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JEFF KATZ



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COVER PHOTO: DENNIS CARNEY

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Letters

Hog Wild over Brooks

When I saw who was on the front of the January/February 1991 issue of *Country Music*, I about ripped the magazine apart trying to find the story. Thank you! I had the opportunity to see Garth in concert at the Arkansas/Oklahoma State Fair in Fort Smith, Arkansas. To sum up the show—Garth went hog wild! That's one concert I'll probably never forget!

Misty Smith
Mountainburg, Arkansas

Proud Fan of Garth

Thank you so much for the cover story on Garth Brooks in the January/February 1991 issue. We fans of Garth have known for some time what a special person he is. I'm glad your great magazine let the rest of the music world know about him, too. It isn't often that someone comes along with integrity, charisma and genuine love for his family and fans, like Garth Brooks. The special relationship Garth has with his wife, Sandy, only reinforces my belief that I made a good choice when I became a fan.

Lynn Humphries
Shelby, North Carolina

Thrilled With Brooks and Strait

Wow! What a way to start the new year! My two very favorite people in country music are in the January/February issue. Garth is a fellow Oklahoman, and we love him to death—we would even if he weren't from Oklahoma. Garth is so honest, humane and sings so well. Go get 'em, Garth!

Then there was that magnificent creature in the centerfold—George Strait! He is, and always will be my all-time favorite. I will never get tired of seeing or hearing about George Strait—just a case of *More is Better*. Entertainer of the Year—you bet! Living Legend—you got it!

Janie Dean
Kingfisher, Oklahoma

Come Back, Reba

In response to Bob Allen's article on Reba McEntire in the November/December issue of *Country Music*, I hate to admit it, but Bob hit the nail on the head. I have been a Reba fan for years, but recently quit her fan club. I have bought all her albums, but *Rumor Has It* will be my last. I also saw the same concert Bob did, in Nashville, and had an empty feeling afterwards. I've



seen her shows many times in the past and always enjoyed them. The lack of a steel guitar and the use of electronics has made her music lose a lot of its appeal.

I fell in love with the Reba of yesterday who sang for the everyday country fan. Reba, you should listen to your fan club members. I used to be one of them. Pop fans aren't as dedicated as we are. We want you back!

Bruce Brown
Unionville, Tennessee

Disappointed with Reba

I am responding to the cover story on Reba McEntire in the November/December issue of *Country Music*. Being a big fan of Reba McEntire since her *Heart to Heart* album, I am sorry to say I must agree with Bob Allen's opinion of her performances. There was a time when I really enjoyed seeing Reba live, but now I wouldn't go for free. She has all the spontaneity of a well-worn record, and her country charm has been replaced by numerous costume changes and boring choreography.

I keep buying Reba's albums hoping to hear the down-home songs that originally grabbed my attention, such as "Just a Little Love" and "How Blue," but they can't be found anymore. It was very disappointing to hear her say she just wants to "Do what sells."

I have decided that my album, ticket and T-shirt purchases will not fuel her jet anymore.

Marc Daniel
Portland, Oregon

Support for Reba

When I received the November/December issue of *Country Music*, I was overjoyed to see my favorite country singer, Reba McEntire, on the cover. I thought that by reading the article I would get to know her better, but apparently Mr. Allen was only concerned with criticizing Reba's business, music, shows and clothing. I don't believe Mr. Allen has the right to criticize or to tell someone who has wonderful talent and overwhelming success how she should do her job. She has done a splendid job, so far, without Mr. Allen's help.

Keep it up, Reba!
Paula Wiberg
Alcester, South Dakota

Dynamite Centerfold

I couldn't believe it! When I opened the January/February issue of *Country Music*, there he was in big, beautiful color—the gorgeous one, George Strait. Thank you so much for a second dynamite centerfold!

Coverage on George is the reason I buy your magazine. If he was the centerfold in every issue I would be happy—of course, I know that's not possible. You really give us Strait fans more than any other magazine.

Wanda Chandler
McKenzie, Tennessee

Ecstatic over Black Poster

The Clint Black pull-out poster in the November/December issue was excellent! I had the chance to see this wonderful man in concert recently, and he put on one hell of a show! The concert with Lorrie Morgan, Clint Black and Alabama is the best concert I have been to in a long time—all three put on a super show.

Your magazine is great!

Darlyne York
Caldwell, Idaho

Warm-Hearted Tucker

I just wanted to thank you for the excellent article on Tanya Tucker in the January/February 1991 issue of *Country Music*.

Although the article made Tanya appear as a tough young lady, I believe she's a warm-hearted country girl who just wants to be loved for herself. Regardless, the article was great, and it renewed my subscription for two years.

Dennis Southers
Virginia Beach, Virginia



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The Fort Worth Star-Telegram promoted a "Tonight with Tanya" contest to benefit the Food Bank of Greater Tarrant County. The contest winner joined Tanya Tucker for the traditional singing of "Auld Lang Syne" at Tanya's New Year's Eve performance, held at Billy Bob's Texas in Fort Worth, on December 31, 1990.

The True Tanya

Thank you for the feature on Tanya Tucker in the January/February issue of *Country Music*. Finally, a story which shows the true Tanya! Reading it was just like talking to her—you showed the side of Tanya that many people don't know. Not even baby Presley can slow or calm her down. I think her rowdy ways are here to stay.

Mindy Scaggs
Endicott, New York

Correction on Tucker Feature

I have been receiving *Country Music Magazine* for several years now, and I really enjoy reading it from cover to cover. However, in the January/February issue, I believe Patrick Carr made a mistake in the Tanya Tucker article. Tanya was never married to Glenn Campbell—they were only engaged.

Marlene Rohrbaugh
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Carr Sets Record Straight

Despite what I wrote in my recent feature story, Tanya Tucker and Glen Campbell were never married. Therefore, my description of Tanya as country music's "most notorious divorcee" was somewhat wide of the mark, even though I believed it absolutely when I wrote it. This is what happens when you neglect to run a reality check on your memories of a fuzzy decade, which in my case included the period of Glen and Tanya's association. My regrets and apologies to Tanya, Glen and you readers.

Patrick Carr

Teddy Bear Kilgore

Thank you so much for the CMM Update on Merle Kilgore in the People section of the January/February issue of *Country Music*. I belong to the Hank Williams Jr. Fan Club, and Merle is our other big teddy bear. Merle is very much a part of Hank's concert. If I were to go to a Hank concert and not hear Merle introduce him, I would feel cheated. We love Merle as much as Hank.

Marlene Leep
Martin, Michigan

Kilgore Responds

Dear Rich Kienzle,

Happy New Year! Thank you for the super interview in the People section in the January/February issue of *Country Music Magazine*. It is absolutely great! In my 41 years in the music business, yours is one of the best. You really know how to keep things flowing.

Best wishes, Merle Kilgore

Atkins—King of Guitar

Hooray for me, hooray for *Country Music Magazine* and hooray for everyone who loves Chet Atkins as I do. Bless you for that superb story about him.

Since I am 64 years old, you might say I grew up with Chet and his guitar. I have always thought of him as the King of Guitar, from the very first time I heard him play on KWTO radio in Springfield, Missouri, many years ago. I am very glad that "all he wants to do, is just play." We don't want you doing anything else, Chet. And God willing, you will still be playing when we are 100 years old.

Bernice Yust Dack
McCook, Nebraska

From Gimble to McCoy

The caption on the photograph on page 47 of the January/February issue of *Country Music Magazine* is not correct. That is Garrison Keillor, Chet Atkins and the great fiddle player, Johnny Gimble (not Charlie McCoy). That's a fiddle under his arm, not a harmonica.

Ralph Bukofzer
Massapequa Park, New York
Someone from Chet's publicity firm sent us the photo with a note saying it was Garrison Keillor and Charlie McCoy. So, someone here wrote it down. I had them both taken out and shot. The rest of us are having our eyes checked.—R.D.B.

Tickled Pink with *Country Music Magazine*

First of all, I truly enjoy *Country Music Magazine*. I was "tickled pink" to see the poster of Clint Black and the 20 Questions with Sawyer Brown in the Novem-

ber/December issue. I was also glad to see the article on The Kentucky Head-Hunters, but I found a mistake. Early in the article you said, "brothers Doug and Richard Young." Doug Phelps is Ricky Lee Phelps's brother and Fred Young is Richard Young's brother. You got the facts straight later on in the article.

Jennie Dean
Tullahoma, Tennessee
With those hairdos, who could tell? We stand corrected.—Ed.

Twitty Heaven

I've just touched down from Conway Heaven to thank Bob Allen for the article in the November/December issue on my long-time favorite singer, Conway Twitty. Even though the article showed Conway to be a workaholic, a diehard fan will tell you he loves what he does and wouldn't have it any other way. I've been a Conway fan for 18 of my 36 years and know that Conway's energy level is a major factor in the success of his career. Bob Allen should consider himself lucky to have been able to keep up!

Barbara DeGrose
Clifton, New Jersey

The Golden Rule

We just wanted to write and thank you for the CMM Update on William Lee Golden in the November/December issue of *Country Music*. As big fans of his, we know articles on him are rare and precious.

We are very proud to be among the fans who have followed William Lee, even after his departure from The Oaks. We go to see William Lee and The Golden whenever possible. They've never disappointed us. Their shows are worth every minute and every mile we drive.

We are waiting for the day William Lee and The Golden rule the charts. The Golden Rule with us.

Tami, Pat and Marge Sears
Elkhorn, Wisconsin
Shirley Johnson
Valparaiso, Indiana

Appreciate Don Gibson

Just a short note to let you know your Legends of Country Music feature on Don Gibson in the November/December *CMSA Newsletter* was much appreciated. I have always enjoyed his singing—my favorite song is "Just One Time." Keep up the good work.

Teresa Ahrnkeel
Craig, Alaska

Terrific Don Williams

Thank you, *Country Music Magazine*! Your January/February issue was a real treasure for Don Williams fans. Thank you, Bob Allen, for the super review of Don's album, *True Love*—my favorite cut

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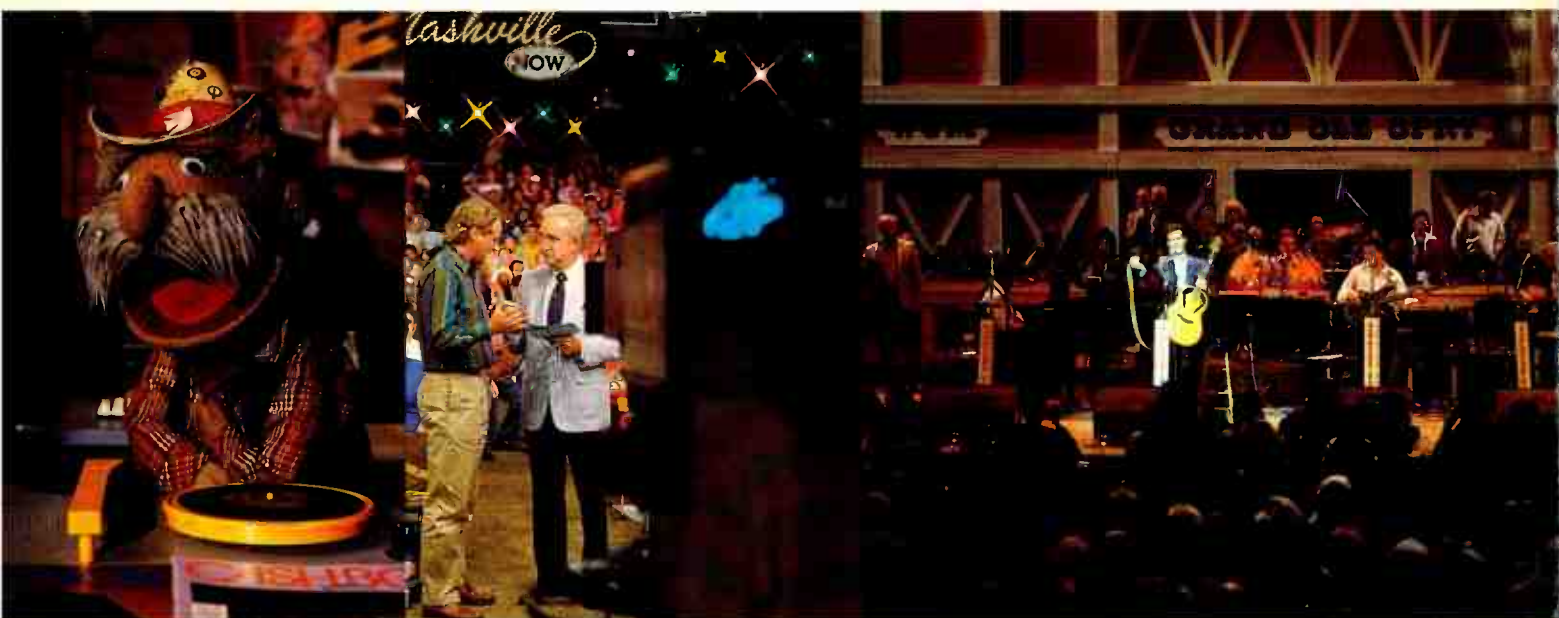
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from it is "Darlin', That's What Your Love Does." Thank you, Michael Bane, for the interesting questions in the 20 Questions with Don Williams, and for a really enjoyable article. And thank you, Don Williams, for sharing your thoughts and for being—well—"terrific" doesn't quite cover it, but it's a start.

Lucille VanDusen
Wrightstown, New Jersey

Sawyer Brown— Some Performance

Just a note to let you know how happy I was to see 20 Questions with Sawyer Brown in the November/December issue of *Country Music*. I have been waiting for this for some time—being I'm a great fan of the group. I also wanted to share my experience meeting Mark Miller.

Sawyer Brown was in Headly, British Columbia, on July 14, 1990, at the Headly Blast Country Festival. I had the opportunity to talk to Mark Miller and see the group perform. Believe me, they are a group to see! What a performance!

Shelley Gibson
Revelstoke BC, Canada

What's Up, David Frizzell?

I would like to know what is going on with David Frizzell. I sure did love his records. I felt he had a great future in country music. I get *Country Music Magazine* but never see anything about him.

Maxine Kent
Lutesville, Missouri

Our sources tell us he and Shelly West are set to tour again in 1991.—Ed.

Here's What Happened to Bobby Helms

I am an avid fan of Bobby Helms and have been for more years than I care to admit—way back to when "Fraulein" came out. I also loved "My Special Angel" and my personal favorite, "Just a Little Lonesome." No one, but no one, can hold a candle to Bobby Helms on these particular songs. He was so very good to my late son, Jim Hines, a victim of muscular dystrophy.

Stella Hines
Hoopeston, Illinois

Bobby Helms has a CD, cassette and several singles out on Playback Records. The CD includes "My Special Angel" and "Fraulein." To get them, write: Playback Records, Box 630755, Miami, Florida 33163, or call 305-935-4880.—Ed.

Hooray, Operation Homefires!

At Operation Homefires held on December 19, 1990, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Tammy Wynette and Joe Diffie performed for the families of soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia. My husband, PFC David Mercer, is stationed in Saudi Arabia and has been for several months. It's been a really hard time, and listen-

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ing to Tammy and Joe really lifted my spirits. Joe cheered me up with his songs, and Tammy made me cry when she sang "Blue Christmas" and "Stand by Your Man." It meant a lot to me that two great singers would take the time to care about the soldiers' families—I know it meant a lot to many others, too. Thanks for Operation Homefires!

Mykal Mercer
Oak Grove, Kentucky

Randy Is a Horse's Act

My horse, Forever Randy, featured in your Letters column back in September/October 1989, has been on the show circuit all season and has done quite well! He has won several first place ribbons and championships. At a horse show sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Quarter Horse Association, Forever Randy won all week and then won the grand championship.

I gave my sister a subscription to *Country Music* last year, so I won't have to hide my copies anymore. We really enjoy your magazine. Arlene Hey
Sewickley, Pennsylvania



Mary Dickson poses proudly with her sister's Grand Championship horse, Forever Randy. The cooler in the picture was the grand prize.

George Is a Dog

Have you heard our favorite, talented, green-eyed, "Georgeous" Strait is running in Daytona Beach? Oops! It's not our man, but a greyhound named George Strait running at the dog track. No matter, of course he came in first. How could he not have been a winner with a name like that!

Here's to George Strait, who is Number One in every race.

Bunny Gessner
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Bunny sent us a copy of the dog race schedule to prove her sightings—Ed.

Underrated Gene Watson

I recently saw a clip of Gene Watson on TNN's *Country Standard Time*, hosted by Ed Bruce. Ed said, "In my opinion, Gene Watson is one of the greatest, most underrated singers in the music busi-

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ness today." I definitely agree! To me, he ranks right up there with the best and deserves a lot more publicity and airplay.

By the way, I've noticed that one of the main complaints your readers have is you don't publish monthly. Well, that bugged me too. Therefore, I sent for copies of all your competitors because I wanted to subscribe to one to keep me busy while I waited for *Country Music Magazine*. Well, folks, there's just no comparison! The others are just "teen fanzine" magazines for people who don't want to turn the page to finish a story. I'll just go listen to Gene while I wait for my next issue.

Edith Sheedy
Greer, South Carolina

Not Shy with Johnny Lee

I've become involved in country music in the last four years and have seen most of the current artists at concerts and fairs in Southern California. Anyway, my seven-year-old daughter, Jennifer (whose middle name is not shy), has also gotten involved in country music, and has managed to get herself invited up on stage twice with Johnny Lee.

Johnny Lee may not be a Top 10 artist at the moment, but he has a wonderful voice, and he is a great example of what country music represents. Thanks for putting out such a great magazine.

Kathy McGinn
Sepulveda, California



Johnny Lee, his daughter, Cherish, and Jennifer McGinn at the San Fernando Fair in California.

Fantastic Shelby Lynne

I used to subscribe to *Country Music Magazine* several years ago and recently, at Fan Fair, subscribed again.

While at Fan Fair, I met country newcomer, Shelby Lynne. I saw her again in August at the Michigan State Fair where she was in concert with Willie Nelson. I just want to say that I think Shelby Lynne is a fantastic singer!

Virgie Warren
Flushing, Michigan
Fan Fair's the place to meet 'em. This year's dates are June 10-16th. For information write: Fan Fair, 2804 Opryland Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37214, or call 615-889-7502.—Ed.



Jacob Moon in his Minnie hat.

Men for Minnie

Who would you say I look like with this hat on? I'm only 11 months old and a country music fan already. My auntie thought the great Minnie Pearl would certainly appreciate this picture my mom took of me. Here's to ya, Minnie-howdy!

Jacob W. Moon
Freeport, Maine

For more on Minnie, see opening of People in this issue.—Ed.

A Taste for Travis

I am so upset! I've just learned that two (2) of those awful duets from Randy Travis' *Heroes and Friends*, reviewed by Bob Millard in your January/February issue, have actually been nominated for Grammys! Mr. Millard, is there no end to people's poor taste in music? Or, wait a minute, could it be you who has displayed poor taste?

Ellen Hanlon
Appleton, Wisconsin

Bob knew you'd write! Congratulations to Randy—the album's also doing well on the charts.—Ed.

Are We Listening to the Same Travis Album?

I anxiously awaited the January/February issue of *Country Music Magazine* to see the review of Randy Travis' album, *Heroes and Friends*. As I read Bob Millard's review for the umpteenth time, I find it hard to believe he and the other reviewers I've been reading are listening to the same album!

I enjoy your style of writing, Bob, and appreciate the fact that you think enough of Randy to be concerned. But this was supposed to be a fun album, and it is! I'm glad Randy had the opportunity to fulfill his dream.

I know as a critic it's your job to analyze the music; however, as fans, I'm glad it's our option to simply enjoy it. By the way, the artist featured with Randy on "Waiting on the Light to Change" is B.B. King, not Muddy Waters, as printed.

Gloria Cudney
South Bend, Indiana
The Grammy folks got it right—the duet's nominated in the Best Country Vocal Collaboration category, along with Travis' and Jones' "A Few Ole Country Boys." See letter above.—Ed.

Yoakam Album—His Best Yet

I was so glad to see that Rich Kienzie reviewed Dwight Yoakam's new album, *If There Was a Way*, in the January/February issue of *Country Music*. He didn't have to tell me it was great, I already knew it. I'd had the tape almost a month before I read the review, and it sure was nice to hear he agreed with me. All Dwight's albums are good, but *If There Was a Way* is his best yet. I have been a big Dwight Yoakam fan for years and was anxiously awaiting his next album—it was worth the wait. I'm no spring chicken, but Dwight makes me feel like 18 again. Keep up the good work, Dwight!

Peg Heintz
Jay, Maine

George Jones' Best in Years

Thank you, John Morthland, for the record review on George Jones' album, *You Oughta Be Here With Me*, in the November/December issue of *Country Music*. Your review pretty much summed it up. As you indicated, "Hell Stays Open" is probably the best song he has done in about 10 years, but I think the album is the best one he has done in five years—all of the songs are great. It's just too bad the singles didn't do well on the charts—mainly due to little airplay. I sure would like to see a feature on George real soon.

Rodney Gibbons
San Francisco, California

More Airplay for Gary Stewart

I have news for Bob Allen concerning Gary Stewart's latest two releases, *Brand New* and *Battleground*. Though they are both very good, I have not heard one instance of airplay from these releases. Without any help from the radio stations, I'm afraid Gary will be stuck with being "modestly successful," as Bob describes it in Record Reviews in the November/December issue.

I guess these days you must be a country "hunk" in a stupid-looking, 40-gallon hat that only Hulk Hogan could fit into. It's a shame because the songs "Brand New," "Let's Go Jukin'" and "Delia" are as good as anything Gary has ever done, and I've been a fan since the beginning and will be to the end. There is also prejudice on the part of programmers who won't play anything that isn't on a major label even though the HighTone recordings are recorded right in Nashville.

Marc Beard
Bloomington, Illinois

Clint Black Review on the Money

The review of Clint Black's new album, *Put Yourself in My Shoes*, in the January/February issue, is right on the money. I agree wholeheartedly. I received a copy of the album as a Christmas gift and haven't stopped listening to it since. Bob Allen certainly

has an ear for good, emotional music. I don't normally pay any attention to critics, but this time I just had to voice my opinion. I hope Clint can come up with a third album to top his first two.

Madge Hayslip
Wilmington, Ohio

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I think your *Country Music Magazine* is great! I love the articles, pictures and letters sent in by readers. Since reading this magazine is one of the best ways to get the inside news and events from all around the world of country music, I definitely wanted to renew my subscription. What better way to keep on top of what goes on in the world of country

music. I never, in my wildest dreams, thought I would win anything in the sweepstakes and could not believe my good fortune when I was notified that I had won \$1,000. Thank you for the \$1,000 and a great magazine.

MaryAnn Kilis
Bellflower, California

You make money for us! We make money for you.—Ed.

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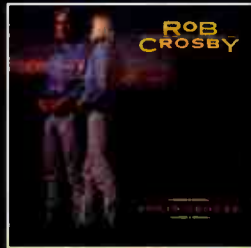
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MINNIE'S 50TH

On her 50th Anniversary as a member of the Grand Ole Opry, country music's "jewel on earth," Minnie Pearl, was honored with an hour-long TV show during the Opry segment on TNN. Friends like Hall of Famers Roy Acuff, Jimmy Dickens, announcer Grant Turner, Opry sister Connie Smith and longtime friend Chet Atkins performed on the show and offered their congratulations, as did Minnie's close friend and favorite performer, Gary Morris. The very best part of the 50th Anniversary, in my opinion, came from Dwight Yoakam, who wired Minnie Pearl 50 dozen roses. The Opry stage looked like a huge bed of roses. I'd like to thank Dwight for being so sweet to this legend.

PROFESSOR PARTON-DEAN, BY CRACKY, OR JUST CALL HER DOC

Tennessee's best known female, the inimitable Dolly Parton, took herself hillside to Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee, and got herself a Doctor of Letters degree. The event was titled "Special Convocation Honoring Dolly Rebecca Parton Dean." I'm not going to tell you what "convoca-



tion" means. You can look it up just like I did or call Dolly and ask her. After all, it was her party. Seriously, we congratulate Dr. Parton-Dean. This is surely something to brag about. So call me up and brag, Dolly. (Thanks to Karen Travis of Newport, Tennessee, who sent this info to me.)

DEATH DEVELOPS HEROES

All of us are guilty of it. Just let somebody die, and we all get on the blooming gravy train. Like I was so mad at *Rolling Stone* when Keith Whitley died. Man, they were on the phone to RCA

Tender moments onstage for country music's funniest lady—the grand finale with Jimmy Dickens, husband Henry Cannon, Connie Smith and Roy Acuff; with Opry announcer, Grant Turner, and the blanket of 50 dozen roses from Dwight Yoakam; and performing with old friend, Chet Atkins.

trying to get a line on Keith and wouldn't give him the "line of day" when he was alive. But we are all guilty of making heroes out of the obits. A case in point is the current release, *The Legendary Roy Orbison*, a four-CD or four-cassette boxed set with a 32-page booklet covering the singer's astonishing career, as they say. Which is okay. But what about all the years that Roy Orbison lived right here in Hendersonville and couldn't get nobody to record him for love nor money? Oh, well. The record is a CBS Special. Thank God we can get it. At least some of his work has been preserved.

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

People

CLINT'S VIDEO



When they shot the video for Clint Black's "Put Yourself in My Shoes," co-producer George Flanigan, Clint, director Dean Lent and co-producer Robert Deaton set up shop in Owens Barber Shop in Clarksville, Tennessee. The video features Clint and his band in a performance piece with a "Mayberry-type" theme. Watch for it!

POP GOES NASHVILLE

Thanks to God and you fans, Nashville artists boast 19 albums on the Top 200 pop charts. Our artists are selling at such a pace that the chart folks have to put the country albums on the pop charts. See, once an album soars past the half-million mark, it can just hang around Number One country. But when it reaches that status, there's enough sales to put the music sales-wise in the category of the pop artists, so the country artists make the pop charts. Superstars Garth Brooks, Randy Travis, Kentucky HeadHunters, Clint Black and Vince Gill all made the pop charts recently. So pop goes us.

THE SHAME OF IT

The Lynn Anderson/Spook Stream episode has been all over the papers. Oilman Harold H. (Spook) Stream III is Lynn Anderson's former husband. Divorced from the singer for some time, he's now suing for custody of the children. He's accusing her of drugs. She's accusing him of drugs. He admits he did cocaine but only with her. She claims the judge on the case knows Spook very personally. And both Lynn and Spook claim

they want the children. There's two children involved here, and to tell you the truth, they are the only ones I'm concerned with. Those kids did not ask to be born and deserve better. The shame of this expose makes the music business look real bad, too.

SYMPATHY AND LOVE

Heartfelt sympathy and love to Bill Monroe on the death of his only daughter, Melissa Kathleen, 54, who died following a prolonged illness attributed to diabetes and kidney disease, followed by a stroke.

THAT CUTE CLINT

When asked where he wanted to go with his new album, *Put Yourself in My Shoes*, Clint Black replied, "Just a little further down the road." Cute for a juvenile, don't you think?

TOOTING THE SAX

Somebody named Peter Kinder, writing for the *Southeast Missourian* regarding Dan Seals' concert, suggested that Dan (or someone else) had perhaps pre-taped the sax break. Maybe Dan mimed the oh-so-perfect sax for the

benefit of the audience? Well, to set the record straight, Dan Seals does play the saxophone for real during his concert performances. What may have confused Mr. Kinder is the fact that a wireless mike has been placed on Seals' saxophone. Dan Seals ain't Milli Vanilli, sir. He can toot his own horn.

SUN DON'T EVER SET ON OUR MUSIC

Some who performed at the Gstaad Festival in Switzerland were Suzy Bogguss, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Highway 101 and Buck Owens. I understand the Swiss, who are born with a silver yodel in their throats, really got a kick out of Suzy's yodeling. Her first album contained the old Patsy Montana masterpiece, "I Want to Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart," with that wonderful yodel.

TEXAS STAMPEDE

When George Strait went to Cavender's Boot City in Hurst, Texas, there was almost a stampede in the parking lot. Some 10,000 loyal Strait 'n' Narrows showed up for a publicized autograph session. Twelve police officers were needed to control the crowd. While all this craziness was happening, the Dental Hygenists met and declared that George had the "Biggest Smile in Texas." How about at my house, Hygenists?

SIX TIMES NUMBER ONE

Billy Joe Royal's video, "A Ring Where a Ring Used to Be," has taken Billy Joe to the top of the CMT (Country Music Television) charts for the sixth time. Congratulations to you, Billy Joe, from us.

I AM SO PROUD OF ROY WUNSCH

Roy Wunsch, President CBS/Epic Nashville, was named Chairman of the Board of the Country Music Association. Roy's been a friend of mine for a long while, and I am so proud of him. He's done real good turning CBS/Epic around and making it a competitive label again. He will do great as Chairman of the Board of the CMA, too. I don't know Thom Schuyler very well except to say he is an excellent songwriter/singer. I'd like to congratulate him for being named President of the CMA Board. All I can say is, "Keep it country, boys."

Vince Gill

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People

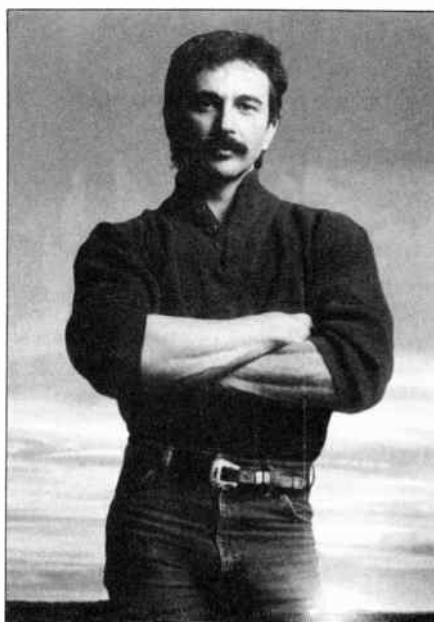
AARON TIPPIN, A MAN WITH A DIFFERENT SOUND

We've got all these tight-fanned young studs singing hillbilly songs that sound like George Jones/Merle Travis/Lefty Frizzell or the like. Well, I'm here to tell you that Aaron Tippin don't. He sounds like Hank Williams Sr. The South Carolinian with the music, muscles and palmetto tattoo took front and center stage at 328 Performance Hall, a local nightery, and just blew away everybody in attendance. His self-penned songs are not only original but clever, with neat hooks.

One humorous story. When the RCA folks invited me to the Tippin do, they asked me had I ever heard of "Aaron" pronounced with a short "a" as in "apple." "Of course," I allowed. When Moses came down off the mountain and saw his brother and all the crowd fooling around, with the short "a" he ordered him, "Aaron, throw down that calf." Course, the city way of pronouncing "Aaron" is "errand," leaving off the "d." And that is my English lesson for today, thank you.

DIFFIE'S HOME RUN

Right out of the box, Joe Diffie's first single on Epic, "Home," chart-topped for two consecutive weeks in trade publications, *The Gavin Report* and *Radio*



New star Aaron Tippin.

& Records. It also made the prestigious Number One spot in *Billboard*. First time in history, so they tell me, that a new artist topped the charts in three trades with a debut single. Diffie's album, *A Thousand Winding Roads*, is doing real well chart-wise too. His first video and second single, which he co-wrote, is titled "If You Want Me To." Here's wishing Joe the best, and that ain't a diffie-cult thing for me to do.

REBA'S VIDEO SHOOT



Reba and director Jack Cole discuss a shot for her "Rumor Has It" video, her single from the album of the same name. Looks like they agree on how to look good. Keep your eyes peeled for this one on the tube.

THANKS, MARLBORO

We at *Country Music Magazine* always try and give credit where credit is due. And once again credit is due the good Marlboro folks. Some of our people who will be working for Marlboro include the legendary Carl Perkins, Female Vocalist of the Year Kathy Mattea, newcomer Lee Roy Parnell, Hall of Famer Chet Atkins, songwriters extraordinaire Guy Clark and John Hiatt and Texas fave, Joe Ely. Others include Lyle Lovett, the great Merle Haggard, Foster & Lloyd, The Texas Tornados, great bluesman Delbert McClinton, the Cajun man, Jo-El Sonnier, and others. Marlboro not only gives our people work, they also support the Second Harvest, a food bank for the needy. Hear this. One dollar from every ticket sold from Marlboro-sponsored events goes to the needy. Aren't you proud?

DAVID LYNN

When KAIT Radio in Jonesboro, Arkansas, needed a theme, they turned to hometown David Lynn Jones, who snapped his fingers and said, "Neighbors you can turn to." Ain't that hot?

WHAT AN HONOR FOR THE ASTRONAUTS

The astronauts on the space shuttle Discovery were awakened each morning by tunes by The Highwaymen, who of course you all know are Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson. Them astronauts fly high, but them four Highwaymen have seen the day when individually they could fly higher than the shuttle...or thought they could. Course the roaring days are over for our Fab Four. They are now all grandfathers and making a home video, *Highwaymen Live*, which all us outlaw fans must have for our collection. I mean when Mount Rushmore does a video, I want it at the house, don't you?

TNT

Tanya 'n' Travis rumors have soared through Music Row like a summer storm. Travis Tritt says he and Tanya Tucker did some shows together, visited on each other's buses and went out a couple times, but nothing's serious. I don't know how heated this romance is, but where there's smoke, there's fire most of the time. I'd wager the two "T's" together would definitely be TNT.

People

CASHING IN

The new Rosanne Cash album received such a rave review in *Rolling Stone* that the star/mother felt she should tour the Northeast and do some TV-ing. Other publications with rave notices include *The Village Voice*, *Us Magazine*, and *USA Today*. Titled *Interiors*, this is her first recorded work in about three years. It seems to be a critics' favorite, though I still can't help but favor some of her earlier material, like *Seven Year Ache*, which to me was country with an edge at its best.

MEN WILL PLAY GOLF IN THE SNOW

Moe Bandy held his Pro Celebrity Golf Classic this winter. Over \$50,000 was raised to benefit the Children's Transplant Association of Texas. This annual charity event has enjoyed steady growth over the past four years, with this year's total exceeding 1989's by more than \$15,000. Lots of celebrities attended, like Charlie Daniels, Ray Pillow, Glen Campbell, Sheb Wooley, Billy Walker, Johnny Gimble, Charlie Walker and football coach Darrell Royal. As I read the list of golfers, I wondered if any of them would go outside and hang clothes for their wives in the dead of winter.

WHO WAS THE BLONDE?

Who was the blonde Merle Kilgore was seen embracing in the foyer of the Stouffer Hotel during the SRO Convention? Couldn't be Marilyn Monroe, she's dead. Oh! It was Hazel Smith...uh oh, that's me. Other gentlemen with good taste, good luck and good sense to match who hugged me that night were Tony Conway and Paul Lore from Buddy Lee Attractions, Mr. Roy Wunsch, the man in charge of CBS/Epic Nashville; the illustrious Ben Farrell of Varnell Enterprises, and some other lucky males who happened to be in my reach. One gentleman I tried to get to but only got to shake his hand was Jim Ed Norman, who heads up Warner Brothers Records here. Jim Ed is booked two months in advance all the time, so don't expect an appointment until then.

YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT EYE SAW

First off, Eye saw my illustrious publisher and gad-about-the-world, Russell Barnard, dining at Maude's with my editor, Rochelle Friedman. Also the



Here's Wild Rose with BMI director Jody Williams, left, and producer James Stroud, center. Clustered around Stroud are Wanda Vick, Nancy Given Prout, Kathy Mack, Pam Perry and Pam Gadd.

legendary Jack "Cowboy" Clement joined the trio with a couple of his friends. (In case you're wondering, I made up the rest of the trio.) To make matters more interesting, our beloved publisher, Mr. Barnard, did, in fact, shake hands with Mr. Joe Galante who is now the Prez of BMG/RCA for the world, while Ms. Friedman got a handshake from that handsome Randy Goodman, formerly of Nashville and now residing in New York City, also with BMG/RCA. To make it sweeter, both Galante and Goodman laid juicy kisses right on the mouth of yours truly. If that weren't enough, after the extended luncheon, as we started to depart, the songwriter's songwriter-seated on a bar stool up front and under the influence of lunch—did kiss the "Cowboy" right on the mouth. I would not lie to you, friends. This happened exactly as I tell you. And I can tell you, the scene was funnier than *Hee Haw* has ever been. And Eye saw it.

WILD ROSE IS

For those of you who have asked, the all-girl (great) band, Wild Rose, consists of Wanda Vick—lead guitar, dobro, fiddle, pedal steel and mandolin; Kathy Mack—bass and harmony vocals; Nancy Given Prout—drums and harmony vocals; Pamela Gadd—lead vocals, acoustic gui-

tar and banjo; and Pam Perry—lead vocals, acoustic guitar and mandolin. They are a *great* band, and don't you dare tell them individually or collectively they pick good for a girl unless you want to get your lights punched out. They are great musicians...play on their albums and on the road. There's no Milli Vanilli here.

NEW INFO GAL AT CMA

The very capable Teresa George has been promoted to fill the shoes of Kelly Gattis at the Country Music Association. Kelly has exited; Teresa's new title is Coordinator of Public Information. George attended college in Texas and has been with the CMA for two years.

SANDY SEZ

My friend Sandy Neese, who keeps me abreast of the Polygram happenings, let me in on a doozy. Seems the folks over there got real smart and have released *Hank Williams: The Original Singles Collection*. The package includes 84 cuts by the artist, including the unedited version of "There's a Tear in My Beer." I don't know about you, but I can't wait to get mine. The first time I cried over a country music artist was when Hank died on New Year's Day 1953. He was a trailblazer for sure.

ing appearance on *The Tonight Show*; marveled over the sales of the latest album. But, somehow, with the rain pounding down, hard lights shining on a deserted stage, the old times seem a lot closer, as if the saga of Randy Travis and Lib Hatcher were nothing more than a dream, less real than the lightning flashing to the north, towards America.

"You remember it, too, don't you?" Lib is saying. "I can't decide whether it seems a long time ago or yesterday.

The rain pours on.

* * *

"See," Elizabeth Grant is saying, "to really understand Guantanamo, you've got to understand those red and green sprinkles you put on Christmas cookies..."

Elizabeth Grant is married to a Marine who's across the floor of this concrete block honky tonk, the Lateral Hazzard, as it were, tossing darts. She is swaying slightly, as if in response to a whisper of a breeze. I am also swaying, I suspect in response to the local drink of choice, a "fireball," which proves to be cinnamon schnapps mixed with some hellfire-hot Jamaican hot sauce.

"See, when they've got the green sprinkles, they don't have the red sprinkles," Elizabeth Grant continues.

"When they finally get the red sprinkles, they'll be out of the green sprinkles. So you never get cookies with red sprinkles and green sprinkles, because one or the other is always 'on the barge.' It's always on the barge..."

We have arrived at the Lateral Hazzard, next to the only golf course in the world that requires you to carry, in addition to your clubs, your own sod in the form of a square of AstroTurf, because we are celebrities. Well, spin-off celebrities. Randy Travis—who is, wisely it would seem, back in officers' quarters asleep—is the biggest thing to hit the island of Cuba since the bearded man to the north made his big move. The Navy and the Marines are buying big time, and the Travis entourage is holding their own. More or less. Maybe less than more.

With war brewing half a world away, the USO has asked Randy Travis to spend Thanksgiving weekend in Cuba, entertaining the 2,500 troops and 5,000 support personnel stationed there. A USO trip is exactly the opposite of a normal concert tour, where the artist is insulated, for the most part, from the crowds. Part of doing a USO trip is mingling as much as possible. We've only been in country a few hours, and we've

been through two, maybe three parties, a chicken dinner and assorted introductions.

Randy is loving it. He has signed about a million CD and cassette covers, had his picture taken with an endless string of uniformed people and civilians and received more than his share of hugs and kisses. "You mean," says one young female admirer, "he's just standing there? I can go right over there and maul him?"

* * *

"You know," Lib Hatcher is saying, "sometimes he doesn't seem to have noticed that everything's changed. He still does the same things he always did. In fact, on some things, I think he's getting worse."

The rain continues unabated. Dripping roadies come in, grab a cup of coffee and head back out, getting the equipment under shelter.

"Remember, he was always one to sign autographs," she said. "He'd sign autographs for days unless we made him stop. Now, he can't even be satisfied with that. He's got to interview the people who ask for an autograph. See if they've got the same cousin or something."

Sure enough, as if on cue, Randy looks up from across the small room, where he's engrossed in conversation with a family who's brought him a CD to sign.

"You know," Randy is saying when he looks up and catches our eye, "my people are from pretty close to there..."

"Hopeless," says Lib, with an exaggerated sigh.

* * *

"Big night last night?" Randy asks, laughing. I have no comment. We are where you always seem to end up on trips with Randy Travis, at the gym. It is 7 A.M., and we are trying to pump iron to a continuous barrage of Randy Travis songs from the radio. I mean, I

PHOTOS DAVID HATHCOX



Just one of the boys: When he meets the troops off-stage, Randy is as down to earth as he can be. Signing autographs is not a chore—it's a time to get close and share a part of himself. He sometimes even asks people where they're from.



like "He Walked on Water" as much as the next guy, but it makes it a little tough to concentrate on biceps. Finally, even Randy, doing seated dumbbell curls, cracks up in helpless laughter.

"I can't get a pump with this music on," he says, laughing.

Maybe, someone else suggests, we can phone in a request for AC/DC.

Despite the orgy of Randy Travis ballads, we suffer through a couple of hours of iron, 'til the shoulders ache and the elbows glow from the exertion. The gym is Randy's salvation, home away from home. The weights don't care much whether you're a star or not. They don't read *Billboard* or the *National Enquirer*.

For people whose weekly workout consists of hoisting a couple of brews on Saturday night, it's hard to explain the appeal of something as simple as lifting weights. Think, though—no crowds, no charts, no producers, no entourage, no excuses. The world may be going crazy around you, but within the confines of the gym, you're in control. Push hard, and see the results; slack off, and lose it.

There is, I think, a strange balance between Randy Travis the performer and Randy Travis the athlete (although Randy Travis scoffs at the notion he's a real athlete—"I just work out," he says). No matter what happens in the outside world, the world of tours and recording sessions, record deals and television shows, there's always the iron waiting. He lifts with quiet intensity, concentrating on correct form, broken only by brief spells of showing us what he's been learning from Chuck Norris.

"Basic kicks and punches, mostly," he says, demonstrating. "Lots of stretches." Chuck, we think, has his work cut out for him. Did you talk to Chuck about movies, I ask.

"Oh," he says, "Lib did. Lib don't miss a chance."

Simple statement, gospel truth. Lib Hatcher has guided—and still guides—Randy Travis' career through the treacherous shoals of Music City. She is part and parcel of the mythology of Randy Travis, the older "Svengali" who may or may not have orchestrated his rise to fame. There are people in Nashville who don't speak all that kindly of Lib Hatcher—she's hard, she's cold, she's tough. Interestingly enough, all those adjectives would be compliments if they were applied to men.

Randy Travis wasn't the first of country's "new traditionalists." Before Randy, there were The Judds. Before The Judds, there was George Strait. Before George Strait, Ricky Skaggs. But Randy was the first to really capture the audience's—and the media's—imagination. Not that there was any-

PHOTOS: DAVID HATHCOX



Randy the performer: On stage he's just as comfortable as he is with fans. At this year's USO show in Cuba, the crowd sat mesmerized. Cuba was not the first time Randy sang for the troops. Last year he entertained servicemen and women at the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey.

thing wrong with country music in the early 1980's. The pendulum had swung from "outlaw" back to "pop." Willie Nelson played golf. There were still good songs and good singers. But what was missing was a voice, a new George Jones, a new Merle Haggard, a standard-bearer.

With "On the Other Hand" and "1982," Randy Travis became that standard-bearer, your basic lightning rod. With his successes, the floodgates opened, and, as it always has, country music changed, evolved. Within a few years, the business belonged to the "men with hats," traditional male vocalists.

But the music business is notoriously fickle. With all the "new" new traditionalists, what was there to say about

the "old" new traditionalists? Especially, the one who had hit it big. *The Tonight Show*, network interviews, magazine covers, million-sellers, *Sesame Street* for heaven's sake! Randy Travis had gone from being a "fast train from Caroline" to the very top.

There must, then, be something wrong with him. And the supermarket tabloids will stop at nothing to find out what it is. Their coverage has Lib and Randy a little bit on edge.

"We don't talk about it," says Lib. "When people ask, we change the subject."

This is the same Lib Hatcher who, according to the supermarket tabloids, was tossed into the streets by a vengeful Randy Travis.



Randy the cowboy: On a cattle drive filmed for The Nashville Network, Lib Hatcher and Michael Bane joined Randy on horseback. An experienced rider, Randy gave Michael some tips. He also met his hero, Roy Rogers, who appeared on the show. Roy recorded a duet single with Randy for his *Heroes and Friends* album.



JIM HAGANS

"Do I look like I've been tossed into the streets?" she says.

This is also the same Lib Hatcher who went to a costume party dressed in dozens of issues of the *National Enquirer*. She looked great.

"Ask Randy about it," she says. "It's up to him whether he wants to talk about it."

I do corner him and broach the subject, and he doesn't laugh it off.

"In a way," he says, "I try not to ever think about it. I try to ignore them—it's such a farce. I've never been in restaurants these newspapers said I was in; certainly never had a fight in them. A fight in a restaurant! You've known me a long time. How many fights in restaurants have I had?"

He smiles about the articles, but it's not a happy smile.

"I tell you this, Michael," he says. "If the person who wrote those things was with us right now, it would be hard for me not to remark about it."

So reporters call the office, see, and ask for Lib Hatcher.

"I take the calls," she says, "and then

they don't have anything to say. I guess they're surprised I'm not off tossed in the street somewhere."

"Basically, you have some success," says Randy, "and people start looking for the bad as well as the good."

He does laugh, though, at the introduction of an unauthorized version of his life, *Randy Travis: The King of New Country Traditionalists*.

The writer, Don Cusic, stages an uninvited visit to Randy's family home in North Carolina, where Harold Traywick, Randy's dad, gives him the unceremonious boot.

"It is obvious that this is not a man to reason with," Cusic writes. "There is a violence about him you can feel in his presence. I turn, and as I head toward my car, I listen for a click, hoping he has left his gun inside the house...."

Randy laughs.

"Daddy did run him off," he says. "And said several choice words. But that book kind of made me mad. We didn't cooperate with the guy one bit. Wouldn't talk to him."

We talk for a while about singing,

about technique. His singing strength has improved since he was diagnosed as having an allergy to a number of common foods, including dairy products. The result is a very strict, low cholesterol, no-sweets diet that is, by his own admission, tough to stick to on the road.

"Like for Thanksgiving, I ate whatever I wanted," he says, "and I felt really, really bad. But, you know, after two years on the diet, it's getting easier and easier to sing. When I started singing, I thought you just *sang*, you know, like you talked. Boy, forget that! Technique, practice, learn more technique."

In the meantime, life's pretty good on the Randy front. Randy's got a couple of good cutting horses at the farm in Tennessee, and he'd like to spend a little more time there, riding.

We work out. We shoot pool—I lose, with amazing regularity. We worry about sneakers for running—he favors Brooks; I'm a Nike guy. We discuss custom gunsmiths and Randy's maybe movie career—"a western, of course."

We compare karate moves. We laugh about our cattle drive together in Montana, filmed for The Nashville Network—"the worst horse I've ever ridden"; his friendship with Roy Rogers—"you know, he's just like I expected him to be"—and how I talked Lib and public relations wiz Evelyn Shriver into riding horses with me—"don't ever do it again."

After six years caught in the gears of the star-making machinery, Randy Travis is the same Randy Travis I met in a honky tonk in Chattanooga, singing old Hank songs in front of a disco house band. We have traveled to Cuba, Grand Cayman and a place in Canada where the air was so polluted that the white birch trees were black (this is true), and, strangely enough, we've always had a great time.

"I swear," says an exasperated Lib Hatcher. "Sometimes I think he's oblivious to it all."

"You got to come to Nashville," Randy Travis is saying, "and spend some time. I've got this cutting horse that would be perfect for you. I mean, I'll teach you how to *really* ride."

I think I'll take him up on it.

It's hot in Cuba, blistering hot, the iguanas seeking whatever meager shade the cactuses and rocks offer. Across the bay, the mountains, where Fidel and the mysterious and romantic Che Guevara once plotted revolution, are lost in heat haze. On a stage in a huge aircraft hanger, Randy Travis is singing "An American Trilogy." In the audience, a woman in camouflage fatigues wipes her eyes, but quickly, lest anyone notice.

When he finishes, the ovation goes on for a long time. ■

CMSA NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRY MUSIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA MARCH/APRIL 1991—EDITOR, HELEN BARNARD

Newsletter

REVIEWS & FEATURES

March Winds and April Showers

A season of new beginnings—wet and blustery, but let's hope it will bring forth good things. A new magazine, *The Journal*, featuring old-time music, has been born since the last *Newsletter* reached you readers. Many CMSA members have already joined the American Academy for the Preservation of Old-Time Country Music, which publishes *The Journal*. One is Gene Bear, West Coast collector and country music lover. Gene is featured in this *Newsletter*—we make note of his contributions to *The Journal*.

Assistant to the Publisher George Fletcher has initiated many new beginnings for the *Newsletter* in the past few months, including the fine series on regional country music associations. The fledgling Texas association is profiled here. George is also reintroducing two fine old features from the *Newsletter's* earliest days—concert reviews and record reviews by members. Garth Shaw's review of Doug Stone in concert appears here, as well as Matt Konopka's coverage of George Jones, Conway Twitty and Merle Haggard. Send us your album reviews for upcoming issues.

We're especially interested in albums not reviewed in *Country Music Magazine*. When you send in reviews, features or items for the Collections page, include your CMSA membership number as it appears on your CMSA membership card. Your membership number verifies your membership in the Society and makes your material eligible for publication in the *Newsletter*. In the January/February issue, we asked you to include a copy of your magazine label (or the label itself) with all material submitted. Your membership number is simpler and provides the same insurance. Submissions sent without membership number will be returned. (Sorry, you will have to wait until your membership card arrives to send things in.)

Rich Kienzle, also associated with the new *Journal*, as those of you who are Academy members as well as CMSA members know, takes us to Oklahoma for Legends this time: Johnny Bond is our feature. And the Collections page returns.

Happy spring!

Doug Stone Goes West

Garth Shaw, a member in Costa Mesa, California, reviews Doug Stone opening for Tammy Wynette at Hollywood's Roxy. Check the photo of Tammy after this show in the September/October issue of *Country Music Magazine*.

As I was standing outside the world-famous Roxy on Hollywood's Sunset Strip, I heard the man in front of me ask his wife as he read the marquee, "Who's Doug Stone—is he a magician?" As they would soon find out, Doug is amazing, not for magic, but for his vocal talents. A former auto mechanic, Doug was discovered at a VFW hall in Georgia. Producer Doug Johnson took him to Nashville where he was signed to the Epic label by CBS's legendary Bob Montgomery. Doug's first single, "I'd Be Better Off (In a Pine Box)," rapidly rose up the left side of the country charts.

This was Doug's first time out of the South, and he was opening for country queen, Tammy Wynette. That alone would be enough to make any newcomer nervous, but get this: Among the stars in the audience during the two sold-out shows were country greats Randy Travis and Ricky Van Shelton, rockers Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne, and Hollywood stars Burt Reynolds and wife, Loni Anderson. Despite it all, Doug kept his cool.



Doug Stone is out on the road.

In This Issue

- Legends in Concert
- Bear Country
- Doug Stone Debuts
- Johnny Bond Remembered
- Collections

His chiseled good looks and "country-vice" outfit—no "hat tricks" here—had the ladies swooning, but it was his music that had stars and fans, men and women, on the edge of their seats. The sound was strong, the mixing perfect, the lighting superb. Doug played acoustic guitar (with capo) and was backed by six of the tightest and tastiest pickers I've heard in a while. They were: Ralph Torbit (guitar), Jeff Arrington (bass), Marty Ray (drums), Tommy Dodd (pedal steel), Jeff Stanley (fiddle) and band leader, Gordon Dee (keyboards).

Doug performed all the songs from his album, *Doug Stone*. They are songs about true-life experiences that people can relate to. My favorites were the first hit single and two other ballads, "Crying on Your Shoulder Again" and "My Hat's Off to Him." I hope these are considered for future singles.

If you didn't catch Doug Stone's debut at the Roxy, you missed the magic of a superstar-in-the-making. But don't fret, this country charmer won't be disappearing any time soon: His latest singles, "Fourteen Minutes Old" and "These Lips Don't Know How to Say Goodbye," also did well on the charts, and he's working on a new album.

Garth Shaw
Costa Mesa, California

Members, send us more reviews.—Ed.



Scenes from the "Living Legends" concert in Springfield, Massachusetts: George Jones with wife, Nancy, and grandson, Pee Wee. Matt Konopka checks out George's bus and meets with Conway Twitty and Merle Haggard.

Living Legends Live!

Matt Konopka, a reader from Bristol, Connecticut, recently had his dream come true when he met his all-time favorite singer, George Jones, at a concert in Springfield, Massachusetts. Merle Haggard and Conway Twitty were also on the bill. Matt tells his story below.

I have been a fan of George Jones for over 30 years. I have attended many of his concerts and, yes, there were several "No Shows," but that was before, and I accepted and understood it. On November 11, 1990, I realized a life-long dream—I spent time backstage with George Jones, his wife, Nancy, and his grandson, "Pee Wee," when George appeared at the Springfield Civic Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, with Merle Haggard and Conway Twitty.

George is exactly as I imagined him: soft-spoken, polite, even humble—a trait which is almost unheard of in a legendary superstar. I don't exaggerate when I say that his speaking voice sounds as incredible as his singing voice. It literally gave me

goose bumps. Mr. Jones was kind enough to autograph several items for me—including the George Jones jacket I was wearing! He even posed for photographs with me.

While George was performing, I sat right next to the stage with Nancy. We talked as though we had known each other for years. She is one of the nicest people I have ever met. After the performance, she invited me

JANUARY 1991 POLL Album and Single of the Month

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Garth Brooks | <i>No Fences</i> |
| Alan Jackson | "Chasin' That Neon Rainbow" |

CMSA voters like the Hat Brigade! Top spot in albums goes to Garth Brooks. Number Two is Clint Black with *Killin' Time*. Alan Jackson and *Here in the Real World* are third, followed by runners-up George Strait, Vince Gill and the lovely Reba McEntire, all with their current albums. In singles, we have practically a dead heat between Alan Jackson with "Chasin'" and Garth Brooks with "Friends in Low Places." Third place single is Clint Black's "Put Yourself in My Shoes." Fourth and fifth go to Garth again, with "Unanswered Prayers," and Reba with "You Lie."

to walk back to the bus with them to say goodbye. As the three of us talked for a while longer, it became obvious that George and Nancy were meant for each other. I thanked them for this incredible honor, shook hands with George, hugged Nancy and waved goodbye as the bus drove off.

I was also backstage while the two other country giants performed—Conway Twitty and Merle Haggard. They, too, were kind enough to give me their autographs and pose for photos. And they, too, put on a great show—though they had a tough act to follow!

I want all of George's fans to know that he looks and sounds even better than he ever did. It was a good feeling to see that he is happy. He deserves to be, and I thank Nancy Jones for *truly* standing by her man.

Matt Konopka
Bristol, Connecticut



CMSA member Chuck Lindert of Chelan, Washington, featured in the March/April 1990 *Newsletter*, is still at it. Chuck is turning his guitar-making hobby into a business. He makes his electric guitars by hand, and has presented them to numerous country stars. Chuck's shown here with guitar master Chet Atkins and the guitar he made for Chet last summer. The guitar features gold hardware and Lindert's patented "Thumbs up" design. "I sprang for the gold hardware for Chet," Lindert remarks. "There's still nobody else who possesses that touch and feeling to their playing, and his new album with Mark Knopfler, *Neck and Neck*, is indeed a special piece of work." Atkins was appearing in Washington with Garrison Keillor.

REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS: A SPECIAL SERIES

In the third installment of our continuing series on regional country music associations, we head for Texas, where Texas Country Music Association Executive Director Lee Michaels fills us in on the TCMA's doings. Lee, who's been involved in radio for over 15 years, says, "We want to have the biggest, most active state association in the USA.... And why not? We're from Texas!" The

association is just getting started.

We hope you're finding this series as interesting and useful as we are. The local country music scene is an important part of the industry—some big names get their start there. We still have quite a bit of territory left to cover in this series, so all of you local CMA's, let us hear from you.

Texas Country Music Association

The Texas Country Music Association (TCMA) was founded in February 1989 to promote country music in Texas and to give Texas country music fans a voice of their own. Membership in the TCMA is free and open to the public. More than 2,000 people have joined.

The TCMA works with Texas radio stations to get its message out to the fans. The organization sponsors "Country Music Days" with radio stations throughout the state, setting up displays in shopping malls and at fairs. Further promotional work is accomplished through public service advertisements on television and radio and appearances at concerts, night clubs, barbecue cook-offs and rodeos. Members are kept abreast of developments through a weekly column in local newspapers—some 20 papers throughout the state carry the TCMA column.

The 1990 TCMA Awards Show was carried by the Texas State News Network, a regional affiliation of Texas radio stations.



Texas Governor's Aide, Ann Robertson, presents "Country Music Day" proclamation to TCMA's Bud Fisher. Lee Michaels with Texas State News Network's Joe Short and the broadcast tape of TCMA's Awards Show.



The show was also picked up by Armed Forces Radio for broadcast to the troops overseas. Even Texas Governor William P. Clements Jr. was involved. On the day of the Awards Show—October 28, 1990—he issued a proclamation designating the 28th as Country Music Day in Texas. TCMA Director Lee Michaels, who works for radio

station KYZZ in the Temple area, is working toward increasing awareness of the fledgling organization. During 1991, TCMA hopes to establish a Texas Country Music Hall of Fame and increase the membership ranks.

—George Fletcher
For more information, write the TCMA at P.O. Box 505, Salado, Texas 76571.—Ed.

California is Bear Country

CMSA member Gene Bear hails from Tujunga, California. Well-known and well-respected on the West Coast, Gene Bear lives country music.

Country music entrepreneur Gene Bear is one of the West Coast's leading authorities on country music history. He has amassed a veritable library of country music material—70,000 records, more than 4,000 sheet music selections, thousands of photographs and numerous books and magazines. Gene believes his collection to be the West Coast's largest. But Bear's involvement with country music goes even deeper. He's country music to the core—the former Illinois farm boy says he can't even remember a time when he wasn't interested in country music. As such, he wears many hats: fan, historian, guitar picker, singer, author and even cable TV talk show host. In these various capacities, Bear has been a fixture on the West Coast country scene for more than 30 years.

Gene Bear's impressive photograph collection is of particular interest to *Country Music Magazine*—he's had one photograph from his archives used in the magazine



Gene Bear's various collections help keep country music's past alive and well.

recently (in the Eddy Arnold 20 Questions feature in the September/October 1990 issue), he's contributed to *Legends in the Newsletter*, and one of his rare Hank Williams shots appears in the Academy's Premier Edition of *The Journal*.

Bear Country, the title of his weekly TV show as well as the name of his band, airs on Friday nights over the King, United and West Valley cable systems. Those three cable systems deliver the show to nearly 200,000 Southern California homes. Guests on the program have included Cliffie

Stone, Denver Pyle, Freddie Hart, Hank Penny and others in the entertainment industry.

Bear is also active in humanitarian work—he's hosted fundraisers for the March of Dimes and Muscular Dystrophy, and is involved in Ahead With Horses, an organization that allows disabled children to interact with horses. He even finds time to help out the Wildlife Waystation, a California refuge for injured and abandoned animals.

All of these activities taken together make for a busy man, and one who has seen many accolades come his way, including a 1984 Certificate of Appreciation from Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley for "25 years in the Country Music Industry and service to Los Angeles." Coincidentally, Gene finds himself in the same issue as Johnny Bond, whom he considers a mentor and role model. Bear gives a lot of credit for the success he's achieved to those who helped him out in the early days, like Bond. Gene has set up a post office box for any artists wishing to send promotional material for the TV show: Bear Communications, P.O. Box A 1, Tujunga, California 91043.

—George Fletcher

Readers Create

Lonely Time

Tom Smith, an amateur songwriter from Frederick, Maryland, loves reading *Country Music Magazine* "from cover to cover." He hopes readers will like his entry.

The Only Things Certain

I knew that she was madder than she'd ever been before.
I could tell by the way that she slammed the door.
Those pictures on the wall never shook like that before.
But I was certain that she'd come back, I was even sure.
I didn't think she'd let her pride take this very far.
There had to be some love for me deep down in her heart.
But I was getting worried when I heard that motor start.
And I knew that she was gone with the squealing of them tires.

I was certain that with time she'd come back to me.

There was no doubt in my mind, only certainty. But now I'm left here all alone with nothing but my hurtin'.

I guess death and taxes are the only thing certain.

It's never been this lonely lying in our bed. With lots of time to think, the thoughts were rolling through my head.

So I called her on the phone, you won't believe the things she said.

I was certain that she told me I could go and drop dead.

I was certain that with time she'd come back to me.

There was no doubt in my mind, only certainty. But now I'm left here all alone with nothing but my hurtin'.

I guess death and taxes are the only things certain.
—Tom Smith



Concert Inspires Artist

June Vinci of Santa Rosa, California, sent along two sketches—the one above of Clint Black, and one of Dwight Yoakam (which, space permitting, you may see in the future). June says, "I was lucky enough to see Clint and Dwight together at California's Concord Pavillion. That was the best concert I've ever been to, and they are two of the most talented men in country music today. The concert inspired me to do these pencil sketches."

Dolly Word Search

Maria Creighton, a member in Lusby, Maryland, sends this Dolly Parton word search. Maria really enjoys the magazine and is a big fan of Dolly's.

Answers run frontwards, backwards, vertically, horizontally and diagonally. Look hard and have fun!

R T N P O R T E R W A G O N E R I L A Y Y W L Z N
W F U D G Y S Z L A Z V D U N I Y Z V R R J T U I
U R Y O W H I T E L I M O Z E E N E I A A Z E O N
S I M R F W O H S V T Y L L O D T N E U U M N S E
T E T O T F G U I T A R L D L V G V L N L P N I T
E N H B I H D L I H C H T R U O F G E A S O E Y O
E D U E N I E N O T N E P E L O S S E J I F S U F
L L O R W I G M N N D J A M G O L D T T N T S N I
M Y Y T S D M E I S O O R Y T T W R A S G G E G V
Y P E L U W T R D G S F T P G S L D N P E N E X E
R E V E H T U D G S H S O S S H N Y E X R X Z W G
V R O E P O W N G D Z T N F O U D O O Y N I N E Z
A S L T L I V I U O E L Y Z O Y D O L L Y W O O D
G O S N A S H V I L L E Z F W N X D Z T E Z W E T
I N Y B T F I E A L E Y D I I O Z Y I O H O D N H
T A A A I O G Z R Y Z O E D Y N O N T R I O T O D
H L W N N U H E E E O X E R L B E O O H J B S T J
R I L D U N H E B W I G S E A O D B X Y A O Z S I
N T A T M D E N Y S O Z N B H J N T A D X N M E A
D Y L S W K E L I T S I J E D N G D Z N K P A N X
B K L C A R L D E A N D A C F A V C A Z D G S I Z
C E I K R O S C S H G V N C L B R Z J W S R X H V
R N W M D N X A D R R F X A N I J C L M N M G R N
W H I E I O H S A I L O N G A M L E E T S V L N T
Y S O N G W R I T E R E S R E G O R Y N N E K D K

Nashville
Tennessee
Dollywood
Dollywood
Foundation

Parton
Singer
Songwriter
Rebecca

January
Fourth Child
Wigs

Avie Lee
Robert Lee
Carl Dean
Friendly

Personality
Porter Wagoner
Kenny Rogers
High Heels

Gold
Platinum

Banjo
Guitar
Dolly TV Show
Nine to Five

Rhinestone
Steel Magnolias
Trio

White Limozeen
The Mighty
Fine Band
I Will Always
Love You

Is It Really Over?

Johnnie Milton says he's written lyrics for years, but this is his first time sending them in. He hails from Tampa, Florida.

Love's Not So Easy to Die

I walked over to sit at your table
And, darlin', you looked so surprised.
Just because you say it's all over,
Do you think love's that easy to die?

Love's not so easy to die.
Love can hide behind a tear in your eye.
Love's in the sound of a whippoorwill's cry.
Love's not so easy to die.

I know it's gonna take a long time,
A long time to get you out of my mind.
Please give me a shoulder to lean on,
And talk to me when I'm losin' my mind.

Darlin', you say that you love him,
But my love for you doesn't grow dim.
My love for you still burns high.
It won't go out, it still flames high.

Love's not so easy to die.
Love can hide behind a tear in your eye.
Love's in the sound of a whippoorwill's cry.
Love's not so easy to die.

—Johnnie Milton

COUNTRY MUSIC



DOLLY PARTON

PULL OUT
CENTERFOLD
OF THE MONTH

DOLLY PARTON

Facts of Life

Personal Data

Birthdate: January 19, 1946
Birthplace: Locust Ridge, Sevier County, Tennessee
Family: Husband, Carl Dean; Mother, Avie Lee; Father, Robert Lee; 11 brothers and sisters—Dolly is the fourth of 12 children.
Famous for: Her special look

Awards Highlights

Seven CMA awards including Entertainer of the Year 1978/three Grammys including Best Female Country Vocal Performance ("9 to 5") 1981/three ACM awards including Vocal Group of the Year (with Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris for Trio) 1987/two *People's Choice* awards including All-Around Female Performer 1988/*Ms. Magazine* Woman of the Year 1986/and many, many more.

Film Highlights

9 to 5/Best Little Whorehouse in Texas/Rhinestone/Steel Magnolias

Recording Career

Record Label: Columbia Records, 34 Music Square E., Nashville, TN 37203.

| Albums | Release Date |
|--|--------------|
| <i>Hello, I'm Dolly</i> | 1967 |
| <i>Just Between You and Me</i> | 1968 |
| <i>Just Because I'm a Woman</i> | 1968 |
| <i>Just The Two of Us</i> | 1968 |
| <i>In the Good Old Days</i> | 1969 |
| <i>Always, Always</i> | 1969 |
| <i>My Blue Ridge Mountain Boy</i> | 1969 |
| <i>The Fairest of Them All</i> | 1970 |
| <i>Porter Wayne and Dolly Rebecca</i> | 1970 |
| <i>As Long as I Love</i> | 1970 |
| <i>A Real Live Dolly</i> | 1970 |
| <i>The Best of Dolly Parton</i> | 1970 |
| <i>Once More</i> (With Porter Wagoner) | 1970 |
| <i>Golden Streets of Glory</i> | 1971 |



| | |
|---|-------|
| <i>Two of a Kind</i> (With Porter Wagoner) | 1971 |
| <i>Joshua</i> | 1971 |
| <i>The Best of Dolly Parton and Porter Wagoner</i> | 1971 |
| <i>Coat of Many Colors</i> | 1971 |
| <i>The World of Dolly Parton</i> | 1972 |
| <i>The Right Combination Burning the Midnight Oil</i> (With Porter Wagoner) | 1972 |
| <i>Touch Your Woman</i> | 1972 |
| <i>Together Always</i> (With Porter Wagoner) | 1972 |
| <i>Just the Way I Am</i> | 1972 |
| <i>Dolly Parton Sings, My Favorite Song Writer, Porter Wagoner</i> | 1972 |
| <i>We Found It</i> | 1973 |
| <i>My Tennessee Mountain Home Love and Music</i> (With Porter Wagoner) | 1973 |
| <i>Bubbling Over</i> | 1973 |
| <i>Mine</i> | 1973 |
| <i>Jolene</i> | 1974 |
| <i>Porter 'n' Dolly</i> | 1974 |
| <i>Love Is Like a Butterfly</i> | 1974 |
| <i>The Bargain Store</i> | 1975 |
| <i>The Best of Dolly Parton</i> | *1975 |
| <i>Say Forever You'll Be Mine</i> (With Porter Wagoner) | 1975 |
| <i>Dolly</i> | 1975 |

| | |
|--|--------|
| <i>All I Can Do</i> | 1976 |
| <i>You Are</i> (England) | 1977 |
| <i>New Harvest—First Gathering</i> | 1977 |
| <i>Here You Come Again</i> | **1977 |
| <i>Heart Breaker</i> | *1978 |
| <i>Great Balls of Fire</i> | *1979 |
| <i>Dolly, Dolly, Dolly</i> | 1980 |
| <i>Porter & Dolly</i> | 1980 |
| <i>9 to 5 and Odd Jobs</i> | 1980 |
| <i>Heartbreak Express</i> | 1982 |
| <i>The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas</i> | 1982 |
| <i>Dolly Parton's Greatest Hits</i> | *1982 |
| <i>Burlap and Satin</i> | 1983 |
| <i>The Great Pretender</i> | 1984 |
| <i>Rhinestone</i> (Soundtrack with other artists) | 1984 |
| <i>Once Upon a Christmas</i> (With Kenny Rogers) | 1984 |
| <i>Real Love</i> | 1985 |
| <i>Dolly Parton</i> (Collector's Series) | 1985 |
| <i>Think About Love</i> | 1986 |
| <i>Trio</i> (With Emmylou Harris & Linda Ronstadt) | **1987 |
| <i>Rainbow</i> | 1987 |
| <i>White Limozeen</i> | 1989 |
| <i>Home for Christmas</i> | 1990 |
| <i>Eagle When She Flies</i> | 1991 |

*Gold Album, over 500,000 sold.

**Platinum Album, Over 1,000,000 sold.

Television Highlights

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>The Porter Wagoner Show/The Bill Anderson Show/The Wilburn Brothers Show/Dolly</i> (syndicated)/ <i>Kenny & Dolly—A Christmas to Remember/Smoky Mountain Christmas/Dolly</i> (ABC-TV series)/ <i>Home for Christmas</i> | 1972 |
|--|------|

Fan Club

To join the Dolly Parton Fan club and get newsletters, itineraries and more for \$20, send check or money order payable to Country Music Reader Service to: *Country Music Magazine*, Reader Service Dept. 3491, 329 Riverside Ave., Westport, CT 06880. Add \$1.95 postage and handling.

TOMORROW'S HITS—YESTERDAY!

COLUMBIA COUNTRY CLASSICS



You never know where the next great country hit will come from. But you can bet that a lot of them will be coming from right here... **COLUMBIA COUNTRY CLASSICS** is the most comprehensive and well-researched overview of influential country recordings ever released by Columbia Records. It features a total of 128 country music perennials on five individually-available cassettes or CDs.

VOLUME 1 THE GOLDEN AGE. 27 all-time-great songs recorded between 1935 and 1951, including original versions of "Can The Circle Be Unbroken (Bye & Bye)" (The Carter Family); "Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain" (Roy Acuff & His Smokey Mountain Boys); "Born To Lose" (Ted Daffan's Texans); "Blue Moon Of Kentucky" (Bill Monroe & His Bluegrass Boys); "When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again" (Wiley Walker & Gene Sullivan); "Don't Get Above Your Raisin'" (Flatt & Scruggs & The Foggy Mountain Boys); and many more surprises. (46029)

VOLUME 2 HONKY TONK HEROES. 27 songs that accounted for 68 weeks at #1 on the charts between 1946 and 1962. Includes the 1956 Johnny Horton hit that took Dwight Yoakam to stardom 30 years later—"Honky Tonk Man," plus the original versions of "Room Full Of Roses" (George Morgan); "(Remember Me) I'm The One Who Loves You" (Stuart Hamblen); "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down" (Charlie Walker); and much more. (46030)

VOLUME 3 AMERICANA. From Fess Parker's "Ballad Of Davy Crockett" in 1954 to Willie, Waylon, Cash and Kris' "The Highwayman" in 1984, here are 30 years of legendary American hits. 25 in all, including "Tennessee Flat Top Box" (Johnny Cash); "The Ballad Of Paladin" (Johnny Western); "The Ballad Of Jed Clampett" (Flatt & Scruggs & The Foggy Mountain Boys); "The Battle Of New Orleans" (Johnny Horton); "Waterloo" (Stonewall Jackson)...all your favorites! (46031)

VOLUME 4 THE NASHVILLE SOUND. 26 country and crossover hits of the '50's, '60's, and '70's. Eleven were #1 winners, including "Singing The Blues" (Marty Robbins); "Ring Of Fire" (Johnny Cash); "Charlie's Shoes" (Billy Walker); "Almost Persuaded" (David Houston); "I Never Promised You A Rose Garden" (Lynn Anderson); "Stand By Your Man" (Tammy Wynette); and "Behind Closed Doors" (Charlie Rich). (46032)

VOLUME 5 A NEW TRADITION. Three decades of breakthrough country music! 23 important recordings from the '60's, '70's and '80's by Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, The Byrds, Poco, Willie Nelson, Marty Robbins, Crystal Gayle, David Allen Coe, Asleep At The Wheel, Ricky Skaggs, George Jones, Merle Haggard, Ricky Van Shelton, Rodney Crowell, Rosanne Cash and others. (46033)

EACH VOLUME IS A COMPLETE COLLECTION. COLLECT THEM ALL! ON COLUMBIA CASSETTES AND CD'S.

Starting Over

Lois C. Johnson, of Jacksonville, Alabama, sent us several songs recently. Says Lois, "I hope you like my songs well enough to print them. Hopefully someone in the music industry will see them and want to record them. I've had this dream for many years." Here we present one of her efforts.

Do I Start a New Life

The chairs are all empty—my friends went out the door
and I'm standing here wondering—which way to go.

I have a choice to make—oh which will it be
do I start a new life—or live with your memories?

Do I start a new life—or live with your memories?

The house seems so empty—to everyone but me.

I still see your face—and hear your voice calling me.

This house is so full—of your memories.

My friends say that sometimes—love turns to hate

but how can one end—what it takes two to make?

You've taken away all our plans—and our dreams.

Do I start a new life—or live with your memories?

—Lois C. Johnson



The Ever-Popular Hank Jr.

David Adkins of Xenia, Ohio, says that he was pleased to see his sketches of Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash published in past issues of the *Newsletter*. Now he sends along this likeness of Hank Williams Jr., with the comment, "Hank has always been in my album collection and always will be." David expresses his thanks to Donna Blevins for photographing his sketch.



Like Fine Crystal

Alan Ames, of Salina, Kansas, sends this sketch of Crystal Gayle done by his sister, Marla Kuiper. Marla presented it to Alan for his birthday. Alan comments, "Crystal has been my favorite for many years and I feel she doesn't get the attention she deserves."

Back to the Country

Colette Mitchell writes in from Wellsville, New York, "I enjoy writing about situations I have been in or people close to me have been in. Most of all, I write about feelings." Here are her thoughts on a subject many can relate to—living in the city but longing for the country.

Neon's Overrated

Fast drivin', a snazzy car, rock 'n' roll
It's not what it's cracked up to be.

A country road, horseback, the river's music.

Yes, now there's peace inside me

Shopping malls, fast food places

Traffic jammed, door to door, bumper to bumper.

A tractor in the distance, starting spring's crop.

Take me back to a life that's so much simpler.

Forty-story building reaching to the sky.

Dreamin' of a honky tonk bar.

Disco music and neon lights

Wishing to look up and see the stars.

Sirens and whistles, howling through the night.

Oh, to awaken one fine morning

Not to smog, but to fresh clean air.

Not to the sound of horns, but to robins singing.

To walk along the creek in subtle awe

To sit on a porch swing and hear the peepers' noise

And in every whispering soft breeze

You can hear God's voice.

This is where he wants me

Enjoying the life that he created.

Drive me back down that country road.

City life's way overrated.

—Colette Mitchell



Another View of Clint

From Ruidoso, New Mexico, comes this drawing of Clint Black, made by Tricina Collins. Clint should be keeping you artists busy for years to come! Letters about the Clint Black centerfold in the November/December issue of *Country Music* have kept our Letters editors busy!



GENE BEAR ARCHIVES

Johnny Bond never became a superstar. He had only 11 records on the *Billboard* charts from 1947 to 1971, several of them “cover” versions of other artists’ hits. His name hasn’t surfaced as a future Country Music Hall of Fame inductee, nor are record companies rushing to reissue his recordings.

Why? In part because Bond stuck to his guns musically. What he did in the 1960’s differed little from what he did in the 40’s. The trends of the moment never had much effect on his music. A low-keyed, dry humored, literate man, self-promotion was never his strong suit. Oddly enough, even though Bond is not actually *in* the Hall of Fame, as a Country Music Association Board Member in the mid-60’s, he played a major role in planning the Hall’s actual construction. He also figured prominently in the Western music of the 40’s and 50’s through his close association with Gene Autry, with whom he worked for over 20 years, Jimmy Wakely and Tex Ritter.

A gifted composer, Bond penned the classic Western ballad, “Cimarron,” as well as “I Wonder Where You Are Tonight” and two of Ernest Tubb’s big 1940’s hits: “Tomorrow Never Comes” and “I’ll Step Aside.” His song, “Your Old Love Letters,” was a Number 10 record for Porter Wagoner in 1960. In the 50’s, Bond played a major part in the legendary Southern California country TV show, *Town Hall Party*, staying with the show throughout its run.

Like so many stars who came to prominence in California, his life began further east. Cyrus Whitfield Bond was born in the tiny Oklahoma community of Enville on June 1, 1915. The Bond family moved to a farm near Marietta, Oklahoma, where Johnny first heard Jimmie Rodgers records in the late 1920’s. Like many young people of his generation—Ernest Tubb among them—he was instantly entranced, and from then on was committed to Rodgers’ music, even when many in his community ridiculed anything relating to “hillbilly” music or learning the guitar.

In 1934 he was living in Oklahoma City. A struggling musician, he took occasional radio jobs before joining local group, Pop Moore and His Oklahomans. During this period, he met Jimmy Wakely, another struggling singer, and began working with him. As singing cowboy films took off, fueled by the huge success of former Oklahoman Gene Autry, Bond and Wakely took to wearing Western duds. They added singer Scotty Harrell to their group and began performing as The Bell Boys, sponsored by the Bell Clothing Company.

Broadcasting over both WKY Radio in Oklahoma City and Bob Wills’ home base station, KVOO in Tulsa, The Bell Boys gained a regional following. They preferred

Johnny Bond

Born in Oklahoma, Johnny Bond followed his star to California, where he made his mark in the Western music and movie scene.

to open their shows with an upbeat number, and in 1938, Bond, inspired by the film *Cimarron*, wrote a song with that name, a tribute to the nearby Cimarron River. It caught on with their audiences.

In 1939 the local-boy-made-good, Gene Autry, returned triumphant to Oklahoma. The Bell Boys managed to meet and perform for him. Impressed, he used them as his backup band at some local shows and suggested they look him up if they ever got to the West Coast. They did travel to California to appear in a Roy Rogers film that year but quickly came home.

However, that trip—and Autry's invitation—inspired the group, now known as The Jimmy Wakely Trio, to pack up their families and instruments and head west in May 1940, despite a lack of firm prospects. Scotty Harrell stayed behind; he was replaced by Oklahoma singer and Columbia recording artist, Dick Reinhardt.

In Los Angeles, Wakely landed his own recording contract with Decca, and recorded "Cimarron" at his first session. That September, Autry added the Trio to his immensely popular CBS radio program, *Melody Ranch*, sponsored by Doublemint Gum. Bond soon had a contract with Columbia and began recording for them in August 1941, with the legendary Uncle Art Satherley producing. Satherley also produced Autry, Roy Acuff and Bob Wills. None of Bond's records sold. He did, however, play rhythm guitar on Autry's records and with Autry's band backed Al Dexter on his 1942 honky tonk classic, "Pistol Packin' Mama." The Trio also did local shows at L.A.-area dance halls.

From 1940 to 1945, Bond appeared in 34 movies, most of them westerns. He did one film with Autry, *Heart of the Rio Grande*, and also worked with Jimmy Wakely (who was becoming a major star of westerns), Tex Ritter, Johnny Mack Brown and William "Hopalong Cassidy" Boyd. He had a part in *Duel in the Sun* with Gregory Peck. Most of the time he played a sidekick who sang a song or two.

His success on records finally came in 1947 (as his work in westerns was winding down) with a cover of Merle Travis' Number One record, "Divorce Me C.O.D." It got as far as Number Four, and was followed by a cover of Travis' second Number One hit: "So Round! So Firm! So Fully Packed!" Bond's version reached Number Three. Covering other singers' hits was common practice in both country and pop music in the 40's.

Bond's "The Daughter of Jole Blon," (Number Three in 1947) capitalized on the popularity of the song "Jole Blon," a hit for both Cajun fiddler Harry Choates and Roy Acuff. His fourth hit, "Oklahoma Waltz," went to Number Nine in 1948. In 1949 he

had two hits—the ballad, "Till the End of the World," and a cover of Red Foley's hit, "Tennessee Saturday Night," that went to Number 12.

By the early 50's, Bond was concentrating on upbeat honky tonk numbers that dealt lightheartedly with drinking. His next two hits were "Love Song in 32 Bars" (Number Eight in 1950) and "Sick, Sober and Sorry" (Number Seven in 1951). The latter was his last hit with Columbia. He was busy enough co-hosting and performing on *Town Hall Party* with Tex Ritter, Joe



Bond and the rest of The Jimmy Wakely Trio with Gene Autry in the 1940's—Wakely, Autry, Bond, Dick Reinhardt.

and Rose Lee Maphis and an ensemble cast and was present at Autry's final *Melody Ranch* broadcast in 1956.

In 1957, some 16 years after he began recording for Columbia, Bond was dropped by the label, but not before re-recording "Sick, Sober and Sorry" as a duet with Lefty Frizzell. He remained with *Town Hall Party* until it was canceled in 1960. Bond recorded another cover, this one of Charlie Ryan's talking blues novelty, "Hot Rod Lincoln," for Autry's Republic Records. It had some modest success, but Ryan's was the big hit. Bond and his friend, Tex Ritter, also founded Vidor Music Publishing.

In 1962, Bond recorded an album of cowboy songs and sold it to the Nashville-based hard country label, Starday. Starday released it as *That Wild, Wicked But Wonderful West*, then signed him as an artist. Though he didn't have a string of hits, the Starday years found him at his musical best. Many of his albums were collections of novelty drinking songs. Others mixed ballads and trucker tunes. "Three Sheets in

the Wind," another boozing song, cracked the Top 30 in 1963.

On November 5, 1964, Bond was performing at a function at the WSM Studios, during Nashville's annual Disc Jockey Convention. Almost as an afterthought, he performed a novelty drinking recitation titled "Ten Little Bottles," a number he occasionally did onstage and had recorded for Columbia in 1954. The tape was rolling, and when released in 1965, the record hit both the country and pop charts and spent four weeks at Number Two on the *Billboard* country charts. In the midst of the Beatles era, it even broke the pop Top 40. In some markets it was a Number One record—Bond's only Number One.

Bond was elected to the CMA Board in 1965, as plans were being drawn up for the Hall of Fame. Still based in Los Angeles, he was active as a writer and performer in a TV revival of Autry's *Melody Ranch* that ran from 1964 to 1970. Autry, now a multi-millionaire businessman, did not have time to be involved.

Following a 1969 collaboration with old friend Merle Travis on the tribute album, *Songs of The Delmore Brothers*, Bond's career appeared to be winding down. His drinking song, "Here Come the Elephants," was his last chart entry (Number 59) with Starday. In 1972 they parted ways. His recording career, however, was not quite over. He recorded an album for the Lamb & Lion label in 1973, then recorded for old friend Jimmy Wakely's Shasta label in 1974 and for CMH Records in 1976.

Bond spent much of the 70's at his Burbank home. Royalties from "Cimarron" and other songs kept him comfortable. Always interested in writing prose, he penned biographies of Gene Autry (*Champion*, published by Chappell) and Tex Ritter. He also completed his autobiography, *Recollections*, published in 1976 by the John Edwards Memorial Foundation, a country and blues research center then based at UCLA. The book, now out of print, mixed reminiscences with rare photographs, items from his scrapbooks and a complete discography. A 1977 stroke forced Johnny to cancel a planned tour of England, and while in the midst of undergoing rehabilitation, he suffered another stroke. He died June 12, 1978, at age 63.

A passage from the final pages of his autobiography says much about the man himself and why he never became a bigger star. "Change is nothing new," he wrote. "It seems to be here to stay and I, for one, choose not to fight it or complain about it."

—RICH KIENZLE

Albums Available
See For CMSA Members Only Page.



The Chuck Wagon Gang recently celebrated 54 years in gospel music. Their promoter, Ralph Long, pays tribute during a concert in Gainesville, Georgia. Keep it up, Gang!

Responses to Features

Our mailbox turns up various viewpoints on some of our recent features.

MORE ON SONGWRITING

Our feature on songwriting in the September/October issue—including a letter from Glenn Warren, General Manager of Nashville's Marco Music Group—generated this response from Jim Pollina of Buffalo, New York.

I read your review on Glenn Warren, and I

agree to a certain point. He said to keep faith in yourself and be persistent, and I agree, but having all the faith in the world won't help you if you don't have a "contact."

After 34 years of reject after reject, along with the occasional "keep on trying," I realize that without help from someone who knows the business and has contacts, I have to face the fact that I'm not going to make it, no matter how much faith I have. There is no one out there who has the time or is willing to help an unknown.

I may have given up on writing, but I still hold onto dreams. The only difference is, instead of dreaming how it's going to be, I now dream of how it might have been.

Jim Pollina
Buffalo, New York

THE MERLE TRAVIS LEGACY

Our Merle Travis Legends feature, also in September/October, brought in several responses, too. A line in the story read, "There will not be another artist of Merle Travis' like," and several readers took exception, saying that there is indeed another artist quite like Merle—his son, Thom Bresh.



Merle Travis heir, Thom Bresh.

Singer Lane Brody is one who checked in. We at the Lane Brody/Thom Bresh Fan Club have been hearing a lot about your recent article on Merle Travis. Thom is Merle's only son, and it seems Thom's fans took the ending to your article as an oversight to the fact that the "Travis Tradition" is living and being carried on by Thom.

Artists such as us, not currently wearing a cowboy hat or affiliated with a label, get used to being overlooked by publications. But the fans know us and follow our every move.

Lane Brody
Nashville, Tennessee

COLLECTIONS

Collecting the Magazine

Help each other complete your collections of Country Music Magazine.

• For Sale: *Country Music Magazine*: Aug 76, Nov 76, Dec 76, Jan 77, Feb 77. Also have book, *The Entertainers of Country Music*, plus 8-tracks and T-shirts of Conway and Alabama. Send want list to **Pamela Hollander, P.O. Box 175, Glen Alpine, NC 28628.**

Information, Please

Members may write to each other directly about information and items they need. To prevent misunderstandings, we suggest you conduct all transactions involving money COD. Please include SASE if you must correspond.

• Trying to locate album by Jim Ed Brown, *Gentle on My Mind*. Please send price and condition info to **D. Henges, 141 Banwell Ln., Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054.**

• Does anybody have a copy of Marty Stuart's 1985 CBS album, *Marty Stuart*, to sell or tape for me? Any help would be appreciated. **Roxanne Johnston, 10499 Hwy 37, Hibbing, MN 55746.**

• Wanted: George Strait photos, T-shirts, issues of *Strait Talk*, anything! Also Randy Travis and Clint Black items. Have some items for trade, or will pay cash. Send list and prices to **Tammy Henrikson, 3152 W. Holladay, Tucson, AZ 85746.**

Pen Pals

Meet new friends by mail.

• Hi! Lonely cowboy, 42, young-looking, living in very un-country town, serious musician and composer, magazine editor, eligible bachelor, family-oriented, wants to re-locate to the States, start new life and meet a genuine, caring, fun-loving, single lady 20-35-ish. You must love country music as much as I do. ACCWBK,

CMT, TNN fan. Favorites include: too many to list (pick an artist)! Send me your interests and a picture; I'll return the favor. All replies answered. **Ronald Scott, P.O. Box 4232 Station A, Victoria, BC, Canada V8X 3X8.**

• I'm a 38-year-old, single female and I love country music. I especially enjoy attending concerts and country dancing. Some favorites are Ricky Van Shelton, Patty Loveless, K. T. Oslin, Reba and Charlie Daniels. Would love to hear from all country music fans, especially single men age 35-45. Will answer all letters. Photo nice, but not necessary. **Delica Meyer, 3418 Nature Trail Ln., Mt. Vernon, IL 62864.**

• Hi, my name is Leslie Pitts. I'm a 27-year-old East Texas cowgirl who loves country music, rodeos, concerts, dancing, camping and fishing. Some favorites are Steve Wariner, Clint Black, Conway Twitty, Alabama, Alan Jackson, Lionel Cartwright, Garth Brooks, Randy Travis and The Judds. I would love to hear from anyone age 21-35. No inmates, please. If you send a picture, I'll send one in return. **Leslie Pitts, 116 S. Rusk, Overton, TX 75684.**

• Hi! My name is Peggy. I'm 18 and single. I love country music and country life. I'm looking for lonely guys, age 18-22, who love country. Send picture if possible. No inmates, please! **Peggy Campbell, 440 West Dewey, Platteville, WI 53818.**

• My name is Caroline. I'm 24 and love country music. My favorites are William Lee Golden, Clint Black, Garth Brooks, Lorrie Morgan and Patty Loveless. Write soon. No inmates, please. **Caroline Coleman, 1502 Torrywood Ln., Nashville, TN 37217.**

• Hi! My name is Susan, and I'm a 21-

year-old college student. I'm a devoted Barbara Mandrell fan and would like to meet other Barbara fans. No prisoners, please. **Susan Small, Rt. 1 Box 316, Walkerton, IN 46574.**

• Hi. My name is Trudy. I love country music and have a lot of favorites, including George Strait, Randy Travis and Clint Black. Would love hearing from men and women. I'm 53 years old. **Trudy Ruhge, 3638 A St., Lincoln, NE 68510.**

• Hi! I'm a 31-year-old, married lady who would like to meet some new friends in the West Michigan area. My hobbies are refunding and collecting. I'm an avid fan of Reba and Garth but love all country music. Let's talk. **Kathy Bookie, 11050 96th Ave., Zeeland, MI 49464.**

• Hi! I'm a 38-year-old single male. Would like to hear from other country music fans, male or female, any age. My favorites are Alabama, Anne Murray, The Judds, Willie Nelson, Patsy Cline, Eddie Rabbit and more. Please write, and I will respond. **John J. Berger, P.O. Box 501, Garfield, NJ 07026.**

• Hi! My name is Teresa. I'm 30 years old and single. Love horses and country music. I would like to meet some new friends who also enjoy country music. Love them all, but my favorites are Clint Black, Randy Travis, Billy Dean, Delbert McClintock, Mark Chesnutt, Kentucky HeadHunters and Pirates of the Mississippi. Write soon. **Teresa Miller, 1 Edwards Dr., Brookfield, CT 06804.**

• I'm a 24-year-old single mother. I love bluegrass and country music. Favorites are Alan Jackson, Mark Chesnutt, Clint Black, Hank Jr., Bill Monroe, Patsy Cline, Patty Loveless, Reba, etc. Would love to hear from anyone. Country folks are the best! **Lora Small, 1514 Hiawatha, Jackson, MI 49201.**

Letter to Mendelson

Associate Publisher Leonard Mendelson's efforts to communicate with servicepeople in the Middle East have borne more fruit.

Dear Mr. Mendelson,

It took a while to get my *Country Music Magazine* over here in the Middle East. I'm in the Air Force flying on an airplane called an AC-130 gunship originally stationed at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Hurlburt Field is home to the Air Force Special Operations Command. We're the ones who were sent to Grenada and the Panama Canal for Operation "Just Cause."

Would like to hear from you. Also can you put me in the pen pals section? It would be nice to get some letters over here. I'm 30 years old, single, love to Western dance and am from Woodward, Oklahoma.

Sorry this is so sloppy—I'm writing with a flashlight at 4 A.M. Christmas Eve.

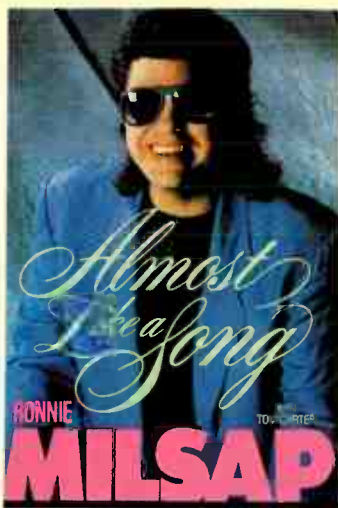
There is a cow in the desert over here. I made her out of plywood. She's black and white, about three feet high and four feet long. Her name is "Moo-Moo"—too bad she doesn't give real milk. So there's not just camels over here anymore. She makes me feel more at home.

Your magazine makes time go by.

SSgt. Wesley Fields
AFSOC DEPLOYED A-35
APO NY 09855

Moo-Moo asked us not to insist on SSgt. Fields including his magazine label or membership number. Please forgive us if we agreed. —Ed.

Send material for Newsletter to Country Music Magazine, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, CT 06880. Mark your envelope, Attention: Newsletter. To be considered for publication, material must include your membership number.



LIGHT VISION

*In this excerpt from *Almost Like a Song*, Ronnie Milsap looks back on his childhood. Loving grandparents and years in a state school for the blind had a profound effect on his life.*

It had been a routine press conference. Weary reporters asked the usual tired questions.

"Milsap, were you born blind?"

"Ronnie, have you abandoned your country music roots by recording songs that are more accepted by pop music audiences?"

"Ronnie, why do you treat your mother like shit?"

The room became a symphony of coughing and throat clearing. Amid all the squirming, the reporter who had posed the question rose from his chair, to repeat the inquiry as a challenge.

"Why do you treat your mother like shit?"

After members of my entourage removed him, I learned that he was not a reporter. I was told that he escorts a woman who says she is my biological mother.

I believe she is.

The woman knows intimately the formerly unpublished account of how my mother gave me away when I was one year old.

My grandparents and daddy explained to me years later that my mother did not want her baby because I was blind. According to her twisted thinking, my blindness confirmed God's anger toward her. Religious fears were as perverse as they were common at that time in rural western North Carolina. Misguided fundamentalist teachings were the way of life and the only hope for eternal life among those dwellers of the Smoky Mountains.

Daddy told me how my mother spent much of the first 12 months of my life sobbing and blaming him for me. He endured a year of hysterical rantings. She demanded that if he really loved her, he would find a way to rid her of this pitiful disaster in diapers.

"Take away God's punishment," she thundered. My daddy finally had all he could take, and when I was one year and one day old, he jerked me into his arms and stormed out through the door. He said my mother yelled after him: "Don't

you take that baby out of this house without a blanket."

Funny—the woman who put me out in the cold wanted me to be warm.

Daddy took me to live with his mother and stepfather, Phenia and Homer Frisby. They raised me lovingly until, at age six, I was sent away to the state school for the blind. My grandmother became my substitute mother, and all the feelings one has for a mother, I had for her. I called her "Mama."

My blindness was diagnosed when I was five months old. I was four years old the first time I remember being examined by Dr. Nettie Perrett. She was the doctor who had delivered me in my natural parents' living room. Five months later, she had reaffirmed her initial diagnosis of congenital glaucoma.

Although it has been said that I was born totally blind, I had what is called "light vision" in my left eye. I couldn't see forms or tell distances, but I could detect light, very, very slightly, if I looked into direct sunlight. To call that "sight" may be misleading, but it was hope to a little boy. I was, at the bottom of my heart, positive that someday my light vision would be surgically improved and I eventually would see.

As a child, I overheard adults talk of medical breakthroughs and how modern science was searching for cures for blindness. About that time, Dr. Jonas Salk discovered the polio vaccine. I thought to myself, if a crippling disease could be wiped out, why not someday something as comparatively minor as my blindness? I wanted nothing more then, or now, than to simply look at this world before I leave it.

When I was young, I may have encountered my mother a half-dozen times. The first time was when I was five or six. She surprised me by bringing along a baby daughter. I thought she was trying to be kind when she put my fingers on her daughter's eyes. Then she said something I will never forget.

"Feel her eyes, Ron. They're real clear, not like yours. She's not like you, and she didn't shame me. She can see."

You can imagine how words like that would break the heart of a little boy. I can still remember holding back the tears. But I wasn't about to let myself cry in front of a stranger.

Those early attempts at controlling my emotions proved to be rehearsals for the way I am today. I'm not as emotional as some people, perhaps because I developed the habit at that impressionable age of suppressing my feelings.

Today, I can remember dates surrounding events of long ago very well. But I can't always remember how I felt. Maybe, subconsciously, I don't want to. As a grown man, I haven't cried very often. A few of the times have been around people I'm really close to, but most often I've been able to control it until I could be alone to cry.

Another time, when I was still a preschooler, my mother came to visit, and she gave me a dollar. In those days, a dollar was a lot of money. You could buy a Coca-Cola for a nickel or a loaf of bread for 15 cents. To a six-year-old, paper money, even one dollar, seemed like a fortune. I put the dollar beside the big family Philco radio where I could feel for it and find it. I was mighty proud of that dollar. I would check regularly to make sure it was safe. It was the most money I'd ever had, but I didn't have it very long. My mother stayed for two days, then before she left, she asked me for the dollar back!

I have heard psychologists claim that 90 percent of a child's personality is formed by the age of seven. If that is true, my psychological scars are deep. I was taught to feel guilt and inferiority because I was blind. Sometimes, instead of trying to compensate for blindness, I tried to punish myself. I was a small child trying to achieve atonement for an affliction over which I had no control. My mother actually made me feel, in my young mind, that I was responsible for my own blindness.

Patty Loveless

Takes Care of Business

Dealing with the ups and downs of the music business isn't anything new to Patty Loveless, but she's finding there's more to being a country singer than just making music. • By Patrick Carr

There's no place like a honky tonk in high daylight, and the one we're at today is a beauty. The mid-afternoon sun flashes off empty beer bottles rolling lazily in a weary breeze across the almost empty parking lot, which looks big enough to be visible from high earth orbit. Chemical storage tanks and other items of industrial architecture, a nice touch, are just visible in the convection haze coming off the asphalt. The scrape of glass on stone is the only sound; birds avoid this place. A shame, that. A vulture or two would fit right in.

Inside it's a little better. Crushes of people and waves of music make things more normal. Not much more, though, because of the light. It's very, very bright. You can see people's pores under their makeup; if you wanted to, you could probably pinpoint every cigarette burn and Bloody Mary stain in the joint. That's so unnatural it's spooky.

Brilliant illumination is necessary, though, if you want images of honky tonking on light-hungry film, which is what's happening here. Everything is an illusion: the partying people are all paid extras, the lubricating booze is all tea or

soda, the guys who look like dope dealers are creative-team types, the terrorists are technicians. A music video is being made, is what it is: "The Night's Too Long" from Patty Loveless on MCA records, tapes and laser products.

Although she's not on camera today, Patty herself is here, leaning up against a wall near the entrance, wearing dark clothes and dark glasses, looking slim and streamlined and hidden away inside herself. She has a little posse around her: Kathy Gurley, her personal publicist; Janet Rickman, MCA's publicity chief; and Tony Brown, who produces her records.

Not a bad posse, that. Decent souls and heavy hitters all. The whole deal here, in fact, is pretty much first class. You have a thoroughly professional film crew shooting a clip on a very successful and increasingly popular artist singing a drop-dead song by a wonderful writer from an album overseen by an outstandingly creative producer. So this, really, is about as good as it gets in Nashville.

In another way, though, it's the pits. It just stinks. You have to stand there, leaning against a wall in a smelly, nasty honky



tonk in the middle of the afternoon, watching them shoot setup after setup of tedious stuff—extras dancing endlessly, a woman blowing cigarette smoke, an urban cowboy glancing significantly at an urban cowgirl, a bartender handing a drink tray to a waitress—while your time on this earth ticks slowly away.

But it's a living, and a better living than many, and sooner or later this same old show business limbo will end and you'll get to actually do your job.

Today that happens pretty quickly. Patty says let's talk, and we go looking for somewhere private. We find a dirty little dressing room a whole ballroom away from the video action, and there we settle gingerly on torn, sticky vinyl furniture under a sputtering fluorescent light. Such glamour.

Our last interview having been a little while ago, when Patty had just begun her recording career, we start with the most obvious of the changes she's experienced: commercial success. Then she was a newcomer. Now she's one of the top half-dozen women in the business.

"Well, yes, the records are really happening right now," she acknowledges with a quick smile. The smile, though, turns into a grimace when she begins describing the immediate effect of success on her life.

"I'm spending less and less time at home, and almost no time by myself," she says, and has the itinerary to prove it; she's just back into Nashville from 21 straight days in Canada, and she'll be gone again in two days. "I'm traveling with nine people at all times on the same bus, and though I'm sort of used to that because I'm from a big family, and it's a really good group of people, that wears you thin sometimes.

"I mean, the others have it just as hard as I do. They're away from their families and their own beds and their TV's and whatever other comforts they have at home. So that's how I deal with it. I tell myself I'm not the only person out here."

Note that she says 'out here,' not 'there.' She doesn't feel like she's back home today, and why would she? She's in the city where she lives, but she's still in a honky tonk working.

She goes on. "There's so much more that I have to be doing, though. Sometimes the others get to go home, but I have to stay out to take care of business: visit radio stations, do interviews, promotions, all those things. It's kind of lonesome sometimes. It's very hard to prepare myself for all these things. Sometimes it's very hard to keep on schedule.

"A lot of things suffer. I don't work out as much as I used to. I don't have the time. It's not like a girl can put her makeup on and curl her hair and then go run or work out in a gym, 'cause you've got to worry about the show at night after a whole day of keeping appointments. And my writing has suffered. I was writing every day, but now I'm not. I'm a very private person, a loner. I do like being by myself a lot, because that's when I start to think and create. But now I can't do that. So, yes, a lot suffers, writing included."

Now, there's nothing unique about Patty's situation. It's the inevitable consequence of success—which means that hard as it is, it's what happens when the dream of a lifetime actually comes true. Patty recognizes that little irony, and like many before her and doubtless many more to come, she's in a dilemma. She wants to be honest, but she feels bad confessing negative feelings about a situation she's spent her whole adult life trying to create, and she fears that not many people can relate to the hardships of her new life.

She may be right; most people enjoy the idea that the entertainment business is an earthly paradise in which the stars are happy, all-powerful little gods. The idea more popular on the inside of the entertainment business, that the stars are meat, doesn't compute.

Patty takes a stab at it anyway.

"I remember just after I signed my recording contract, someone looked at me and said, 'Kid, you don't know what you've got yourself into, do you? Well, you'll find out.' They were right. There was so much I was very naive about."

This was true, she says, despite all her previous experience in the music business, the five years she spent singing country in The Wilburn Brothers' show and the decade during which she and her former husband, Terry Loveless, were the core of a traveling rock/pop/country-rock club band.

"I just never realized the responsibility of the recording end of it: making sure you get those masters in to the record company once year, and then doing all the promotional work they want you to do on top of your show dates. And it's not just that. Your band depends on you, and that's a big responsibility. You have to keep working so everybody else can work."



BETH GWINN

Getting in front of the camera is part of the job for Patty Loveless. In order to film the video of "The Night's Too Long," the cast and crew took over the bar area of an old Nashville restaurant. Part of the video features Patty with Laura Weber on mandolin.



BETH GWINN

And, she adds, the financial reward isn't what she expected. "Getting a recording contract doesn't mean you get all this money, like you think it does," she says ruefully. "It takes a while to make money in this business. It definitely takes money to make money."

We talk for a while about the business today versus the business of yesteryear, when the stars Patty admired as a coal miner's daughter in Pikeville, Kentucky—her cousin Loretta Lynn, the late Patsy Cline, the young Dolly Parton—were all the rage. It's not any harder or easier now than it was then, we conclude. These days most of a star's time is spent being dragged around to meetings and media events of one sort or another; back then, traveling and greeting fans in person took up most of a star's day. What hasn't changed is that most of the time, the magic hour or two on stage seems to make it all worth while ("That's what you live for," says Patty), and some of the time the other stuff feels like too high a price.

We're into the next subject, the modern country star's five-year life cycle from ignition to burnout if not outright extinction—from bright new face to has-been, if you want to put it that way—when a very dirty, beat-up, red-eyed, catatonic-looking man with a mop and a bucket comes into the dressing room. He shuffles wordlessly between us in a reek of booze and urine, throws open the door of a toilet a few feet away across the stained concrete floor, and starts mopping.

We just watch. Objecting would be futile, and it would be irresponsible to get up and just go home like we want to. The look on Patty's face suggests that in some ways, five years of first-class stardom may be too long.

Patty is worried now. "I really didn't mean to walk in here and start complaining," she says. "I don't want to be negative. I really wanted this, you know, and I really enjoy it. I even knew there'd be things I'd have to give up to get it—you know, I've worked very hard, and there are a lot of things I wish I could have been enjoying—and that was okay. It's just that sometimes the work gets too much. I get overwhelmed. I guess I'm sort of feeling that way today."

She also says that "the list of things that are pleasing outweighs the other, really," so I ask her for the list of good things.

She doesn't have to think about that one. "I enjoy being on stage. I enjoy being with the band; they're like my family. I enjoy making the records. I enjoy being in the studio. I enjoy working with Tony Brown, whom I love dearly; I think he's great. I enjoy being

around other artists who have the same musical integrity as I do, people who you know appreciate the music, not people who are just talking to you because of the politics of it. That's the kind of friends I have among the other artists, and that's really great."

Patty's list could be boiled down to one word, music, and that underlines the most pertinent fact about Patty Loveless as a recording artist: that she's one of the people in Nashville whose talents and motives are primarily creative, and she's been smart and lucky enough to fall in with collaborators of



Patty's video of "I'm That Kind of Girl" finds her in a variety of costumes with a cast both young and old.

like mind. Therefore she tends to make better records than most. Not much weak, lazy, fake or force-fed music comes out of this singer's mouth.

I ask her about how she makes her records, beginning with how the songs are chosen.

"These days it's just me and Tony Brown," she says. "We've worked so well together these last two albums, brought in songs and compromised about songs. I love working with Tony 'cause I trust his whole thing about the music. He has a love for music himself, you see; he's a musician. When he hears a song he really likes and thinks I could do, he saves it and puts it back until our next little get-together. That's what I do, too. I keep songs I come across and let Tony hear them, and we talk about it. And that's it. That's the reason I really like the way MCA is set up. There's no outsiders coming in and interfering with the music. They don't mess with it till it's done."

That is indeed an awful lot better, I remark, than the executive committee approach to record making, or for that matter the producer-as-king, artist-as-meat approach.

"Believe me, I *know*," she laughs. "I like the changes that have taken place at MCA in the past three years. We used to have someone from the company take us around to song publishing offices, but now the publishers come to my office and play their songs, and I either like it or I don't. It's take it or not, and after that it's just Tony and me. It really works that way."

And, I say, better records really do result. Patty's last couple of albums have been very nicely thought out, very tastefully made and very intelligently balanced.

"Well, thank you," she says, and then laughs ruefully. "You know, after choosing the songs, the first day of tracking I'm pretty nervous. The first night I go home and cry, because I don't know if the songs are going to work or not. But by the next day we've all got to know each other and things have smoothed out, and I'm happy again."

"I always have to go through those jitters, though. I know the songs aren't all going to be Number One, and I know they all can't be just for radio. I'm trying to make an album where you're able to put it on and enjoy listening to all of it, not have it just because a song's playing on the radio and there's a video release. I want people to feel that it was worth their while to go out and pay the 15 bucks, or however much they're getting for a CD where you live. I'm a record buyer too, and it really disappoints me if I buy a record 'cause of a real good song on the radio and find that the rest of the album kind of takes a back seat. I've bought a few like that."

"I mean, I don't expect people to like every song on the album just because I do, but I hope they'll feel that at least eight of them—at least eight—are worth it. And you know, if I ever catch myself doing one of those two-or-three-song albums, I think I'm going to say 'Well, that's it. Go give it a rest until your creative juices are flowing again, girl.'"

Song quality is hardly a problem at present, though, and for the next quarter hour or so we talk about the primary reasons for that, Patty's favorite songwriters. There's the marvelous Lucinda Williams who wrote "The Night's Too Long," the first but likely not the last of her songs to be recorded by Patty; Paul Kennerley, Emmylou Harris' English husband, who wrote and co-wrote two songs on *On Down the Line*; Wendy Waldman and Matraca Berg and Karen Brooks and Carey and Larry Lynch, who all contributed to the album; several others here and there (the list gets kind of long once Patty starts to really think about it); and Kostas, the "great little Greek guy" who wrote Patty's breakthrough hit, "Timber, I'm Falling in Love" and no less than four of *On*

BETH GWINN



PEOPLE WEEKLY © 1990 ACEY HARPER

With her career in full swing, Patty had doubts about announcing her marriage to producer Emory Gordy Jr. He's in the business, too.

Down the Line's ten songs, the title track included.

It's fun talking about songs, and evidently it's fun writing them, too, because Patty gets a real gleam in her eye when she talks about it. Also, it's a pretty nice way to make a living. Thinking about the financial security and the new pickup truck "Timber" bought for Kostas out there in low-stress Colorado, she says, "Songwriting's really great, you know. I mean, you can work at home and see your family."

That's an important point, because "Oh, yes, I definitely want to have a family," and when the currently overwhelming demand for her services as a singing star declines, as it surely will within five years or less, she's going to try to have one. That, she says, is why she keeps a notebook with her and writes down song ideas whenever they occur amid her rush of commitments. And yes, for three years now she's been seeing a man who prefers to remain anonymous in print, and "it's still good."

Final details before we set her free. Yes, she says, she's still living in the modest condo she had before her current success—"It's got a bed, a bathroom and a kitchen; I'm not home enough to need any more than that"—and no, she doesn't have what you'd call a plan for the next few years. All she knows about how to handle the stuff flying at her is that "Well, you can't let it control you, but you can't control it, either. I guess the thing is not to get upset." And she shakes her head and laughs.

"I remember just after I signed my recording contract, someone looked at me and said, 'Kid, you don't know what you've got yourself into, do you? Well, you'll find out.'"

There is a postscript to this story which comes clear after we've released Patty from interview duty.

Patty, it seems, has been telling us less than the complete truth on the subject of romance. She has indeed been seeing a man who prefers to remain anonymous, but she has also been married to that man since February 6, 1989. He is Emory Gordy Jr., the well-known country record producer; she got to know him while she was making her first single for MCA.

This is not breaking news, as many readers will know. With Patty's cooperation, *People Magazine* has already revealed all, and The Nashville Network has spread the word among country fans. What we need, then, is not news but background, and to that end we get Patty on the telephone.

"Are you mad at me?" she begins, then explains why she kept her marriage secret. One reason was that "My ex-husband still had not accepted the divorce between us, so I was just not wanting to put it out in magazines or talk about it on TV and flaunt it in his face." Also, she says, "Sometimes, when people see you're doing so well, they try to find reasons why. So I thought, well, if they find out about Emory and me, they'll probably say, 'That's the reason! She's married to a producer, and he pulls a lot of strings.' I just didn't want it to come out that way. I wanted people to know that I *have* been standing on my own two feet."

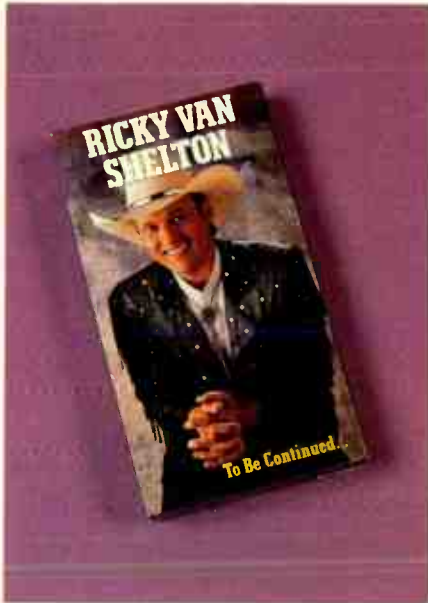
She says her husband also preferred a hush-hush marriage. "Really it was both our ideas. Emory, he's always wanting to be in the background. He doesn't go on the road with me but very seldom, and he doesn't attend any of the awards shows with me. He's just not that kind of person. He's just not the kind of person to want to go out there and say, 'I married Patty Loveless.'"

Gordy and Loveless started out as musical collaborators ("For about a year and a half working together, we had no romantic interest in each other at all," Patty says), and they're still professionally aligned; Gordy left MCA after Patty's first album, but now he's back, co-producing her next album with both Patty and Tony Brown. Periods of recording, in fact, are when the two see the most of each other, since Gordy still lives in Dallas, Georgia, while Patty still lives in her Nashville apartment. "When he comes here, we live together, we share an apartment, but I very seldom get to see the house in Georgia. The most I'll be there is four or five days once in a while. It's sort of like a vacation home; it's not a complete home to me, 'cause I don't spend enough time there, helping around the house."

It's not the conventional married-couple setup, but Patty says it works okay. After all, she still spends most of her time on the road, and that's not likely to change for a while. She figures it'll be another couple of years before she and Gordy decide to make a single home together.

More songwriting and less touring will be a feature of that future, Patty says, and she hopes that children will be, too. "I'm hoping I won't be on the road the way I am now for too much longer," she says, "but I'd like to maybe give my career another two to three years before I have a child. That's a big responsibility, and I want to be a hundred percent responsible for my child. But if an accident was to happen and the Good Lord wants to bless us before we plan it, that's fine with me." She laughs; she sounds happy. ■

EDITOR'S CHOICE



RICKY VAN SHELTON: TO BE CONTINUED...

What can I say...Ricky Van Shelton is a hunk with a fabulous voice! He has topped the country album charts and produced seven Number One singles—so far. Ricky Van Shelton's video, *To Be Continued...*, includes every music video Ricky has done, plus two live performances. In addition, there are interviews with Ricky and his mother. Ricky discusses the time he received his first guitar at Christmas, his hobby of collecting old cars and restoring them, the pleasure he gets taking "Sunday" drives through the country, goals for his Beefalo business and more. During the interviews, Ricky reveals his humility and sense of humor. It is an absolute delight hearing about his interests, goals and lifestyle. His mother adds insight by explaining that all Ricky ever wanted to pursue was music and art. I thoroughly enjoyed *To Be Continued...* In fact, I watched it twice the first night I brought it home! *To Be Continued...* includes Ricky's big hit songs: "Crime of Passion," "Somebody Lied," "Life Turned Her that Way," "I'll Leave This World Loving You," "Hole in My Pocket" (Live), "Living Proof" (Live), "Statue of a Fool" and "I Meant Every Word He Said." *To Be Continued...* is 35 minutes long and costs only \$24.95, #G5W. See Rich Kienzle's review in *Essential Collector* (November/December 1990, *Country Music*).

THE MERLE TRAVIS GUITAR

The Merle Travis Guitar is a collection of instrumental electric guitar performances originally recorded from the late 1940's through the early 1950's. Rich Kienzle reviewed *The Merle Travis Guitar* in *Buried Treasures* (July/August 1990 issue, *Country Music*) and states, "For fans of this style, which influenced everyone from Chet Atkins to Elvis' original guitarist, Scotty Moore, this is definitely the album to get." *The Merle Travis Guitar* includes: "Blue Smoke," "Black Diamond Blues," "On a Bicycle Built for Two," "Saturday Night Shuffle," "Bugle Call Rag," "Tuck Me to Sleep in My Old Tucky Home," "Walkin' the Strings," "The Memphis Blues," "The Sheik of Araby," "Blue Bell," "The Waltz You Saved for Me" and "Rockabye Rag." Not surprisingly, this was one of our bestsellers in 1990. For only \$11.98, #HAT3132, you can get *The Merle Travis Guitar* in either LP or cassette.



COUNTRY MUSIC BELT BUCKLES

Look at these gorgeous belt buckles made of genuine pewter, the vibrant enamel colors highlighting the words "Country Music." These buckles will wear handsomely on your belt—the publisher of *Country Music Magazine* loves his! Both buckles are carefully crafted with beautiful designs—you'll just love the intricate details. The "I Love Country Music" buckle is nicely accented with a bronze fiddle and guitar; the "Country Music" buckle shows off a banjo and fiddle. Each belt buckle only costs \$9.95, or save money and buy two for \$17.90. "I Love Country Music" belt buckle, #G6J; "Country Music" belt buckle, #G7L; both belt buckles, #G6J/G7L.



COUNTRY MUSIC MAGAZINE LOGO T-SHIRT

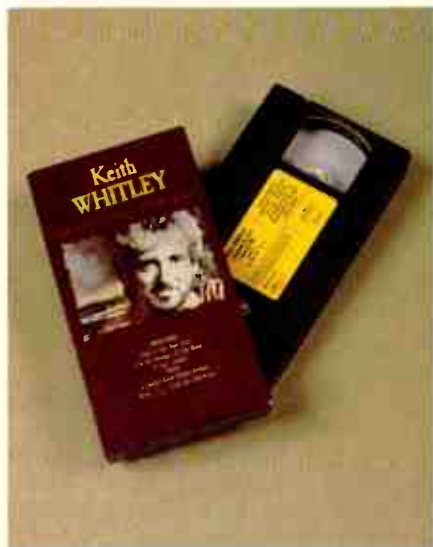
You're familiar with our *Country Music Magazine* trademark. Now you can get this famous logo on a comfortable, 100% cotton T-shirt. Made for us by Champion, these T-shirts are the same top quality they provide to most professional sports teams. The classy *Country Music* logo is printed in white across your favorite color: red or navy blue. Melissa, modeling our red T-shirt, is a staff member at *Country Music Magazine*. That's me, Robin, wearing out best-selling "I Love Country Music" T-shirt. It comes in navy blue only. We are offering these T-shirts for only \$10.00 each. *Country Music* logo T-shirt: #G2P-navy blue, #G2Q-red; "I Love Country Music" T-shirt: #G20-navy blue. Please indicate shirt size on order form (S,M,L,XL).

**MERLE HAGGARD:
THE LEGEND OF BONNIE & CLYDE**

The Legend of Bonnie & Clyde is another of Merle Haggard's great recordings—so great, it was one of the top sellers in 1989 in *Country Music Magazine*. On this album, as on so many of his others, Merle Haggard shows why he is so highly regarded in the recording industry—his rare knack for picking a song, his amazing ability as a songwriter, his gift for making the most out of each song he sings. *The*



Legend of Bonnie & Clyde includes: "Is This the Beginning of the End," "Love Has a Mind of Its Own," "The Legend of Bonnie and Clyde," "The Train Never Stops," "Fool's Castle," "Will You Visit Me on Sundays," "My Ramona," "I Started Loving You Again," "Money Tree," "You Still Have a Place in My Heart" and "Because You Can't be Mine." Receive all these great songs for only \$11.98, #HAT 3075. Available in LP and cassette formats. See Rich Kienzle's review in *Buried Treasures* (January/February 1989 issue, *Country Music*). This album was a big seller in 1989!



**CHET ATKINS: GET
STARTED ON GUITAR VIDEO**

Just think, Chet Atkins teaching you how to play the guitar! Do you know how many people would die for that opportunity? With the *Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar* video course, beginners can have fun learning the basics, and advanced players will discover a goldmine of helpful hints and ideas. In his *Get Started on Guitar* video course, Chet is assisted by John Knowles. As Chet describes John, "Dr. John Knowles is a dear friend and one of the smartest and best teachers I have seen work. There would be no book or video without him." *Chet Atkins:*

Get Started on Guitar video course includes a one-hour videocassette, a 112-page instruction book and a 40-minute audio-cassette—all three components cross-referenced to each other and packaged in a handsome case for easy carrying and access.

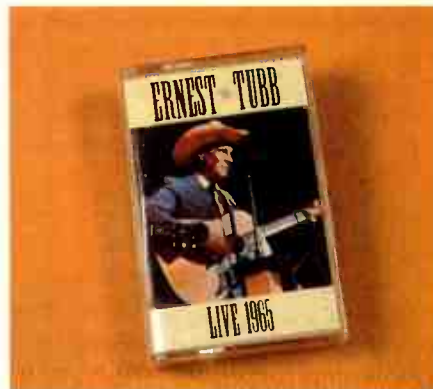
The instruction book will guide you through the music Chet and John play in the video. Each tune has its own chapter which contains basic information and advanced tips. There are also special reference sections on "Playing Chords," "Fin-



ger-picking Chords," "Playing Melodies" and "Playing by Ear." The video shows split-screen close-ups so you can see exactly how the techniques are done. Also included are on-screen chord symbols that let you play along as you watch and an on-screen clock to help you locate specific places in the video. *Chet Atkins: Get Started on Guitar* video is a must for all guitar and music lovers. You receive the video, audio-cassette, instruction booklet and binder case for \$69.95, #B2G.

ERNEST TUBB LIVE 1965

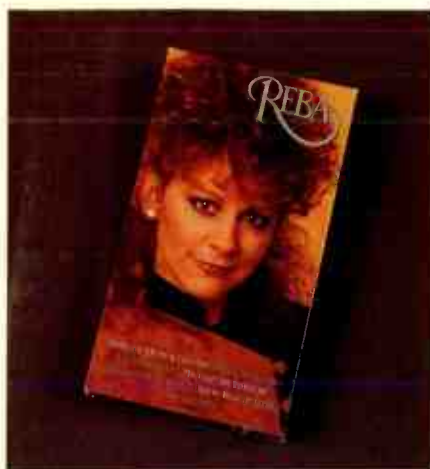
Many of you country music fans are familiar with the ever-so-popular Ernest Tubb Record Shop in Nashville, Tennessee, the *Midnight Jamboree* radio program he founded, still broadcast live every Saturday night on WSM, and Tubb's craggy face bronzed at the Country Music Hall of Fame. Now you can capture this great legend on his album, *Ernest Tubb Live 1965*. *Ernest Tubb Live* is unique—a true



**KEITH WHITLEY:
I WONDER DO YOU THINK OF ME**

On May 9, 1989, as the album, *I Wonder Do You Think of Me*, was close to completion, Keith Whitley passed away—many people mourned the loss of this powerful artist. In one of his last conversations with his producer, Garth Fundis, Keith spoke of how much this record meant to him and how proud he was of it. Now, with his video, *I Wonder Do You Think of Me*, Keith Whitley can live on in our hearts and in his music, with his smiling face. *I Wonder Do You Think of Me* includes a number of Keith's songs: "I'm No Stranger to the Rain," "It Ain't Nothin'," "Don't Close Your Eyes," "Hard Livin'," "When You Say Nothing at All" and "Homecoming." In addition, there is a special tribute to Keith from CMT (Country Music Television). *I Wonder Do You Think of Me* is 30 minutes long and costs \$19.95, #G1C.

live recording of one of his shows in 1965. One of Tubb's finest Texas Troubadour bands backed him on this show, including Jack Greene and Cal Smith. *Ernest Tubb Live* includes: "Drivin' Nails in My Coffin," "I Love You Because," "There's a Little Bit of Everything in Texas," "Blue Eyed Elaine," "Slipping Around," "Mississippi Gal," "I'll Take a Back Seat for You," "Warm Red Wine," "Thanks a Lot," "Pass the Booze," "You Don't Have To Be a Baby to Cry," "Do What You Do Do Well," "Try Me One More Time" and "Walking the Floor Over You." *Ernest Tubb Live 1965* has been a big seller in *Country Music Magazine*, thanks to its great, live content. Available on CD and cassette only, *Ernest Tubb Live* costs \$8.98 for the cassette; \$14.98 for the CD, #R70902.



REBA MCENTIRE VIDEO

Reba McEntire is one of country music's most highly respected female singers. She won the CMA Entertainer of the Year Award in 1986, plus four CMA Female Vocalist of the Year awards. Her video, *Reba*—top notch, rich in character and carefully prepared—includes the following songs, all personally introduced by Reba: "Whoever's in New England," "What Am I Gonna Do About You," "The Last One to Know," "Sunday Kind of Love," "I Know How He Feels" and "Cathy's Clown." Rich Kienzle states, "Reba introduces each with a few recollections about how each video was produced in her natural, down-to-earth style..." (November/December 1990 issue, *Country Music*). I have seen Reba live in Las Vegas, Nevada, at Caesars Palace, and she puts on some show! Don't miss out on some of Reba's biggest hits in this 30-minute collection, for only \$21.95, #G4E.

LULU BELLE & SCOTTY

Admired as sweethearts forever, Lulu Belle and Scotty perform 26 of their old favorites in a double-cassette collection—*Sweethearts Still* and *The Sweethearts of Country Music*. *Sweethearts Still* includes: "I Told Them All about You," "I'll Be All Smiles Tonight," "Sweet Evalena," "Between You and Me," "Try to Live Some While You're Here," "Molly Darling," "The First Whipporwill Call," "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," "Sunset Years of Life," "Bonnie Blue Eyes," "Rocking Alone in an Old Rocking Chair" and "When I Yoo Hoo in the Valley." *The Sweethearts of Country Music* includes: "Homecoming Time in Happy Valley," "Sunday School," "Remember Me," "Does the Spearmint Lose Its Flavor," "When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold," "Sweet Lips (Battle of King Mountain)," "The Empty Christmas Stocking," "I'm in the Dog House Now," "Have I Told You Lately that I Love You," "Mountain Dew," "Each Time You Leave," "What You Don't Know, Won't Hurt You," "Brown Mountain Light" and "Shortnin' Bread." Some of these songs were Lulu Belle and Scotty's



final recordings. See Rich Kienzle's review of *The Sweethearts of Country Music* in Essential Collector (November/December 1990 issue, *Country Music*). All you lovebirds who admire the sounds of Lulu Belle & Scotty don't want to miss out on this great buy. For only \$9.98 you receive both *Sweethearts Still* and *The Sweethearts of Country Music*, #HT260/HT269.

HANK THOMPSON AT THE GOLDEN NUGGET

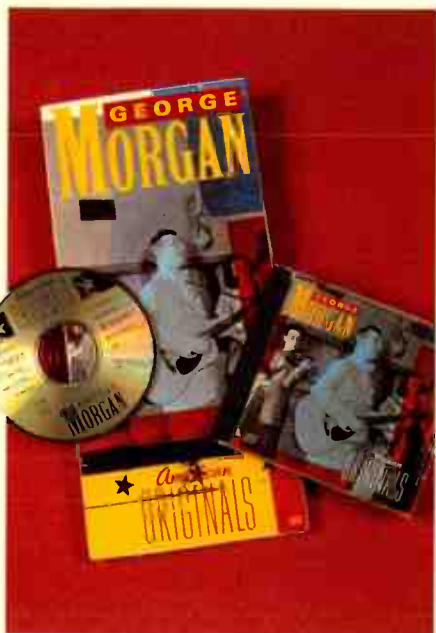
The famous Golden Nugget Casino, located in Las Vegas, Nevada, is that city's center for country music entertainment. And when the marquee reads "Hank Thompson," customers can be certain of standing-room only. Hank's album, *Hank Thompson at the Golden Nugget*, was recorded onstage during a live performance at the Golden Nugget Casino. You'll hear Thompson at his natural best,



displaying the personality and charm which have helped make him a standout performer for so many years. On this album, Hank gets some great backing by The Brazos Valley Boys. Rich Kienzle reviewed *Hank Thompson at the Golden Nugget* in *Buried Treasures* (January/February 1989 issue, *Country Music*) and states, "The band was having a good night when they recorded it—it smokes from beginning to end." On top of that, Hank gets some help from his dear friend, Merle Travis, who contributes some of the brilliant guitar work. *Hank Thompson at the Golden Nugget* includes: "Honky Tonk Girl," "I Guess I'm Getting Over You," "I'll Step Aside," "Orange Blossom," "I Didn't Mean to Fall in Love," "John Henry," "Nine Pound Hammer," "She's Just a Whole Lot Like You," "Have I Told You Lately that I Love You," "Steel Guitar Rag," "Just One Step Away," "Lost Highway" and "A Six Pack to Go." It only costs \$11.98, #HAT 3076, LP or cassette.

GEORGE MORGAN AMERICAN ORIGINALS

George Morgan American Originals is the first George Morgan album available since 1975. This record includes: "Candy Kisses," "Little Dutch Girl," "Please Don't Let Me Love You," "Room Full of Roses," "In Your Eyes," "Cry Baby Heart," "I'm in Love Again," "You're the Only Good Thing (That's Happened to Me)," "Just Out of Reach" and "Almost." Rich Kienzle reviewed *George Morgan American Originals* in *Buried Treasures* (May/June 1990 issue, *Country Music*) and states, "Nearly everything that matters is here...George was a smooth singer much like the young Eddy Arnold, but unlike Arnold, Morgan, who died in 1975, kept close to his traditional sound." George Morgan is a huge favorite with many, so don't miss out on this long-awaited collection—you wouldn't want another 15 years to go by. Available on CD, #CK45076, and cassette, #FCT45076, only. Price for the CD is \$15.98; the cassette is \$7.98.





ELVIS 50 YEARS/50 HITS

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the King's, RCA put together this fabulous treasure trove filled with Elvis' 50 greatest hits. All the famous hits, the legendary songs that made Elvis so popular and made so many swoon, appear on this deluxe set. *Elvis 50 Years/50 Hits* includes: "A Big Hunk O' Love," "Don't Cry Daddy," "Wear My Ring Around Your Neck," "It's Now or Never," "My Wish Came True," "I Got Stung," "(Now and Then There's) A Fool Such as I," "Blue Hawaii," "Kentucky Rain," "Can't Help Fallin' in Love," "Heartbreak Hotel," "Don't be Cruel," "I Want You, I Need You, I Love You," "(You're the) Devil in Disguise," "I Need Your Love Tonight," "Too Much," "Viva Las Vegas," "Hound Dog," "Old Shep," "The Wonder of You," "Loving You," "Kissin' Cousins," "Suspicion," "All Shook Up," "Love Me Tender," "What'd I Say," "Danny Boy," "(Let Me be Your) Teddy Bear," "Good Luck Charm," "Suspicious Minds," "Treat Me Nice," "Return to Sender," "If I Can Dream" and lots more! If you love Elvis, you can't afford to miss out on this special offer. A must for your collection! *Elvis 50 Years/50 Hits* costs only \$19.98 and is available in either LP, #R1A, or cassette, #C2A.

THE 1991 LEGENDS OF COUNTRY MUSIC CALENDAR

Many of *Country Music Magazine's* subscribers are fortunate enough to have become members of *The American Academy for the Preservation of Old-Time Country Music* and to have received the authentic *1991 Legends of Country Music Calendar*. Fortunately, now you may enjoy this legendary calendar. Filled with many of your old-time favorite performers, *The 1991 Legends of Country Music Calendar* includes: Jimmie Rodgers, Marty Robbins, Loretta Lynn, Lefty Frizzell, Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Kitty Wells, Johnny Cash, Patsy Cline, The Carter Family, Hank Snow, Hank Williams Sr. and Ray Price. In addition, *The 1991 Legends of Country Music Calendar* contains important trivia facts, such as birthdates, deaths, marriages, etc. *The 1991 Legends of Country Music Calendar* normally sells for \$12.00, but we're giving you a break. You can buy it for only \$7.95, #G1K. Don't miss out on this unique calendar!



LEGENDS OF COUNTRY MUSIC VIDEO

"This video is among the most important historical country music videos on the market today," says Rich Kienzle in *Essential Collector* (January/February 1991 issue, *Country Music*). I couldn't say it any better myself! *Legends of Country Music* consists of live performances by the Opry stars, filmed in the 1950's. Opry greats who took part: Ernest Tubb, Webb Pierce, Ferlin Husky, The Wilburn Brothers, The Louvin Brothers, Marty Robbins, Carl Smith, Ray Price, Bill Monroe, Cowboy Copas, Faron Young, Hawkshaw Hawkins, The Jordanaires, Chet Atkins, The Carter Family and lots more! Captured in beautiful color, *Legends of Country Music* covers 28 hit songs including: "Tomorrow Never Comes," "Solemn Old Judge," "Crazy Arms," "I Hear a Voice Calling," "I Need Your Love so Bad," "Little Liza Jane," "Gone and Left Me Blues," "I Love You so Much It Hurts Me," "Got Five Dollars and It's Saturday Night," "How Could Anyone so Pretty be so Dog-Gone Mean" and much more. Wouldn't you just love to see how all your favorite Opry stars looked 40 years ago and hear those great original songs! *Legends of Country Music* is 60 minutes long and costs \$49.95, #V1W.

NASHVILLE WAREHOUSE EDITOR'S CHOICE

Mail to: Nashville Warehouse, P.O. Box 5090, Ronkonkoma, NY 11779

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 TOTAL AMOUNT:

Add \$2.00 postage and handling for first item and \$.95 for each additional item. 3491-1



Johnny Bond Special

Only one of Johnny Bond's Starday albums is in print, and it includes none of his hits: *That Wild, Wicked But Wonderful West* (SLP 147), the 1962 album he recorded and sold to the company before they signed him as an artist. It's available on LP and cassette for \$6.98, or on CD for \$7.98. Most were Western songs penned by Bond himself including "The Pass" and "At Dawn I Die." Among the non-originals are Western classics like "High Noon," "Empty Saddles" and "Dusty Skies." One additional number included on the album, "Belle Starr," is not Bond but The Glaser Brothers. See Buried Treasures in the September/October 1990 issue for more details on this album. Member's price is \$2.00 off list price. Include membership number.

Cliffie Stone Special

Last issue's Legends feature was Cliffie Stone, but because of the full-page Poll, we didn't have room to include recordings. Rich Kienzle was able to find a few of Cliffie's productions, though, and here they are.

Cliffie Stone's own recordings are all out of print, and it's likely they'll stay that way, given their relative obscurity. However, two important albums he produced are in print. Rhino's *Sixteen Tons of Boogie: The Best of Tennessee Ernie Ford* (R 70975), available on cassette (\$9.98) and CD (\$14.98), has all of Ernie's boogie hits produced by Cliffie. On most of the tracks, Cliffie also plays bass. *The Best of Merle Travis* (R 70993), available on cassette (\$9.98) and CD (\$14.98), includes 18 Travis classics, most produced by Cliffie, among them such Travis-Stone compositions as "No Vacancy," "Cincinnati Lou," "Three Times Seven" and "Lawdy What a Gal." These albums were also covered in Buried Treasures in the September/October 1990 issue. Member's price on these albums is \$2.00 off list price. Include membership number when ordering.

Buried Treasures Special

CMSA members' special prices on Buried Treasures items are indicated in the "How to Get These Treasures" box on the Buried Treasures page in this issue. This time Rich Kienzle reviews Bill Monroe, Lefty Frizzell, Hank Williams and Jimmy C. Newman. He also covers a multi-volume classic song collection from Columbia Records and a new boxed set from the Smithsonian.



The Journal Debuts!

Academy members have now received the Premier Collector's Edition of *The Journal*. It includes features on legendary country artists such as Jimmie Rodgers, Roy Acuff, The Carter Family, Hank Williams, Uncle Dave Macon, Gene Autry, Ernest Tubb and many, many more. It's an issue you don't want to miss. If you haven't yet signed up for the Academy, now's a good time to do it—we'll start your membership with this special issue. Plus, you'll get the 1991 Legends of Country Music Calendar! The Academy's staff is now at work on the second issue, and it's sure to be another winner—Hank Snow will be featured this time around. To start your Academy membership today, send your check or money order for \$7.99 to American Academy for the Preservation of Old-Time Country Music, P.O. Box 2000, Marion, Ohio 43305.

How to Order

To order any album listed on this page or in Buried Treasures, send check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 3491N, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Include \$1.95 postage and handling for the first item, \$.95 each additional. Members taking their discount must include membership number.

MEMBERS POLL/MARCH 1991

VOTE

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

Bought Any Good Records Lately?

1. Did you buy any albums (records, cassettes or compact discs) in the last month? Yes No
How many records? _____ cassettes? _____ CDs? _____
2. Which ones did you like best? List performers and album titles.
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____
e. _____

Your Choice for Album of the Month

3. To vote, list the numbers of your top five favorites from the Top 25 in this issue.
Singles (list 5 numbers)
Albums (list 5 numbers)

Where Do You Shop? Do You Have a Credit Card?

4. Check any of the following stores you or anyone in your household has shopped in during the past three months.
 K-Mart Sears
 Wal-Mart Penney's
 7-Eleven Ward's
5. Check all of the credit cards owned by you or anyone in your household.
 Visa American Express
 MasterCard Diner's Club
 Discover Card Oil Company
6. Have you or anyone in your household ordered anything by mail or phone in the last 12 months? Yes No
7. If you or anyone in your household traveled on vacation in the last 12 months, about how many miles was the trip? _____

Who Can Vote

Only CMSA members are eligible to vote. If you are a member, write your membership number here. _____

If you are not a member but would like to join and vote immediately, fill out the poll and enclose your check for \$16 for one-year CMSA Membership (you get an extra year of *Country Music Magazine*, too).

Fill out poll and mail to: March Poll, *Country Music Magazine*, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118, New York, NY 10173.

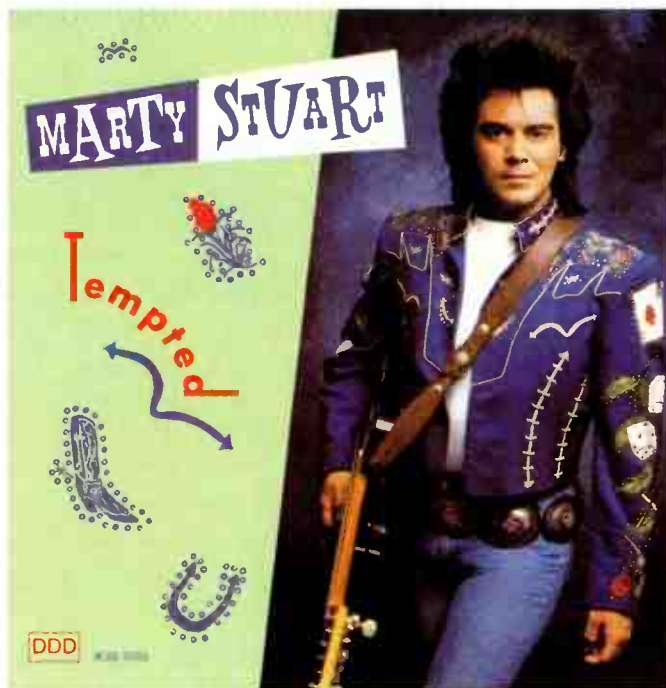
Record Reviews

Marty Stuart
Tempted
MCA-10106

It's still a mystery to me why *Hillbilly Rock*, Marty Stuart's first album for MCA, released in 1989, didn't make more waves. I, for one, touted it loudly in these pages. I believed—and still believe—that it was one of the best releases of the year. I can only theorize that Stuart's sincere and smoldering tribute to 1950's raunch and rockabilly was a bit too strident and visceral for country radio programmers. (These folks have a system of their own for deciding what to play and what not to play on the airwaves; it is apparently so complex and arcane that they don't even understand it themselves most of the time. However, for whatever it's worth, George Bush requested a copy of *Hillbilly Rock* to play on Air Force One. At least somebody besides me thought it was worth a spin.)

With *Tempted*, his latest, Stuart has done something I wasn't sure he was capable of doing—made an even stronger album than *Hillbilly Rock*. This one, I predict, will prove more palatable to country radio—which is, after all, a country artist's ultimate grinding wheel of success or failure. Stuart hasn't changed direction this time around; he's merely shifted gears a little and eased into a more comfortable and solid groove—one that perhaps doesn't strut and swarm over you and get in your face quite as aggressively as some of the cuts on *Hillbilly Rock* did.

Instead, *Tempted*, in an effortless and unselfconscious



way, reaffirms Stuart's rootsy fondness for 50's and 60's country. There's hardly a song on here that wouldn't be right at home on a Johnny Cash, Carl Smith or Johnny Horton album from 30 or 35 years ago. Stuart's own composition, "Paint the Town," sounds as if it emerged full-blown from the 50's. So do the handful of other songs he has co-written with superstar songwriters like Paul Kennerley and Kostas and his coolly nonchalant but sensual version of Eddie Miller's "Burn Me Down."

The Johnny Cash influence is in evidence everywhere on *Tempted*, as it almost always is in Stuart's music. Stuart is, after all, a former Cash protege, sideman and in-law, as well as a lifelong friend. "Blue Train," for example, is an old Cash number that Stuart has updated with a faithfully growling vocal, some futuristic-sounding

keyboard fills and some supersonic electric guitar variations on the old trademark Cash boom-chick-a-boom. "I'm Blue, I'm Lonesome" is another restless, footloose train song of sorts in which Stuart invokes the ghost of Hank Williams and the spirit of Bill Monroe and manages to do them both justice.

From a guitar aficionado's point of view, this is the best and boldest guitar-framed album I've heard since *Guitar Town*, Steve Earle's debut of five or six years ago. That's no coincidence, since Tony Brown and Richard Bennett, who co-produced *Guitar Town*, are at the production helm here. *Tempted*—to Brown's and Bennett's considerable credit—possesses the same arresting rawness, cockiness and vitality that made the Earle debut album so refreshing.

Richard Bennett's bold sig-

nature lead electric guitar work can also be heard throughout the tracks on *Tempted*, as it was on *Guitar Town*. In fact, with session ace Ray Flack playing on some cuts, and Stuart, who's a former newgrass super-picker himself, playing red-hot guitar and mandolin licks on others, there are no fewer than three guitar stars at work here.

Mind you, not every cut here is a ringer; there are one or two near-misses. All the rousing guitar licks and spirited vocals in the world don't make Neil Young's "Back to the Country" anything more than the semi-lame song it's always been. But Stuart uses the song to make a broader point about his music and his life. And considering the fate of his previous album, it's a point both timely and well taken.

The year is early yet, but I'm tempted to say that *Tempted* is just about the best thing I've heard since 1991 rolled over on the odometer. I'll even put my money where my mouth is—perhaps sagely, perhaps foolishly—and predict that '91 will be "The Year of Marty Stuart." With *Tempted*, he sounds like he's arrived at last.

—BOB ALLEN

Aaron Tippin
You've Got to Stand for Something
RCA 2374-4-R

I have a great topical song title I'm gonna give away to any songwriter who wants it. Here goes: "Don't You Think This White Hat Bit's Done Got Out of Hand?" The rampant conformity running through Music City on this

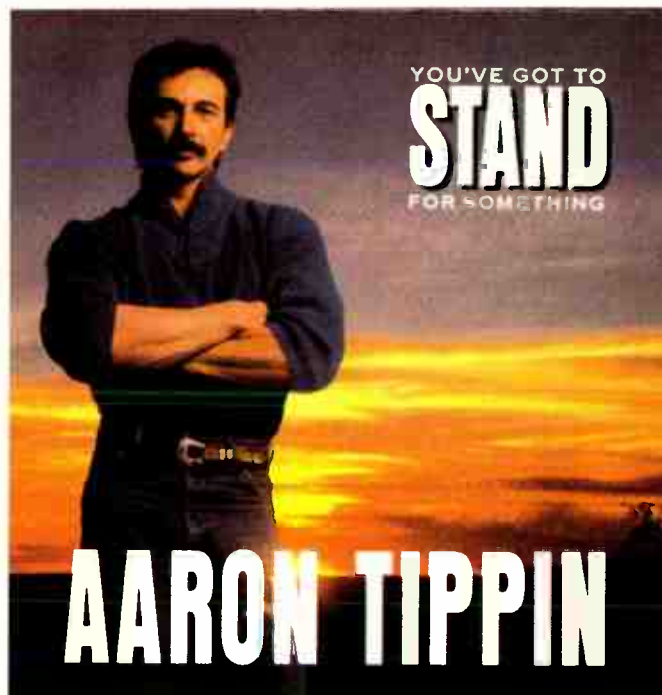
Latest releases from Marty Stuart, Aaron Tippin, Joe Diffie, The Judds, Joe Ely, Vince Gill, K.T. Oslin, Beth Nielsen Chapman, Alison Krauss, Fred Koller, Tom Russell, Mark Chesnutt and more.

matter is a little frightening. It seems nearly every new artist on the scene is wearing an outfit inspired by George/Clint/Garth, as if that conferred instant talent and/or credibility.

Before you let loose on the Letters page, understand that I'm not knocking these three artists. They came about it naturally. But I *am* jabbing those nearsighted Music Row record executives who run a good thing into the ground. One almost expects to see White Hat Conformity Squads patrolling Music Row to make sure all new male artists (females aren't affected—yet) get with the program.

It's to the point where you almost have to trust any male singer who goes in the opposite direction. When you don't see a white hat in the photos accompanying the album, you know the guy's got to be real. And that's where South Carolinian Aaron Tippin comes in.

The 32-year-old Tippin is simply the freshest New Traditionalist to hit the business in a long while. His raw, unvarnished voice isn't calculated to sound like anyone, or to mimic a Travis, Strait or Yoakam. That alone gives him a big edge. Another strength: Tippin writes his own songs, all of them straight to the point and laden with humor and cynicism. He and Mark Collie co-wrote Collie's first single, "Something With a Ring to It." Tippin tends to work with co-writers, but the results are almost always gratifying. The backing on his tracks is small-scale and free of excess (electronic synthesizers are nowhere to be found), thanks to the good sense of producer Emory Gordy Jr.



Both "I've Got a Good Memory" and "I Wonder How Far It Is Over You" deal with memories of past loves that the singer can't shake no matter how hard he tries. "You've Got to Stand for Something" is about as blunt a statement on upholding one's principles as I've heard lately. The cynical wit and humor of "Ain't That a Hell of a Note," co-written with Terry Brown, raises the concept of goodbye notes to a hilarious level, bolstered by a loping, 1940's-style arrangement (with Jerry Byrd-style Hawaiian steel guitar!).

Even "The Man That Came Between Us," a confession and plea for forgiveness, stands out from most songs in that mold. It's full of the little off-the-wall twists that make Tippin's songs worth hearing more than once. Ditto for "She Made a Memory Out of Me." Successfully using a macho attitude to describe

falling in love is something rarely accomplished, but the Tippin-Buddy Brock number, "Up Against You," succeeds admirably.

Much as I loathe comparing anyone with Hank Sr.—because it's so easy to do—I must say that "The Sky's Got the Blues" is raw and clever enough to have come from Hank's pen. Listen if you don't believe me. Tippin is less successful on the rockabilly number, "Many, Many, Many Beers Ago," but that's only because the approach he takes has been used so often by others. The performance itself is hot, invigorating country boogie.

Tippin's debut must be heard to be believed, and I might add a warning to the aforementioned White Hat Conformity Squad: tread easy around this boy. The press kit includes information about his extensive interest in body building, and a

couple of beefcake publicity photos show him about as muscular as the music within. Them white hats don't look good pulled down to someone's navel.

—RICH KIENZLE

Joe Diffie
A Thousand Winding Roads
CBS ET 46047

Even in an era marked by plenty of impressive debuts (Alan Jackson, Mark Chesnutt, Alison Krauss, Aaron Tippin, etc., etc.), Joe Diffie's *A Thousand Winding Roads* stands out in the crowd. It marks the emergence of yet *another* young, world-class, honky tonk singer who arrives on the scene, his talent nearly full-blown.

Diffie—not surprisingly, considering his powerful voice—has made his living for the past few years as one of Nashville's most in-demand demo singers. He's sung on numerous songwriters' demo tapes used to pitch songs that eventually ended up on George Strait, Ricky Van Shelton, Randy Travis and Keith Whitley albums. Just weeks after the release of his debut album late in 1990, Diffie—again, not surprisingly—made record biz history when "Home," the first single from *A Thousand Winding Roads*, hit the Number One spot across the board in all three trade magazine charts.

Diffie sounds like a young George Jones with maybe some vintage Cal Smith, Buck Owens and Keith Whitley thrown in for good measure. His powers of imitation, so essential for the demo singer, who has to be

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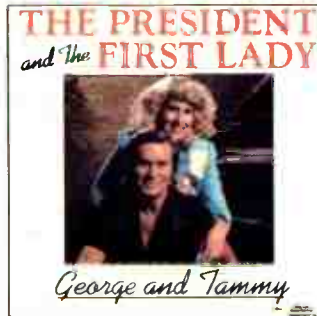
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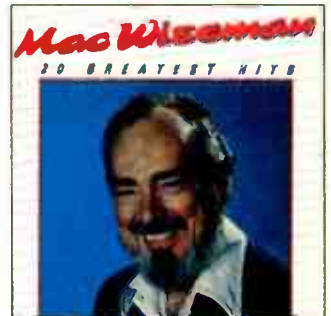
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THE STATLER BROTHERS

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RED SOVINE

Tecky Bear • Daddy's Girl • Lay Down Sally • Truck Drivin' Son of a Gun • Colorado Kool-Aid • Little Rosa • I Didn't Jump the Fence • It'll Come Back • Little Joe • I Know You're Married (But I love you still) • Last Goodbye • Phantom 309 • Tuses for Mama • 18 Wheels a Humming Home Sweet Home • 6 MORE! LP No. LP17/8TK No. T17/Cass No. CASS17



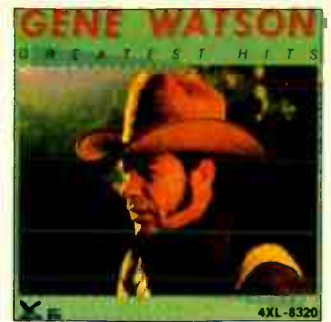
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Faded Love • San Antonio Rose • Beaumont Rag • All Night Long • Let's Get It Over And Done With • If He's Moving In, I'm Moving Out • Mayflower Waltz • You Can't Break A Heart • Done Gone • Sooner Or Later • Gone Indian • Buffalo Twist • Wills Junction • Bob's Schottische • No Disappointments In Heaven • Bob's First Fiddle Tune • 5 MORE! Cassette Tape Only. No. CASS39



LEFTY FRIZZELL

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HANK THOMPSON

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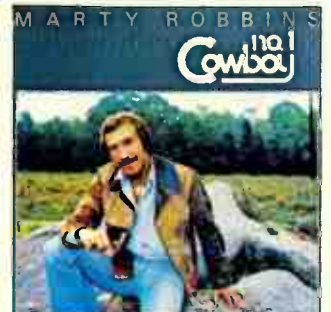
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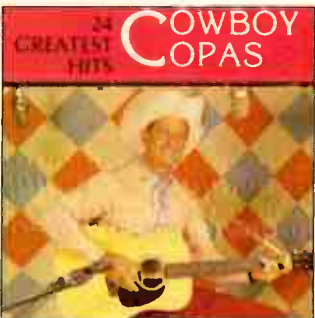
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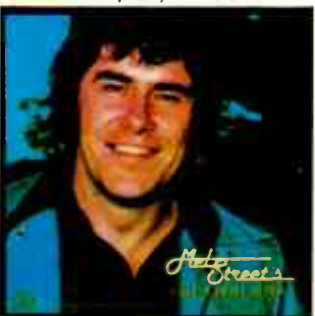
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Record Reviews

good enough to make the star who listens realize how good *he'll* sound when he records the song, are simply uncanny. His voice—like Jones—has an almost acrobatic range, and he's got all the classic Jones-style yelps, moans and growls down to a tee.

All that Diffie's singing really lacks at this point is the sort of fine seasoning and nuance that a singer (like Jones or Haggard) can only earn as he gradually accumulates wrinkles on his face: through experience and the passage of years. If the styles of the singers who have influenced Diffie occasionally shine through his work a little too boldly, if he occasionally sounds as if he's not yet distilled all he's heard into a unique style of his own, he is at least ninety percent down that road.

On *A Thousand Winding Roads*, Diffie manages to tip his hat effectively to all the right stylistic bases and even master most of them: Western swing ("If the Devil Danced in Empty Pockets"), hardcore honky tonk ("New Way to Light Up an Old Flame"), sentimental ballads ("Almost Home," "Home") and heartbroken tearjerkers ("If You Want Me To," "Stranger in Your Eyes"). And he does it all with remarkable, sometimes even astounding, ease and assurance.

Diffie's songwriting is also impressive. With various collaborators, he has written some of the strongest material on the album. One or two of his songs have all the earmarks of instant honky tonk classics. ("Pour Another Shot Of) Liquid Heartache" and "New Way to Light Up an Old Flame" are at once so clever, yet so down-home and so sincere, that they could have come straight from the pens of honky tonk poet laureates of yesteryear such as Whitey Shafer or A.L. Owens. "If You Want Me To," which Diffie also co-wrote, is a broken-hearted lover's self-pitying pledge to do whatever it takes to make his woman happy—even part ways with her.

With *A Thousand Winding Roads*, Joe Diffie—singer and songwriter—has come out of the starting gate with a big bang. Now, if he can sustain this level of work for a couple more albums, we'll no doubt have another superstar on our hands. —BOB ALLEN

The Judds *Love Can Build a Bridge* RCA 2070-4

With Naomi Judd's health forcing her off the road and out of The Judds, it seems inevitable that their current album have a certain

poignancy. At this point it's not clear whether there'll be any more Judds albums. It depends on whether Naomi chooses to do anything at all in the studio and whether they've recorded anything that RCA is still holding in its vaults.

There's nothing particularly sorrowful about *Love Can Build a Bridge*, in and of itself. In fact, it's generally a tougher, harder-edged effort than many The Judds have done in the past. Both the opening track, "Born to Be Blue," and the hot "This Country's Rockin'" are gutsy, brawny rockers without a cutesy note. Even the acoustic "Calling in the Wind" and "Talk About Love" have a full-bodied gutsiness and honesty.

And if you didn't think Naomi and Wynonna could *really* get funky, one listen to the gutbucket "Rompin' Stompin' Blues," a decidedly female-oriented blues song, should cure that view. Given the current popularity of the blues, now seems a good time to try this number. "One Hundred and Two" takes its cues from Memphis rhythm-and-blues of the 1960's, and the duo handles it as adeptly as they do the blues.

The sensual "In My Dreams" is more or less typical of The Judds' ballad sound from the beginning. The title tune, also a ballad (would

such a title imply anything else?), takes a 180-degree turn into the sweeter harmonies of their earlier hits. Given the impending end of the act, the track takes on a special eloquence. In fact, I'd have ended the album with it, though the final number, the hauntingly beautiful "Are the Roses Not Blooming," is nearly as effective.

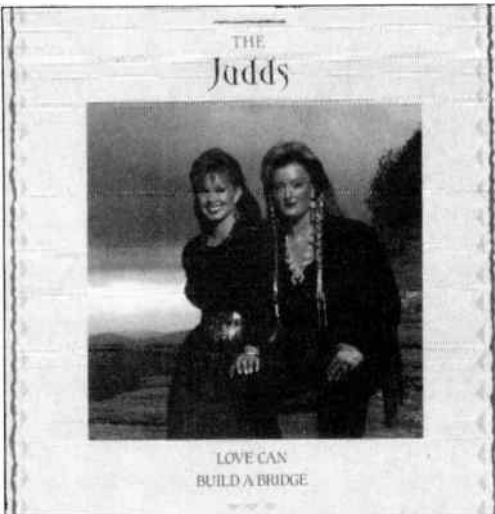
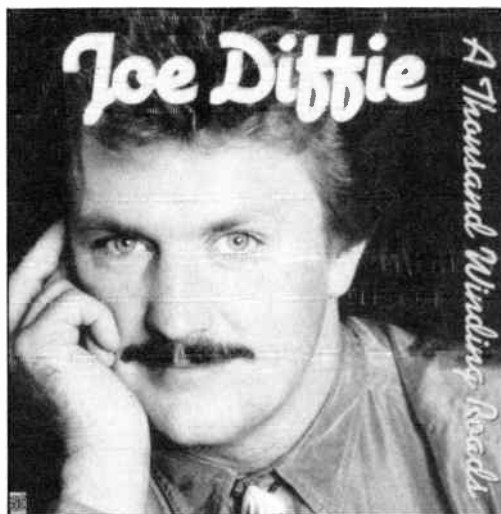
In the end, *Love Can Build a Bridge*, though it probably wasn't conceived that way, sums up The Judds' music from "Had a Dream," their first Top 20 hit seven years ago, through everything they've tried since. If this is their finale, it's neither mawkish nor geared to exploit Naomi's leaving. It's just The Judds doing what they've always done and doing it in top notch form. If this does turn out to be the end for them on records as well as on the road, they could have done far worse.

—RICH KIENZLE

Joe Ely *Live at Liberty Lunch* MCA MCAC-10095

Though he's been making great records for the past 13 or 14 years, Texas country-rocker Joe Ely has never quite managed to find a niche in the country mainstream. I suppose he's just a bit too raw, raucous and off-the-wall for that.

For those who recall, Ely recorded a half-dozen or so memorable albums for MCA in the late 1970's and early 1980's. More recently, he did two excellent ones for the HighTone label. Though most of these have since found their way into the remainder bins, Ely himself rocks on. And—as his recently-released album, *Live at Liberty Lunch*, attests—he's still one of the most provocative songwriters and compelling performers on the scene. Far from past his peak, Ely sounds like he's just begin-



Record Reviews

ning to reach it.

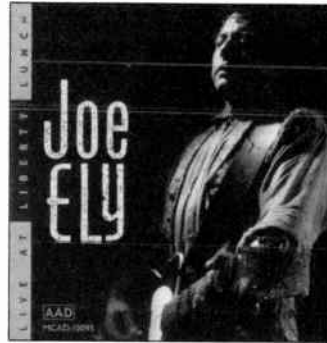
Recorded in an Austin club in early 1989 and produced by Ely himself on a shoestring, *Live at Liberty Lunch* is one of the best live albums I've heard in a long time and a riveting showcase for one of the best road bands around. Ely's sidekicks, known simply as The Joe Ely Band, are: David Grissom on electric lead guitar and background vocals, Davis McLarty on drums and Jimmy Pettit on bass and background vocals. On these 13 selections (most of them familiar to longtime Ely aficionados), they are razor sharp and out for blood.

Ely and the boys unleash extended versions of such Ely classics as "Cool Rockin' Loretta," "Musta Notta Gotta Lotta," "Row of Dominoes" and "Letter to L.A."—all of them, at times, positively incendiary. As Ely and Grissom trade off furious electric guitar riffs, you can close your eyes and almost see the sparks fly!

There are quieter moments, as well—haunting renditions of Randy Banks' "Where Is My Love" and Butch Hancock's "If You Were a Bluebird." On the latter, Hancock himself makes a guest vocal appearance. Hancock, by the way, also wrote "Row of Dominoes" and numerous other favorites from Ely's repertoire and was once, along with Ely and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, part of a band called The Flatlanders, whose one album was released recently on the Rounder label.

Ely also delivers an unexpected solo vocal/acoustic guitar rendering of "Me and Billy The Kid" (released as a single by Marty Stuart earlier this year) that's in sharp contrast to his free-for-all electrified debut recording of the song several years ago.

If you've been missing out on Joe Ely all these years, *Live at Liberty Lunch* is a fine place to start getting acquainted. Then, if you want more, work your way back



through his HighTone albums and his MCA releases (if you can find them). Along the way, you'll be discovering one of Texas-America's most unheralded popular music geniuses. —BOB ALLEN

Vince Gill *Pocket Full of Gold* MCA 10140

I'm going to follow the spirit of this album and get right to the point: Vince's last album deserved the critical acclaim it got and so does this one. Gill's tenor voice is distinctive enough, but it's the combination of that and his formidable writing skills that made his first MCA album, *When I Call Your Name*, so special. And he nearly equals it this time. Nearly.

This one kicks off with the snapping Gill-Max D. Barnes tune, "I Quit," then changes tone abruptly with another Gill-Barnes item, a love ballad, "Look at Us." These two men certainly have a gift for exploring the ups and downs of relationships. On "The Strings That Tie You Down," they chronicle the more poignant side of marital dissolution.

Gill's talent for uncanny twists in his songs shines through on the straightforward shuffle, "Take Your Memory With You When You Go," written by Vince alone and comparable in spirit and verve to some of Harlan Howard's best work. His strong sense of morality, a morality that seems rooted in the past,



erupts on the cheating ballad, "Pocket Full of Gold."

The rocking "Liza Jane" uses the old traditional song in passing, but Gill and Reid Nielson's lyrics give a more potent, swaggering and solidly contemporary edge, with the vocals wedged in between brief, burning guitar solos. The tormented "What's a Man to Do," a T.J. Wright/Curtis Wright ballad, has a solemnity and dignity that, combined with Gill's anguished delivery, make for a memorable performance—it's another high point.

Had Gill not racked up these seven amazing performances, the three losers might have made things worse. "If I Didn't Have You," which Gill co-wrote with Jim Weatherley, upholds Weatherley's time-tested talent for creating wimpy, watery ballads. Gill himself is responsible for "A Little Left Over," an uptempo dance-and-party ditty that harkens back to the shallow days of the Urban Cowboy era. "Sparkle" is a trivial, frothy number that sounds more like 1960's bubble-gum rock than a song worthy of being on the same album with "I Quit" and "What's a Man to Do."

These tracks aside, Gill deserves credit for maintaining his original direction. With tight production by Tony Brown and hot musicianship (even the synthesizer isn't offensive), combined with his clear, beautifully focused voice, he's moving in a direction that is right for him. Others should be so lucky. —RICH KIENZLE



K.T. Oslin *Love in a Small Town* RCA 2365-4-R

The 80's Lady eases into the 90's with a fine piece of work here. In the roughly two years since her last album, *This Woman*, her basic style hasn't changed. The songs included are better than okay, and Oslin racks them up with a performance that pulls no punches.

Obvious winners are "Come Next Monday," "Mary and Willi," which runs over much the same ground as John Prine's "Donald and Lydia," and "Momma Was a Dancer." Gorgeous harmonies and Oslin's gift for finding a new, concrete image for an old, familiar hurt make "New Way Home" possibly the most moving song in a collection that does not disappoint at any turn.

Oslin dips into the musical history book to bring back the mid-1940's with "You Call Everybody Darling" and into the late 1950's with "Love Is Strange." It should be pointed out that Oslin gives the latter a sensual workout rather than making it a cheap dirty joke as Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers did not so long ago. Oslin also showcases a song from her own steamer trunk of tunes, dishing what she claims is the first song she ever wrote, a bemused take on a small town girl's declaration of love (and lust) for "Cornell Crawford." This number has been in her stage act from the get-go.

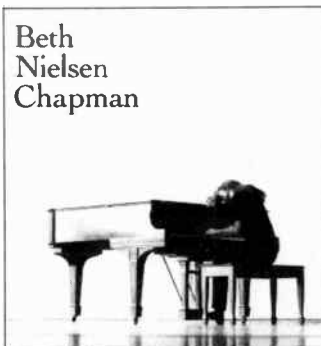
Record Reviews

Performance makes this record. Oslin has a sense of theater, garnered no doubt while working in and around New York's Broadway, that rises above obvious manipulative gimmicks. Her dramatic know-how propels her country adult contemporary music to a higher level of listener involvement, sometimes with the quirkiest lyrics. Another entertaining offering from a very original lady.

—BOB MILLARD

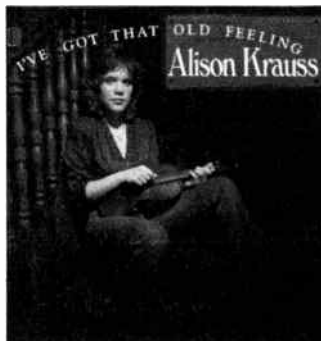
Beth Nielsen Chapman

Beth Nielsen Chapman
Reprise 9-26172-4



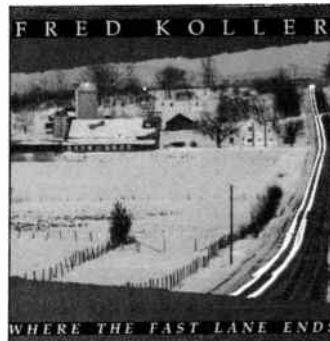
Alison Krauss

I've Got That Old Feeling
Rouder C-0275



Fred Koller

Where the Fast Lane Ends
Alcazar 112



Tom Russell

Poor Man's Dream
800 Dark Angel

Every year, amidst the flurry of album releases by the brand-name stars, there are also dozens of less celebrated releases (many of them on independent labels) by comparatively unknown but no less talented artists and songwriters. These four albums are just a few of the unheralded musical gems from the past few months:

Beth Nielsen Chapman has emerged in the last few years as one of Nashville's hottest songwriters. She's written several Number One hits: "Nothing I Can Do About It Now" (Willie Nelson), "Strong Enough to Bend" (Tanya Tucker) and "Five Minutes" (Lorrie Morgan). Her songs—often co-written with Don Schlitz and other notable collaborators—have

also been recorded by Alabama, Waylon Jennings, Don Williams, Crystal Gayle, Lee Greenwood and others.

On her stunningly fine debut album, entitled simply *Beth Nielsen Chapman*, Chapman once again proves the old adage that nobody can sing a songwriter's songs with as much empathy and conviction as the writer. Chapman's voice—like her songs—is impressive, yet completely natural. Her point of view is similar to Rosanne Cash's, though her style is her own. Nielsen—like Cash—is a full-grown woman singing with mature, unflinching honesty about the trials, complexities and bittersweetness of love: not just love between husband and wife, but also the tangled bonds between parents and children and lifelong friends.

But it's not just Nielsen's eloquent realism or her beautiful voice that grabs your attention. It's also her painful honesty. As a woman, a writer and a singer, Nielsen seems incapable of an insincere note.

Fred Koller is another distinguished Nashville song-

writer who has long been making the rounds as a coffeehouse performer and aspiring recording artist. Koller's songs have been popularized by The Oak Ridge Boys ("Where the Fast Lane Ends"—co-written with Sonny Throckmorton), Kathy Mattea ("Goin' Gone," "She Came From Fort Worth"), Michael Martin Murphey ("Will It Be Love by Morning") and The Jeff Healey Band ("Angel Eyes").

Koller's new album is a refreshing, off-the-wall musical excursion in which he puts a bluesy, frog-voiced pop spin on several of the above-mentioned hits, along with some of his less familiar originals. Koller's growling, sometimes deadpan singing style and the dry sense of humor in his songs remind one of Tom Waits or Randy Newman. The superb production was handled by Koller himself, along with veteran Nashville producer Steve O'Brien.

Alison Krauss has become something of a media darling lately. She's been featured in *Newsweek*, *USA Today* and *Rolling Stone* and has appeared on just about every

national TV talk show known to man. Krauss is a former national fiddle champion who made her recording debut at 14; she's only 19 now and heads her own fine bluegrass ensemble, Union Station.

I've Got That Old Feeling, Krauss' latest album, showcases her gigantic talent and quickly makes one realize just what all the media excitement is about. Her voice, in particular, is so pure, natural, sweet and Appalachian-warbly that she sounds like (and I know the comparison has been made before—it's unavoidable) a young Dolly Parton reborn as a bluegrass singer.

Produced by dobro-master Jerry Douglas, *I've Got That Old Feeling* features the usual round-up of newgrass suspects: Sam Bush, Stuart Duncan and Edgar Meyer, among others. Songs like the title cut and "Wish I Still Had You" beautifully highlight Krauss' soulful vocal power which reaches far beyond her years.

Tom Russell, another of America's most original, articulate and overlooked songwriter-recording artists, recently released *Poor Man's Dream*, the follow-up to his critically heralded 1988 album, *Road to Bayamon*. The husky-voiced Russell mines the same sort of blue-collar, anti-hero musical territory as Joe Ely, John Prine and Nanci Griffith. He's written songs with both Griffith and Ely. His original songs have been recorded by Johnny Cash, Nanci Griffith, Sylvia Tyson, Ian Tyson, Katy Moffat and others. Ironically, Russell has had chart success in both Canada and Scandinavia but has yet to crack the Top 10 in the States.

On *Poor Man's Dream*, Russell has gathered together another fine, rough-edged collection of original songs, many co-written with either the above-mentioned artists or Dan Zanes of the Del Fuegos. It would be fitting and proper if *Poor Man's*



Country Music VIDEOS

MARTY ROBBINS Super Legend—120 mins.

This memorable video features 18 performances: *El Paso/White Sport Coat/Devil Woman/Ribbon Of Darkness/Singing The Blues/! Couldn't Keep From Cryin'!/Don't Worry 'Bout Me/This Time You Gave Me A Mountain*, and many more, including Marty's Grammy winning song, *My Woman, My Woman, My Wife*. It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and the big screen, as well as exciting clips from his racing career. You'll also hear fitting remembrances from fellow stars like Roy Acuff, Faron Young and Barbara Mandrell.

MARTY ROBBINS A Man And His Music—55 mins.

This additional Marty Robbins video was recorded live at the Opry in 1980. "Funnin' around" was what he called it. And that's precisely what this video is all about. It includes his version of Elvis' *That's All Right (Mama)*, plus these other great selections: *Ribbon Of Darkness/A White Sport Coat/Devil Woman/Big Iron/My Woman, My Woman, My Wife/Among My Souvenirs/Don't Worry/El Paso*.

HANK WILLIAMS JR. Full Access—80 mins.

In Montana, you'll get an insider's view of Hank's private refuge and see the side that only a privileged few have seen before. In Tennessee, join Hank as he relaxes with friends at his home, and meet some of the people closest to him. In concert, see, hear and feel Hank's hits as only he can perform them: *Born To Boogie!/The South Woulda Won/Family Tradition/A Country Boy Can Survive/Young Country/My Name Is Bocaphus* • **MORE!**

ALAN JACKSON **NEW!** Here In The Real World

Here are Alan's three #1 smash hits. *Here In The Real World* and *Wanted* and *Chasin' The Neon Rainbow*. Plus, a pair of captivating live performances: *Dog River Blues* and *Home*. There's also his first big song *Blue Blooded Woman*. *Here In The Real World* clearly reveals Alan's humble, unpretentious manner combined with genuine talent and striking good looks—all the elements that have made him country's hottest new star. 25 minutes.

COUNTRY MUSIC ON BROADWAY Filmed 1964, New York City, 96 mins.

Here is the first full length country music movie ever filmed. See the legendary Hank Williams in his only filmed appearance, uncut and crystal clear. Enjoy 30 full musical numbers by Hank and other great headliners like George Jones, Hank Snow, Porter Wagoner, Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper. Here's just a sample: *Hank Sr.—Hey Good Looking/George Jones—White Lightning; She Thinks I Still Care/Hank Snow—Moving On; Now And Then There's A Fool Such As I/Porter Wagoner—Satisfied Mind; One Way Ticket To The Blues* • **PLUS MORE!**

DON WILLIAMS **NEW!** Live—30 mins.

Here, for the first time on video tape, is your chance to enjoy one of country music's most solid performers on stage. Included on this brand new video are: *Good Ole' Boys Like Me/Tulsa Time/One Good Well I've Been Loved By The Best/Just As Long As I Have You/I Believe In You/ Amanda/Lord I Hope This Day Is Good*. For fans of Don this tape should come as a blessing. Order your copy while our limited supply lasts.

GEORGE JONES Same Ole Me—60 mins.

They call him "Possum." They also call him "Country Music's Living Legend." Unquestionably, he is the greatest vocal interpreter that the world of country music has ever known. This is his authorized biography, complete with these great hits: *He Stopped Loving Her Today/ Bartender's Blues/The Race Is On/She Thinks I Still Care/ White Lightning/Why Baby Why/Some Day My Day Will Come!/Always Get Lucky With You*.

CLINT BLACK **NEW!** Put Yourself In My Shoes—29 mins.

He's the hottest new star to hit the country music stage... winner of the 1989 Horizon Award and 1990 CMA Male Vocalist of the Year. Meet this newest country music phenomenon up close. Hear Clint's frank interview with Country Music Video Magazine. Listen to all his great hits, including: *Killin' Time/A Better Man/Walkin' Away/ Put Yourself In My Shoes*. If you are one of Clint's million plus fans, you won't want to miss this new video.

TAMMY WYNETTE IN CONCERT Live From The Capitol Music Hall

It's the first lady of country music coming to you live on stage in this brilliant performance as she sings her heart out and shows off her astonishing talent to a grateful Wheeling, West Virginia audience. In a show thats chock-full of country music classics, Tammy sings her greatest songs, including: *My Man/Turn Around/You Light Up My Life/Makin' Lovel/ Don't Wanna Play House/Til I Can Make It On My Own/Amazing Grace/D-I-V-O-R-C-E/Will The Circle Be Unbroken *Plus, Tammy's all time greatest hit: Stand By Your Man*. It's 60 unforgettable mins.

LORETTA LYNN In Concert—61 mins.

Here is the "Coal Miner's Daughter" in living color on-stage at Harrah's in Reno. It's a one of a kind performance featuring: *You're Lookin' At Country/Take Me Home, Country Roads/Out Of My Head And Back In Bed/Pregnant Again/One's On The Way/I Saw The Light/Wine Women & Song/Foggy Mountain Breakdown/Don't Come Home A Drinkin'!/They Don't Make 'Em Like My Daddy/ Coal Miner's Daughter* • **10 MORE!**

MERLE HAGGARD The Best Of Merle Haggard—60 Mins.

"I have selected some of my favorite songs for this video...and I hope they will be your favorites too!"—Merle Haggard. You be the judge: *My Favorite Memory/ Stay Here And Drink/Mama's Hungry Eyes/Today I Started Loving You Again/Old Man From The Mountains/ Kern River/If I Could Only Fly/When Times Were Good/ Honky-Tonk Night Time Man/Ida Red/Big City/Okie From Muskogee/Footlights* • **6 MORE!**

ELVIS PRESLEY **NEW!** The Great Performances—Vols. 1 & 2

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—RICH KIENZLE, *Country Music*, January/February 1991



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Record Reviews

Dream managed to raise Russell's low profile a few more well-deserved notches. Unfortunately, it is hard to find this record since it is only available through the mail by calling 1-800-327-5264.

—BOB ALLEN

Mark Chesnutt *Too Cold at Home* MCA-10032

A white hat. A ringing endorsement from none other than George Jones, who grew up in Chesnutt's hometown of Beaumont, Texas. The right clothes. Another back-to-the-roots honky tonker playing hot Western swing and music in the tradition of E.T., Lefty, Webb and, of course, Hank. *That* Hank.

Hot stuff, right?

I'm not so sure. Chesnutt certainly looks the part. But something doesn't ring true when you hear the music. In fact, I can't really tell what he's trying to accomplish. It seems to me he's aiming at the traditional market. But too many songs (five either written or co-written by producer Mark Wright) are mediocre crossover fare not too different from music in vogue five or six years ago.

Likewise, Chesnutt's voice doesn't quite fit the image. For one thing, he doesn't deliver his honky tonkers with the conviction they demand. The late Keith Whitley's "Brother Jukebox" is so far superior to Chesnutt's version, there's no contest, and he doesn't handle Bobby Harden's excellent "Too Cold at Home" with the power which it deserves.

"Friends in Low Places" (Garth Brooks' hit), "Lucky Man" and "Too Good a Memory" are pleasant, if cut and dried. Neither songs nor performances show much emotion. "Hey You There in the Mirror" is flat, delivered with all the conviction of singing the phone book. Even

"Danger at My Door," the closest thing here to a rocker, is so predictable you know what's coming before you even hear it.

Wright's production is no help. It tries and fails to merge a number of styles: honky tonk, rock, crossover and pop. And all too often it's clear that Wright is simply constructing—not creating—music. What the hell is a reggae guitar player doing on a record like this? I mean, wait a minute, mon, do George/Dwight/Ricky/Randy/Garth need reggae guitar players on their records?

Chesnutt may very well have a niche, but unless or until he finds a voice that suits him—instead of trying to mix styles that don't mix—and comes up with something original and exciting, I'll have my doubts. A white hat just ain't enough anymore.

—RICH KIENZLE



Points West *New Horizons in Country Music* HighTone HC 8021

Founded little more than a half-decade ago, HighTone Records was initially a blues label; its chief find was young guitar phenom, Robert Cray, who went from the bars of the Pacific Northwest to the international charts. Somewhere in there—with Bobby Durham's 1987 album, *Where I Grew Up*, best as I can recall—the feisty, San Francisco Bay Area indie label began recording country as well. The emphasis was



always on the Texas-to-Bakersfield axis of country dance music that put more of a premium on beat and visceral impact than on production niceties.

But HighTone never limited itself to that style alone, as this sampler demonstrates. I'm not saying there's something here for everyone—those who lean towards country-politan and/or extreme sentimentality in their music will find little of interest—but there is an impressive array of sounds and styles on this 14-song package, which boasts quite a few more hits than misses.

California folkie Heather Myles has a pleasing voice, though she's not always in control of it. Her stark, acoustic rendition of "Rum and Rodeo" has it all over her "Lovin' the Bottle," a more conventional honky tonker. She's simply too delicate to put "Lovin' the Bottle" across convincingly. L.A.'s Lonesome Strangers sound like a tougher Ricky Nelson on their fluid, rockabilly tune, "Goodbye Lonesome, Hello Baby Doll," while their other number, "Another Fool Like Me," ought to induce a knowing grin (or grimace) in more than a few listeners. "Rainin' Rainin' Rainin'" shows an older and wiser Gary Stewart still in need of songs as good as his pipes and a producer willing to take chances, but the screaming, bottleneck guitar showcase, "Nothin' But a Woman" (song courtesy Cray's crew, by the way), takes definite steps in that direction.

Jimmie Dale Gilmore of Lubbock, Texas, via Austin checks in on this album with his creaking, old-timey voice for "Red Chevrolet" and "Fair and Square." Jimmie Dale's an acquired taste I like fine, though I can certainly understand if you don't. Texans Ted Roddy and The Talltops are the ultimate uninspired fans, providing faceless rockabilly and honky tonk on "Stronger Than Dirt" and "Where Can She Be." West Texas rocker Joe Ely's take on Butch Hancock's "Row of Dominoes" is full of fear, danger, dashed hopes and bitter truths. Californian Buddy Miller sounds half-baked to the point of self-parody on "The Garage Sale" and only slightly more accomplished on "Feel Like I'm Falling in Love." Bakersfield journeyman, Bobby Durham, handles the wobbly honky tonk of "Playboy" with assurance.

Throughout this set-on hits and misses alike—*Points West* has a life and a devotion to hard country's eternal verities that contrast sharply with even the funkier stuff coming out of Nashville studios. I'm a sucker for shaggy-dog projects like this. At their worst, they keep the rest of country music honest, and at their best, they keep it throbbing and growing.

—JOHN MORTHLAND

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Buried Treasures /

Reissues,
Rarities and the
Hard-to-Find

When Buried Treasures began in this space in the fall of 1978, most American record companies preferred to let their vintage material sit on the shelves. Longtime BT readers may recall that in the early days, much of what we reviewed came from Europe.

Times change. Note the number of high-grade reissues this time around, and most of the boxes here are produced in the U.S.

Bill Monroe: In 1950 Bill Monroe, the Father of Bluegrass, began recording for Decca Records. More than 40 years later, Decca, now MCA, remains Bill's label. The first eight Decca years are covered on Bear Family's *Bluegrass: 1950-1958* (BCD 15423): four compact discs, 109 songs covering 32 recording sessions from February 3, 1950, to December 1, 1958. It showcases some of the finest work he did following the breakup of his 1940's band with Flatt and Scruggs.

Monroe began to grow as a composer during this time, and nowhere is this trend more apparent than on his creative and influential instrumental compositions. "Roanoke" and "Wheel Hoss," created then, have stood the test of time. Also included are ten Jimmie Rodgers songs (three never released before). Bill also re-recorded several trademark songs, among them Rodgers' "Muleskinner Blues" and his own "Blue Moon of Kentucky"; following Elvis' success with "Blue Moon," Monroe cut this version, playing the first half in the original waltz time, the second half upbeat as Elvis did it. He also recorded the original version of "Christmas Time's A-Comin'" and covered mainstream country hits such as "Y'All Come" and Jim Reeves' "Four Walls."

As always, The Blue Grass Boys of that era included



musicians who went on to far greater fame, among them fiddlers Vassar Clements, Bobby Hicks (now in Ricky Skaggs' band), Kenny Baker and Gordon Terry. For a time, Bill had guitarist/vocalists Jimmy Martin and Carter Stanley and teenage banjoist, Sonny Osborne, with him. Occasionally, on his Decca sessions, he also used Nashville studio musicians.

Monroe fans will also recall that despite his outspoken purism, Monroe occasionally used decidedly non-bluegrass instruments on Decca sessions. Owen Bradley played vibes on "Christmas Time's A-Comin'" and piano on "A Mighty Pretty Waltz," and on three gospel sessions in March 1958, he played organ. None of this compromised or diluted Monroe's music at all.

The remastered sound is tremendous on the CD's. In fact, rumor has it that this collection inspired a number of bluegrass fanatics to invest in their first-ever CD players. The booklet, with notes by bluegrass authority Neil Rosenberg and superbly detailed histories of each song by Charles Wolfe, makes engrossing reading.

Columbia Country Classics: Just the facts on this one, as I annotated it. Columbia Records' country recording activities go back to the days when it was known as the American Recording Company. CBS acquired the company in 1938, when its top country artists were Roy

Acuff, Bob Wills and Gene Autry. Each album in the five-volume set, *Columbia Country Classics*, a cassette and CD collection, was produced by veteran reissue producer Gregg Geller; each covers a specific aspect of the company's country history, for a grand total of 128 songs.

Volume One: The Golden Age (46029) covers the 1930's and 40's, specifically The Carter Family's "Can the Circle Be Unbroken?" and Roy Acuff's "Wabash Cannonball," "Great Speckled Bird" and "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain." Wiley Walker and Gene Sullivan's "When My Blue Moon Turns to Gold Again" was an enormous success, as were Bob Wills' "New San Antonio Rose" and Spade Cooley's "Shame on You." Early bluegrass includes Bill Monroe's "Molly and Tenbrooks," Flatt & Scruggs' original "Don't Get Above Your Raisin'" and The Stanley Brothers' "The Fields Have Turned Brown."

Volume Two: Honky Tonk Heroes (46030) turns up a mixture of everything. It features such standards as Floyd Tillman's "Slippin' Around," "This Cold War With You" and "I Love You So Much It Hurts." Carl Smith's here with early favorites like "Hey Joel," "I Overlooked an Orchid" and "Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way." Lefty Frizzell is represented by "If You've Got the Money," "I Love You a Thousand Ways" and "Always Late."

Ray Price's greatest musical period is covered here by favorites "Heart Over Mind" and "Crazy Arms."

Volume 3: Americana (46031) is a mixed bag of saga songs, Western and folk-based songs and other uniquely American tunes ranging from Fess Parker's "Ballad of Davy Crockett" and Marty Robbins' "Big Iron" and "El Paso" to Lefty's "Saginaw, Michigan" and "Long Black Veil." Johnny Horton's saga songs are represented by "North to Alaska" and "Battle of New Orleans." Johnny Cash's "A Boy Named Sue" and "Tennessee Flat Top Box" are here along with The Statlers' "Flowers on the Wall," Hag and Willie's "Pancho and Lefty" and The Highwaymen's "Highwayman."

Volume 4: The Nashville Sound (46032) deals with the mid-to-late 50's to the early 70's, starting with Marty Robbins' "Singing the Blues," Cash's "I Still Miss Someone" and "Ring of Fire," Billy Walker's "Charlie's Shoes," Marty Robbins' hit "Devil Woman," plus Hawkshaw Hawkins' "I Can't Seem to Say Goodbye," George Jones' "The Grand Tour," Tammy's "Stand by Your Man," George and Tammy's "Take Me," David Houston's "Almost Persuaded," Johnny Paycheck's "She's All I've Got" and Charlie Rich's "Behind Closed Doors" and "The Most Beautiful Girl."

Volume 5: A New Tradition (46033) picks up folk-flavored country, country-rock, the outlaw sound, the brief mid-70's honky tonk revival and New Traditionalism. Everything from Cash's "Daddy Sang Bass" and Bob Dylan's "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight" to Willie's "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," The O'Kanes' "Oh, Darlin'," Asleep at the Wheel's "Choo Choo Ch-Boogie," The Gatlin Brothers' "Houston," Marty's

"El Paso City," David Allan Coe's "The Ride," Rosanne Cash's "Seven Year Ache" and Ricky Van Shelton's "Life Turned Her That Way" make up this volume.

Lefty Frizzell: There is, surprisingly, nothing even approaching a definitive Lefty Frizzell compact disc on the market today. CBS's own *American Originals* disc was woefully inadequate, and though Bear Family is planning an updated CD version of their comprehensive Lefty box, that's some time off. Rhino's new *The Best of Lefty Frizzell* (R71005) brings together everything from Columbia that matters: "If You've Got the Money," "Always Late," "I Love You a Thousand Ways," "Saginaw, Michigan," "Look What Thoughts Will Do," "I Want to Be With You Always," "Mom and Dad's Waltz," "Give Me More More More," "Don't Stay Away," "Forever," "I'm an Old, Old Man," "Long Black Veil," "She's Gone, Gone, Gone" and "Shine Shave Shower." Extras included only on the CD are "Run 'em Off," "How Long Will It Take," "I Love You Mostly" and Lefty's version of Jimmie Rodgers' "Travelin' Blues." Complete liner notes by Charles Wolfe, the authority on Lefty's music, round things out nicely.

The Smithsonian Collection: *The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music* first appeared in 1981 as an eight-album boxed set of songs spanning the 1920's to the 1970's, chosen by country music authority, Bill C. Malone. It was hailed as a major achievement despite giving bluegrass and pre-World War II recordings too much space at the expense of later music. A decade later it's been reconfigured, and is now available on six albums, four cassettes and four CD's.

The idea this time was to better reflect the changes of the past 15 years. Outlaw music gets broader treatment than previously, as does rockabilly, the Nashville Sound and New Traditionalism. But there's a price to pay. The 1981

package had 143 songs; this one has 100, including 59 from the original package. The new collection begins with fiddler Gid Tanner's 1929 recording of "Soldier's Joy" and ends with The Judds' 1986 hit, "Grandpa (Tell Me 'Bout the Good Old Days)." Elvis' version of "Blue Moon of Kentucky" and Jerry Lee Lewis' "You Win Again" represent rockabilly. Jimmy Dean's "Big Bad John," Glen Campbell's "Gentle on My Mind" and other crossover hits are new to this compilation as are tracks by Waylon and Willie, Rodney Crowell, two by Emmylou (including "Love Hurts" with Gram Parsons) and later material by Dwight Yoakam, Ricky Skaggs and Hank Jr.

Cutting down the number of songs has caused some problems. Even though important numbers were added, others, equally important, have been bumped. Songs missing include such classic early recordings as Fiddlin' John Carson's 1922 number, "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane," and Eck Robertson's 1923 recording of "Sallie Goodin."

While the original collection overdid bluegrass, the present one *under-represents* the idiom, picking up only three songs, one each by Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs and The Osborne Brothers. Similarly, the sole Buck Owens number, "Excuse Me (I Think I've Got a Heartache)," hardly

reflects the Buckaroo years. While Willie's "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" was on the 1981 edition, the producers saw fit not to include it here. With cuts like these in mind, what monumental contribution have The Bellamy Brothers made to merit their inclusion?

Regardless of who's at fault for all of these omissions, this new edition still only partly chronicles the music's history. At this point, you almost need both the out-of-print 1981 set *and* this one to get a full picture. I do credit Bill Malone for scolding Randy Travis, Merle Haggard, Linda Ronstadt, George Strait and Reba McEntire for refusing to allow any of their songs to be included. That a music historian like Haggard (who was on the 1981 set) would refuse is appalling.

Hank Williams Singles Collection: If you haven't upgraded your Hank Williams Sr. collection recently, now may be the time to do so. *Hank Williams: The Original Singles Collection* (Polygram 847 194) collects 84 songs—everything that possibly matters—from Sterling sides like "Never Again (Will I Knock on Your Door)" and "Honky Tonkin," through all the Hank standards, to recordings released after his death and later discoveries such as the Hank and Audrey gospel duet, "Something Got a Hold of Me," and "The Log Train."

One significant new track is

a 1942 live recording of an early Hank tune, "I'm Not Coming Home Anymore," made at an appearance in Montgomery, Alabama. Despite the understandably poor sound, Hank can be heard singing in a style strongly reminiscent of his idol, Roy Acuff. The other new track is the original demo of "There's a Tear in My Beer" without Hank Jr.'s overdub. This is the version Hank Sr. gave to Texas singer, Big Bill Lister, whose Capitol recording of it stifled.

The accompanying booklet has complete recording information and rarely-seen photos of Hank.

Jimmy C. Newman: Jimmy C. Newman made his most important recordings for Dot from the mid-to-late 1950's, all long unavailable in the U.S. Newman was the first Cajun-based artist to enjoy sustained popularity. Fiddler Harry Choates had "Jole Blon" in 1946, and Al Terry had "Good Deal Lucille" in 1954, but they were essentially one-hit successes. Newman managed to play to contemporary tastes without compromising the Cajun flavor of his music. In the process, he paved the way for people like Rusty and Doug Kershaw and, later, Jo-El Sonnier.

Bear Family's *Bop A Hula* (BCD 15469) covers all 47 of Newman's 1953-1958 Dot sides on two compact discs. You get all of the early Dot successes: "Cry, Cry Darling," "Daydreaming," "Blue Darlin'," "God Was So Good" and his hit version of George Jones' "Seasons of My Heart." Newman's sole crossover effort, "A Fallen Star," a Number Two country hit that broke the pop Top 30, coexists with "You're Makin' a Fool Out of Me." Among the five unissued tracks included here are Newman's version of Jim Reeves' "Need Me." Most of the other numbers were originally issued on two mid-60's albums on Dot. Complete recording information is available in the booklet enclosed. —RICH KIENZLE

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Available in formats shown at prices shown: Bill Monroe, *Bluegrass: 1950-1958* (BCD 15423) four-CD boxed set \$89.95 (CMSA Members \$79.95)/Columbia Country Classics, *Volume 1: The Golden Age* (46029), *Volume 2: Honky Tonk Heroes* (46030), *Volume 3: Americana* (46031), *Volume 4: The Nashville Sound* (46032), *Volume 5: A New Tradition* (46033); in this series each CD \$19.95 (CMSA Members \$17.95), each cassette \$10.98 (CMSA Members \$8.98)/*The Best of Lefty Frizzell* (R 71005) CD \$14.98 (CMSA Members \$12.98), cassette \$9.98 (CMSA Members \$7.98)/*The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Country Music* (R 042), a six-album or four-cassette boxed set \$59.96 (CMSA Members \$49.96), four-CD boxed set \$64.96 (CMSA Members \$59.96)/*Hank Williams: The Original Singles Collection* (Polygram 847-194) four-CD boxed set, CD \$69.95 (CMSA Members \$59.95) four-cassette boxed set \$59.95 (CMSA Members \$49.95)/Jimmy C. Newman, *Bop A Hula* (BCD 15469) a two-CD set \$49.95 (CMSA Members \$39.95).

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Waylon Jennings: My standards for video biographies are pretty high. Video biographies are easy to mess up, either by omitting parts of an artist's life, by lousy production or simply by getting facts wrong. Nashville's Hallway Productions has avoided these errors and is batting a thousand in my book. Nothing proves it better than their latest tape, *Waylon*.

Waylon's long overdue for such a production (as is Willie, and Hallway is working on his biography now). The formula is the same as in other Hallway videos: His life is chronicled through rare still photos, video and audio tape and comments from Waylon and friends. The story begins with his childhood and his youthful days as a disc jockey at KLLL in Lubbock, Texas (complete with a bit of tape from his radio show), then zeroes in on

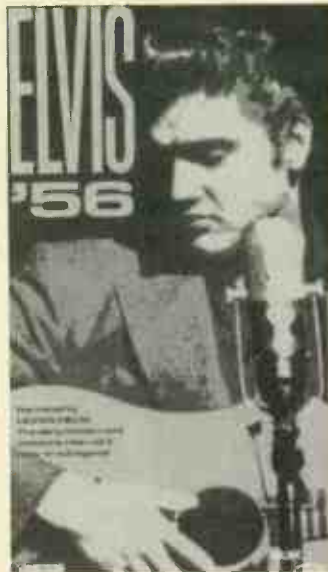
mid-1960's), Jack Clement, Willie, Jessi Colter, his RCA producer Chet Atkins, actor Robert Duvall and longtime buddy Ritchie Albright all have stories to tell. These comments, interspersed with later, in-concert performances, illustrate his rise in popularity and contrast with 1960's film clips, including one made at an early RCA session and some from his horrendous acting job in the B-movie *Nashville Rebel*.

His bad days—the early drug abuse, including his near-fatal struggle with cocaine, and his early 70's disgust with the business that nearly led him to quit, aren't glossed over. The only surprising omission is the lack of comment from Tom-pall Glaser, one of his closest allies in the early Outlaw days.

Elvis Presley: Last issue we reviewed the two-volume *Elvis: The Great Performances*. *Elvis '56* is different enough to be worth having too since it documents one year of Elvis' career: 1956, the year he emerged from the Deep South to burst upon the whole of America.

Using still photos from the Alfred Wertheimer collection (Wertheimer followed Elvis around through much of the year), along with rare video and newsreel clips and portions of Elvis' TV appearances on the Dorsey Brothers, Steve Allen, Milton Berle and Ed Sullivan shows, the video covers every significant event in that momentous year.

Elvis' RCA recording sessions are documented in a novel way. While Wertheimer's photos show him in the studio, you can hear the unedited session tape in the background, including Elvis talking during takes of "Hound Dog." If only RCA would release this. The raging controversy over Elvis' onstage movements is also depicted frankly, including the noto-



rious, from-the-waist-up performance on Ed Sullivan's show. It seems incredibly tame today. Younger Elvis fans who recall his Las Vegas triumphs may not realize that his first Vegas appearance, with The Freddy Martin Orchestra in 1956, was an unmitigated disaster. Martin's older audience had no idea of what they were getting. This event is also fully documented.

Narrator Levon Helm (who played Loretta Lynn's father in the film, *Coal Miner's Daughter*) sympathetically describes the "what and why" throughout. Helm's point at the end is well-taken: After 1956, we never got close to Elvis again. The Colonel hid him away, the Army got him, and he retired to bad movies, Graceland, and eventual dissolution. Older fans may remember 1956, but younger fans who remember him only in the 70's, when he was going downhill, need to see this video to understand just why he still matters. "Suspicious Minds" and "American Trilogy" were only the later part of the picture.

Roy Orbison: Two Orbison in-concert videos are currently available. *Roy Orbison Live in Texas!* is taken from a

live concert, and it's all right, though certainly nothing profound. It runs only 30 minutes, and with only 10 songs, I'd say it's stingily programmed. Titles include: "Oh, Pretty Woman," "Only the Lonely," and "In Dreams." I might be able to recommend it anyway, but it pales when compared to *Roy Orbison & Friends: A Black and White Night*, which originally ran on cable TV's Home Box Office Super Sessions series. It was taped (in black and white) at Los Angeles' Coconut Grove not long before Roy died.

This one's important for several reasons. For one thing, it features some of pop music's heavy hitters, singing and playing Roy's music with loving attention to re-creating the sound of the original, classic recordings. The involvement of such rock names—and longtime Orbison admirers—as Bruce Springsteen, Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Tom Waits, Elvis Costello and Jennifer Warnes speaks for itself. Also involved was k.d. lang. The backup band, featuring guitar legend James Burton and three ex-Elvis sidemen—drummer Ron Tutt, bassist Jerry Scheff and pianist Glenn D. Hardin—also assures quality.

Orbison's career is documented from the beginning, starting with "Ooby Dooby" and "Down the Line" through "Only the Lonely," "Crying," "In Dreams," "Candy Man," "Dream Baby" and, of course, "Oh, Pretty Woman." Record producer T-Bone Burnett, who doubled as musical director, made sure that the band got the original sound of the recordings down pat in concert. Frankly, I could have done without Bruce Springsteen's annoying stage hogging and the producers' tendency to highlight his mediocre guitar solos, instead of those of Burton,



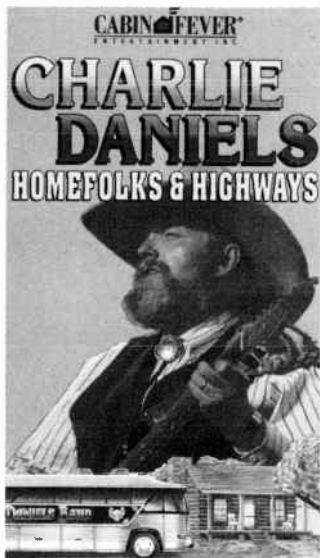
his friendship with Buddy Holly.

Insights from friends and associates connect each phase of Waylon's life. Harlan Howard, George Jones, Herb Alpert (who produced him for his A & M label in the

the true Telecaster virtuoso.

As bitter a pill as Orbison's death was for everyone to swallow, it takes the edge off to realize he saw his career reviving in a big way. The soundtrack of this video is also available on cassette and compact disc on Virgin Records (Virgin 91295-2), so you can revive the magic in your car or Walkman.

Charlie Daniels: A video documentary on Charlie Daniels is certainly overdue. Just a recording of Daniels discussing his outspoken opinions would be interesting—even people who disagree have to give him credit for the flair with which he states his views.



Homefolks & Highways goes further. This video documentary shows Charlie on the road, at his high school reunion, at the grave of his father, at home with his family, at his ranch, in the studio, and visiting the Berlin Wall and the Cowboy Hall of Fame. As such, it depicts Daniels pretty much as he is onstage: a tough, outspoken, garrulous, but genuinely friendly man whose rugged individuality is deeply rooted in America's past. He is clearly a man who expects a lot from his band and road crew, but demands nothing of them that he wouldn't do himself.

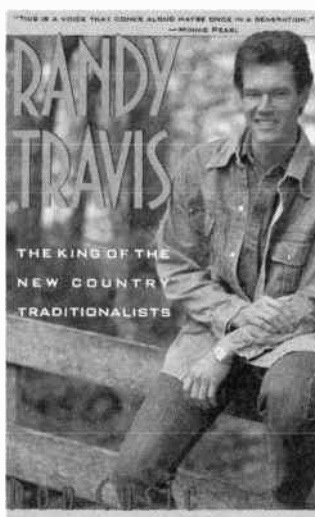
What's disappointing is that this could have and should have been done in the

context of a video biography like the one on Waylon: charting Charlie's life from North Carolina, through his early days in music and experience in the Nashville studios before he formed his first band. As it stands, it has an annoyingly disjointed home-movie quality about it that detracts from telling Daniels' complete story the way it deserves to be told.

▪ Books ▪

Randy Travis: It was inevitable that a Randy Travis unauthorized biography would appear. Such biographies can be well done. But not Don Cusic's *Randy Travis: The King of the New Country Traditionalists*. Its 196 pages of text are divided into 40 "chapters" averaging four or five pages. There are numerous repetitions (Cusic tells us TNN began broadcasting in April 1983 on pages 45 and 54). He wastes an entirely pointless "chapter" asserting that Charlotte, North Carolina, could have been Music City, U.S.A. Indeed, the book's most dramatic moment comes at the beginning, when Cusic visits Randy's parents' home in North Carolina only to be ordered off the property by an angry Harold Traywick, Randy's father.

The encounter seems to have bothered Cusic, who occasionally returns to discuss indiscretions Harold Traywick may or may not have committed while drinking. On page four, he states that Randy's mother "purportedly" said she can't control



her husband. Reporting things that were "purportedly" said is dangerous in this lawsuit-happy society and sheds doubt on Cusic's overall credibility. Most quotes from Randy come from interviews others did with Travis, and in some places, Cusic correctly credits the interviewer. In other places he doesn't credit—both unfair and tacky.

The writing is often embarrassingly bad, especially the author's attempts at wit. At one point he describes an obscure bar band at a club owned by Lib Hatcher as being "satisfied with being small-time heroes and big-time zeroes." On page 130 he says, "People who go from obscurity to stardom in a short time are fond of saying that they haven't changed at all. That's partly true, but it's not necessarily the advantage they proclaim it to be." Say, what?

As you can read elsewhere

How To Get These Collectibles

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in this issue, Randy and Lib aren't at all pleased with the book. They needn't be worried. It's hardly worth the concern, much less the time it takes to read. Cusic, author of a biography on gospel singer Sandi Patti, didn't even come close to doing Travis' career justice.

Grand Ole Opry: There's currently only one book in print that deals in detail with the history of the Grand Ole Opry: Chet Hagan's book, *Grand Ole Opry*. It chronicles the Opry's history from the beginning to roughly the end of the 1980's, and on the surface it does the job adequately. Some of the photographs included are extremely rare, not the usual overused shots of various old-timers. And Hagan is a competent enough writer.

The problem is, there's very little original research here. Much of what Hagan writes is less a history of the Opry than it is run-of-the-mill biographical sketches of some of its best-known artists. Secondly, a lot of the quotes are drawn from other books. Hagan obtained permission to quote them, but frankly, that's the lazy way out. And his research is not always accurate. He gets the story of Bob Wills' first Opry appearance totally wrong. Wills first appeared on the Opry on December 30, 1944. He did not have the electrified fiddles Hagan discusses until his 1948 Opry appearance. The bone of contention between Bob and the Opry in 1944 was drummer Monte Mountjoy's full drum set.

Compared to the pioneering work of Charles Wolfe in researching the Opry's early history, or Jack Hurst's research of the Opry's history in his excellent 1975 book, *Nashville's Grand Ole Opry*, Hagan's runs a distant third. The fact it's the only book available on the subject is its only real selling point. It gets the job done all right, but not the way it should be done. Hopefully someday someone will write a real warts-and-all Opry history.

—RICH KIENZLE

TOP 25

Singles

1. Alabama *Forever's as Far as I'll Go*
2. Paul Overstreet *Daddy's Come Around*
3. Carlene Carter *Come On Back*
4. Reba McEntire *Rumor Has It*
5. Garth Brooks *Unanswered Prayers*
6. Mark Chesnutt *Brother Jukebox*
7. Ricky Van Shelton *Life's Little Ups and Downs*
8. George Strait *I've Come to Expect It From You*
9. Doug Stone *These Lips Don't Know How to Say Goodbye*
10. Kathy Mattea *A Few Good Things Remain*
11. Tanya Tucker *It Won't Be Me*
12. Mike Reid *Walk on Faith*
13. The Judds *Love Can Build a Bridge*
14. Lee Greenwood *We've Got It Made*
15. Dwight Yoakam *Turn It On, Turn It Up, Turn Me Loose*
16. Vince Gill *Never Knew Lonely*
17. Alan Jackson *Chasin' That Neon Rainbow*
18. Rodney Crowell *Now That We're Alone*
19. Aaron Tippin *You've Got to Stand for Something*
20. Mary Chapin Carpenter *You Win Again*
21. Rob Crosby *Love Will Bring Her Around*
22. Joe Diffie *If You Want Me To*
23. Shelby Lynne *Things Are Tough All Over*
24. Shenandoah *Ghost in This House*
25. Steve Wariner *There For a While*

Albums

1. Clint Black *Put Yourself in My Shoes*
2. Garth Brooks *No Fences*
3. Randy Travis *Heroes and Friends*
4. Reba McEntire *Rumor Has It*
5. Garth Brooks *Garth Brooks*
6. K.T. Oslin *Love in a Small Town*
7. Kentucky HeadHunters *Pickin' on Nashville*
8. Clint Black *Killin' Time*
9. Alan Jackson *Here in the Real World*
10. Vince Gill *When I Call Your Name*
11. Dwight Yoakam *If There Was a Way*
12. George Strait *Livin' It Up*
13. The Judds *Love Can Build a Bridge*
14. Kathy Mattea *A Collection of Hits*
15. Ricky Van Shelton *RVS III*
16. Mark Chesnutt *Too Cold at Home*
17. Keith Whitley *Greatest Hits*
18. Alabama *Pass It On Down*
19. Hank Williams Jr. *America (The Way I See It)*
20. Shenandoah *Extra Mile*
21. Travis Tritt *Country Club*
22. Mary Chapin Carpenter *Shooting Straight in the Dark*
23. Doug Stone *Doug Stone*
24. Randy Travis *No Holdin' Back*
25. The Judds *Greatest Hits*

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