love-related: "Elton wanted a disaster song, so *Madness* depicts an outrageous act of terrorism." Writing quirky songs, however, is not exactly foreign to Gary; he lyricized about attacking Martians for the recent "War of the World" concept LP, produced in England.

As for the War of the Lyricists, we ask Osborne the inevitable question: How does he compare himself to Bernie Taupin?

"At this stage it's a bit unfair," he responds, not missing a beat. "He's had all those albums and I've only done one with Elton. Most people have commented that he's more into mystic imagery and my approach is more direct. In a sense, you can say my words are direct, like photographs. They're not surreal paintings."

Harold Bronson is a songwriter, producer and recording artist for L.A.'s Rhino Records, of which he is a "director."

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Publishing's ATVs

A Rap with ATV's Marv Goodman

The setting: The offices of the American Guild of Authors/Composers, 40 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019, where AGAC hosts its weekly Askapro — a head-to-head meeting between music business pros and songwriters.

The guest: Candid Marv Goodman, general manager of New York operations of the ATV Music Corp., a leading publisher.

The transcript:

Writer: Do you have a checklist of questions that you ask yourself as you listen to something?

Marv: Yes. The first question on my list is, do I like it? Would I be comfortable walking in to a producer, an A&R man, an artist or a manager and saying, "Here is something that I think is a hit"? If I don't like the song, it has one strike against it with a fast ball coming high and hard on the inside.

But there is a second question that may override my personal feelings: Do I think the song is worth a lot more than it's going to cost me to do this? Every A&R guy and producer and manager has, in his repertoire or credits, records that he can't stand but which he cut because he knew they were going to sell five million units. And so I'll walk in with a song that's going to sell, even if it's the kind of thing I don't usually associate myself with.

Those are the two major questions. Beyond that, if you listen to 1,500 songs or so, you begin to be able to pick out something that's outstanding. If I gave you a science fiction paperback and you'd never read any science fiction before, you may find it was wonderful. But when you've read another thousand books in that field, you might say it was very asinine.

If I were to sit with a blackboard behind me and a checklist and ask, are the rhymes good or are they bastard rhymes; is there an extra syllable somewhere in this line that irritates me; is the meter perfect; does the modulation work; is there a change in tempo, etc., a lot of the songs that I'm probably going to pass on would rate as an A+ or at least an A or an A– on this objective scale. But in point of fact, it has to mean something more to me. It is ABAB, but that doesn't make it a sale. It does rhyme well. That doesn't make it a sale. It says I love you, rather than I want to disembowel you. That doesn't make it a sale. If this song is not going to compare with the copyrights that I have to answer for, then what's the point in having it run as the sixth song on a tape for a particular producer, when I know I'm going to trim that list down to three or four when I go in to see him?

"Some Top 40 stations are a little bored with ballad-oriented material. Heavier rock . . . will probably come back."

Writer: How important do you think it is for the writer to cast the songs to the artist?

Marv: It all depends. If you know what the publisher is about, if you know the producers that he is tight with and the artists that he seems to have a general run of success with, and you have a vague idea of the area where the publisher is respected, it helps to cast. You would not go to a man producing Engelbert Humperdinck with a song that you would show Elvis Costello. It closes the door to what you are doing. If you can cast in the area that you know he's strong with, you've made that psychic point with him.

You may also be helping him. He may not have thought of that particular artist. There will be times when you'll demo a thing, and though the only vocalist you have is a male, you're thinking of it as a song for Gladys Knight or Barbra Streisand. So if you can make the suggestion and have the man listen with that information in mind, it will help — him and you.

Writer: Do you have a preference

for demos that are closer to a master quality, as opposed to a voice and guitar or a voice and piano? Does it influence you?

Marv: In some cases, it does. If the arrangement is right, if the musicianship is good, the song is going to sound a lot better than what I imagine it should be. If it suggests something I might not have thought of, then it is a plus. And there is an advantage just from a straight-ahead, financial, commercial aspect, in that — if I take the song — it's going to cost me nothing to make my duplicates.

That said, if the song is very poorly arranged, it's not going to hurt, because I'll say the melody is wonderful, the lyrics are superb, let's go in and demo it the way it should be done. If the song is worth it, it doesn't matter that it will cost me an extra $250 or $300 to do a demo. If the song is of questionable value, that $250 or $300 that has to be used is money I can't consider giving as an advance to the writer.

Writer: What do you consider a desirable number of songs on one demo tape?

Marv: If it's my first time meeting with a writer, I would like to hear two, three, possibly four. If there's nothing there, we won't have wasted that much time. If there is something indicative of a good writer, or a promising writer, or there are a couple of very interesting things, we can discuss those at length. If the stuff is really good, it's easy to say, "OK, let's get together in another two or three days." You can also gauge, if those two, three or four songs are in different directions, the kind of music that the publisher is interested in. If he passed on both ballads, but listens to both pieces of rock-and-roll, you'll be able to gauge where to go in the next meeting with him.

Writer: Say a songwriter hears his song for a particular artist — is approaching the producer or the manager of the artist directly a viable alternative to approaching the publisher?

Marv: As a humanist, I would say that there are a couple of advantages to the direct approach. One is the fact that the producer has direct communication with you. He might say, "I don't like this line," and you know that, if you change it, he's going to cut it with his artist. As opposed to the producer saying to the publisher, "I don't like this

"Publishing companies are now more likely to sign artist/writers than staff writers."

line, can you have it rewritten?" Then the publisher has to get back to the writer, hopefully not misinterpreting what he wants to see in the line, have you rewrite the line, get back to the producer and find that it wasn't quite right. You eliminate all of the time in between.

Also, unfortunately, the producers have become aware of what publishing means financially. So if your song were comparable to something that is published by XYZ Music, where he can toss a coin and pick either one of the songs, he may very well wind up being able to work the publishing deal with you, which would be to your advantage in getting a record, and to his as well. So that, too, will sway him to cut an unpublished song rather than one from a publisher who will be reaping the profit.

On the other hand, if your relationship with the producer is one of mailing a cassette, unsolicited, with a song that may not be listened to, then it is obviously to your advantage to have a publisher who can get to see the man and who knows how to convince him of the song's merits.

There are advantages to each side. It's as simple as that.

Writer: In this country, the music changes every five or six or seven years. Do you know what the next trend is? Is it changing now?

Marv: I think so. In the abstract, record labels, publishers, everybody hops on what is going on. But, usually, there are only two or three people who are in a kind of vanguard to pave the change. So that when the Bee Gees come across with a disco direction and score three or four records in the Top Five, all of a sudden a lot of companies that are holding back on disco releases, thinking that the disco sound is dying, come out with a spate of disco releases or sign disco groups that they have been thinking about. The end result: a flood of disco. At some point the market again becomes very samey and there are artists like a Bob Segar, a Kansas, a Styx, who present something else. At the same time you have a Barry Manilow and Samantha Sang, who are doing nondisco, nonrock, middle-of-the-road, ballad-oriented. So there's a certain balance.

Some Top 40 stations are a little bored and glutted with all of the ballad-oriented, adult contemporary material. Right now, heavier rock, which is on the low end of the totem pole, is becoming, by contrast, an exciting piece of music. I think that's what will probably come back. Three or four labels will release things along the line of Ted Nugent or Bob Segar. If those groups begin to happen, we'll be flooded with heavy rock for the next six or eight months.

Writer: In terms of finding material, who services the artist better — the publisher or the artist himself?

Marv: The servicing is one of the primary functions of the professional staff of a publishing company — to get the songs into the hands of people who will listen to and do something with them. Technically, the function is handled by the publisher. But there's no way an artist isn't going to listen to what music is going on the stations, what the competition is doing, what the direction of commercial sales is for this particular time. He's going to listen because it's to his benefit, and he'll service himself to the extent that he may go out to buy a Dan Hill or a Leo Sayer album, rather

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"As a songwriter, you must function as a producer or even an engineer when doing a demo."

Engelbert's Main Man!

Joel Diamond, Last of the Frantics, Talks About Producing the Last of the Romantics

by Lou Stevens

Joel Diamond is sitting at the top of the world these days. Both literally — he lives and works in a penthouse apartment overlooking Central Park — and figuratively, as a top independent publisher, and producer of the likes of Engelbert Humperdinck, Mike Douglas, Eddy Arnold, Telly Savalas and Al Martino.

It's a world of silver and blue. Those are the colors of his hair and eyes, the colors in his apartment. Silver Blue is also the name of one of his publishing companies (the other's called Ocean's Blue), his record company, his production company . . .

. . . And a certain notorious album Diamond put out this year on Epic. Notorious not so much for the content (although his disco-ized versions of Tennessee Waltz, Yellow Rose of Texas *and* Alexander's Ragtime Band *are slightly bent), but for the arresting cover art: Joel is seen lounging along a walk holding leashes on two 6'3" identical blonde twins.*

"I've been getting a tremendous amount of controversy about the art from feminists — and I love it," he reports gleefully. To my mind, all publicity is good publicity."

Hmmm. Could it be that ol' Silver Blue is a mite self indulgent?

"Totally!" he exclaims. "I'm self-indulging myself in everything I'm doing."

To understand the ways of this Passaic, N.J., product, we asked him to backtrack 12 years, to the day he first got on the music biz track. Joel is only too happy to oblige; and thus begins the tale of Joel Diamond . . . and Arnold Capitanelli:

"I was selling insurance at the time, though I really wanted to be a singer. Through a friend at a clothing store I did my shopping in, I met Arnold. At the time, Arnold was in the textile business, had a lot of money. And he was a songwriter.

"So we meet, and Arnold asks, 'What do you do?' I say, 'I'm a singer' — and I was, I had a little orchestra that played bar mitzvahs and weddings in the area. I didn't tell him much about the insurance end. Then he tells me he's a songwriter who does demos, and he wants to know if I know anybody in the record business in New York.

"Living in Passaic was like living in Alaska, as far as New York goes, but I tell him, 'Yeah, I know everybody in the business.' So he says, 'That's great. Why don't you sing my demos and try servicing the people in New York?'

"So we went to the studio and I started singing his demos, not knowing our songs were so far off. . . . In the afternoons I started going to New York. I'd


SILVER BLUE
DENNIS ELLERSON
79

"The whole music business is selling. The songwriter sells to the publisher, the publisher sells to the producer, the producer sells to the record company, the record company sells to the radio stations. . . ."

shlep into the Americana Hotel every afternoon, walk into a phone booth — that hotel has the most comfortable ones in the city — open the phone book to the record companies, and start making calls.

"I did that for months. Being a good salesman I got in to see people. But because I had nothing of quality to sell I got nothing but rejections. I finally ended up selling one RCA A&R man an insurance policy.

"One thing I learned then is that my talents really lay in salesmanship. Which is fortunate, because the whole music business is selling. The songwriter sells to the publisher, the publisher sells to the producer, the producer sells to the record company, the record company sells to the radio stations, the radio stations sell to the advertisers."

To further his sales campaign, Diamond attended MIDEM, an international publishers convention held in France each year. There he met Bob Reno, the man who was to give him his first break.

Reno, then head of Mercury Records' publishing company, MRC 3 Bridges, was soon afterwards promoted to vice president. He needed to pick a successor to run the publishing wing, and his offbeat choice was the young, green but ever-so-eager Diamond.

Diamond sparkled. He placed This Girl Is a Woman Now, *cowritten by Alan Bernstein (later to figure in Joel's career), with Gary Puckett and the Union Gap. The song was a smash, Diamond's first, and it established him as a music biz comer.*

Joel stayed with Mercury for two years, after which he moved up to CBS' April Blackwood as its professional manager. Clive Davis made an "A&R incentive" deal with him, and Diamond also became a talent searcher for CBS Records.

Diamond didn't fare too badly with his first "discovery" — Dr. Hook, who he found playing in a "toilet bar" in Union City, N.J. Publisher-wise, he plugged the tunes of James Taylor, Laura Nyro and Blood, Sweat and Tears.

Next, a "very, very big and heavy" decision — to strike out on his own. "I said at the time, 'Well, I don't want to be working at a big company when I'm 50, still afraid of getting bounced on my ear at any moment if the regime changes,' so I took the risk."

Diamond's Silver Blue Records were distributed at first by Polydor. "I had some R&B hits, but never anything big. Again, it was a building block."

In 1976, TK Records took over the distribution of Silver Blue. Joel Diamond finishes the update: "During this period of time, I started my two publishing companies. And, in 1976, I made my contact with Engelbert Humperdinck.

"That's when everything turned in my life . . . meeting Engelbert, producing Engelbert. . . ."

How did you first meet Engelbert?

I was down in Miami Beach, sitting around the pool at the Fountainbleu Hotel, and listening to one of those three-piece combos that sounded like you could have bottled them up and put them in the dentist's office. And they were playing *Release Me.*

I thought to myself, whatever happened to Engelbert Humperdinck? I knew he was still pumping out records, but I also knew nothing was really happening with him record-wise. So I said to my friend that when I got back to New York, I didn't know how, but that I was going to locate Humperdinck and I was going to produce Humperdinck. I'm a very obsessive type of person, and I knew what I wanted — and I knew I had to do it somehow.

So a poolside revelation led you to produce Engelbert?

Yeah. As I heard those guys in their tuxedos play *Release Me,* I thought to myself, "What a classic song." And I thought that Humperdinck, probably one of the greatest artists around, should be having hit records.

So I returned to New York, and a friend of mine gave me a lead — Gordon Mills. Gordon at that time was manager and producer of Engelbert and Tom Jones. I tracked down Gordon, but it wasn't easy. He was in Africa at the time and I must have called him three or four times there. Meantime, I was trying to find Engelbert. I found out all the various places around the country where he was playing. I'd call and leave

Photos by Ruth Bernal

messages. He didn't know me from a hole in the wall, so obviously he didn't return any of my phone calls.

Finally, I did manage to sell Gordon Mills on giving me a shot at producing Engelbert. I told him I felt I had the material for him — whether I did or not at the time. So it's all due to Gordon Mills — he gave me the opportunity.

At that time, Engelbert was in the process of leaving London Records. They made a deal with Epic, and the first thing I produced with Engelbert, his first Epic release, was *After the Lovin'.*

The song was written by Alan Bern-

stein and Ritchie Adams. Incidentally, Engelbert's latest single, *This Moment in Time,* was the last song that Alan Bernstein wrote before he died at 33 of cancer.

What kind of material do you look for for Engelbert?

Engelbert is not gonna do a Donna Sommers kind of trip. He's not gonna do a Led Zeppelin kind of thing. Engelbert sings great songs, quality material. The better the song, the better Engelbert can sing it.

What would you consider to be the qualifications of a great song?

For Engelbert? A memorable melody and a meaningful lyric. When he walks on stage every single night, he's introduced as the world's most romantic singer — and he really is. He appeals to women of all ages. And they want to hear him sing about love. They want to hear a positive lyric coming from his mouth.

So when you hear a song for Humperdinck, you look for a meaningful lyric and a memorable melody. Anything else?

The song has to touch me. Very few do. That's why I listen to a lot of songs.

When I'm ready to produce an artist, I call all the major publishers for material. I listen to every single song that comes through my office. Nobody listens for me — I'm very emphatic about that. I listen at 6:30 in the morning, I listen at 3:30 in the morning; it doesn't matter.

And then I alert my own staff writers, as well, that so and so is coming up. But

in order for even my own staff writers to get in a session, they better have a better song than anything I've heard from the outside.

How many staff writers do you have?

Right now, four. And I also have writers who give me first shot at all their material.

"How did your staff writers go about becoming staff writers?

Two of them — Hod David and Gloria Nissenson — sent me a cassette in the mail. This is no joke! Their tape was just one of thousands and thousands and thousands of cassettes I get a year. And this one song of theirs just knocked me out. It was called *Without You;* not only did I sign them as staff writers, I recorded it with Engelbert. It was on Engelbert's second Epic album.

I signed Hod and Gloria because I really believed in their material and I wanted to watch them grow. I'm always willing to meet new people, and listen to new musicians, arrangers, as well as songwriters. I think when you close your mind, you may as well leave the business.

Does it become more and more difficult to be open now that you've achieved a lot of success?

No, it becomes easier, because I'm more secure within myself, and I'm not fighting anything or anybody. If anything, I find myself treating people better than I ever had in the past. I never treated people badly, but I'm expanding more, I'm giving everybody a chance, because I appreciate it when I look back and say, "If Bob Reno never gave me a chance with Mercury's publishing company, which I didn't deserve at the time, I'd never be where I am right now."

So, in giving people — such as the readers of *Songwriter* — a chance, what are the do's and don'ts of tape submissions to you?

They should never submit more than three songs for a particular artist, because they cannot conceivably have more than two or three great songs.

Should they tell you they have a particular artist in mind?

It doesn't matter. If they send me a great song, with no particular artist in mind, I'll find the artist for it. And another thing that's very, very important: If they want their material back, they must send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope. I am not CBS; I could go broke sending stuff back.

Would you rather hear a studio demo, or is a guitar/voice or piano/voice demo good enough?

I think I'm enough of a professional that it doesn't matter. If it's a great song, it doesn't matter if it's a lousy demo made in your basement, or if it's a big master recording session. My ears are tuned.

Anything else on tape submissions?

Yes. Always send either a lyric or lead sheet with your cassette. Never send a lead/lyric sheet without a tape — which I get sometimes. That's ludicrous. I'm not going to start sitting down and playing the piano.

Are there types of songs that you're tired of hearing?

No. I could never say I'm tired of hearing love songs, because the world revolves around love songs, and I'm always looking for that one writer who says it a little differently. Love songs are the songs that make standards and copyrights.

What artists are you looking for material for now?

Always looking for Engelbert. He's my main artist. But it doesn't matter, see, if I come up with a great song that isn't for him; I could always go after the right artist. If I heard the right song for Cher, for anybody, I could pick up a phone and call anybody. I may not be able to produce that act, but I'll certainly be able to get the song to the right people at any moment. I can get a song to any artist in the country.

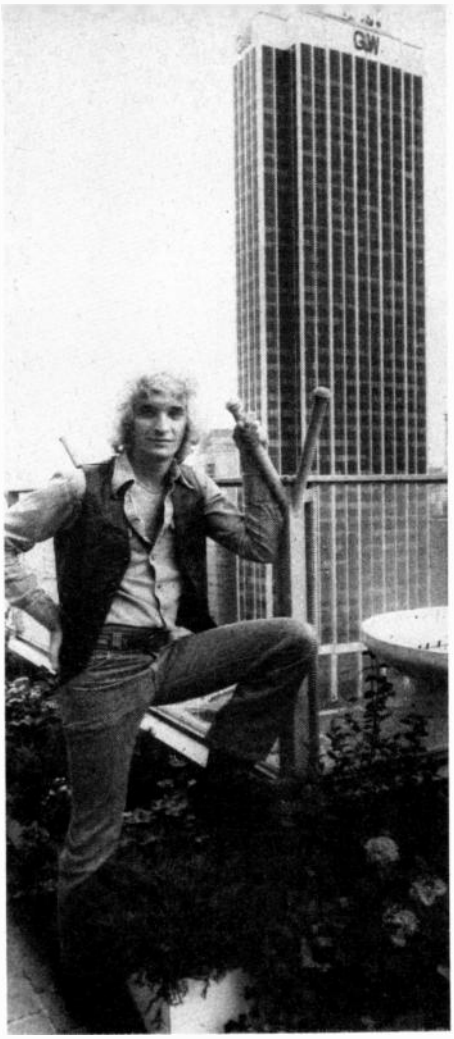
How should new songwriters get feedback on their songs?

They should see publishers, major publishers in bigger companies. They have more time than me, and, besides, that's their job. With me, I'm running a one-man show. I want to listen to everything myself, I don't want to pawn it off to anybody else. And if I do that, then I can't give on the other end.

When you were songplugging yourself, how did you deal with rejection?

"If I heard the right song for Cher, for anybody, I could pick up a phone and call anybody. I can get a song to any artist in the country."

With Ritchie Adams, eowriter of After the Lovin'



"I listen to every song that comes through my office. Nobody listens for me. I'm very emphatic about that."

Very well. I'm very, very thick skinned. I have a lot of resiliency. Tremendous amount of resiliency.

So you bounced back quick?

Almost immediately.

But, hey, not to go down is abnormal. If it's for a split second, you've got to go down. I still get rejection — every day. But my attitude is every time I get a no, I'm getting closer to a yes. I use rejection as a building block.

Put on your producing hat for a minute. What do you see your role of a producer as?

My role as a producer is everything except singing that record. It's analogous to a director in a film. It's everything. It's choosing the song, choosing the artist to go with that song, choosing the arranger, choosing the musicians, choosing the studio, putting all these ingredients together, guiding — never restricting — the artist through the session. That's how I work with all my artists.

When you say guiding, what do you mean?

I never restrict; I never tell anybody how to sing.

I just recorded Mike Douglas for Spring Records . . .

Mike Douglas, the TV . . .

Yeah, the TV personality. *The Man in My Little Girl's Life.* I think we may connect with something else with him.

There are two sides — one is called *Alone at the End of the Rainbow,* and the other, *Let's Be Lovers Again.* Great, great records, and it's a very strange position. Here I am sitting behind the board in the studio, coming from Passaic, N.J., and there's Mike Douglas on the other side of the glass, superstar in his own right — household word all over the country. But in this situation he is no longer the TV superstar, he is looking to me to guide him, to tell him, "That sounded good," "That sounded bad," "That was sharp," "This was flat."

So, I'm actually molding this record. Now I'm no longer molding the song; I'm molding the record.

Do you think about the business aspects of a record while you're producing?

All the time. It's a business. I view what I do every day as a business, and nothing else. I love it. I love it to death. There's only two things important to me in life, and music is one of them.

What's the other?

Women. And women will tell you it's in that order also. That's why I'm single. I weave the women in and out of whatever I'm doing at the time with music.

What are some of your other projects?

What I'm working on for the next four to six weeks is promoting Engelbert's new single. I'm one of the few producers that when I leave the studio my job is not finished.

What else would you like to be doing down the line?

I just want more hits. I'll always want more hits.

Speaking of hits, what's the "hit" sound of today?

I think what's happening today is MOR in its truest sense. Take your Fleetwood Macs, your Eagles, and it's MOR music — youth-oriented MOR. So I really feel I'm really in the right direction. I think your basis, your foundation is the song — the song, the song, the song. It's always gonna go back to that.

Looking back now, do you feel there have been any compromises, any sacrifices to get where you are today?

They're not sacrifices to me. I'm totally hedonistic. Long-term heavy relationships? Children? Those things don't matter to me. It would be a sacrifice if I really wanted something and wasn't doing it. I'm loving my life.

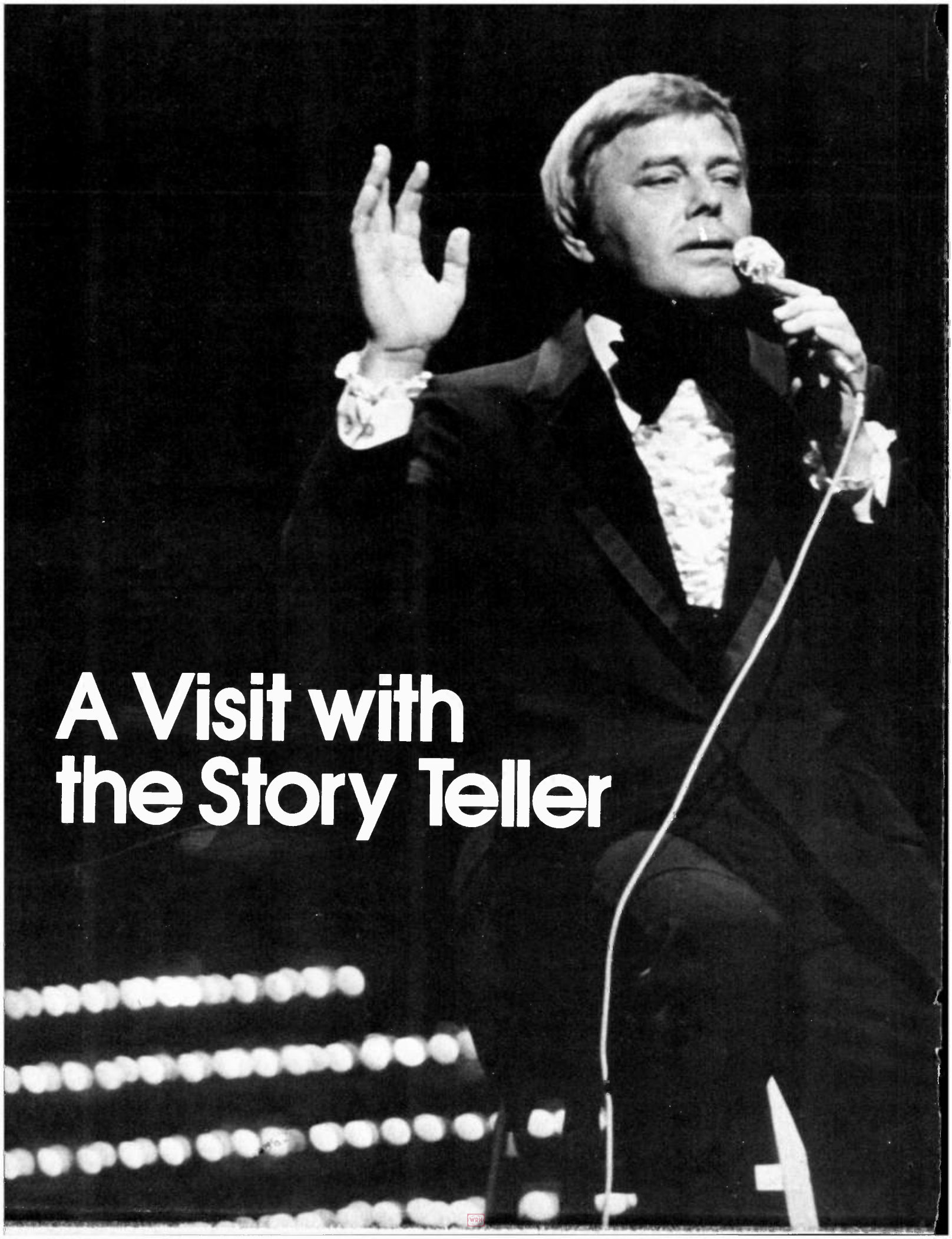
What about "after the lovin'?"

After the lovin' they get their shoes on and get the hell out.

Lou Stevens is a New York songwriter/performer/radio talk show host.

Joel Diamond's address: Silver Blue Music, 220 Central Park South, New York, NY 10019.

"Engelbert appeals to women of all ages. And they want to hear him sing about love. They want to hear a positive lyric."



A Visit with the Story Teller

Tom T. Hall, the Bard of Olive Hill, Harper Valley and Fox Hollow, Talks a Love Song about Songwriting

by Laura Eipper

"Ladies and gentlemen, here's a young man who fancies himself a story teller," drawled Tex Ritter as he introduced a young singer/songwriter to an audience some years ago. The name, like the story songs he sang, stuck, and Tom T. Hall was permanently dubbed "The Story Teller."

Today Hall is known to millions for his unique musical tales of small town life (Harper Valley P.T.A.), *simple pleasures* (I Love), *and philosophies that transcend their homespun wrappings* (Old Dogs, Children and Watermelon Wine).

Among the legion of Nashville songwriters, Hall is ranked by both critics and colleagues as one of the very best, a writer with both an intuitive gift for poetry and a professional approach to songwriting that is nearly unparalleled.

Hall's thoughts on the writing of songs, in fact, prompted him to write a successful book several years ago, "How I Write Songs: Why You Can," and resulted in invitations to teach two songwriting courses at local universities.

The son of a poor fundamentalist preacher, Hall began writing as a child and found ample material for his songs in the tiny town of Olive Hill, Ky., including the unforgettable hero of The Day Clayton Delaney Died, *a local musician who strongly influenced the young Hall.*

At 15 he quit high school and went to work in an overalls factory and a few years later joined the Air Force where, during an eight-year hitch, he picked up again on his writing. From the Air Force, where he finished high school and a year of college, Hall moved to West Virginia, studying journalism at Roanoke College while moonlighting as a copy writer and DJ for WRON radio.

While he was working as a DJ, Hall's songs came to the attention of Jimmy Key of NewKeys Music in Nashville, who sent him a writer's contract in 1964. If writing had been an off-hours pursuit previously, Hall went at it with a vengeance when he hit Nashville, writing eight hours a day for a $50 weekly draw.

His first solid country hit came soon, a BMI award-winning version of DJ for a Day *by Jimmy C. Newman. A succession of hits followed, until in 1968 came the "one big one"* — Harper Valley P.T.A.

The song, which sold more than six million copies, firmly established Hall and the song's unknown young singer, Jeannie C. Riley, as stars. Hall has estimated that the song earned him roughly a million dollars in the past 10 years.

In 1967, after a number of his songs had become hits for other people, Hall decided to record himself. His own first success was with The Ballad of Forty Dollars, *followed by a succession of charted records with the unique Hall stamp.*

Inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Assn. Hall of Fame last fall, Tom T. Hall is at the top of one of country music's most spectacularly successful songwriting careers. Hall and wife Dixie live on a 54-acre farm near Nashville, where they raise prize-winning basset hounds and entertain graciously in their beautiful, antique-filled mansion. Nearby, Hall maintains his Hallmark Music offices and studio.

Don't let the trappings fool you, though. Tom T. Hall, The Story Teller, the poor kid from Olive Hill, the self-educated poet, are still very much there. For all the commercial success he enjoys, Hall has been known to don his old clothes, rent a car and disappear for a few days, travelling around to sit in coffee shops, bars and barber shops, tuning up his ear and his eye, getting "the drift of the country."

The Fox Hollow farm is kept just a little wild around the edges, a place where a man can roam a little, fish in peace and just think, and along with the purebred bassets is an equally prized collection of "found" animals — a wounded crow, or a runaway horse.

Even at Hall's office, decorated tastefully with antiques and hunting prints, the atmosphere is casual and the elegant bar set contains one decanter marked "Shine."

A soft-spoken, reflective man, Hall enjoys talking about his writing. He is an articulate, witty conversationalist and communicates his enthusiasm readily. One recent afternoon, ensconsed in a large leather armchair, Budweiser in hand and the inevitable cap pulled down low over his eyes, The Story Teller did just that.

* * *

Tom T., you're known for your "craftsmanlike" approach to song-

writing, and yet you're a poet. Do you consider songwriting an art or a craft?

Well, it's like football in a way, because you have to get yourself in shape for it. But then, the inspired teams win and the inspired players accomplish.

How do you get yourself in shape for songwriting?

First of all, you have to love writing, things that are written, I think. You have to admire good writing and aspire to good writing. In order to do that you have to read good writers and listen to good writers and not imitate them or copy them but find out as much as you can about what motivates them — why they write, how they write, when they write and everything else you can.

I originally studied novelists, authors, newspaper writers and columnists. You take a Buchwald or an Irma Bombeck, William Safire, Mary McGrory. You wonder how they do it day after day. They write such interesting things and such good things and well-informed things. Writing to me is all just one big word. It's not just songwriting. I think that's helped me a lot.

Why do you mostly write what you call "story songs"?

I'd like to say that they're my favorites, but it might be that that's all I can write.

When you sit down to write, do you plan to write a song that tells a story?

I do as much relating as I do creating. Some of my songs mean different things to different people, because I write only the circumstance. I let all of the ulterior motives and all the analysis of the song lie with the listener. I tell them what happened because it amused me or interested me at the time.

I wrote a song called *Homecoming* and it means four or five different things to four or five different groups of people. And that fascinates me. They'd come up to me and tell me why they liked the song and they'd tell me a reason that never dawned on me. That's one of the tricks. You be as honest and sincere with your subject as you can and just write whatever happened. Give the reader a break. Don't tell him what every little thing means. I don't write "in other words." I leave that to the listener. Maybe in a little punch line you tell them why it was important to you, but the rest of the song is theirs.

Do you think there is such a thing as a born songwriter, someone who's just a natural at it?

Probably, yes. I don't deal in mysticism very much — I'm sort of a realist — but at a very early age I had this urge to write, just anything, something written. So, maybe songwriting isn't just for everyone.

Do you think it's possible for nearly anyone to learn how to write songs?

It's possible for anyone to learn how to write certain kinds of songs. By that I mean that a good mechanic could write good songs about an automobile. A good surgeon could write a fairly decent song about an appendectomy. But we have a problem here: songs about automobiles and appendectomies are not big sellers. Songs about boys and girls are the most popular songs. Those are the biggest-selling songs of all times, the songs about the pure, universal, uncorruptible love between a man and a woman.

"I want to write a few great songs, but I'd like to write a lot of good ones too. It would be terrible to have a one-year career and then live to be 80."

That's vanilla. But there's chocolate, raspberry, strawberry, pistachio, too. Songs come in a lot of other flavors. People like some of those once in a while. I seem to be stuck with pistachio. I've never been a romantic, but I survive. Young writers should know that there are songs about other kinds of things besides boys and girls.

You said in your book that there are songs everywhere.

I'm saying here that there are songs everywhere, but they are not all hit songs. They *are* songs, though, about what people want to hear about. So you write. Let's say you're a ballet dancer and there are no good songs about ballet dancing. Write yourself one. Sing it for your friends and other ballet dancers.

That's what I encourage people to do. There aren't enough songs about enough subjects. Most songs seem to be written only for commercial success, to sell records. People shouldn't write songs only for that reason. Songs don't belong to publishers and record companies. The music belongs to the people and they should use it more often and more freely and more frequently and for better purposes than making money. It's sort of a crime to think that music is equated with General Motors.

Is there a dichotomy between what is commercially viable and what is artistically valuable?

I don't subscribe to that at all. First of all, writing — the very definition of the word — is to communicate. If you write something and it doesn't communicate, it's no good. Period. Because that's the very reason we write. The more people we communicate with, the better our writing is. So, no, nothing is written too well to be commercial.

If you have a song that sells eight million records, the classic line in Nashville is "That's a piece of shit." Well, of course it's not. If it communicates with eight million people, it's good writing. You're not writing for critics, you're writing for people.

We should write more like this: you want to borrow a dollar and you have a friend. So you write to him and say "Dear Fred, I would like to borrow a dollar. Tom T. Hall." That's writing. You don't say "Dear Fred. . . ." and then do 20 pages. All you want to borrow is a dollar, so just borrow a dollar and get the hell out of there.

But don't your songs often have a message in them, too?

A song says two things. It says what it says immediately and it says what the writer really wants to say. They are parables of sorts. And they are analogies, right? When I write a song I have two ways that I write it. I write it so that it says what it says, but then it says that other thing that I'm really wanting to say. I write two songs at once. I write in stereo. There's a larger meaning to a smaller subject.

Is that conscious on your part?

It's either a gift or a talent. Not being familiar with the deity, I don't know which it is, but I'm grateful for it anyway.

How did you first begin to write songs?

I was fascinated by music and fascinated by things that were written when I was a child, and that's what a songwriter is. When I was about four years old I started playing guitar and I wrote my first song when I was nine.

Do you remember it?

Yes, it was called *Haven't I Been Good*

Performing his Mr. Bojangles *routine*

With wife Miss Dixie at their annual Plantation Party

Sharing a common interest with Kitty Wells . . . the restaurant business.

With Sybil Carter in the studio recording Peanut Song, *scheduled to be released on Tom's next children's album*

With Billy Carter, Joan Rivers and Eddie Albert on "Dinah"

"Give the reader a break. Don't tell him what every little

Tom T. Hall

To You? Some neighbors of mine had an argument and the wife said, "Well, I'm going home to my mother's," and the argument progressed for a while and his argument was, "Well, haven't I been good to you?" I thought, "Wow! What a great idea for a song." Why I thought that I don't know, but I ran home and wrote it.

I didn't have it on paper or anything, but I was fascinated that it all went together so cleverly. That it had verses, choruses and a melody and everything, just like a real song. I felt somehow that this was inadequate. It was years later that I learned that it was a real song. I thought maybe there was more to it and that maybe I had pulled some kind of rabbit out of a hat by writing it.

That's still the way I do it. I hear something said and then I go home and write about it. Or I do something and it gives me an idea. I write all of my songs the way I wrote that one.

Was there a point in your earlier career when you became sure that you had what it takes to make it as a songwriter?

I think when I wrote *Harper Valley P.T.A.* I really felt like a songwriter. I told a good friend that I felt like one of

"Songs come in a lot of flavors. I seem to be stuck with pistachio."

the big boys. I didn't say that egotistically, or that I felt I was in a league with them, but you see, I had enough money to give up a lot of these other moonlighting jobs and just write. I knew I wouldn't starve within the next year. I would have a place to sleep and something to eat. That gave me real satisfaction.

How did you get the idea for *Harper Valley P.T.A.*? Where did you get the setting?

The incident took place when I was a child. There was a lady who used to have little beer parties on Saturday nights. All she had was, you know, like a case of beer and a couple of people playing the guitar. She was a widow lady and I was so impressed that a person of her social status would take on the aristocracy of the community — fight City Hall. I thought if the mayor ever spoke to me or called me by my first name I would have fainted. I mean, this is a town of 1,400 and I thought the mayor was in league with the gods. How else could he get a title like mayor?

But she just told them off and that always stuck in the back of my mind. What a grand, courageous person. Someone who knew who she was and knew who they were and wasn't overly impressed with herself and not at all impressed with them.

Clayton Delaney was also a character from your childhood. How did you get the idea for *The Son of Clayton Delaney*, the tune on your new album, "Places I've Done Time"?

Well, I have a son and he's 17 years old and a huge, successful young man who has a full scholarship to the University of Kentucky and I wanted Clayton to have one. I thought it was only fair. So, now he has one and he's doing exactly what Clayton would like him to do — playing the music of his time and doing it very well.

What about your own performing? How does it relate in importance to your songwriting?

I rank songwriting as one, two and three and entertaining as four. Because entertainment can never be true. When you're gone, what's entertainment? You're gone. But when you're writing, that's you. Good, bad or indifferent, that's you.

In your book, you concentrate quite a bit on the rules of songwriting, the mechanics. How important are the formal aspects of songwriting?

Well, when I taught songwriting I found that what holds a lot of writers back as it did me when I was nine years old, was the mechanics. Most of the time I spent teaching that when once you have a song, you have it. The mechanics are left to the people who are in the mechanics of songwriting — the lead sheets, the work tapes, the publishing. All that sort of thing has no bearing on a good song. Once you can sing it you have the song. The rest of that is all a matter of modern technology.

You don't have to know how to write music. All you have to do is write a song

"You don't have to know how to write music. All you have to do is write a song that communicates with somebody and they say, 'I really like that.' "

that communicates with somebody and they say, "I really like that." The rest of it, for lack of a better word, is bullshit, technology — which has nothing to do with writing in the first place. You can't disregard rhythm, rhyme, meter and so on, because those are parts of the song. But once you have the song, you can disregard all the other mechanics of it.

Do you get writer's block very often?

I occasionally get a block, but it comes from trying to write what people want me to write instead of what I want to write. My blocks come when producers, publishers, agents, managers, people are on my back to be Tom T. Hall. Because I hate self-plagiarism and I don't like self-imitation. They say, "When are you gonna write another Tom T. Hall song?" My blocks come from writing for someone other than me.

If I'm not growing, if I'm not going upward, I'm going in some direction because I'm alive and things change and move and I must by all the rules of nature and providence move with them. And so I have no alternative but to change. Sure, I'd like to be 16 years old again, and my publishers and managers would like me to be five again and write

thing means."

some more *Harper Valleys*. I can't fulfill my wish nor theirs.

Have the things that interest you, that inspire you to write, changed over the years?

Yes. Because I'm a different age, the geography is different, I experience things differently.

Do you have a set time of day that you work?

I work in the morning, between about three and nine. I require a good deal of time alone, so if I get up at four o'clock in the morning I can just sit there and drink coffee and smoke cigarettes until eight. Sometimes I just sit there and read, very pleased with being alive and up ahead of the rest of the world. I pet my dogs and look out the window. I'm not hard to entertain.

Is it ever a chore to write?

No, I never write under those circumstances. If I'm not writing I just sit back and read.

You don't worry about cranking something out every day?

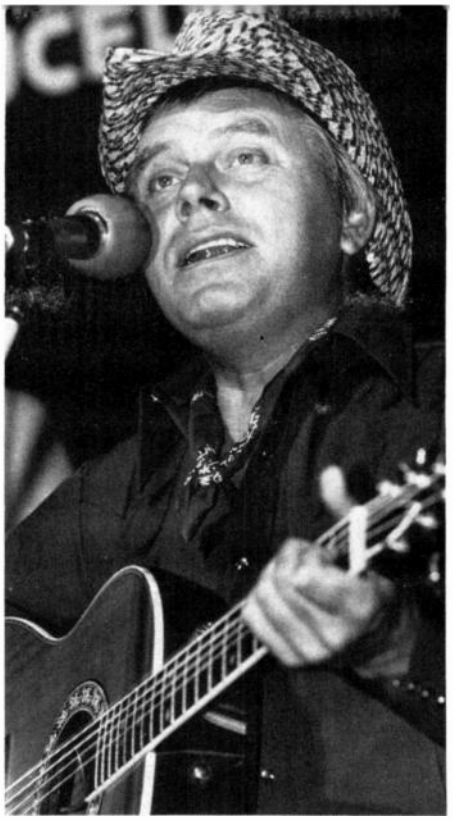
I used to for the first five years I was in Nashville. I paid my dues that way. I

"I work in the morning, between three and nine. Sometimes, I just sit and read, very pleased with being alive. . . ."

wrote from nine until five every day and I wouldn't move out of the apartment because I figured I had an obligation.

Would you recommend that as a way to get yourself started?

Yes. If I were a young person who really wanted to be a writer, I would find the financial circumstance that



would allow me to do it and then write from nine to five and not do anything else. Not read, not go anywhere, just write even if it's bad. It's good practice. I also got a lot of good practice writing radio copy. I wrote advertising copy for radio and how many times can you have a white sale? I wrote all kinds of trivial things for local stations.

It was good practice because a song is about the length of a piece of copy, without all the beats and measures between the bars. It's about a page long, which is what a good song is. It was good training, making something out of nothing.

Where do you get your melodies? Do you write them at the same time you write lyrics?

They just come. Some songs require a mental picture of a train wreck. Some others require, melody-wise, a flower waving in the breeze. Somewhere in between those two extremes there's a melody for your songs. So you sort of sing what it ought to sound like. I do it all at the same time. It sounds like some sort of mental trick, but it's not. It's believing in yourself and whatever you're thinking, start singing it. We sing when we talk. If there's a melody for our conversation, there certainly must be some available for our songs. Just hum what you're thinking.

What other kinds of advice would you give up-and-coming songwriters?

Sinclair Lewis was asked one time to talk to a class of students about writing. When he got there he asked a question of the class: "Do you people want to be writers?" And they all said yes. Then he said, "Why the hell aren't you at home writing?" You can't learn to write reading about it or listening. You can get inspiration, but you need to write.

Write a lot. Write everything. And be sincere. Write about what you know. Just lay it all out there. It's a business of mental prostitution anyway, so give it all you've got. It's the world's second oldest profession.

Which of your songs would you say is your favorite?

I always cop out on that. These songs are my children and I'd be foolish to pick a favorite. They're my bread, my butter, my rent. They're everything to me and I can't pick a favorite.

What about favorite songs by other people?

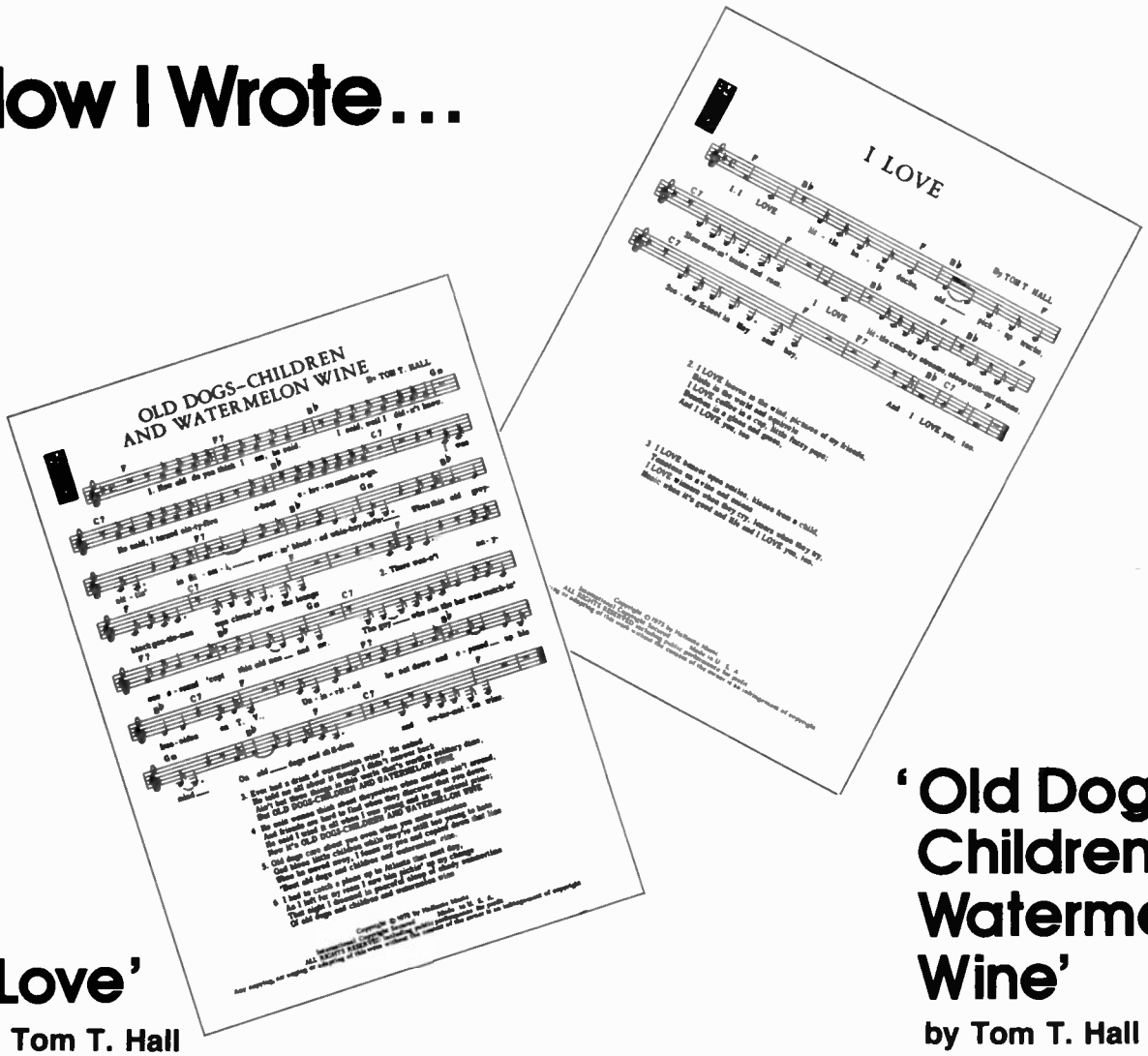
I have a lot of favorites. *Jingle Bells, Irene Good Night, Understand Your Man,* by Johnny Cash. *I Can't Stop Loving You* by Don Gibson. And *Don't You Ever Get Tired of Hurting Me* by Hank Cochran. I guess if I'm just sitting around half drunk I'll sing those more than any others. They just come back to me somehow. Oh, and *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* and *Far Away Places*.

I stick with the guys who have been around, the guys with the track records. The Bill Andersons. The Harlan Howards. I know they're not popular folk heroes, nor are they the hottest thing in the world, but these people have been here for years and they still keep writing hit songs.

That fascinates me. That's what I want to do. I guess that's why they're my heroes. People who have been writing songs for a long time and they still write because they love the idea of songwriting. I love those kinds of artists. I admire a lot of the younger writers, but they seem to come and go. They don't want to write anything but great songs. I want to write a few great songs but I'd like to write a lot of good ones, too. It would be terrible to have a one-year career and then live to be 80.

Laura Eipper is a feature writer for the Nashville Tennessean.

How I Wrote...



'I Love'

by Tom T. Hall

I Love is one of the simplest songs I have written, from the standpoint of rewriting or plot structure. It's obvious I used a formula in this song.

I used the "rhyme each line" and "rhyme within a line" method.

Example:

I Love little baby ducks
Old Pickup trucks
Slow moving trains . . . and rain

The first two lines rhyme, and then I rhyme within the line with "trains" and "rain."

Once I have established this pattern, it also gives me a chance to perk up the ears of the listener by dropping the rhyme within line method and using a different sound at the end of some verses.

Example:

Tomatoes on the vine . . . and onions

"Vine" and "onions" do not rhyme; however, I feel that the first two lines rhyme strongly enough to hold the song together while I make a little point that some of the things I love are not of a rhyming nature.

I really enjoyed writing this song. I immediately knew I had a universal thought when it dawned on me that no one had written a song called "I Love." Oh yes, there had been songs about loving Paris, Alice, trains, and all sorts of people and places, but there had not been one that simply said, "I Love."

I was sitting at the desk at my publisher's making some phone calls when I got the idea. It had been a beautiful fall morning and I was in a very good mood, as I love any of the changes of the seasons. I suppose the one reason there are so many references to spring is that it seemed so far away at the time.

There is always a guitar in just about any office in Nashville, so I picked up the one that was nearby and began to strum the melody as I wrote down the list of things I really love and appreciate.

The line about "grass" really threw me for a minute, as I knew almost as soon as I had written it that someone would think the grass in my song was a reference to marijuana. I personally think that grass is about twenty percent of the beauty of nature, as it is the carpet on which a lot of the furniture of flowers and animals is spread. Once I had made up my mind to go ahead and use the word "grass," it was not a problem to me any more, because I knew that the word meant what I wanted it to mean and nothing more. Or should we say, "less."

'Old Dogs, Children, and Watermelon Wine'

by Tom T. Hall

I find it difficult to see all the things in *Old Dogs, Children, and Watermelon Wine* that have made it successful, because a man cannot know all there is to know about himself. But I will tell you why I wrote the song in the way I did, and perhaps in reading the lyrics you can discover more about the song and more about me than I myself have learned.

I opened the song with a question: "How old you think I am? he said." First, try to get the attention of the listener. As someone once said, the public, just like a mule, will listen to you, but you must first get its attention. Thus, the unusual opening line.

In writing the song, I attempted to do two things. I tried to get sympathy for the narrator by placing him in a bar in Miami, sipping blended whiskey, and sympathy for the old man, simply by having him be an old man. I establish his advanced age by mentioning he is past 65, and just being an old man gives him license to be a philosopher, in my estimation.

We have established the location; the old man is working in a bar in Miami, talking to a fellow sitting there. The subject of the song is the old man's philosophy, which is that there are only

three things in the world worth a solitary dime: old dogs, children, and watermelon wine.

Seldom will I write a song without mentioning a woman somewhere in it. This is because, I have been told, women buy eighty percent of the records sold in this country. True or not, I rarely leave them out of my songs. In the song, I added a line which is part of the old man's philosophy, that "women think about theyselves when menfolk ain't around." Now you may not believe this, but I have tried to say a little something about women's liberation; I tried to imply that women have things to do and think of besides men. Some women were rather put out by the line. Some said, "What do you have against women? You said in your song that they think about themselves when men aren't around." I countered by saying, "It is not my philosophy; it is the old man's. That's what he said, and I am only quoting him in the song." Thereby, I narrowly escaped a lengthy dissertation on what women do when menfolk aren't around.

In the line "I saw him picking up my change," I am crediting the old man with humility. He is apparently retired, and this is perhaps a part-time job cleaning the tables in the little bar. I feel this gives his philosophy even more credibility; it states he would take a tip for the service he performs and is not above making a few extra dollars through honest labor.

As the narrator, I involved myself personally with the old man's philosophy by dreaming that I, too, was enjoying the old dogs, the children, the watermelon wine, and the shady summertime.

When writing a song, remember that every line is important. You have only a short time in which to get your message across to the people. Given the opportunity of an entire line in which to say something, let's not just make it rhyme with the line prior to it, but make it meaningful, sincere, lending credence to the message of the song. This gives the tone of the song a continuity, makes it more believable. Many times I mention incidents of seemingly small importance to the overall thought of the song, and yet, upon hearing these small comments and observations, people will be moved to agree, "Yes! Of course! That's just the way it was."

Popular Scale Forms

...Or, May the Source Be with You

by Rob Sanford

As you may have gathered from last month's article on guitar gymnastics, there is an infinite variety of shapes, patterns and forms on the guitar fingerboard. These fretboard shapes are the result of applying particular musical sounds to the guitar. It is these musical sounds, which themselves are infinitely varied, that produce the endless string of patterns on the guitar fingerboard itself. The source of all this infinite variety is known simply as: the *scale*.

There are, in turn, a multitude of different scales, each one acting as a source in the creation of its own particular galaxy of melodic and harmonic vibrations, known as its *key* or *tonality*. We will explore the most popular, useful, and down-to-earth scales first, and then, in the future, expand our understanding out to encompass the more far-reaching, esoteric corners of scalar reality.

The Major Source

By far, the most common scale (source) within the universe of popular music is the diatonic major scale. Rodgers and Hammerstein, cleverly using this very same scale, even wrote an instructive tune called *Do-Re-Mi* for their musical, "The Sound of Music."

The major scale in the key of C consists of the following pitches: C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C. Looking at and listening to this sound you will see and hear that the major scale is constructed with the following distribution of whole-steps and half-steps: whole-whole-half-whole-whole-whole-half. That is, there will always be a half-step between scale steps 3-4 and 7-8. (Note: a half-step = 1 fret; a whole-step = 2 frets.) If for some reason you can not yet get the sound of this major scale in mind, then find a tuned piano and play all the white keys starting on the white key directly to the left of the left black key in any group of two black keys: this sound will be a C major scale starting on C.

The C major scale is not as black and white or as readily visible on guitar. The constellation of **Fig. 1** displays all the possible major scale notes on the fingerboard for the key of C, full guitar range. The bulls'-eyes or targets illuminate scale step 1 or "do," which is the tonic of the key or, as in this case, the note C itself.

Of course, the note C is repeated in different octaves and it is found simultaneously in different locations on the fretboard. For instance, the C on the 5th string-3rd fret is one octave lower in pitch than the C on the 2nd string-1st fret. However, this C on the 2nd string-1st fret is simultaneously available on the 3rd string-5th fret, 4th string-10th fret, 5th string-15th fret, and 6th string-20th fret. Look for similar relationships between other scale steps too.

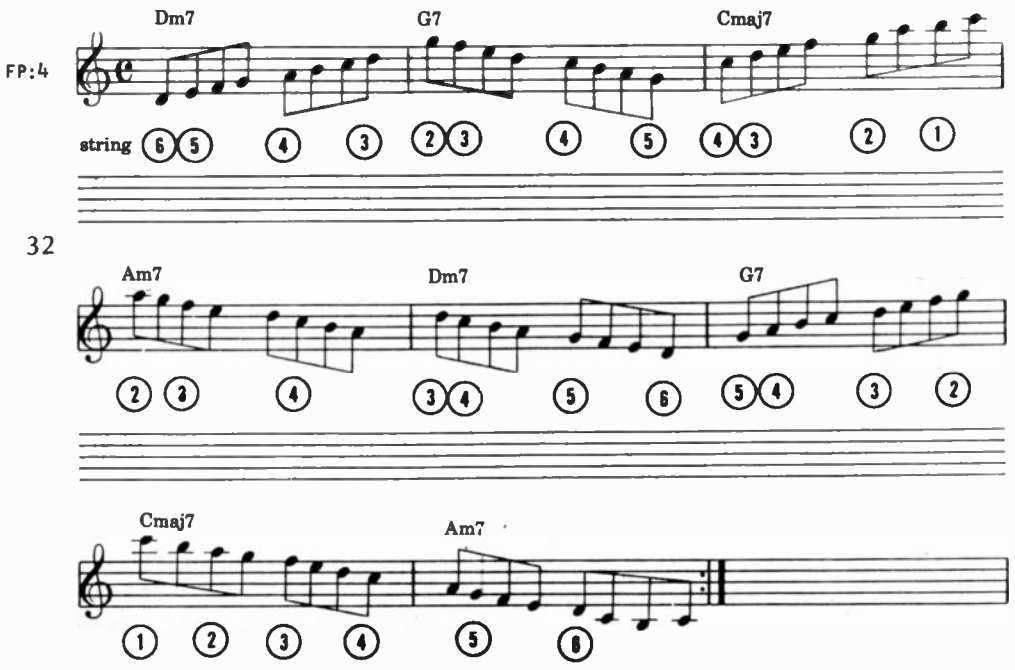
Divide And Conquer

Trying to memorize all these possibilities at once might send your cerebellum spinning into the twilight zone. So, we must reduce the amount of information and reorganize it in order to master it. First, we will divide this massive array of scale dots into 5 different forms or shapes, each remaining within a 4-5 fret span. (Be aware that other shapes are also infinitely available.)

Each of the 5 scale forms will contain its own reference points known as the tonic and its octaves (indicated in the illustrations by bulls'-eyes). This tonic tone functions as the north star of the scalar constellation and as such, it will act as a guide-tone which will provide a bearing for accurate visualization of each shape. The tonic will also possess the greatest musical pull or force, so great in fact that all other scale tones will gravitate toward it. So, let the tonic be the note that lights up in your mind's eye when you visualize the scale shape.

In addition, each scale form will con-

Example 1



tain its own reference chord. As you will soon see, these 5 forms conveniently connect so that, once you learn them, you will have the entire fingerboard completely covered.

Fig. 2A shows the first fingering pattern for the C major scale, so (out of convenience) let's call this shape: Fingering Pattern #1 (abbreviated: FP:1). Or, if you'd rather, you can give pet names to these various shapes or even connect the dots in obscene ways if it will help you remember them. But before you do that, let me reveal to you an easy and efficient technique for getting these shapes (or any others) quickly in mind.

First, however, check out **Figs. 2B-2E** which map out FP: 2-5, respectively, in the key of C major. **Fig. 2F** shows FP: 1 again, but this time moved up an octave higher. If you compare the relative positions of the C major scale shapes in **Figs. 2A-2F,** you will discover that they all indeed connect with one another as they span the entire scope of the fingerboard and eventually repeat. Notice that once you play past the 12th fret, the shapes will begin to recur in a cyclic fashion. Compare FP: 1 in **Figs. 2A** and **2F.**

Reference Chords

Figs. 3A-3F illustrate the reference chords for FP: 1-5, respectively, with FP: 1 repeated at the octave to help you visualize the shape. If you compare each reference chord with its respective scale shape, you will see that the scale is the source that spawns the chord. That is, you should observe that all the notes of each reference chord are found within its respective scale.

You should further observe that the reference chord for FP: 1 is based on the shape of an open C-chord form. Similarly, the reference chord for FP: 2 can be related to the shape of an open A-chord form moved up to the 3rd fret and played with the first finger barre. Correspondingly, the reference chord for FP: 3 relates to the shape of an open G-chord form moved up to the 8th fret. Additionally, the reference chord for FP: 4 relates to the shape of an open E-chord form moved up to the 8th fret and played with the first finger barre. And finally, the reference chord for FP: 5 relates to the shape of an open D-chord form moved up to the 12th fret. Review **Figs. 3A-3F.**

Pattern Learning

It is, without a doubt, better to learn only one or two of these scale patterns and to have them well in mind and hand (without having to think about them any longer), than to try to learn all 5 shapes concurrently and haphazardly. With this principle in mind, learn FP: 1 and FP: 4 first (one at a time). FP: 1 & 4 are the most widely known, they connect very well when the keys change, and we will be using them extensively in columns to come.

Let's focus our attention on FP: 4 in the key of C major **(Fig. 2D).** At first glance there appear to be 17 isolated bits of information (dots) that we must program into our mind/body computer. But this unrelated approach to learning leads only to the black-hole of knowledge: you will become inundated with

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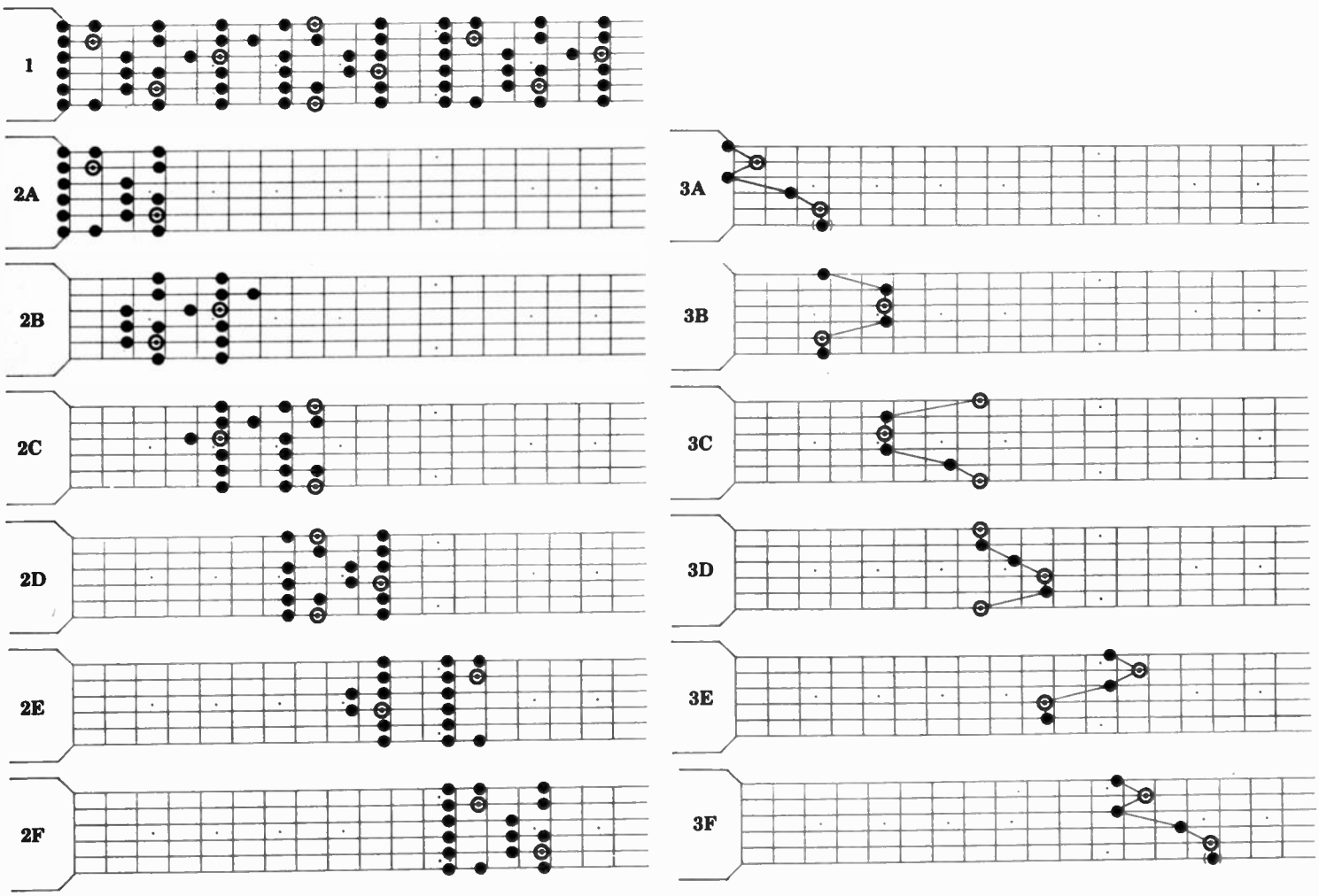

Guitar Workshop

continued

and eventually consumed by a multitude of minute maxims. Let's try, instead, to transcend confusion by reducing and reorganizing the amount of information as much as we can.

First, look at the pattern on the 6th string alone (FP: 4; **Fig. 2D**): half-step — whole-step (or 1 fret — 2 frets). Let's call this individual shape: subpattern A. Now look for identical patterns (if any) on the other separate strings. You do not have to go too far to find this pattern repeats itself exactly on the adjacent 5th string.

Look again. You should discover that this subpattern A occurs once again on the 1st string. By the way, you should suspect that, since the 1st and 6th strings are both E-strings, whatever pattern you play on string one will be identical to that on string six (and vice versa). This effect will occur without exception, so we can automatically reduce the 6 different string patterns to, at least, 5.

So far we have combined strings 6-5-1 under subpattern A. Now look at the pattern on string 4: whole-step — half-step. A light should go on: this new shape is simply the reversal of subpattern A. So let's call it: A′. Does subpattern A′ occur elsewhere? Check it out. You should notice A′ again on string 3.

String 2 is the only string remaining. Examine its pattern: whole-step (just 2 pitches). This shape is unlike any of the others, so let's call it: subpattern B.

Finally we have reduced 17 original, seemingly unrelated bits of information down to an understandable 3:

1) subpattern A occurs on strings 6-5-1;
2) subpattern A′ occurs on strings 4-3;
3) subpattern B occurs on string 2 only.

You should also observe that each string contains 3 notes, except string 2 which contains only 2 notes.

It is an efficient learning habit (or secret) to analyze these patterns in this fashion *before* you attempt to play them. Learn the pattern first — by thinking, making observations, arriving at conclusions, and reducing and reorganizing the amount of information — and then play what you already know.

Practice Plan

If you did a minimal amount of work with the preskill drills from last month's column, you should realize that your 4 left-hand fingers can comfortably span a 4-fret area. Further, you should have developed the ability to stretch the 1st and 4th left-hand fingers out an extra fret to cover a 5-fret span as necessary. This left-hand technique will help you play these new scale patterns. There are some fingering options, so use those left-hand fingers which seem the most logical.

The procedure for practicing a pattern by itself is: 1) play the reference chord; 2) play the scale pattern (ascending and descending) beginning and ending on the lowest tonic; and 3) play the reference chord again. Playing the chord and starting and ending on the tonic helps to establish the tonality in your mind's ear.

To practice the scale forms in the context of a chord progression: 1) record about 20 minutes of a standard II-V-I-VI chord progression *in strict tempo* on your cassette recorder. Use a metronome, if at all available, and set it to a tempo at which you will make no mistakes. 2) Play the scale in eighth notes along with your prerecorded chord changes. 3) Increase the tempo only as your ability to perform increases. Or maintain the same tempo and quicken your finger movements. (If you do not know what a II-V-I-VI chord progression is, see the article on chords in the December, 1978, issue of *Songwriter*.)

Since, in any given key, the chords are derived from the scale, you can play the one corresponding scale over any or all the chords derived from that scale and it will sound fine. Try starting your scale passage on the root of each chord, but be sure to maintain the proper tonality (key). That is, in the key of C you would play: a C scale from D to D (in eighth notes) over the Dm7 chord for one measure; a C scale from G to G over the G7 chord; a C scale from C to C over the C chord; and a C scale from A to A over the Am7 chord. Notice that the C scale is used over each chord regardless of the starting pitch, since all four chords are in the key of C (see **Ex. 1**).

You should, of course, experiment with these scale forms in all keys, full guitar range. Again, learn FP: 1 & 4 first since future articles will focus especially on these two.

Remember, too, that your song melodies as well as accompanying chords and embellishing lead lines all spring from out of this essential source we call the scale. You must know your musical source very well in order to use it successfully as a vehicle of expression. Take some time now to get in touch with the very source of songs, and the source will always be with you.

Songwriter Rob Sanford is presently teaching guitar in the University of Southern California's School of Music.

Moving from the Frantic ... to the Specific

by Buddy Kaye

There must be a great inner satisfaction and excitement in "completing" a lyric as *quickly* as possible, rather than as *solidly* as possible. Otherwise why would these "60 minute masterpieces" be so prevalent, so widespread among the newer songwriters? Unfortunately, the slam-bam writing method, in my experience, leaves writers with lots of ordinary, unripe, recycled songs — with no takers.

Fast, frantic-paced writing (accepting the first thing that flits across your mind) is something I see happen much too often at the various classes and seminars I teach. Because it is of some concern to me I believe the subject deserves a spotlight on its shortcomings. At the same time I would warn writers that judging these feeble efforts as a standard of quality is a grave mistake; I refer to these grade "c" songs that find their way on to LPs and radio airplay via strange circumstances.

True we're living in the fast lane of fast food franchises and get-rich-quick attitudes, but unfortunately for the fast-buck, impatient songwriter, *lyrics,* like children, demand lots of attention if they are ever going to amount to anything.

The professional writer knows that old golden adage: lyrics aren't *written* — they're *rewritten!* The frantic approach to writing can at best deliver lines that "just make sense," false rhymes, uneven lines in meter and accents and a distinct lack of specifics. Where are the lines that "say something" — warm, different, memorable? For the writer struggling to gain a foothold in the profession there is only one way to go: move your audience to smiles, tears, empathy, make them feel the hurt, give them *your* solution to a common problem, tell a story and make a point. This is the "job" of a songwriter, who can well become the historian and poet of the times, if the songs are written intelligently and compassionately.

Example: The song, *Lady Gray,* by Sue Sheridan. Although it didn't jump out of the Cheryl Ladd album as a hit song, I feel it is destined to become one. Sue "says something" in her lyric when she explains that although she is "blue" she calls herself "Lady Gray" because "blue is sky, and blue is sea/And gray is nothing, just like me." She makes the audience feel the pang of her personal hurt. This is the truth of communication between artist and listener. You can be sure the lines were not written in a frantic race to finish a song, just to have it finished.

I've posed the problem. What is the cure? It's "Slow Dancing in the Big City" to quote the current film title . . . or, in our terms: Slow Writing for the Big Money.

Begin with a solid title, using an uncommon song word in it or a fresh new phrase. The Eagles did it with *Life In The Fast Lane.* Leon Russell with *Tightrope.* Paul Simon with *One Man's Ceiling Is Another Man's Floor.*

After you are satisfied that you have a unique title, draft an outline, a synopsis of your story, making sure you have a three-minute-movie approach (a line I first heard from Al Kasha). This will force you into a beginning, a middle, and an ending, just like in a movie. If you can't find the complete story in prose, chances are you won't find it in lyrical form either.

When you begin to write your lyric from your outline, keep in mind that your first burst of enthusiasm doesn't guarantee a flawless lyric. Give your lyric the "TLC" (Tender Loving Care) treatment. And then, when your lyric is "complete," put it aside for several days. Freeze it! When you come back to it, you will either get the surprise or shock of your life. Your lyric will either be satisfyingly solid or disappointingly raw. If you have rushed it, chances are the latter.

Now the *real* work begins. Honing, crafting, chiseling, changing, replacing — rewriting! With your new perspective on what you have written, brought about by the time freeze, you will be in a position to scrutinize your own lyric with calculating detachment, almost as though it was written by some stranger. The end result can't help but get you smoother, coherent lines, and remove the looseness and dissonance that is inherent in fast writing. Your lines, thoughts and ideas will reflect the care, time and love you will be pouring into your lyric. Specifics will come after the who, what, when, where of the story line that every listener depends on in order to relate to your feelings or message you are making in your lyrics.

Songs must retain listeners' interest, make them feel comfortable with the facts coming to life, and involve them in the action. In *Wichita Lineman,* the first line immediately tells the listener that the person telling his story is a "Lineman for the County." The line implies that the person is young, male, strong and possessor of a job. And we know *where* it's taking place from the title. In the outstanding song, *Year of the Cat,* the writers, Al Stewart and Peter Wood, describe *their* setting, Casablanca, in the most original descriptive opening line: "On the morning of a Bogart movie. . . ." Bogart and Casablanca have become so synonymous that the line works.

Many songs combine *when* and *where,* as in the Gordon Lightfoot song, *Early Morning Rain. When* is in the title and *where* in the subsequent line, ". . . a long way from home."

The subject of *who* in a song is easier to deal with because who is usually the character of the song as in Curtis Mayfield's *Superfly* or in the Lennon-McCartney song, *The Fool On The Hill.*

You must remember that the listener knows absolutely nothing about the song you are presenting, nor the people in it, nor the story you are unfolding and, therefore, specifics must be clearly stated.

As a songwriter, you have the choice of tossing lyrics around haphazardly, dropping them here and there in an undisciplined manner, saying things but never getting your point across — or going back to your songs time and time again and believing that this method of "cooking on a slow burner" in perfecting lyrics will take you from the *frantic to the specific.* And, in terms of success, this approach to writing can make an *ocean* of difference.

*Hit songwriter Buddy Kaye (*Quiet Nights, Speedy Gonzales) *will begin teaching a songwriting course at Los Angeles Valley College Feb. 3. For info: (213) 781-1200. The above article is excerpted from Buddy's songwriting cassette home-study program, "The Complete Songwriter," advertised elsewhere in this issue.*

The Songwriter As Producer:

Tips on Succeeding as a Knob Twirler

by Bob Safir

"Okay, we'll save the first two choruses and punch in on the third verse. And what's the cue mix sound like anyway? Is she hearing the limiting on the vocal?"

There was a time when this kind of talk belonged only to record producers. There was a time when a songwriter wrote songs, a producer produced them, an engineer engineered, and a publisher published. Though this is still mostly true, think of some of the people that you might know who are involved in several facets of the business. You yourself as a songwriter must function as a producer or possibly even an engineer when doing a demo of your own. Even without an elaborate production, you are still responsible for creating or "producing" your product. So, in the end, learning good production techniques can make you a more competitive songwriter.

Simplicity Gets Complicated

As a songwriter/producer, you are not going into the studio to make a record, you are making a demo. So, you try to keep things simple. If you think that's easy, you've got a surprise coming. Keeping things simple is complicated. You want to add this and that, enhance and decorate . . . to seduce your listener. When this attitude goes unchecked, the beauty of the original idea can easily become cluttered.

Simple creative ideas possess a quality known as tastefulness. It's odd how the most inspiring guitar solos don't rely on guitar "chops" as much as they do on "feel" (more on that later). So, simplify, not only in terms of what parts should be included in the music, but also the parts themselves.

A good check-and-balance system in the studio is to ask yourself what good a particular production technique is going to have on the overall effect of the demo. If it's a moog solo on a guitar/vocal demo you might be overindulging. If it's a harmony part consisting of a major third on each chorus of the song it might be helpful. One valuable yardstick: keep a check on whether or not your production ideas are running into lots of studio hours. You must measure the worth of your ideas by the time factor involved and the overall effect it might have.

If It Feels Good, Use It

In an earlier article we examined the importance of neatness and accuracy in the demo-making process. As a songwriter/producer this is always your first order of business. Mistakes don't "cover up" the way you think they do. If your piano track is off-beat and out of tune, a vocal sung over it does not make that fact disappear. The listener may not even register the mistake in a conscious manner, but it still throws their attention out of focus. Be as professional as you can. If you can't pull it off yourself, get someone who can. In many cases, hiring someone more adept at a certain skill (musicianship, singing, etc.) can ultimately save you more money by saving more time in a recording studio.

Then there are the nitpickers who can find the tiniest mistakes in the universe and point them out to you every time. Just what is it that constitutes a *mis*take, a *re*take, and a good take? A certain degree of accuracy . . . combined with a generous amount of "feel." Feel is that intangible element of emotion, that fleeting moment of inspiration that, when captured on tape, can get people dancing, laughing or crying. Feel can make or break a performance. Think of feel when you cut a rhythm track or do a vocal. Although a good feel does not actually "cover up" mistakes, it can outweigh them. In cutting a rhythm track a gross mistake might necessitate a retake, but a few minor mistakes with an incredibly good feel might constitute a final take. Try to be an objective listener when you're in the studio. How would the song impress you if it were the first time you were hearing it? If it feels good, use it.

Down to Basics

In cutting a basic track with musi-

cians, you should always check your tuning first; probably more demos have been cut out of tune than in tune. This creates havoc on the hearing and sells lots of aspirin, but we're selling songs here. Also to be kept in tune is the vocalist. Pitch can be very tricky in the studio, especially when you are working with prerecorded tracks being fed to you via headphones. It sometimes helps to remove one headphone while doing a vocal so that you may hear yourself "naturally" in the room instead of just in the phones. The best singers will sometimes go out of tune in the studio so don't feel bad if you do, but do take the time to correct it if you can. The luxury of punching in a line or even a word makes this process a lot easier.

Timing and tempo are also tricky little devils in the studio. As songwriter/producer you must determine whether the tempo is just right for the song. Sometimes the smallest change can make a big difference. In a studio environment the atmosphere can sometimes be tense (time is money) and therefore tracks are sometimes uneven in tempo, speeding up and slowing down several times in the course of a song. A vocalist who is somewhat nervous can tend to rush vocal lines and throw the timing off on a song. Advice to you: relax. Do it again. Very often, the perfect take is only one take away.

The "Fix It in the Mix" Idea

You can't really fix it in the mix, but there are things you can do to make it sound better. Off-key notes will still sound off-key if you add echo, for example, but echo can smooth out a vocal sound and make it very pleasing to the ear. Different amounts of echo can add the reflective qualities of a room or the reverberant qualities of a large concert hall. How much echo should you use? Again . . . if it feels good, use it.

Equalization, or eq, is the most basic audio function in the recording and mixing process. Eq is simply a more sophisticated means of tone control, the amount of bass, midrange or treble a given audio signal is going to have. In most cases you want things to sound natural, clean and discernible, so use equalization with a certain amount of caution. Remember the "keep it simple" idea, because in a lot of cases applying no eq whatsoever might sound the best. At least listen to it without eq before twisting all the knobs and dials.

Panning is another tool you might use in the mixing process. Panning is the placement of sound between the left

continued on page 43

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NSA's Nashville Byline

How Criticism Can Pave Your Way

by Linda Hargrove

When the novice writer begins to toy with the idea that his/her songs are of commercial value, or longs to hear his/her lyrical and melodic creation on the airwaves, or desires to trade stacks and stacks of songs for even higher stacks of money; he/she is inviting criticism.

Now this is not criticism of the homegrown variety . . . "You ought to go to Nashville" . . . "George Jones would tear that up if he heard it" . . ."You're the best songwriter in Two Egg, Florida" . . . or "Son, you have a way with words."

No, this criticism is of the professional type . . . "It's a little too long for a record" . . . "The song rambles a bit" . . . "I know what you're trying to say, but will the public understand or care" . . . "It's too artistic" . . . or, perhaps the most ego-shattering of all, no criticism/explanation at all: "Well, it's not exactly what we're looking for right now."

Accepting criticism constructively and gracefully is a learned art in itself, especially if you haven't even found a publisher yet. I can remember a time, a long time ago now, when I thought criticism was a personal affront to my artistic integrity, and what's worse, a personal attack on my babies . . . my songs.

Rejection of any kind is a bitter pill to swallow, but you will learn you can learn more by taking professional criticism on an impersonal level. It can lead you eventually to write what the professional *cannot* criticize because you have taken all they have said critically of your songs and used it to construct new and better commercial songs.

Finding a good publisher who will give you honest feedback will be far more valuable to you than one who loves everything you write. Sure, criticism can frustrate the best of us, but at the same time out of that frustration many a great song has been born.

Now, you don't have to rewrite every song according to the comments offered. In fact, it is helpful to have more than one critic (perhaps another songwriter). Accept, too, that all criticism is not honest . . . *but,* it is your acceptance of all criticism, good or bad, in a *positive* way that may pave the way to writing the next "Song of the Year."

Some writers are fortunate enough to be able to pitch their material directly to artists and producers. In these situations you deal face to face with acceptance or rejection. This makes some writers uncomfortable; some, in fact, never learn quite how to handle it at all. I have known writers who have had doors closed to them strictly because the producer or artist knows the writer will take rejection personally. To these people I suggest leaving the songplugging to the publisher.

In closing, I have seen too many talented, raw, undeveloped writers fold in the face of professional criticism when a little understanding would have made them great commercial songwriters. Remember, even though most of us are laying our hearts out on every line we write, this is a business we are in.

Linda Hargrove is a Nashville-based songwriter/recording artist (Capitol, and now RCA) who's penned such songs as Just Get Up And Close The Door, I've Never Loved Anyone More *and* Love, You're The Teacher.

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and the right speakers, or anywhere in between. Usually vocals, kick drums and bass guitars are placed center in the mix (coming out of the left and right speakers equally in level). The placement of other instruments in the stereo spectrum may be left up to individual taste, but one good idea is to place things as they really were in the live situation. This might mean putting an electric guitar on the right and an acoustic guitar left of center. Most importantly, panning should be utilized as an aid in making sounds clear and intelligible. If you are moving lots of sounds from left to right and right to left during the mixdown process, you are probably being more gimmicky than tasty. Use it as a tool and not as a "trick."

In the final mix, the true focus of the song should be the vocal; everything else should be complementary to that. You may argue that on a lot of records the vocals are buried in the track. Once again, these are records, not demos. A publisher is keenly interested in the lyrics of the song, so make them as "out front" as possible.

Studio "Future Shock"

The more that technology has advanced, the more creativity has become diversified. There are more tools available to you than ever before, and at a lower price. Multichannel recorders, digital recording and effects devices are all accessible to you directly or through other people who know how to use them. What this means is more and more creative possibilities in terms of your song as well as your sound. If we were to generalize and say that songwriters should not use synthesizers on demos then songs like Donna Summers' *I Feel Love* would be difficult if not impossible to conceptualize. The Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" was produced with less equipment than what a lot of demo studios are offering these days.

In other words, technology is there — but technology by itself is not enough.

As songwriter/producer, we can't overstate your responsibilities. You take a song all the way from concept to a presentable form of submission. As far as the latter goes, remember that your technique must be offset by feel, and that you must keep things simple. When you've got those notions ingrained, you'll probably be very successful.

Songwriter Bob Safir is the proprietor of L.A.'s Track Record, a four- and eight-track studio that specializes in demo recording.

Songwriter Charts

• Indicates those artists who record songs by other writers

Easy Listening Top 10

	Songwriter	Title	Artist	Publisher, Licensee, Label
1.	W. Jennings R. Kerr	Somewhere In The Night	Barry Manilow	Irving/Rondor, BMI (Arista)
2.	N. Young	Lotta Love	• Nicolette Larson	Silver Fiddle, BMI (Warner Bros.)
3.	W. Robinson W. Moore	Ooh Baby Baby	• Linda Ronstadt	Jobete, ASCAP (Asylum)
4.	B. Gibb M. Gibb	Too Much Heaven	Bee Gees	Music for UNICEF, BMI (RSO)
5.	D. Addrissi	I Believe You	• Carpenters	Music Ways/ Flying Addrissi, BMI (A&M)
6.	A. Bernstein A. Adams	This Moment In Time	• Englebert Humperdinck	Silver Blue, ASCAP (Epic)
7.	P. Stookey	The Wedding Song (There Is Love	• Mary MacGregor	Public Domain, ASCAP (Ariola)
8.	B. Joel	My Life	Billy Joel	Impulsive/April, ASCAP (Columbia)
9.	A. Stewart P. White	Time Passages	Al Stewart	DJM/Frabjous, ASCAP (Arista)
10.	D. Schlitz	The Gambler	• Kenny Rogers	Writers Night, ASCAP (United Artists)

Soul Top 10

	Songwriter	Title	Artist	Publisher, Licensee, Label
1.	G. Clinton W. Collins B. Worrell	Aqua Boogie	Parliament	Rubberband, BMI (Casablanca)
2.	P. Bryson	I'm So Into You	Peabo Bryson	Warner Bros./ Peabo, ASCAP (Capitol)
3.	H. Thigpen J. Banks E. Marion	Holy Ghost	• Bar-Kays	East Memphis, BMI (Fantasy)
4.	N. Ashford V. Simpson	Is It Still Good To Ya	Ashford & Simpson	Nick-O-Val, ASCAP (Warner Bros.)
5.	N. Rogers B. Edwards	Le Freak	Chic	Chic, BMI (Atlantic)
6.	M. White A. McKay A. Willis	September	Earth, Wind, & Fire	Saggifire, BMI/ Steelchest (Columbia)
7.	I. Thompson	Get Down	• Gene Chandler	Gaetana/Cachand/ Cissi, BMI (20th Century Fox)
8.	L. Sylvers K. Spencer	Take That To The Bank	Shalama	Rosy, ASCAP (RCA)
9.	I. Hayes	Zeke The Freak	Issac Hayes	Afro, BMI (Polydor)
10.	T. Randazzo J. Simon	Love Vibration	• Joe Simon	Possie/Teddy Randazzo, BMI (Polydor)

Country Top 10

	Songwriter	Title	Artist	Publisher, Licensee, Label
1.	S. Dorff M. Brown T. Garrett	Every Which Way But Loose	• Eddie Rabbit	Peso/Warner-Tamerlane/Malkyle, BMI (Elektra)
2.	M. True	Why Have You Left The One You Left Me For	• Crystal Gayle	Mother Tongue, ASCAP (United Artists)
3.	D. Parton B. Vera	I Really Got The Feeling/ Baby I'm Burning	Dolly Parton	Velvet, BMI/ Songs Of Bandier Koppelman, ASCAP (RCA)
4.	D. Reid H. Reid	The Official Historian On Shirley Jean Berrell	• The Statler Brothers	American Cowboy, BMI (Mercury)
5.	G. Bonner A. Gordon	Happy Together	• T.G. Sheppard	Chardon, BMI (Warner/Curb)
6.	C. Berry R. Fratto A. Freed	Maybellene	• George Jones Johnny Paycheck	Arc, BMI (Epic)
7.	R. Allen, Jr. J. Maude	It's Time We Talk Things Over	Rex Allen Jr. The Boys	Boxer, BMI (Warner Bros.)
8.	N. Diamond	You Don't Bring Me Flowers	• Jim Ed Brown Helen Cornelius	Stonebridge/ Threesome, ASCAP (RCA)
9.	M. Clark	Come On In	• Oak Ridge Boys	Beechwood/Window, BMI (ABC)
10.	B.E. Wheeler	Gimme Back My Blues	• Jerry Reed	Sleepy Hollow, ASCAP (RCA)

Songwriter Top 40

	Songwriter	Title	Artist	Producer	Publisher, Licensee, Label
1.	B Gibb M. Gibb	Too Much Heaven	Bee Gees	Bee Gees Albhy Galuten	Music for UNICEF, BMI (RSO)
2.	B. Joel	My Life	Billy Joel	Phil Ramone	Impulsive/April, ASCAP (Columbia)
3.	N. Rogers B. Edwards	Le Freak	Chic	Benard Edwards Nile Rogers	Chic, BMI (Atlantic)
4.	J. Morali H. Belolo V. Willis	Y.M.C.A.	Village People	Jacques Morali	Green Light, ASCAP (Casablanca)
5.	M. White A. McKay A. Willis	September	Earth, Wind & Fire	Maurice White	Saggifire/Irving/ Charville, BMI/ Steelchest, ASCAP (Columbia)
6.	W. Robinson W. Moore	Ooh Baby Baby	• Linda Ronstadt	Peter Asher	Jobete, ASCAP (Asylum)
7.	J. Farrar	A Little More Love	• Olivia Newton-John	John Farrar	John Farrar/ Irving, BMI (MCA)
8.	R. Feldman R. Linn	Promises	Eric Clapton	Glyn Johns	Narwhal, BMI (RSO)
9.	N. Young	Lotta Love	Nicolette Larson	Ted Templeman	Silver Fiddle, BMI (Warner Bros.)
10.	D. Williams J. Jamison, Jr.	Don't Hold Back	Chanson	David Williams James Jamison, Jr.	Pure, ASCAP (Ariola)
11.	B. Spring-steen	Fire	Pointer Sisters	Richard Perry	Bruce Spring-steen, ASCAP (Planet)
12.	R. Stewart C. Appice	Do You Think I'm Sexy	Rod Stewart	Tom Dowd	Riva, ASCAP (Warner Bros.)
13.	B. Seger	We've Got Tonight	Bob Seger	Bob Seger Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section	Gera, ASCAP (Capitol)
14.	N. Ashford V. Simpson	I'm Every Woman	• Chaka Kahn	Arif Mardin	Nick-O-Val, ASCAP (Warner Bros.)
15.	B. May	Bicycle Race/ Fat Bottom Girls	Queen	Ray Thomas Queen	Queen/Beechwood, BMI (Elektra)
16.	M. Lloyd Scotti Brothers	I Was Made For Dancing	• Leif Garrett	Michael Lloyd	Michael's Scot Tone, ASCAP (Atlantic)
17.	Paich	Hold The Line	Toto	Toto	Hudmar, ASCAP (Columbia)
18.	L. Taylor	I Will Be In Love With You	Livingston Taylor	Nick DeCaro	Morgan Creek/ Song Of Bandier, ASCAP (Epic)
19.	G. Rafferty	Home And Dry	Gerry Rafferty	Hugh Murphy Gerry Rafferty	Hudson Bay, BMI (United Artists)
20.	C.B. Sager P. Allen	Don't Cry Out Loud	• Melissa Manchester	Harry Maslin	Irving/Woolnough/ Jernave/Unichappell/ Begonini, BMI (Arista)
21.	C. Lynn D. Paich D. Foster	Got To Be Real	Cheryl Lynn	Marty Paich Davie Paich	Butterfly/Gong, BMI/Hudmar/ Cotaba,ASCAP (Columbia)
22.	T. Scholz	A Man I'll Never Be	Boston	Tom Scholz	Pure Songs, ASCAP (Epic)
23.	J. Steinman	You Took The Words Right Out Of My Mouth	Meat Loaf	Todd Rundgren	Edward B. Marks/ Neverland Peg, BMI (Epic)
24.	G. Simmons	Radioactive	Gene Simmons	Sean Delaney Gene Simmons	Kiss, ASCAP (Casablanca)
25.	M. Jagger K. Richards	Shattered	Rolling Stones	Glimmer Twins	Colgems-EMI, ASCAP (Atlantic)
26.	W. Jennings R. Kerr	Somewhere In The Night	• Barry Manilow	Barry Manilow Ron Dante	Irving, BMI (Arista)
27.	D. Parton	Baby I'm Burnin'	Dolly Parton	Gary Klein	Velvet Apple, BMI (RCA)
28.	D. Schlitz	The Gambler	Kenny Rogers	Larry Butler	Writers Night, ASCAP (United Artists)
29.	R. James Gordy	Mary Jane	Rick James	Rick James Art Stewart	Jobete, ASCAP (Motown)
30.	N. Diamond A. Bergman M. Bergman	You Don't Bring Me Flowers	• Barbra Streisand Neil Diamond	Bob Gaudio	Stonebridge/ Threesome, ASCAP (Columbia)
31.	D. Merino	You Need A Woman Tonight	• Captain & Tennille	Daryl Dragon	ABC/Dunhill, BMI (A&M)
32.	D. Hall J. Oates	I Don't Wanna Lose You	Hall & Oates	David Foster	HotCha/Six Continents, BMI (RCA)
33.	R. Vannelli	I Just Wanna Stop	Gino Vannelli	Gino Vannelli Joe Vannelli Ross Vannelli	Ross Vannelli, ASCAP (A&M)
34.	B. Gibb B. Weaver	Our Love Don't Throw It Away	Andy Gibb	Barry Gibb Albhy Galuten Karl Richardson	Stigwood/Unichappell, BMI (RSO)
35.	J. Webb	MacArthur Park	• Donna Summer	Giorgio Moroder Pete Bellotte	Canopy, ASCAP (Casablanca)
36.	A. Stewart P. White	Time Passages	Al Stewart	Alan Parsons	DJM/Frabjous, ASCAP (Arista)
37.	M. Chapman N. Chinn	You Thrill Me	Exile	Mike Chapman	Chinnichap, BMI (Warner/Curb)
38.	C. Storie	Dancin' Shoes	• Nigel Olsson	Paul Davis	Canal, BMI (Bang)
39.	L. Loughnane D. Seraphine	No Tell Lover	Chicago	Phil Ramone	Com/Street Sense/ Polish Prince, ASCAP (Columbia)
40.	L. Gramm M. Jones	Blue Morning, Blue Day	Foreigner	Keith Olsen Mick Jones Ian McDonald	Somerset/WB, BMI (Atlantic)

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