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COUNTRY MUSIC

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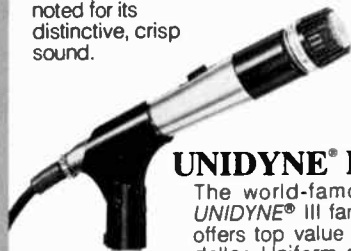
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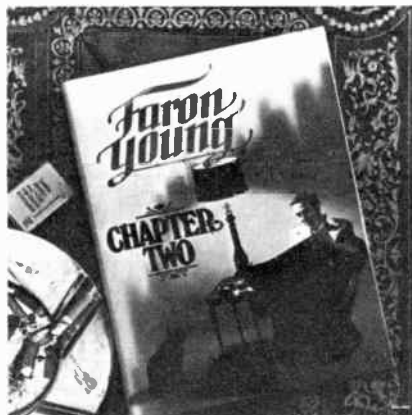
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Letters

As Long As It's Music

I'd like to compliment you on a fine magazine. I enjoy reading about the people who make up the country music field. Most of all, I appreciate it that you cover many different types of people, people who can go from country to pop to rock-a-billy or whatever—who cares what the different styles are called—music is a univesal language and there is enough of each kind to please most everyone. My favorite singers range from the most country-fied to the most sophisticated men and women—I wouldn't even attempt to name them—I might leave out somebody and then you wouldn't have time to read all the names.

Again, I love your magazine and would like to read more about Marty Robbins. He has made public appearances in our area recently and he is a fabulous entertainer.

Thank you for a great magazine.

RUBY HOOD
SILEX, MO.

A feature on Marty with a beautiful color picture appears in our July/August issue., Ed.

I have not been a subscriber to Country Music magazine very long, but have always loved country/western music and enjoy the magazine more with every issue I receive. Your articles on Jim Reeves and Marty Robbins in the July/August issue are excellent. Also, I especially enjoyed reading about Anne Murray as she is one of my favorites too. Lipstick and Mascara was very interesting—special—in that it goes right along with other articles but gives information about people, and things they do. I think anyone would like knowing and reading about.

BILLIE ELMS
TAYLOR, TEXAS

Tom T. Hall

Just finished reading the Interview with Herman Woonzel by Tom T. Hall in the June issue and enjoyed it very much and would love to see more interviews by him.

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Tanya Tucker

I just had to write this for the people. Tanya Tucker can go out and hire a rock and roll band and her producer can do all he wants to try to change Tanya, but Tanya has a pure country voice that no one can take from her. So they can try and change her all they want, but Tanya Tucker will always sound country so they ought to give up.

MARTY LEWIS
GAINESVILLE, FLA.

Thanks for the article about Tanya. Since her fan club disbanded it is hard to find out what she is doing.

I have a suggestion for future articles in Country Music Magazine. I would like to see some articles on the bands which back up country stars. These musicians don't get all the credit they deserve. I am sure, the major artists would allow their bands to be interviewed.

KEVIN McCURDY
LAWTON, OKLA.

Good idea, check out our June issue. Ed.

Johnny Rodriguez

Thank you for the wonderful article on Johnny Rodriguez in the July/August issue of Country Music. An article on Rodriguez was a long time in coming but well worth the wait. I was very, very pleased with it. It was very well written and unbiased. I have been a big Rodriguez fan ever since Johnny's first song hit the charts. I think Johnny is a fantastic singer and a wonderful person.

I feel Johnny is one of the most underrated and overlooked singers in Country Music. He has never gotten the recognition he really deserves. Johnny has handled his success very well. It is wonderful that Johnny has his career back on the tracks, and that he is happy with his life again.

Johnny's album, **Rodriguez**, is possibly the best album he has ever recorded. If it is any indication of things to come, the future looks very bright for Rodriguez fans as well as for Johnny.

I'm sure all Rodriguez fans really appreciated the story on him. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

J. HAWK
NEWBURGH, PA.

"Crash"

I adore your magazine. This time especially because of Michael Bane's article in the June issue on Mr. Country Rock, and the most sexiest man next to Elvis I ever saw, Billy Crash Craddock. This past June I got my picture taken hugging Billy Crash Craddock and he squeezed me, I thought I'd gone to heaven. What a talent and a man. Let's get a CMA entertainer award nomination for him.

PATRICIA JOHNSON
SANTA ROSA, CA.

Tex Ritter

I am a member of the Tex Ritter fan club. For the last two years I have been reading your magazine and want to ask you why you don't have a tribute to the late and great cowboy singer Tex Ritter? He is one of the best singers in country music. When he died in 1974 we lost a great man. I hope in the near future you will come out with a tribute to Tex Ritter.

GLENN BLUMANHOARST
CARDIFF, CALIF.

A story on Tex is in the works. Ed.

The Oaks

Thanks for the terrific article on the Oak Ridge Boys in the June issue. I think they're just great. Keep up the good work.

I love your magazine.

STEPHANIE HENSLEY
HARRISONVILLE, MO.

Barbara Mandrell

I have been receiving your magazine for a year now and I enjoy it very much. I hope that you will do a feature on Barbara Mandrell soon cause down here in Alabama at the Alabama Sheriff's Girls Ranch (a place for girls without a home, we live on donations only), she has really become a great friend. She has done so much for us at our home. Not only did she have a golf tournament for us but in May she had a swimming pool built. We enjoy it very much. I am hoping that part of my letter will somehow end up in your wonderful magazine. There is just no words to explain just how wonderful Barbara is. She comes down as often as possible and that always makes us 42 girls very happy. We are *her* girls now. This October she and The Statler Brothers are coming to do a concert at Auburn University and the golf tournament has become a yearly event.

JAN SPURLIN
CAMP HILL, ALA.

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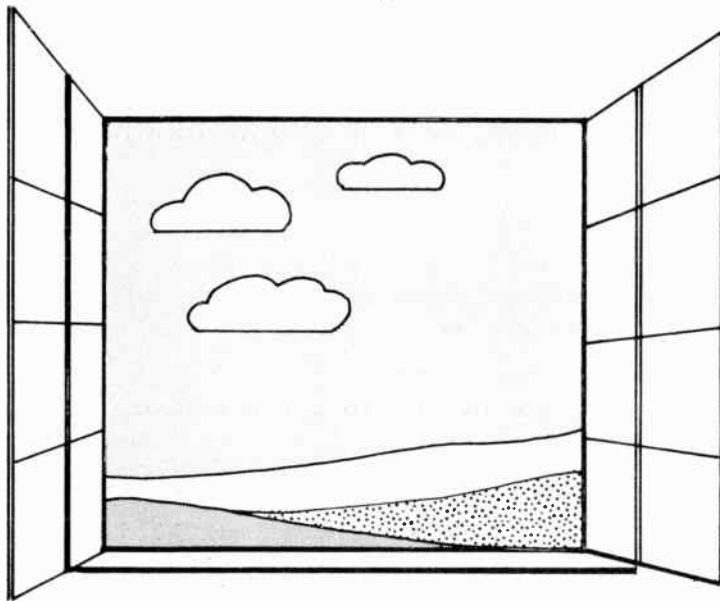
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The Life and Times of America's Blue Yodeler

Jimmie Rodgers

by NOLAN PORTERFIELD

"The most complete and accurate account of Rodgers that we are likely to get [with] some of the most valuable insights about early country music, and the South, that can be found in any published work."—Bill C. Malone, author of *Country Music, U.S.A.*

America's Blue Yodeler, The Singing Brakeman, The Father of Country Music, first performer to be elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame, folk hero of the Depression days—here is his fascinating, highly readable biography. Porterfield uses interviews with many people who knew and loved Jimmie Rodgers and provides much new information about his personal and professional life.

It's a classic, rags-to-riches, show-must-go-on story of a gallant entertainer who was dying of tuberculosis by the time he was famous but who went on singing till the day before he died. It's the story of an era, too—of the rise of motion pictures, radio, and the record industry and the decline of live entertainment. In the thirty-five years he lived, Jimmie Rodgers was part of it all, from the grassroots level to the big time. Illustrated \$15.00

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Letter To The Readers

A Month of Firsts

For the first time a U.S. President has proclaimed October as Country Music Month (See story p. 19). So, it's fitting that *Country Music Magazine* have some "firsts" this month, too.

First Issue, Second Generation

My partners, Jack Killion and Spencer Oettinger, and I started this magazine with very little money . . . and the magazine has gotten by on even less ever since. (I'm sure many of you know the feeling.) But, every new business has that kind of problem. The difference with *Country Music* is that we have you, the readers. Last year *Country Music* was the second fastest growing magazine in America. We had 338,000 subscribers with our September issue, and 1,250,000 people read the average issue.

More importantly, by this time last year, we could see that *Country Music* could easily attract 500,000 to 600,000 subscribers in total. All we needed was the money . . . which we didn't have. So, we began to look for partners who, in addition to having money to invest, also shared our interest and optimism in the field of country music. We spent a year looking, talking and negotiating. Several groups made offers which is testimony, we think to the future of the magazine.

Last month, we concluded a fruitful union with another company, Candlelite Music, which is as deeply involved in country music as we are. Their business is selling collections of records and tapes . . . such as *The Golden Dream of Hank Williams*, *The Velvet Memories of Jim Reeves*, *The Legendary Recordings of Elvis Presley*, as well as collections of Johnny Cash, Eddy Arnold, Tammy Wynette, Conway Twitty and many others. These records are never available in stores, but you see them advertised on television and in *Country Music*, available only by mail. They do this job pretty well. Candlelite has received twenty-five gold and platinum records over the last five years, and, this year, their sales will exceed \$50,000,000.

We and the principals of Candlelite Music (Wesley Wood, Wayne Stierle and Sal Nastro) have formed a new company called Country Music Magazine, Inc. which has purchased *Country Music*. The goal is to have 500,000 subscribers by the end of 1980. And, to make *Country Music* even better at the same time. This approach represents an investment of over 3,000,000, and shows our faith in you and country music.

First Dylan

Our first review of a Bob Dylan record appears on p. 58. This is long overdue. Dylan, undeniably a rock giant, has deep musical roots in all forms of traditional American music including country. He once said, "If I had known what I know now, I probably would have taken off when I was twelve and followed Bill Monroe. 'Cause I could have gotten to the same place." We agree, and will continue to help country fans to get acquainted with Dylan, as well as other rock artists with country roots.

Jerry, Jerry, Jerry

This is also the first time *Country Music* has ever had "Jerry" on the cover three times. The staff is pondering the significance of this event . . . none has been found so far. Someone said they now know what Cary Grant meant that time, when he said, "Jerry, Jerry, Jerry."

Russell D. Barnard

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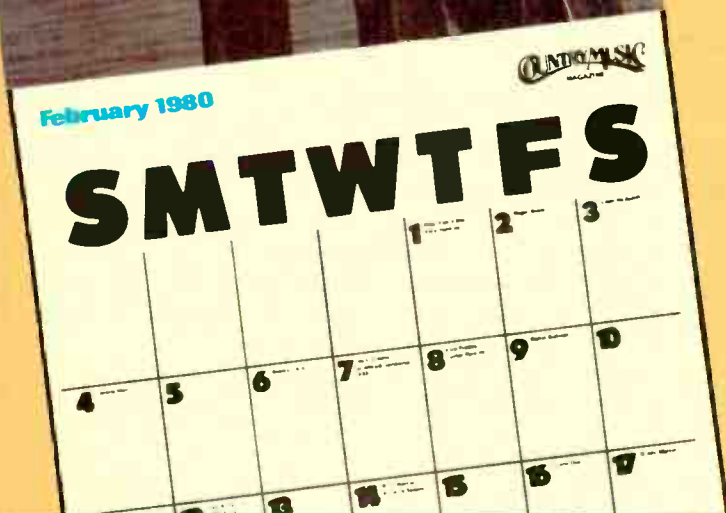
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Country Scene

Cowboys, Indians and Country Music In Kenya

Some people rave about their food, others fly Pan Am from New York to Kenya because it only makes two stops during the 19 hour trip but, I looked forward to its country style "Music In the Air" on its stereophonic Channel 6. It features hits by Crystal Gayle, Marty Robbins, Anne Murray and Conway Twitty. What a way to go!

Sitting next to me on the flight was a man dressed in a long white dress and a turban. I noticed he also had his headphone switched to Channel 6 and his foot was tapping the same rhythm as mine. Not long after he said "Jambo," ("hello" in Swahili), he was telling me how Kenyans loved country music. While I was dreaming of big game safaris, he was looking forward to a hootenanny. They have them the first and third Thursday of every month in Nairobi, Kenya's largest city.

Guess where I was on Thursday night. At Buffalo Bill's Wild West Saloon, it's down the road from the hootenanny. The saloon is a treat for even the most jaded cowboy. Since he had an Indian restaurant next door, the manager, Michael Handelman felt it was only fair to open a cowboy place. "Cowboys and Indians . . . you get it?," he quipped. Three years ago he bought Buffalo Bill posters and the decorating began but, that was only the beginning.

The horseshoe-shaped bar is surrounded by stools topped with saddles and patrons bouncing up and down in them to the country music that plays into the wee hours of the night. "They love the sound of galloping horses from movie scores like *High Noon* or *High Chaparral*," said Handelman. "We play a lot of the Austin Sound and if I hear Jim Reeves' *Put Your Lips Closer To The Phone* one more time I'll . . . Bluegrass is getting big too. I remember when I thought it was a new kind of marijuana."

Amidst the tables, done up as covered wagons with hurricane lamps and griddles hanging from them, is a table in a barred "County Jail" with real locks. "That's the favorite spot of Ignacion Nderi, head of Kenya's Criminal Investigation Department," said Handelman. "His office is around the corner. We serve him bread and water."

To everyone else, the waiters clad in blue jeans, plaid shirts and straw hats serve scrumptious over-sized hamburgers, hot dogs and steaks. John Nderito, the Kenyan born chef claims, "They are like grandmas from America used to make 'em. Where do you think

The atmosphere is very informal and friendly. "There's a real camaraderie here," said a geologist in a distinctive Irish brogue. When one of the guest performers, a Texan tourist forgot the words to a song, he said, "I'm sorry" and the audience carried on. "That's par for the



At Buffalo Bill's Wild West Saloon in Kenya, the horseshoe-shaped bar is surrounded by stools topped with saddles that have patrons bouncing up and down to the beat of country music that plays well into the night.

we got the recipe to cross pigs and elephants for extra big pork chops?"

Buffalo Bill's has square dancing once a month too. "Everyone is American here," said Handelman. "If they're not, they pretend they are."

The biweekly hootenanny attracted over 200 Americans and other country music fans the four times I was there. For 10 years folks have flocked to the Hotel Normandie to hear approximately seven to nine musicians of varying caliber, including locals, peace corps volunteers (there's a lot of them in Kenya) and tourists. "We never have a shortage of performers," said manager/proprietor "Sham" Shudin Karmali. "They do it for a free beer." Their modest stage has a Masai (a local tribe) mask and crossed spears over it. Everyone sits on the floor until the dancing starts and legend has it, it always does before 10 PM.

course," said "Sham." "No show is complete without one loud burp." There's a very lively, very social half hour intermission. Beer is available.

The backbone of the show is Kenya's most popular country music band. They do the first half of the show alone, tell jokes in between acts and do the back-up when needed. Audience participation is encouraged. The band has released three records and they are working on a fourth.

"Country music is popular in East Africa because the tunes are simple, melodic and the lyrics are easy to understand," said Mike Craig, the bazoogie and mandolin player, "and that's important because English is only the second language for most Kenyans. The heavy beat of rock appeals to a limited number of people whereas everyone loves country music because its so darned easy to listen to." "Weepy stuff dies quickly here,"

Country Scene

said David Beglin, the man on the harmonica, penny whistle and the fiddle.

"To understand Kenyans' tastes in music you have to take into consideration that most traditional African music has very little emphasis on the instruments," said Frank McGinley, one of the guitarists. "Their instruments lack finesse. Traditional music is basically one guy speaking to sympathetic strings."

"Country music became big in Kenya in the 60's. Jim Reeves, Charley Pride and gospel singer Skeeter Davis have the strongest across the board repertoire. Nothing outsold Reeves' album *We THANK Thee* or his single *Across the Bridge*, said Ron Andrews who plays the banjo and fiddle and owns a record company. "They have a stronghold on the market to this day. Dolly Parton and

Porter Wagoner are no. 1 in Uganda but, Dolly alone was never too hot. We like ballads and she has turned to rock."

Just about anywhere in Kenya you can hear country music daily. It's broadened on Kenya's largest radio station VOK (Voice of Kenya). The day I left they played a solid hour of Jim Reeves. Country music usually dominates their prime time programming.

"I discovered country music in Kenya," said Nancy Wilson, a student from Arizona. "It's everyone's music here. It represents "home" to foreigners, whether they're from the States, Canada or Australia and "good vibes" to the natives. I think there are a lot of reasons why it's bigger here than in the States. Now that's ironic!"

NANCY TRACHTENBERG

Never mind that the obvious tongue-in-cheek double entendre of the hook tickled the fancy of country and pop listeners alike. *Beautiful Body* skyrocketed to the top of the country charts where it sat smugly in the number one position for weeks, shutting out heavy competition from records by Don Williams, Crystal Gayle and the Oak Ridge Boys. Then it jumped over onto the top-40 playlists and took off again.

But what about the Bellamys? Do they think of themselves as country artists? Or is this, perhaps, only a private joke, a mild flirtation with the country fans before flinging themselves headlong back into rock?

ARE YOU KIDDING?? say the Bellamy Brothers calmly. They know that their music is closer these days to their real roots than ever before.

"Sure, we've recorded lots of different kinds of material in the past, but we've always been country underneath," explains David, the talkative Bellamy. "We grew up on a farm in Florida—where we still live—and our father was a country musician who played dobro and fiddle."

"Even the vocals and harmonies we do on the rockers still have a sort of soft, gentle country quality to them," adds David. "And we perform a lot of straight, pure country tunes in our show. Our pop label came from other people—we've always known we were country!"

Between the Bellamys' first album and their latest, *The Two And Only*, nearly three years elapsed in which they released several singles with no noticeable results. It began to look as if the momentum they had built with *Let Your Love Flow* was going to evaporate.

When pressed, the brothers admit to being involved in legal and contractual hassles that were costing them a say-so in their own career direction. Eventually, they returned to the States, took some time off to regroup their ideas, and set about making changes.

First, they auditioned and hired a permanent band that would comprise an integral part of the Bellamy sound, a band which they use both on live dates and in the studio. Next, they signed on a full-time sound engineer and road crew, bought their own touring vehicles, negotiated a booking agreement with United Talent in Nashville (they have since left United Talent and signed with Top Billing), began managing their own

The Bellamy Brothers: "We've Always Been Country"

Every so often, in a quirky reversal of today's highly publicized crossover trend, artists who have made a name for themselves in the field of pop will suddenly "go country." They establish an entirely new career out of dominating the country charts.

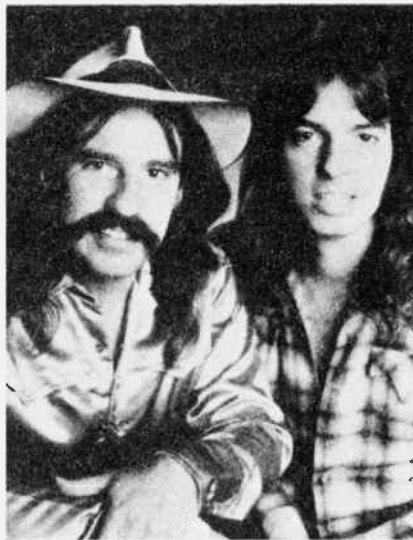
There are a number of stars now dotting the country music constellation who were once active in the pop galaxy . . . Kenny Rogers, Freddy Weller, Jerry Lee Lewis, Debby Boone, Conway Twitty, Ronnie Milsap, Emmylou Harris.

Well, sharpen your pencils because it's time to add another name to this list: the Bellamy Brothers.

Uh, now, the Bellamy Brothers don't exactly LOOK like your stereotyped description of typical country artists; with their straight, shoulder-length hair, blue jeans and flowered shirts, they're visually more reminiscent of Woodstock than of Hank Williams.

Not only that, mustached Howard, 33, and younger brother David, 28, have spent a rather checkered ten-year career playing rock, soul and r&b in undiscovered bands with names like "The Accidents" and "Jericho." Not exactly your standard preparation for a career in country show biz.

This, of course, was prior to the Bellamys' "overnight success" in 1976 with a single called *Let Your Love Flow*, which splashed them into the national limelight and won them a lot more atten-



tion from pop radio stations than it did from country ones.

So how is it that the Bellamy Brothers find themselves now, three years and four albums later, in the role of fast-rising young country stars?

Part of the secret certainly has to lie in the outstanding impact of the brothers' initial song from their most recent Warner-Curb album. When they decided to release David's self-penned *If I Said You Had A Beautiful Body Would You Hold It Against Me* in the spring of 1979, the Bellamys claimed they intended it simply to be a nice, melodic love ballad.

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TANYA TUCKER - C-31742 ALBUM \$2.98
Delta Dawn; New York City Song; Smell The Flowers; If You Touch Me; He's All I Got; The Jamestown Ferry; Loving You Could Never Be Better; Love's The Answer; Soul Song; The Happiest Girl In The Whole U.S.A.; I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry.
8 TRACK TAPE - 18C-31742 \$4.98
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Country Scene

business affairs for the first time, and selected a new producer, Michael Lloyd. Lloyd's production credits include work with Shaun Cassidy and Lou Rawls, and his musical versatility is evident in both LPs he has engineered for the Bellamys.

Their revitalized career, hot on the heels of *Beautiful Body* and their follow-up single, *You Ain't Just Whistlin' Dixie*, has David and Howard on the road over

250 days a year and making periodic forays into television as well. They rarely find time to go home to their Florida farm to relax, brand a few calves or mend an occasional fence. And if they continue to duplicate their current success in the future, the Bellamy Brothers will find the top of the country charts a familiar place to be.

KIP KIRBY

Jim Reeves and The Mystery Lady

Jim Reeves, dead 15 years, has another hit. *Don't Let Me Cross Over*, the 1962 Carl and Pearl Butler hit, broke the Top Ten in August. That's no big deal: Reeves has had hits ever since he died. Nor is it significant that the song, originally recorded for RCA with his backup band, the Blue Boys in 1963 received new, modern accompaniment. That's been going on for years.

But it's now a duet with a young lady, and that's very significant, for the only duets he ever did were with Ginny Wright in the fifties, when they both worked the Louisiana Hayride and recorded for Abbott, and with Dottie West in the '60s when they were on RCA. And this young lady's voice has both fans and industry people buzzing. It's Dolly, some say; no, it's Emmylou, others insist. What is even more surprising is that no other vocalist is credited on the top 10 single. The liner notes on the just-released Reeves LP, *Don't Let Me Cross Over*, identifies one "Deborah Allen" who duets with Reeves on the title tune and four other tracks. Is it a pseudonym? Is somebody playing games? Just what's going on here, anyway?

According to Mary Reeves, who supervises the unending flow of re-packaged, revamped Jim Reeves recordings from her Madison, Tennessee of-

fice, there is no mystery, though she admits she's amused by the speculation. Ms. Allen, she says, is a 22 year old backup singer hired to do several overdubbed duets for the album. Her voice was electronically intercut as they alternated vocals. Where her voice went, Jim's was mixed out and she harmonized with him on the choruses.

Mary herself attended only one of the sessions, she says. "(Deborah) got so shook that I was there," she recalls. "And I thought it'd even be worse if I had left right then. I didn't go to any of the sessions after that." Though the single might seem nostalgic for today's country charts, Mary wasn't concerned. "I expected it to be (successful)," she says. And she admits she may try it again with a better-known female singer "if the occasion calls for it."

Well, to my ear it does sound like Dolly more than Emmylou. But then the sales potential of a Dolly/Reeves duet LP certainly wouldn't be lost on either RCA or Mary Reeves. And it's likely that had either Dolly or Emmylou been involved, word would have slipped out somehow. But hiring a singer with a resemblance to both is smart business. It gets people talking and writers like me speculating. Decide for yourself, folks.

RICH KIENZLE

D.J. Of The Month: Ralph Emery



Forty-six year-old Ralph Emery has been d-jaying since he was eighteen years old. "I was an only child," he noted one recent morning sitting in the control room of WSM-radio. "And I would pass my time listening to the radio, envisioning myself as the announcer." So, when I got old enough, I went straight to broadcasting school."

But after three months, Ralph's eleven dollars a week income would no longer support his schooling. "So I got a job."

Emery didn't join WSM until 1957 when he heard they were wanting a dj who had some knowledge of the country music industry. "I went on the air for a week as an audition and didn't hear back from them," reminisced Emery. "On the last day, they told me they'd call. I really didn't know I had the job until some time later."

From there, Emery began hosting his all night country show that aired from 10:15 p.m. until 5 a.m. the next morning. "I did that until mid-1972 when I decided I'd had it with staying up all night."

Today, Ralph Emery is dj at WSM from nine until ten every week day, hosts a TV show on WSM, hosts his syndicated radio show that is currently in 290 markets and plays host on his TV syndicated show, *Pop Goes the Country*. The TV show is already shown in 150 markets with an estimated audience of eight million people.

During his leisure time, what little there is, Ralph is a homebody and hangs out with wife "Joy" and their three sons.

DOLLY CARLISLE



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Country Scene

Watch This Face: Razzy Bailey



"I just want to be successful," says Razzy Bailey, revealing a dazzling smile along with refreshing candor.

After three top-ten singles (all from his RCA album, *If Love Had a Face*), some might feel he had scaled the heights, but Razzy isn't about to get complacent.

"It's taken me a long time to get a break," he says. "I'm just thankful for everything that happens."

Razzy's 15-year "overnight success" is a pretty typical music business story. In 1966 he wrote the Dickey Lee hit, *9,999,999 Tears*. Since 1968 he has worked full-time as a songwriter and musician, but recognition has been slow in coming. Razzy's commitment to music has been lifelong, and he has managed to persevere.

"I just like music, every kind of music. All my life I've always wanted to be in music," Razzy says.

The Bailey family used to sing together at their Five Points, Alabama, farmhouse. Razzy's father strummed the

guitar, while other local pickers played fiddle, harmonica or mandolin.

"Daddy told me to be original, not like anyone else I heard," Razzy recalls.

Like many country singers, Razzy counts among his important musical influences, rural black blues players—neighbors who played slide guitar and harmonica. Later he heard Bobby "Blue" Bland and other urban bluesmen on the radio.

"I like feeling in music. Whatever style it is, I like to hear it with a lot of feeling," Razzy says. "That's one of the reasons I like the blues."

Razzy's own singing style recalls the early 1960s fusion of R&B with pop music, together with traditional country music. One can discern traces of Brook Benton and Tom Jones in Razzy's voice as he moves easily through a wide range of contemporary country material.

The broadening of country music's audience is a healthy change, Razzy feels.

"Country music is appealing to a bigger majority of people. People who don't like hard-core country can enjoy MOR country. Even Conway Twitty seems to be moving toward an MOR sound," he says.

"I think new hard-core country artists would have a very hard time getting noticed now, whereas the established acts are doing quite well."

Razzy is rather definite about his own future plans. He wants to play music, make more records for RCA, perhaps do some more television. Independent producer Bob Montgomery has played a big part in getting his career up to groundspeed, Razzy says, and he intends to continue working with him.

With cautious optimism, Razzy and his wife Sandra have even considered moving to Nashville. They now live in Macon, Georgia, with their twin daughters.

When you see Razzy and Sandra together, it's hard to believe they've been married 20 years.

"It was one of those Loretta Lynn marriages," Sandra laughs. With her long black hair and fresh good looks, she could pass for Loretta's little sister.

Hasn't it been difficult being married to a musician all these years?

"Not really," Sandra smiles. "It's just our way of life."

"She gets more excited about the music business than I do," Razzy says. "She's my biggest promoter."

Even after three hit records (*What Time Do You Have to Be Back to Heaven, Tonight, She's Gonna Love Me* and *If Love Had a Face*) in the last year, Razzy realizes he isn't yet a household word.

In Nashville recently for Fan Fair and *Porter Wagoner Show* tapings, Razzy and Sandra were having dinner—unnoticed—in the Opryland Hotel. The star of a popular TV series entered the restaurant, leaving a wake of turning heads and whispers.

"I thought, what will I do if I ever get to the point where everyone recognizes me like that?" says Razzy.

He flashes a straightforward smile.

"What would be worse, of course, is if I never get to that point."

TERRY NEWKIRK

Country Scene

New York Goes Country With The Opening Of The New Club Lorelei

Country music fans in New York City now have another major nightclub at which they can hear their favorite music. Called the New Club Lorelei, the nightspot is located at 231 East 86 Street, in the heart of the Big Apple's posh Upper East Side.

The club is not really new. However, it is new to country music, having opened its doors to country fans, officially, in August with a bill headed by none other than Jerry Lee Lewis. Lewis' program consisted of a tasteful mixture of country, blues and rock 'n roll numbers which he performed with the usual fire and electricity. The house was literally packed with young and not-so-young fans who roared their appreciation for such numbers as *Whole Lotta Shakin'*, *Troubles In Mind*, *Great Balls Of Fire*

and *Fraulein*.

Preceding Lewis on-stage was another rock 'n roll legend—Otis Blackwell. Although an impressive performer, Blackwell is best known as a composer, having penned such early rock 'n roll hits as *Great Balls Of Fire*, *Breathless*, *Don't Be Cruel*, *Return To Sender* and *All Shook Up*. He also wrote the Peggy Lee hit, *Fever*.

Lorelei's owner, Pat Forrestal, and promoter Richie Allen seem determined to offer only top-drawer acts. As *Country Music Magazine* went to press, their roster of upcoming acts included The Nashville Superpickers, the Drifting Cowboys—Hank Williams' original band, Eric Weissberg and Deliverance, and the legendary Merle Travis.

ART MAHER

October Becomes Official Country Music Month

All of us close to the country music business know that October is a big month for our music. There's the Country Music Association convention and award show (13th annual) which includes the D.J. Convention, The Grand Ole Opry's Birthday celebration (54 this year), record company shows and luncheons and dinners throughout the week.

But this year its been made official. President Carter has proclaimed October as Country Music Month, and the governors of several states have issued similar proclamations.

In his statement the President said, "Every year at this time the harvest season is celebrated throughout the hills and valleys of rural America, where country music has its roots. Country music chronicles the richness and fullness of American life, the hopes and dreams, joys and sorrows of those who have raised a great nation from a bountiful land.

"Because it expresses the simple human emotions we all share, country music is in tune with our everyday experiences, whether we live on a farm or in the city. This authentic American art form has grown to be one of the most popular styles of music in our nation today.

"It is fitting, therefore, that October be designated as Country Music Month. I commend the Country Music Association for its contribution to this annual observance, and I invite all Americans to join me in saluting the talented performers who have given us so many hours of listening pleasure through country music."

In preparation of 1979's Country Music Month, Willie Nelson sent letters to governors of every state, requesting that they issue official proclamation of Country Music Month in their respective states. The Country Music Association has put together promotional packages to send to country radio stations including advertising slicks, posters and discs featuring messages from country music artists about Country Music Month. A promotional effort is being aimed at the International Council of Shopping Centers and the Country Music Association is also setting up a display at the National Airport in Washington, D.C.

At this time, more than 30 country music month proclamations have been received from governors throughout the United States with many more expected and as in previous years, Roy Horton is chairman of the Country Music Month committee.

ROCHELLE FRIEDMAN

A Farewell To Two Country Greats

Dorsey Burnette

Country Music Magazine sadly notes the untimely passing of Dorsey Burnette in August. Dorsey had been a country star for over 20 years, and is best known for his hits, *Tall Oak Tree*, *Hey Little One*, and *Big Rock Candy Mountain*. He recorded and wrote many successful songs, (*Dreamin'*, *You're Sixteen*, *For God, Country, and My Baby*) and was the brother of Johnny Burnette. Dorsey and Johnny Burnette were both a part of the early rockabilly years. Dorsey was on the charts at the time of his death with his new Elektra single, *Here I Go Again*.

Dick Foran

In November of 1935 Warner Brothers—a studio known for musicals—unleashed upon the film world a revolutionary new idea, that of a singing cowboy, when *Moonlight On The Prairie*, starring Dick Foran, was released. Only trouble was that smaller Republic studios had beat them to the punch, having released *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*, starring a newcomer named Gene Autrey, in September.

Though he was billed as "The Singing Cowboy," Dick Foran's musical westerns never caught on the way Autrey's did, and after a series of twelve "horse operas," drifted into other roles, where he made his deep impression on the Hollywood community. Born John Nicholas Foran in Flemington, New Jersey, on June 18, 1910, he was the son of US Senator Arthur F. Foran. After graduating from Princeton University, he headed for Hollywood, and appeared on screen from 1934 well into the television era, often in supporting roles but occasionally as a dapper leading man. He was frequently found in cowboy roles, though most have forgotten his brief history as a singing cowboy. He recorded for Universal and for Decca, but his strong baritone was more at home on the Broadway stage than on the open range, and his records were not aimed at, nor were they accepted by, the country audience.

Dick Foran, The Singing Cowboy, died August 10, in a Los Angeles area hospital, of natural causes.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Audio

Think Small: Mini Components

By HANS FANTEL

Back when the first VW Beetles scurried around the big, tail-finned gas guzzlers which dominated the road in those days, few people believed that compact cars had much of a chance. Since then we've learned that size isn't everything.

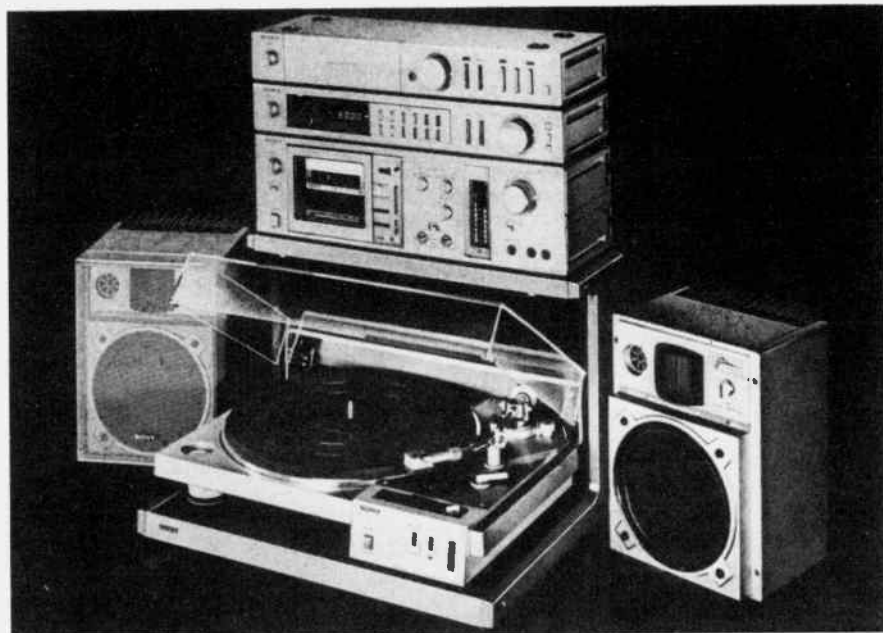
Now it's happening in stereo. Audio designers are learning to *Think Small*. And that's good news for music fans living in small apartments or mobile homes who just haven't got the room to stash a lot of oversized sound gear. The new bantam music makers are called mini-components, and some of them are no bigger than a cigar box. But the surprise is that these pigmies put out big, full-range sound. Only their bulk has been shrunk—not their performance.

The new minis are a direct spin-off from the miniaturization methods used in computers and space electronics.

Just about the best bargain among the minis is **Radio Shack's STA-7** receiver, which sells for \$160. It consists of an AM/FM stereo tuner, plus an amplifier delivering 10 watts per channel with no more than 0.5% distortion at full output. Granted, that's not the kind of power that will raise the roof or rouse the neighbors, but we checked it out and found that it fills even a fairly large room with clear, well-balanced sound at ample volume. Radio Shack also sells this receiver with two matched mini-speakers as their "System Seven"—priced at \$220. By throwing a special switch at the receiver's back, you can add some extra bass boost that partly makes up for the small size of these mini-speakers. The system sounds quite good that way, but if you really like rock-bottom bass, better pick a pair of larger speakers to go with this mini-receiver—preferably the high-efficiency type that gives you a lot of sound per watt.

As for the tuner section of the STA-7, it may have a little trouble way out in fringe areas. But if you live anywhere within 30 miles or so from the FM stations you usually want to hear, this mini will bring in the broadcasts clearly and hold the station without drifting.

A more powerful mini model is the **Rotel 55**, which delivers 20 watts per channel and can be run from regular house current as well as from a 12-volt DC battery, making it usable in vans and



The complete Sony "Avatar" mini-system equals the sound of much larger systems but takes up far less space. De-luxe design features quartz-locked digital tuning.

boats. The system is styled to stand up vertically, and since it measures only 11 inches in height and 6 inches in width, it fits easily on a record shelf. The \$310 price includes two matching 2-way speakers.

The fancier and more expensive mini models have highly advanced and sophisticated features that are rarely found even in full-sized sound gear. For example, **Sony** and **Toshiba** have quartz-controlled FM tuning circuits which use computer-type technology to assure that the station you pick is tuned in "right on the nose." These tuners don't even have conventional tuning knobs for you to twirl. Instead, you punch in the frequency of the station you want to hear just as you punch a phone number into a telephone touch-pad. The station frequency then flashes at you from a digital read-out, and you know you're tuned in with absolute accuracy. In effect, it's impossible to mis-tune these tuners.

On the **Sony** you also have preselector tuning, allowing you to pre-set up to twelve FM stations and then pull them in at the touch of a single button. Power ratings among these fancy minis also range a lot higher than the ones mentioned before, what with **Mitsubishi**—the most powerful

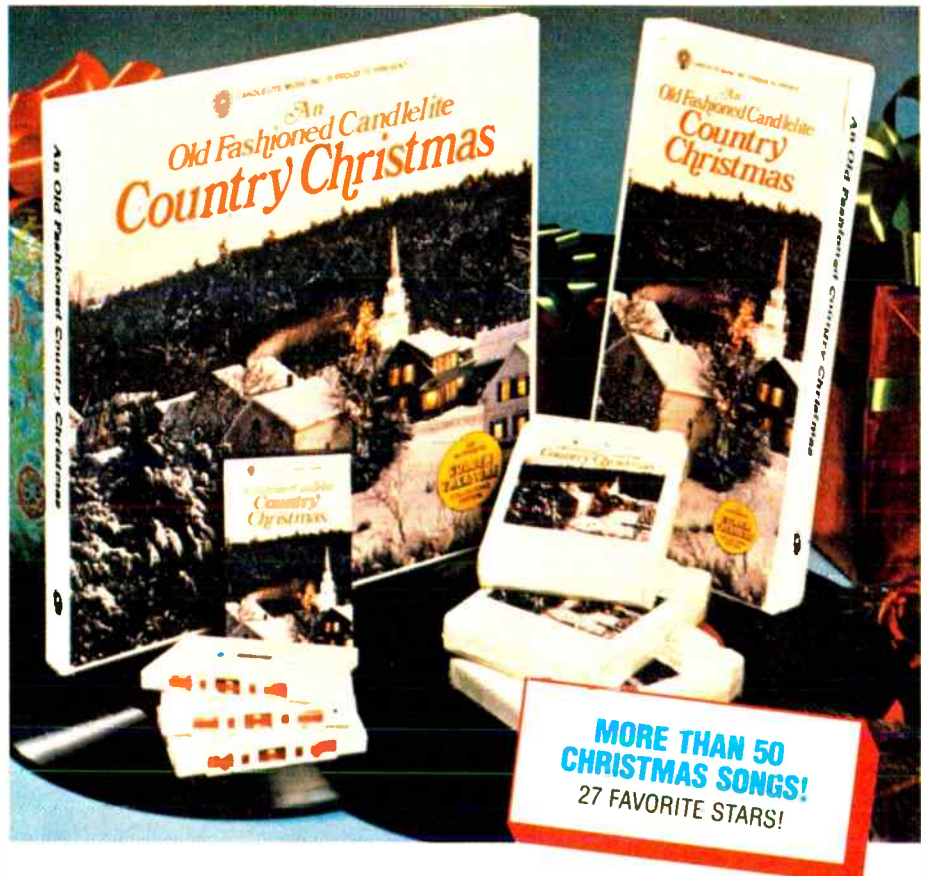
—hitting 70 watts per channel, and most of the others rated between 30 and 55 watts per channel.

Of all the various components, cassette decks are the most difficult to miniaturize because, in addition to electronic circuitry, they contain many moving parts. But both **Aiwa** and **Mitsubishi** managed to produce tape decks small enough to stack with the other mini components. Yet despite extreme compactness, nothing was skimped in terms of performance. When we checked them out, we found that **Aiwa's** and **Mitsubishi's** bantam tape decks sounded quite as good as most full-size rigs.

The one thing that's definitely not small on top-rank minis is the price tag. Except for the less expensive systems mentioned before, mini systems may range anywhere from about \$700 to more than twice that figure. This is definitely no bargain because, as things stand now, you can get equally good performance for less money with regular-size components. But where space is at a premium, some people will no doubt pay the premium. After all, these new minis are the best way to get top-notch sound into small rooms. ■

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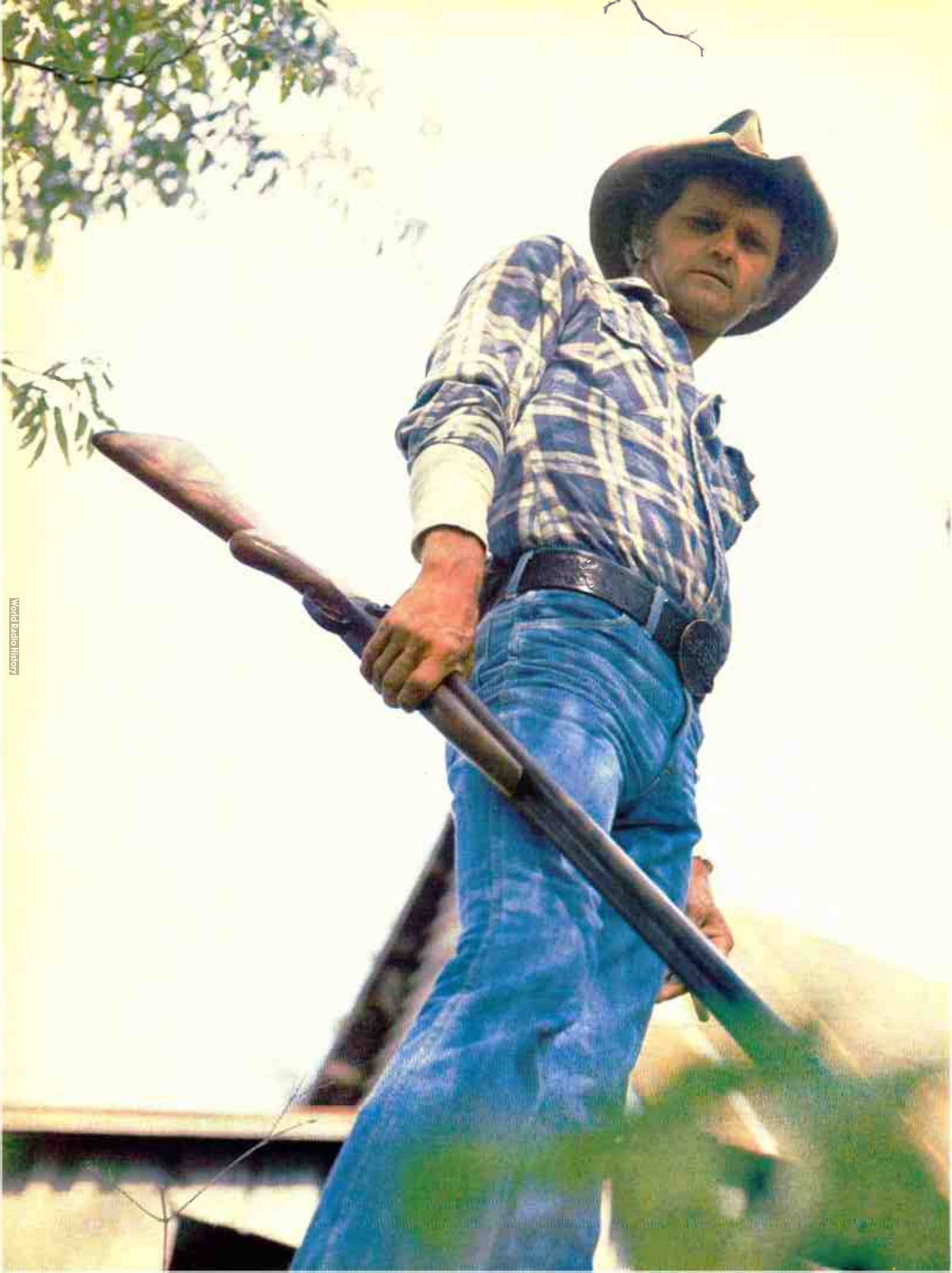
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When You're Hot You're Hot

by Dolly Carlisle

JERRY REED

America has at long last rekindled its waning love affair with good ole boys. This newfound affection for honesty, straightforwardness, simplicity could not have come at a better time for Jerry Reed—country music's most popular, perennial version of the good ole boy.

The fifties were loaded with good ole boys—Roy Rogers, Tab Hunter, Gene Autry, John Wayne—those clean-cut, admirable, trustworthy open-faced boys that would stick by their friend through thick or thin and never do harm to anyone. Only when the forces of evil surfaced would they exert their well-intended nastiness. Oh sure, they would play a villain role now and then. But everybody in the audience knew that under that scowl, growl and quick gun lay the heart of a good ole boy.

During the tumultuous sixties, the good ole boy's attractiveness diminished. America grew cynical, questioning, introspective, dark and very serious. Even the previous decade's king of the good ole boy, John Wayne, traded his crown of glory cowboy hat for the dark green symbol of war, the beret. In the depths of America's cynicism, John Wayne seemed determined to exonerate the image of the good ole boy. But as a reflection of the times, the audiences booed more than cheered.

The marches continued, the screams to end the war raged until the tumultuousness of the sixties was replaced by the disillusionment of the seventies. Now, almost twenty years later, the good ole boy is reappearing in all his glory. Just as superman, the symbol of truth, justice and the

American way, would have been booed out of the theatres in the previous two decades, Jerry Reed would have most likely been ignored as an actor. In the sixties and seventies, there were no roles for good ole boys. During those times in our history, America wasn't sure there were good ole boys.

"I'm afraid to admit that during the sixties, I was one of them silent majority, mainly because I was too busy working to pay much attention," Reed reflected. "Human rights are fine, but you're talking to a dude now who wouldn't let nobody back in the country if they didn't go when the country hollered. When a man or a certain group of people think they're big enough to shake their finger in the face of the entire country and say 'Now I don't like the war and I ain't going,' that's garbage, that's bullshit. They are the kind

**"I have everything I need
and then some. But I deserve
it all. I've earned every last
bit of it."**

when the football team ain't winning, they quit the team. The law says you can never shuck your responsibility. This is the only country they'd ever get away with doing that and that's sad."

"You have to understand that the last thing I want is to get shot at. But I like it here in the United States. It's in rotten shape, but it's better 'n anything else I've seen across the globe."

"Whether they thought that war was

right or wrong, it didn't do any good to burn their draft cards and walk away. It didn't stop one bullet. It was a dumb war—all wars are dumb. And unfortunately, we have some businessmen in the world who want a lot of that going on. But there are the right times and the wrong times to do things. And while the country is geared up to fight a war is not the time to sit back and say no. It's after the war, that you try to change things."

"I think the thing that would probably help this country is a good old war, just an ass-kicking war. It would probably help this country more than anything, where we all had one principal enemy to shoot at. Get us all together again. We're all going off into different directions. This group likes this and that group don't agree."

"I think the country wants their heroes—their Burt Reynolds, their Clint Eastwoods. Look at football. Football is controlled war. I think everybody knows we've never been more vulnerable in our history than we are now. We've never been more susceptible, weaker, fatter, more complacent. I don't think the majority of Americans like it."

The interview with Jerry Reed had been a long time coming. His hectic, tightly paced schedule of the past few weeks had left little time for discussions with journalists. But now, with sneakered feet propped up on his desk, Jerry Reed seemed to have nothing better to do than answer intruding questions about his life. Upon first stepping into his office, he had not appeared to notice my entrance. He was strumming his guitar, bent over, concen-



Jerry and Dom DeLuise play undercover cops who pose as phony fences in "Hot Stuff."



Dom DeLuise gets the goods on Suzanne Pleshette who is trying to get the goods on Jerry.



All undercover cops, Jerry, Dom and Suzanne along with Luis Avalos inspect their loot.

falls in love with girl, boy pursues girl and finally wins her heart and takes her away.

"Prissy and I have had our squabbles," Reed said about his twenty-year marriage to Priscilla. "She's had to put up with an awful lot to put up with me, boy. If I'd been her, I wouldn't have done it, I tell you cause there was a time I was hard to live with—still am, if you want to know the truth. But I love the old gal and she knows it and my kids. Shit, that's all I've got to work for really. I enjoy the money, and the good life. I've worked very hard for it. But

"I think I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing, what I was meant to do and I'm gonna do it until I can't breathe . . . You take this away from me, you may as well take my life away from me."

if I didn't have them to share it with, what's it gonna mean to me? I just want enough money so I can go fishing. The rest I play the game with, pay the bills with. I couldn't live without a woman in the house. A women's libber would never live with me for five minutes. Me or her, one is gonna have to get out of the house. I can't cook, ain't gonna cook and the last time I pulled KP, I said there will be no more sinks in my life.

But I don't ask them to go out on the road and eat ulcer burgers. Home is the only place I don't have to wage war. You know, it's amazing she's lived with me for twenty years."

Jerry Reed has come a long way since his poor boy days working the cotton fields of Georgia. At forty-two, Reed still remembers his first seven dollar guitar that he began picking on. He knows that he has reached his current status because of sheer guts, desire and desperation to achieve. He'll tell you that he hasn't always been a good ole boy. And for a minute, Reed's face reveals the struggles, the moments when he wasn't sure he'd ever make it. But the pain and hardness quickly disappear and a twinkling returns to his eyes. He flashes his grin, and becomes the character that is winning the hearts of America—the good ole boy.

"I live in a bigger house. I drive a big Mercedes, but I got my Blazer. I bought the Mercedes because I don't like to change cars every year or two years. And I'm gonna keep this thing until everything is dragging on it. My Blazer I'll probably trade eventually. And I've got property and a comfortable home. It's not by Hollywood standards, New York or even Miami standards. But I get very uncomfortable in places like that. Also very lost. I have everything I need and then some. But I deserve it all. I've earned every last bit of it. ■

Seidina Reed Is Determined To Make It On Her Own.

"Oh crud," exclaimed nineteen-year-old Seidina Reed, when she saw that her dog, Muffin, had misbehaved on the rug in her room. "Mama, Muffin has been bad again," she yelled in exasperation through the house to her mother, Prissy.

Seidina Reed lives with her parents and sister, Lottie, on their 47-acre lot located just outside Nashville. Hoping to follow the steps of her father's success story, Seidina has just convinced her father that she wants to enter the entertainment business. "I have always wanted to sing, but dad insisted that I wait until I was eighteen before I really got serious. He wanted me to be old enough to know what I was doing."

So, equipped with a booming, gutsy, throaty voice and a desire that may equal her father's, Seidina is looking for a producer and hoping to record her first album in Los Angeles before the end of the year. "My music won't be rock, but pop," she explained. "It won't be as country as Dad's, he calls it hell-bustin' music."

While her father was raised on the

sounds of Chet Atkins and gospel quartets, Seidina feels more in tune with Olivia Newton-John, Linda Ronstadt and Nicolette Larson.

"I probably wouldn't even be singing if it wasn't for a friend of mine when I was twelve-years-old," she confessed. "But she dared me to sing in a talent show and even though I was scared to death, I was too bullheaded to back down."

Like her father, Seidina didn't finish high school. "I don't regret at all quitting," she said with a touch of adamation. "I haven't missed it one bit. I felt like an oddball, a wierdo in high school. I attended a private school from the seventh through the ninth grade and then because of the grueling schedule the school required, my parents transferred me to a public school. Because of who I was and because I had attended a private school, everybody avoided me."

Unlike her father, Seidina recently converted to Mormonism and as a part of the religion's strict codes, had to give up her twelve-pepsi-a-day habit. "It was one of the toughest things I ever had to

do. I loved those Pepsis."

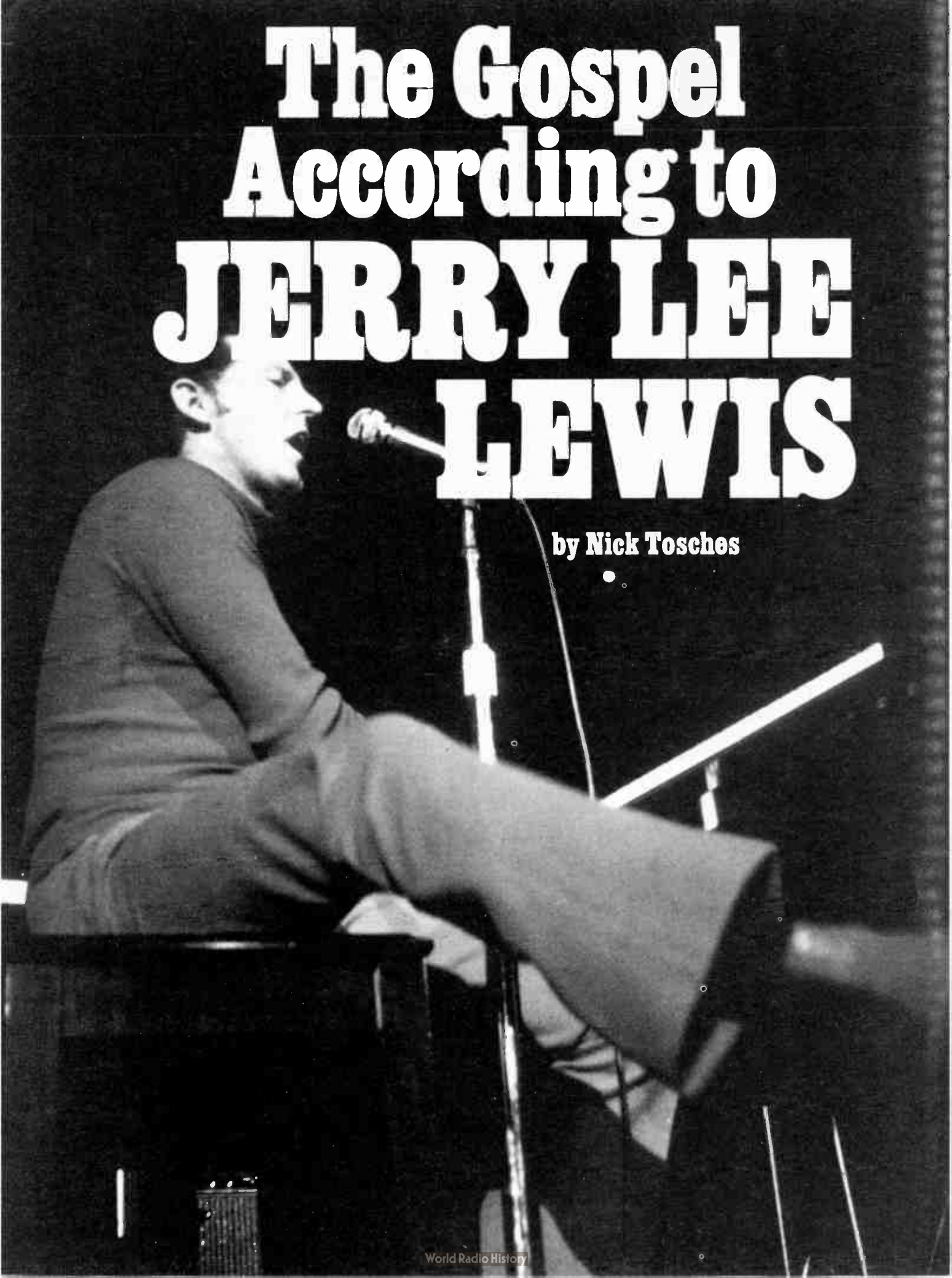
Seidina's room is located on one side of the Reed home so that she has complete privacy. She has already begun writing her own music and passes many of her evenings propped plucking at her piano keys. Her walls are covered with photos of her and her dad and of her meeting celebrities. Referred to as "Pookie" by her dad, Seidina has appeared on numerous occasions with her father and even captured a cameo role in his upcoming made-for-TV movie, *Concrete Cowboys*.

"People tell me that if I make it, it's because of my father." "That makes me so mad," she added, with her green eyes flashing. "My dad may get a few doors open for me, but I know I'll have to make it on my own."

Until she flies to Los Angeles, Seidina continues to rehearse with a band in her father's office building along with riding her horses, bowling, roller skating and swimming. "I've even taken up tap lessons, it's good for the legs," she added with a familiar grin.



The Gospel According to **JERRY LEE LEWIS**



by Nick Tosches

Dressed like a side-street gambler from the days when chrome was chrome, Jerry Lee Lewis sits in the dressing-room of the Palomino Club, holding loosely in his lap a half-drained quart of Seagram's like the unglowing scepter of an ancient fading kingship.

He looks mean. But not as mean as last night, when he straightened out that chump in the audience with one fast, cruel line; when he threw that swaggering record-company lifer from his dressing-room; when, at night's end, he dared any man present to lift a hand against him. I tried to talk to him last night, but he was in too dark a mood. "What's the weather gonna be like tomorrow in China?" he asked me. I told him I didn't know, didn't care; and he snarled his disgust. "Where do you wanna be buried?" he asked me. "By the ocean," I answered. That was better. He nodded his indulgent approval. And so it went last night. Toward the end, he would talk of nothing but the Bible. At the end, he would talk of nothing at all.

But, yes, tonight the Killer is in a better mood. He hasn't thrown anyone out of his dressing-room, nor threatened anyone's life, nor cussed anyone too badly. Not yet, anyway. He looks at the tape-recorder which I have set before him the way a man might look at a snake, trying to decide if it's venomous. He takes one of my cigarettes and starts smoking it. I say something:

NT: Yesterday we were talking about the Bible, and you said that your favorite book was Revelation.

JLL: That isn't what I said. I said from Genesis to Revelation. Take it as a whole. It'd be hard to choose a favorite book in the Bible. Lord, there's so many great books. I studied it, studied it all my life. Greatest history book in the world, if you take it word for word, from Genesis to Revelation. All the way. Don't leave nothin' behind. Don't skip over here and skip back over there, take what you want, leave what you want. That ain't the way God intended it to be read.

NT: Haven't you ever run across anything in the Bible that you can't understand?

JLL: You know why you don't understand it? Cuz you're lookin' for an easy way out. Now, if you can show me somethin' in there that'll show me how to get outa this thing without burnin' my ass off in hell, I wanna know where it's at.

You and me, we're gonna burn in hell. We're in trouble. We're sinners, goin' to hell.

NT: I ain't so sure about that. You really think we're goin' to hell?

JLL: Straight as a gourd. I think we've been extended long enough. We've been smiled upon quite a bit. The time is near.

NT: How near, Killer?

JLL: Well, nearer than you think. We don't have the promise of the next breath. We're goin' to hell. Fire and brimstone.

The fire never dies, the burnin' never dies, the fire never quenches for the weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth. Yessir, goin' to hell. The Bible tells us so.

NT: Ain't nobody going to heaven?

JLL: Very few, very few. It's a hard place to get to, son. Can't get there through the Palomino Club, that's for sure. Church can't get you to heaven. Religion can't get you to heaven. Ain't no such thing as religion anyway. The Bible never speaks of religion; it speaks of salvation.

NT: Next week, Jackson Browne and a bunch of other singers are going to perform at an anti-nuclear rally, nearby in San Luis Obispo. How do you feel about people who combine music and politics?

JLL: Bunch of damn idiots.

NT: So you don't figure on playing at any anti-nuke shows in the near future.

JLL: To hell with 'em all! Blow 'em all up! Blow everybody clear to hell! Get it over quick!

Just don't kill no alligators in Louisiana. Leave them alone. I married a few of 'em.

NT: Did you keep the hides?

JLL: They damn near got my hide.

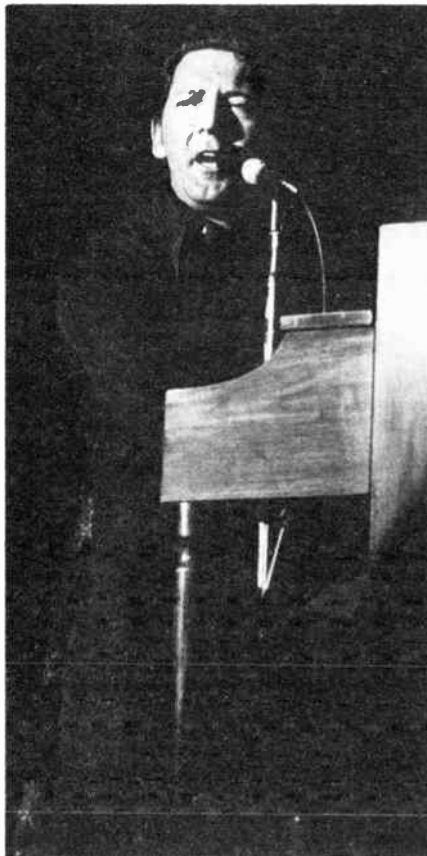
NT: Have you ever thought of producing your own records?

JLL: Every record I ever done. I produced. All them cats ever did was follow me around in the studio, try to keep up with me.

Who would you vote for, me or Linda Ronstadt?

NT: I never voted in my life. Never will.

JLL: Well, son, what if you had to vote?



NT: I wouldn't vote for either of you fools, that's for sure. What could force me to vote?

JLL: Cat with a hide-whip standin' over ya, whuppin' ya on the butt with it.

NT: Hell, I'd vote for him.

JLL: That's sharp. You'd vote for me then.

NT: Anything you say, Killer. Somebody was telling me the other day about your pushing a piano into the ocean.

JLL: You're damn right I did. That was in Charleston, South Carolina, a while back. I pushed it outa the auditorium. I pushed it down the street. I pushed it down the pier. Pushed it right into the ocean.

Don't rightly recall why I did it. The piano musta been no good. I just started pushin' it and it built up steam. Conway Twitty was standin' there starin'. I don't think they ever redeemed that piano. I think Jaws got a hold of it.

NT: You've been married five times now—

JLL: That's my goddam business.

NT: Do you know any more about women now than you did the first time you got married?

JLL: A skirt's a skirt.

NT: Is that knowledge gonna lead to a sixth marriage?

JLL: I don't know, son. Maybe God intends for me to live out my life alone.

NT: Have you ever thought of getting into real acting?

JLL: I don't want no part of it. I hate it. Actors work hard at their job, like I do. But I never did care about actin'. That's somethin' I just never did wanna get into. There's been some great actors, though. Humphrey Bogart, Charles Laughton, Robert Mitchum. I like watchin' them old



movies. I'd hate to take that part of my life away. I like to sit back and watch them suckers, enjoy 'em, knowin' I don't have to be in 'em.

Take them guys, Abbott and Costello. They were sharp, very sharp. Singin', dancin', duckin' under water, talkin', or what; it made no difference. They had it, boy, they truly did.

NT: Do you think you might have missed out on much if you had remained down in Ferriday, Louisiana?

JLL: I really don't know. I never thought about it, Killer. Hand me back my whiskey. Buncha damn drunkards around here.

Y'know, one of them things (*points to the recorder*) can get a man buried. Could get a man killed. A man be sayin' somethin' drinkin', somebody take that tape and use it against him. Get 'im killed. (*Sings:*) I'll be here, son, when you're gone.

Know what I think's your problem? You want your cake and eat it too.

NT: Sure, why not?

JLL: Damn! You just pissin' against the wind. You gonna live, you gonna die. You got a soul, you ain't no animal. And that soul's goin' to heaven or it's goin' to hell. There's just two places to go. On Judgment Day, you and I are gonna have to give account for the deeds that we've done, the sins that we've—

NT: Why are you so obsessed with dyin' and goin' to hell, Jerry?

JLL: I'm a sinner, I know it. Soon you and me are gonna have to reckon with the chilling hands of death.

NT: Why the hell are we going to hell?

JLL: Because Satan has power next to God. We ain't loyal to God, we must be loyal to Satan. Got to be loyal twenty-four hours a day, brother. There ain't no in-between. Temptation is the lowest of sins. Jesus was tempted, but he overcome it. That's why we're sittin' here now.

You are what you are. You shall serve

whoever you served on earth. You can't serve two gods. You love one and hate the other. The Bible says you cannot serve God and Mammon. Can't serve two gods. You'll love one and hate the other.

NT: Do you figure Elvis went to heaven or to hell?

JLL: You're not draggin' me into that one. I'll tell ya, it sure is a shame. Elvis had plenty of time to prepare hisself. I talked to him quite a bit about his soul. (*Starts singing Tumbling Tumbleweeds.*)

Y'know, son, there's only been four of us: Al Jolson, Jimmie Rodgers, Hank Williams, and Jerry Lee Lewis. That's your only goddam four stylists that ever lived. We could write, sing, yodel, dance, make love, or what. Makes no damn difference. The rest of these idiots is either ridin' a damn horse, pickin' a guitar, or shootin' somebody in some stupid damn movie.

NT: What other piano players do you like?

JLL: Chuck Berry. Hell, I can't think of any piano players. I don't know none but myself. (*Sings:*) "Down the road, down the road, down the road apiece. . ."

I remember that one, the piano player who did that one. That was in 1947. Then in '48 he came out with (*sings:*) "Have fryers, broilers, and good old barbecue beef . . . you never seen such a sight, down at the house, the house, the house of blue lights." That's one of my favorites, man, I swear. People don't realize that I have been doin' these songs ever since they were number-ones, 1947, 1948. Since I was a little child, man, growin' up. (*Sings:*) "Down in New Orleans where everything's fine, all them cats are drinkin' that wine."

I got the original record of that, *Drinkin' Wine, Spo-Dee-O-Dee*. My cousin gave it to me many years ago. I played that sucker and played it and played it till I wore the damn thing out. It had it. But it didn't have it like my version had it. A song can be good, but it can't be great till I cut it.

NT: Do you ever get sick of singing

Great Balls of Fire night after night?

JLL: I gotta do it. Them folks would yell for their money back if I didn't. I mean, hell, we sold like thirty-eight, thirty-nine million records on it.

Whole Lotta Shakin' done sold over a hundred million records, if y'can believe that. The guy that wrote it, he's been dead. They got in a big squabble over who wrote it. They don't rightly know who wrote it. The publishin' was all tied up. It went back into court again. Big Mama Thornton did it. She didn't do it like I did it, though. Hell, they oughta give me credit for writin' the damn thing. I rewrote the whole song.

It's funny that me and Elvis should have two big hit records by Big Mama Thornton. That's strange. She's been dead now for many years.

NT: No, she's still alive.

JLL: Hell, no, she's been dead for at least twenty years now, son, that's a fact.

NT: Is it true, Jerry, that your ancestors used to own Monroe, Louisiana?

JLL: That's a fact. Before it was Monroe. The Lewis Plantation. My great-great-grandfather owned it. He could take his fist, hit a horse, knock that horse to his knees. A hell of a man, Old Man Lewis. Then they turned his slaves loose.

Hell, they got a big history, the Lewises. Wild drinkers. Wild gamblers. Sinners, all of 'em.

I tell you, son, I'm a mean, mean man.

NT: It would seem like that at times.

JLL: Man, I could take that there tape-recorder and shove it up your—

NT: Why in hell would you wanna try to do something like that?

JLL: Just to prove I can.

NT: Do you really think you're that mean, Jerry?

JLL: Hell, I don't know. I wouldn't think so. They say I am. They've always called me the Killer. I often wondered why. I think they meant it musically-speakin', not like I'd go around killin' people. Hell, the only thing I ever killed was a Louisiana mosquito. The Killer. Lord, I hate that damn name. ■



Truckstops of America

by Bob Allen

You might be headin' down from Louisville, Kentucky on I-65 on an all-night Florida run, or maybe you're movin' East from Memphis, comin' in from the coast, or maybe you're on the last leg of a turnaround, comin' back from Texas. Either way, you're gonna go past it, because it's right there, near where them three interstates meet, right there, just outside of Nashville, Tennessee, Music City, *U.S. of A.*, the hub of the South. That's right where the Truckstops of America people just got done buildin' their newest (they got about 29 of 'em scattered around the country): 16 acres and \$3.5 million worth of truckstop—the most modern of everything.

I mean, ya can't hardly miss it: they got this 75-foot high neon sign, right there at the James Robertson Parkway Exit on I-265, which you can see from a mile away. But, this one, I'm here t'tell ya, ain't just like any other old truckstop. I mean, bein' where the truckers really are the closest thing they is left today—what with the way they just roam back and forth across the country all the time, livin' on the road, sleepin' in the saddle, always movin' down the highway, which is really the only frontier we got left anymore . . . an' bein' where Nashville, Tennessee is Music City, *U. S. of A.*, it ain't no wonder that they done went a little further on fixin' up this particular truckstop.



To start with, they done put up posters and album covers and *gih*-tars, and saxophones and paintin's of all the country stars all over the walls, so's if you like country music, you'll sure be at home here. They even got *the* largest wooden *gih*-tar in Nashville that is, an eleven-foot-long *gih*-tar-shaped salad bar that's got more different kinds of "rabbit food" on it than I ever even knew there was. Then back in the gift shop, they got a whole big western wear section—cowboy hats, blue jeans, cowboy shirts, boots. . . You can just poke around and try you on a hat for size, and if ya do decide to lay out for a day and see the Opry, or go see the Hall of Fame or Johnny Cash's house, well, you can get yourself duded up right nice for it there.

Yep, the place is a real treat, a real change, 'specially if you been drivin' for eight or ten hours and you done overloaded your nervous system with caffeine and no sleep to the point where all them neon lights and interstate signs are burnin' your eyeballs and startin' to smear together on the dirty windshield, or if ya done ate a whole pack of Roloids, but yo'r stomach is still doin' flip-flops from that greasy chili you had for lunch outside of St. Louis. Yeh, an' maybe you been listenin'

to one of them all-night country stations—maybe heard ole Red Sovine singin' *Teddy Bear*, or ole Johnny Rodriguez singin' about *Ridin' My Thumb To Mexico*, or ole *Cornway Twitty* carryin' on about his tremblin' hands, and how he knows *You Ain't Never Been This Far Before*. . . And then suddenly, you're there son! You pull off into that Truckstop of America, right down there in Nashville, and you walk in an' sit down in the special truckers' V.I.P. section and order you a cup of coffee, and see all them posters and pictures and *gih*-tars, and hear that music, then they ain't no doubt that you have *arrived!*

Seems like there's usually somethin' goin' on. And even if there ain't, you can always just check into the lounge and put your cowboy boots up on one of them soft chairs and take it easy for awhile.

So if y'er just passin' through Nashville on the interstate, it might be worth it just t'stop an' have a cup of coffee, if only just t'see that ole eleven-foot-long, *gih*-tar shaped salad bar. It's the most ridiculous lookin' thing you ever seen. It's the biggest in Nashville, and they says it's the biggest in the *world!* And it durn sure may well be. Because son, I sure ain't never seen none like it! ■

Seems like there's always somethin' goin' on at the new Truckstops of America, on I-265 in Nashville, the newest and most modern truckstop in the country. You can eat at the eleven-foot-long guitar shaped salad bar, grab a quick cup of coffee, fix yer rig, fix yer make-up, shop at the gift shop, or just put yer feet up and relax after a long night's run.





Where There's Laughter There's **JERRY CLOWER**

by **Bob Allen**



“I am convinced that there is only one place where there is no laughter, and that’s in hell. I have made arrangements to miss hell, ‘Praise God,’ I won’t ever have to be anywhere that there ain’t no laughter.”

Jerry Clower

“WHOOOOOOEEEEEEEE!!! WHERE Y’AT, BROTHER ALIEN!”

At 10:00 a.m. on a very hot weekday morning, I hear Jerry Clower’s booming voice echoing down the long corridors of the Mississippi Chemical Corporation, several miles outside Yazoo City, Mississippi. Ambling around the corner at a brisk pace, he takes me in stride and leads me upstairs to where the coffee is served. “YEEEEEE . . . HAWWWW!!! . . .” The halls echo once again, and the slightly startled employees who are having the sleep jarred from their ears, turn in surprise when they hear that patented Clower exhortation—which is something between a hog call, a rebel yell, and the highest expression of gleeful joy that I have ever heard. “I make so much money, yellin’, I do it all the time now!” Clower boasts gently as he squeezes his six-foot, 275-pound frame into one of the small elevators.

There was a time here at Mississippi Chemical, when Clower once supervised a staff of 33 salesmen and handled \$200 million worth of fertilizer sales annually. But this company, which he has since made famous through his numerous references to it, both on stage and on his records, is certainly not the quaint little operation that I imagined it to be; instead, it is a mammoth industrial complex, covering acres of land. Its huge smoke stacks billow forth great clouds of smoke and steam. It employs more than 1600 people, and in a given day, uses more water, electricity and natural gas than any single city in Mississippi. Each day, it produces about 2,000 tons of fertilizer that is quickly loaded into the waiting rail cars and shunted off to various points across the U.S.

From 1954, until 1971, when he “backed into show business,” Clower made his full-time living here: he sold fertilizer, and then later, when they recognized his innate

ability to entertain and influence people through the fine art of laughter, they began sending him out to give talks on the local banquet circuit—to dairymen’s associations, groups of farmers, and at company picnics. Then, lo and behold, some ‘ole boy talked him into making a live recording of one of these talks and pressing it into a record to sell through the mail. A copy of that record came to the attention of MCA Records and they sent a feller from the West Coast down there with a brief case full of money to sign him up. Next thing you know, Jerry Clower started getting calls from folks like the management of the Grand Ole Opry and David Frost—people who wanted to hear Jerry tell his stories, and pay him *a lot* of money for it.

“When I backed into show business in 1971, I was 44 years old,” Clower explains as he shows me into the office he still maintains at Mississippi Chemical. “That *Godly* man you just met out in the hall, Mr. Owen Cooper (the president of Mississippi Chemical) called me to his office and said, ‘Jerry, what is happening to you could be *tremendous* . . . or it could blow over. But we’re willin’ to share you for a while ‘till you see which way you wanta go.’ He never said, ‘Now look Bud, make up yore mind, what’s it gonna be? We in the fertilizer business h’yeh!’ ‘Cause if he’d a said that, I prob’ly woulda’ said, ‘I know I can make a livin’ sellin’ fertilizer, and I got four head a young’uns.’”

And to this day, Clower has never severed his ties with the Mississippi Chemical Company; on the few days a month when he’s home, he’s still a regular here in the office. He still does several shows a year for the company and he stars in their promotional films; and they, in turn, still keep his Blue Cross up to date.

An ex-Mississippi State football player, Clower is a boisterous, powerful-looking man: he’s almost as wide as he is tall.

(“I’m a hawg,” he jokes. “In the last ten years, I’ve lost two thousand pounds, just lose it and put it on again, which is awful! I don’t cuss, I don’t drink, I don’t cheat, I don’t lie, and I just love one woman . . . but bein’ a hawg may be worse than all them other sins put together.”) He favors crimson tuxedos and lizard boots, and wears around his neck, a large gold ornament with diamonds on it that combines the symbols of the Christian cross and the Jewish Star of David. (“It represents the self-centeredness and hillbilly in me,” he is fond of saying.) He imposes, needless to say, a larger-than-life figure, both on and off stage.

Walking past a life-sized “cut-out” cardboard likeness of himself that stands in one corner, he sits restlessly at his desk and launches into a boastful monologue that chronicles all his career achievements. As he talks, he looks me solidly in the eye, gestures bodily, raps his fist against the desk top, and lets fly with one-liners (disarmingly delivered with a stone face that makes it even funnier because you’re never really quite sure if he even caught the joke himself) that have me rolling in my chair, in spite of myself. In a way, he reminds me of one of those fellers whose picture is in the magazine ads, that read, in big bold letters, “LET ME SHOW YOU HOW TO MAKE A MILLION DOLLARS!”

“I’m the best at what I do, of anybody else in the world!” he assures me. “Name an entertainer who is number one in his profession and has pictures to prove it! I’m the most *unorthodox* entertainer they is, and there ain’t but one or two people in the world that even understands what I do.

“Why, one night I’ll be a-talkin’ on the stage of the *world famous* Gah-rand Old Opry, and the next night, I may fly t’Arkansaw, an’ entertain fifty farm chemical salesmen and motivate ‘em t’sell. Then the next night, I may do a package

show with Conway and Loretta in front of 15,000 people . . . for the *same* money. Then the next night, I may fly to Fort Worth, an' do a show for 16,000 teenagers, sponsored by the Texas Baptist Evangelists Association, then I might fly to Charlotte, North Carolina and do a picnic out under the trees for the employees of some company. Then the next night, I might go down to the Rio Grande Valley and entertain 300 cotton farmers . . . and there I am, brother, back with the farmers, ah-goin' through the line, ah-gettin' brisquet and ranch beans and onions and bread, and drinkin' the big glass of ice tea . . . gettin' up and entertainin' farmers, doin' just what I was doin' before I backed into show business, but makin' *show business* money! . . . WHOOOOOO-AAAAAHHHH!!!

"And I ain't never had a valley since I backed into show business," he adds: "I've wrote two best-sellin' books (*Ain't God Good* and *Let The Hammer Down*, both co-written with Gerry Wood). I'm the only artist t'ever get a non-singin' record in the *Billboard* top ten. I've had eight chart albums, I've sold over a million records, and I got me a 'best-of' album comin' out—an *hour* of *Clower*—and it's gonna sell a jillion copies! (*Jerry Clower's Greatest Hits* was released in July.) I been the number one country comedian in all the trade magazines for six years in a row. I do over 200 live shows a year. I do commercials. I co-host my own syndicated TV show, *Nashville On The Road*, one of the best-rated country music shows they is! I've got a syndicated radio show, *Country Crossroads*. Some say it's the largest syndicated radio show in the world! . . . I been on the *Merv Griffith Show* and on the Walter Cronkite *CBS Evenin' News*—75 million people watches that! I been on the *David Frost Show*. David Frost is one of the biggest fans I got in the world. He says I was like a refreshin' new breath of air in show business, that there's very few artists on talk shows that ultimately, you don't have to get around to how much alimony they're payin', and here I am, been married to the same woman forever. And I have a Christian home where love is, and he likes t'talk about them things, because you don't hear it talked about much on television.

"Now I know I'm sittin' here lecturin' you and braggin' to you," he adds. "I love myself see! You can pretty well tell. I don't dislike myself, nossir! Son, the Bible says, 'Love you neighbor as yourself, and that's why I know the Lord wants us to love ourselves.'"

Indeed, in this era of veiled sarcasm, gallows humor, bad puns and punk rock, the earthy witticisms and corn-pone eloquence of Jerry Clower—his tales of coon-hunting, of Marcel Ledbetter and "whuppin' up" beer-joints with a chainsaw, and fightin' with snooty high-society ladies over the rights to watch a football game on

a TV in a hotel lobby—are indeed a breath of fresh air. As is Clower himself. Clinging to the bedrock traditions and sensibilities of his humble, Route 4, Liberty, Mississippi origins and his Baptist upbringing, he still approaches the modern world with a naive sort of righteousness that pokes holes in the foibles of modern sophistication with the penetrating accuracy of a



Jerry stands with a life-sized "cut-out" cardboard amid many posters and awards in his office.

laser beam that causes not pain, but laughter. He is a disarmingly direct man—some would say, overbearing. I once overheard him paternally admonishing a young record company executive who had turned up at an industry party in rumpled clothes and two days' growth of beard: "Boy, if you'd just clean yoh-self up, you'd look so much better!" Another time, Clower overheard Kenny Rogers (with whom he has a passing acquaintance, from all the times they've run into each other going on and off the stage at televised

"I'm the best at what I do, of anybody else in the world . . . I'm the most unorthodox entertainer they is, and there ain't but one or two people in the world that even understands what I do."

awards shows) on the house telephone at Nashville's Spence Manor Hotel, daintily ordering his breakfast eggs "with the white part solid and the yellow part runny," and he couldn't resist cutting in and telling the room-service hostess, "Why don'cha serve 'em to him *raw* and let him *suck* on 'em!"

More yet, he is often recklessly opinionated and outspoken on decidedly touchy subjects. Consider some of his brief policy statements on domestic and foreign affairs: "Ain't no power that can whup us! I seen where the head dog from Red China was over here and he wouldn't but four foot tall. We coulda whupped him with a pine top. . . If Congress had the guts to declare war, we'd hang the traitors on the first day, and whup anybody that messed with us."

Or his brief assessment of the nuclear question: "There was more people killed in President Kennedy's car than there was ever killed in a nuclear plant."

Or his sense of professional business etiquette: "I got no use for people who are lazy, or who are late. If they ain't gonna be on time, then I ain't gonna fool with 'em. They ain't responsible."

Yet, it is exactly this brashness, this impulsiveness (that has underlying it, much more gentleness than it does hostility) this determined naivety and rustic strength of character that makes Clower such an appealing character. (To me, he is like one of those caricatures of the oil-rich Texans who used to turn up on situation comedies a lot during the fifties and sixties: who, when thrown in with the high-society Yankees, clings tenaciously—more yet, ferociously—to his ten-gallon hat, lizard boots, ten-cent cigar and garishly long car.)

Clower's humor is, in fact, a skillful weaving of the fabric of everyday events, laced with sarcasm, colorful recollections from his early days, and from his own Horatio Alger-type success story; all of which is embellished with his great spontaneous sense of humor, and his uncanny sense of comic timing. He confronts an audience like a solid wall of positive energy; he speaks with the booming sonorous, pork-chop-greased confidence of a tent revivalist. His stories are not built around punch lines so much as they are around the humorous inflection and hyperbole with which he tells them. "I don't tell funny *stories*," he explains. "I tell stories *funny*."

And always, they are served up, all punctuated with those famous 'Clower-Power' gestures: pursed lips, closed eyes, clenched fists, dramatic pauses, and of course, that famous, patented paroxysm of glee of his . . . "WHHHHHOOOOO-OEEEEEEEE!!!!!!"

For instance: As we are talking, his secretary at Mississippi Chemical pokes her head in the office and informs Jerry that that very noon, the company is hosting a luncheon for 26 touring county

agents from 24 different states, and it sure would be nice if Jerry could come over and say hello to them and say a few words. So, of course, he walks across the pavillion to the next building to oblige them. As he strides into the crowd, he seems to light up; he's in his element now. He shakes everyone's hand, and as he takes to the front of the room, the cameras start clicking. First he regales the agents with episodes from his own career—how this fellow with the funny hair-do from the record company first come down to Yazoo City to sign him up, and his friend took one look at him and said, "Run him awwwwfff, Jay-reeee! You don't wanta have nothin' t'do with him!..." Then he personalizes his talk to this particular audience:

"The first job I ever had was assistant county agent in Oxford, Mississippi," he tells them. "Now, if you don't think I'm on you-all's side and I don't relate to ya... You all are the *heartbeat* of America! Smalltown, America is where it's at! Y'all see this feller sittin' over here with this beard? (25 pairs of eyes turn to size me up; suddenly, I am that writer from up North

**"I don't tell funny stories,
I tell stories funny."**

... that Yankee carpetbagger with the funny-looking tape recorder...) He's a bigtime writer, who's down here follerin' me around t'do a story. He said, 'Why do you live *here*? Why don't you move to *Hollywood* or *Nashville*?' I just told him, 'Son, I'd rather live in Yazoo City with a broken *back*, than I would in *Hollywood* and be healthy!'"

When he finishes his brief presentation, we pile into his brand-new Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham, and we head down the narrow highway past the swamps and huge, flat expanses of cotton fields, into Yazoo City. "Now y'see, when I went into t'speak t'them fellers, I didn't even know what I was gonna say, but when I left, some of 'em had tears in their eyes." He tells me this quietly, not as a boast, but rather a sort of an awesome commentary on the power of laughter.

The main highway that skirts Yazoo City has been taken over by the same haphazard clutter of K-Marts, Pizza Huts, MacDonalds and Exxon stations that seems to have taken over small towns everywhere across the South; but once off this thoroughfare, you find the real Yazoo City, which is still a post-card pretty community of fresh-mowed lawns, shady streets and quiet, well-kept homes. "If we didn't see Walter Cronkite on television or read in the paper where there's a gas shortage, we wouldn't even know it," Jerry assures me as we drive up a quiet side street. "We got 12,000 people here and three banks with ninety million dollars in 'em. We don't have t'run to no big town to get us no money. I'm four minutes away

from my church, three minutes away from the hospital, a minute and a half away from my family doctor. Small-town America is where it's at! This is my home."

Clower still lives in the same modest, one-story brick house in the same well-manicured middle class neighborhood where he's lived for the past 14 years. His neighbors are insurance salesmen, lumber company managers, retired military men... just people.

"I bought me some property outside of town, and I was gonna build me a great big pretty house, but I changed my mind," he explains as he pulls the Cadillac into the carport. "How could I be more comfor-

table than I am here? Why would I want to sleep in a better place than my bedroom? I'd rather sit in the den right ch'eyh, and me and Mama talk... I read the newspaper while she sews. I don't need to go to no mountains. I'm on a mountain all the time!"

Jerry's wife, Homerline ("pronounced like *gaso-line*"), to whom he's been married for 32 years, is every bit as quiet and reserved as he is loud and boisterous. "Mama's the only girl I ever dated. I ain't never had another sweetheart. We started courtin' and walkin' to and from church when I was 13 years old."

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cakes, black-eyed peas, cornbread, tomatoes and onions, and peach cobbler and ice cream, the family brings each other up to date on household news; they discuss car repairs, the neighbors' health, Jerry's new glasses (which he wears to read), and he playfully chides his two youngest daughters, Sue 17, and Katy 9, for watching soap operas on the big color TV in the living room.

"I don't wan'cha watchin' that nonsense!"

"Oooohhhh Daahhh-deeey!"

He's hardly pushed his plate away when he asks, "What's for supper, Mama?"

His home office, in a wing of the house, out across the patio, is full of what one writer referred to as "coonphernalia": there's pictures of coons in trees, stuffed coons, coon ceramic figures ("This one here's a gift from Billy Carter.") His daughter even has a "coon" bikini, sent as a birthday gift from the folks at Jerry's Nashville agency, Top Billing.

Seated behind his office desk, Jerry seems to lapse into a moment of seriousness as he briefly retraces his early life: born in "the quarters of a sawhill," in 1926, his father abandoned the family when he was still quite young. He grew up in a poor, but colorful rural setting; most of the stories he tells—of coon-hunting and Marcel Ledbetter's epic adventures—are, to some degree, true—lifted straight out of the annals of his childhood. "My mama still lives not a quarter of a mile from where I was born, and not a mile from where John Eubanks treed that coon! Yessir!"

As a youngster, he listened to country comedians like the Duke of Padukah and Lou Childrey on the radio, then later, to the records of Brother Dave Gardener, another influential Southern comedian. Then, during World War II, he served in the Navy, on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific, under Admiral "Bull" Halsey. "I was taught how t'kill people. By my 19th birthday, I had already received three bat-

"I don't cuss, I don't drink, I don't cheat, I don't lie, and I just love one woman . . . But bein' a hawg may be worse than all them other sins put together."

tle stars and a Presidential unit citation."

It was also in the Navy, that he realized for the first time, that there really was a demand for his personal brand of down-home humor. "We'd be aboard ship and we'd be lined up in the chow line, and I'd just be talkin' . . . 'Man, I wish Marcel Ledbetter could see that Japanese ovah yondah, we shot this mornin' . . .' and I'd just be tellin' it. Then in ten minutes, a guy would show up and say, 'Hey rebel, tell these fellers that story you told us,' . . . and



A family man, Jerry and wife Homerline relax outside of their Mississippi home.



Daughter Katy has her work cut out for her.



Jerry's hectic schedule finds him flying often.



His collection of hats from around the country is one of Jerry's favorite hobbies.

it wouldn't be but five minutes, they'd bring another group. I kinda got to bein' a story-teller."

After the Navy, Clower went to Mississippi State University on a football scholarship and earned a degree of agriculture. Also, by this time, he had felt a call to the ministry. "I'd come home from church, feelin' like I coulda' said it better and had us all home to Sunday dinner quicker, and I started thinkin' maybe I should get up and do it . . . The way it turned out, I think I'm in the center of God's will now . . . but I ain't so heavenly minded, that I ain't no earthly good!"

" . . . they ain't nothin' that'll get an individual like hatred. It'll eat your guts out! I know, I been on the hatin' side."

All through his early life, the communion of laughter was a suave for Clower—a way of cultivating human companionship, a proven method of making people not only tolerate his company, but seek it: Since he was a child, Jerry hated being alone. "Even up to when I was a county agent," he admits, "when I use'ta call on dealers and farmers, I'd hurry just so's not to be alone in the car by myself. I loved to be around folks and talk. Some people go fishin' by themselves. I couldn't stand that."

Despite the fame and recognition that Clower has brought to Yazoo City and Route 4, Liberty, by being the consummate country ham, it is often his more serious side that has asserted itself in Mississippi state and local politics. For despite his seeming outward lip-service to conservatism and rural reactionism, he has often been outspokenly liberal on a number of volatile issues, including racial equality. And it has cost him a few old friends along the way. He was once quoted in the Jackson paper as criticizing the public school system for its resistance to integration. As a result, he got over 200 letters, most of them hateful, and most of them unsigned. The reporter who wrote the story, not long after, was fired.

"I was raised a bigot," he recalls. "I remember we'd be on a school bus, and we'd pass a bunch of blacks, walkin' t'school, and we'd giggle, and some of 'em would chuck stuff at 'em. But before we'd get t'school, I'd be wonderin' why some of my black buddies didn't have a schoolbus like we did.

"Then as I got older, I realized that a black family couldn't ride across the state of Mississippi: there was no place for 'em to eat or pee. If they stopped by the side of the road, somebody'd say, 'Why them niggers got a lot of gall, pissin' on the side of the road! They oughta be hung! They oughta be killed!'

"During the week," he adds, "a black church would be burned in the community, and the next Sunday (at the white church) nobody would even mention it from the pulpit. There'd just be silence! It just got to the point where it was somethin' I couldn't live with.

"Son, people talk about tornados and floods and the plague and lice, but they ain't *nothin'* that'll get an individual like hatred. It'll eat your guts out! I know, I been on the hatin' side."

Jerry's two daughters stop in the office to say goodbye. They're off to piano lessons and to take one of the cars to the shop. Soon after, Jerry gets back in his Cadillac and heads back down to the quiet mid-town area. It's the customary "coffee hour" at Miller's Discount Rexall Drugstore. As he parks his car and walks the several blocks along the main street, he seems to know just about everyone he passes, and, in turn everyone—white, black, young and old—seems to know him. He inquires about their children, their jobs, their in-laws . . .

Back in the drugstore's small dining area, he takes a seat with a half dozen or so of his contemporaries: Yazoo City's real estate men, bankers, government workers, accountants, court officials . . . They trade stories and political gossip. Among these men, Jerry is paid no special deference. He's one of the boys—just another coffee-

drinking buddy. After they've had their several cups of coffee (chased with ice water), they all flip quarters several times in an intricate procedure (which I never did figure out) to determine who gets stuck with the \$3.20 tab. Jerry does, and he has to write a check to cover it.

By now, it's late afternoon, and time for me to head back to the Jackson airport. We shake hands and before he walks back to his car, he grips me by the shoulder firmly: "Now listen, you just turn right, up h'yeh and foller that street on out till it turns to Highway 49, and then keep on straight and you'll run into Interstate 55, and it'll take ya on in t'Jackson."

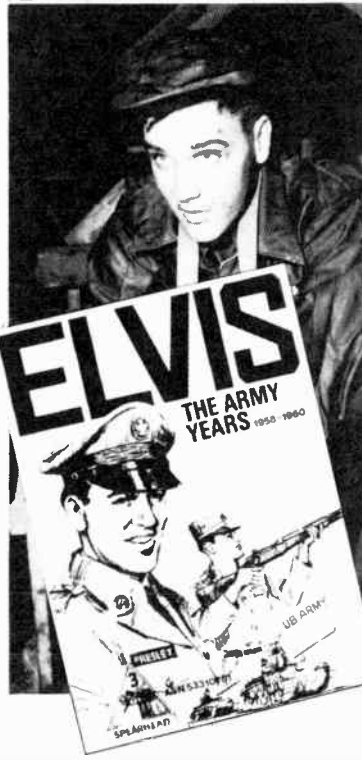
Well, it wasn't the way I had come and I didn't know the roads, and I drove further and further out into the Mississippi flatlands until I figured I must be halfway to New Orleans, and surely going the wrong way. But Jerry's directions were explicit, and though I was tempted to stop and dig out my torn-up road map, or ask another motorist, I kept on driving. And just when that worried nausea of the traveler who thinks he's lost, but keeps on going where he's going anyhow, in the improbable hope against hope that by some quirk, he will end up where he wants to be, I saw the welcome blue of the interstate signs for Jackson.

Sure enough, Jerry Clower hadn't steered me wrong. ■

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Opry Comes

by Mary Jo Kaplan

The four little old ladies stood clutching their Playbills during intermission. "What do you think of country music on Broadway?" they were asked. Grinning slyly, one of them glanced up at the Tanya Tucker poster, shook her grey curls and winked at her 75-year-old companions. "We dig it!"

The group of 14-year-olds waiting by the stage door with their autograph books agreed. So did the couple from New Jersey celebrating their anniversary. And the five businessmen from Ohio out on the town. And the Hell's Angel in complete biking gear. All of them were at the St. James Theatre in the heart of Broadway, across the street from *I Remember Mama*, down the block from *A Chorus Line* and two doors away from the legendary Sardi's restaurant, Broadway's version of Nashville's Tootsie's Orchid Lounge.

They were applauding the debut of **Broadway Opry '79**, the first time country music had ever played the Great White Way. The St. James Theatre, former home of hit musicals like *Oklahoma*, *The King & I* and *Hello, Dolly!*, was now hosting a series of country music performers, a prestigious line-up of more than 45 different acts, with complete cast changes every three days for what was supposed to be a limited 7½ week run.

The roster included: Tanya Tucker, Floyd Cramer, Mickey Newbury, Don Gibson, Waylon Jennings, The Crickets, The Wailors, Conway Twitty, Dottie, Ed Bruce, The Bellamy Brothers, Johnny Rodriguez, Skeeter Davis, Larry Gatlin, Louise Mandrell, R.C. Bannon, Vassar Clements, Earl Scruggs Revue, Faron Young, Freddy Weller, George Jones, Dottie West, Charly McClain, Brenda Lee, Con Hunley, Jacky Ward, Danny Davis & the Nashville Brass, Kitty Wells, Johnny Wright, Bobby Wright, The Tennessee Mountain Boys, Rex Allen, Jr., The Kendalls, Stonewall Jackson, Bobby Bare, Wichita, Johnny Paycheck, Barbara Fairchild, Billy Joe Shaver, Donna Fargo, Nashville Superpickers, Candice Martinelli, Tom T. Hall, Margo Smith, Roger Miller, Zella Lehr, and Big Al Downing.

Under ordinary circumstances, such a project would be a massive undertaking, but what made matters even more difficult was the fact that with the exception of the performers, not one of the people involved in the production knew anything about country music—at least not at the begin-



to Broadway



ning. Executive producer David Fitzpatrick is an entertainment lawyer, rock 'n roll concert promoter and manager of several singing groups including Kool & The Gang and Taste Of Honey. In 1974 he produced the largest indoor rock concert in the world in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The other executive producer, Edward Lynch, Jr., has a Broadway background, and associate producers Spyros Venduras and Joseph D'Alesandro are in the restaurant business. So how did these four end up producing a country show?

Says Fitzpatrick, "I had noticed that there were a lot of 'Black' musicals on Broadway—*Eubie*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Wiz* and so on. But with the possible exception of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, which is a musical comedy, nobody had gone into country music, which is as native to America as Black music. All of a sudden the idea of *Opry* came up, and I thought back to the Grand Ole Opry, the granddaddy of them all, so to speak, the birthplace, to a great extent, of a lot of country music. And we thought of bringing the concept of Opry to New York—but with a new twist. We didn't want to put on a concert at Carnegie Hall or Madison Square Garden. We wanted to direct ourselves toward something new, a stage presentation, with all the trappings that come with Broadway. The lure of Broadway is magic, and we figured that if we could create a new format and a new audience for country music, we had something. We also wanted a Broadway theatre because we needed a space for a locked-in period. You can't lock in Carnegie Hall for 7½ weeks."

The producers, calling themselves Family Affair Enterprises, felt they would not have to look very far for an audience. Although in the past New Yorkers have not been known as big country fans, lately country music clubs like O'Lunney's, the Lone Star Cafe and the Lorelei are thriving. People who love to dance are forsaking the discos for the country bands at City Limits in Greenwich Village. WHN, New York's all-country-music radio station, reaches more than a million and a quarter listeners, and there are more than 80,000 readers of *Country Music Magazine* in the New York/New Jersey area. And then there are what Fitzpatrick calls the "'closet' country fans, people who sit and play it on the radio in their cars, but would never admit to it over a

drink or to a next door neighbor."

So Family Affairs decided to go with a country show, billing it as *Broadway Opry '79, A Little Bit of Country in the Big City*. Nationally syndicated columnist Liz Smith gave it a 2-line mention and was immediately deluged with mail and phone calls wanting details. She reported receiving more response from that one little blurb than any other item in her column's history.

In an interview a few days before *Broadway Opry* opened, Fitzpatrick spoke about the four different audiences he expected. "The first," he explained, "will be the country music freak, who will go anywhere and pay any price to see his star. And who will especially come to Broadway because there is no place in the country right now where you can see Waylon Jennings in a 1,600-seat theatre setting."

"Secondly, we hope to get the foreign visitor, who will never get the chance to visit Nashville or the Ohio State Fair. We also want to attract the traditional Broadway-ite, who attends the theatre regularly."

"And finally, we hope to get the country music fan who won't admit it—but who would in this type of venue be happy to say, 'Oh yeah, I'm going to Broadway tonight.'"

In other words, this show makes liking country music "respectable"?

"That's it."

The producers decided to fly down to Nashville to meet with the management of the Grand Ole Opry, discuss their concept and trade ideas. There wasn't enough time for a collaboration of any sort, but the meetings were a good start and they returned to New York pleased with the Opry's support of the project.

The Niles Siegel Organization was then hired to book the artists, some of whom had played the Grand Ole Opry, some of whom had not—but all of whom were making their Broadway debut.

"Some people refused," reported Niles Siegel, "because they felt the idea was unproven and they were afraid to come into a show with a new concept they didn't understand. They were asking, 'Is New York ready for this, are we ready for this, will we do well or not?'"

Generally, however, the response was positive. Said Fitzpatrick, "Almost every one of the country acts was respectful of

the idea and the desire to put this on Broadway—not only for their own careers, but for the betterment of country music and the country music industry.”

Siegel had only four weeks to book the talent and it was already June. Most of the performers had been signed back in March for summer tours and appearances at state fairs. Dolly Parton was in Japan, Crystal Gayle in China. Some of the biggest names were available, but only for one or two days, not the needed three.

Juggling here, changing there, the schedule was finally put together. “We wanted a total spectrum of talent,” said Fitzpatrick, but at the same time each bill had to have some musical compatibility—not to mention personal compatibility.” A few performers did not want to appear on the same bill as others, and dates and people were shuffled right up to the last minute.

While the talent was being arranged, designers Michael Hotopp and Paul de Pass were hard at work on the set and lights, with only a month in which to design, order materials and build. Depass, a New Yorker, and Hotopp, a West Virginian, epitomize the show’s blend of city and country. But like the producers, their background lay in theatre and pop music, having designed sets and lights for over 15 national tours, a gala ball for Cartier, lighting for the Osmonds’ and fashion designer Bill Blass, and the design of Barry Manilow’s logo. How did they decide on their “Opry” set?

“Creative director Jonas McCord thought up the image ‘A little country in the big city’”, explained de Pass. “What if a group of country people came to New York and set up right in the middle of Central Park with the city as a backdrop? We

interpreted this image visually.”

The set became a semi-circle of tall panels, gauze-fabric scrims representing the city. In front of this stood a little country house that had seen a lot of love and not much repair, with a sagging roof drooping over the porch, a few weeds growing on the front steps, and a fresh-baked apple pie cooling in the window. Slides of skyscrapers were projected onto the panels, which were lit in a rainbow of color effects, changing with the mood of the songs.

With over 45 different acts appearing over the 7½ weeks, it wasn’t easy to come up with a standard lighting plan that would please everybody. Said Hotopp, “We designed 250 lighting cues—including back lighting, silhouette and follow spots. Then we sent all the acts a master plan of the set and lights so they would be familiar with everything before they got here.” Audio design was by Sound Associates.

As opening night drew near there was still unfinished business with the all-powerful unions. Lengthy negotiations took place with Local 802, New York City’s branch of the American Federation of Musicians. Even though all the “Opry” acts carried their own musicians—each one a national member of the AFM—802’s contract with the St. James Theatre, standard for concerts, required 13-15 802 members to be playing at every performance. After several meetings, the number was finally reduced to 7, and these local members became “walkers”—a Broadway term for musicians who are paid to *not* perform. The cost to the producers: approximately \$5,000 a week.

The stagehands’ union, IATSE, had an iron-clad grip on the production, even to the extent that no photographs could be taken except in the dressing rooms, not

even by the producers. The instant a performer’s foot crossed the threshold to the stage, a large “casting call” fee would have to be paid, amounting to almost a week’s salary for everyone. The budget for an 11-man stage crew totalled close to \$5,000 per week, and regulations required the hiring of union ushers, ticket takers, doormen and porters. Aside from certain technical and sound requirements, there were very few contractual demands from the entertainers, although Waylon Jennings’s contract *did* provide for a refrigerator full of Orange Crush in his dressing room.

July 27: Opening Night. Tanya Tucker headlined, joined by Floyd Cramer, Don Gibson and Mickey Newbury. Backstage in their dressing rooms, they discussed their Broadway debut. Joked Cramer, “I’m not intimidated—this will be no different than any other performance, but I do know about the reputation of Broadway and I’m glad to be here.” He predicted New York audiences would be as responsive as those around the rest of the country and Europe. “Music is international, and I play in all languages.

Don Gibson announced he was pleased to see country performers finally getting first class treatment in the United States. “It’s still not up to the level of where it should be,” he complained citing working conditions for country artists as often being inferior to those of other entertainers. “You don’t get treated like a Tony Bennett or somebody like that. Why do they put us country people in such bad places and then book those rock groups who are dirty, filthy and morally bad into some brand new colosseum?”

Does he feel this happens because country artists don’t demand better conditions
(Continued on page 67)



Don Gibson, Tanya Tucker and Floyd Cramer opened the first night on Broadway. Waylon Jennings followed and played to an S.R.O. crowd.



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COUNTRY MUSIC

CHRISTMAS SHOPPER



FOR THESE ITEMS SEE PAGE 50



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ON THE FRONT COVER

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(Photo Not Shown On Cover)

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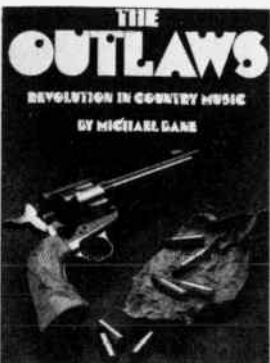


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THE OUTLAWS is the fascinating story of this revolution, from the very early philosophy sessions in Nashville's pinball arcade to the sun-baked mayhem of the Willie Nelson Picnics. But more than anything, it's a behind-the-scenes look at the rebels who bought about the change—Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, Tompall Glaser, Jack Clement, and of course Daid Allan Coe. It's 160 exciting pages, packed with plenty of rare photos.

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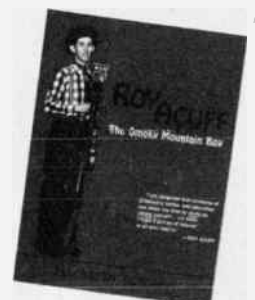
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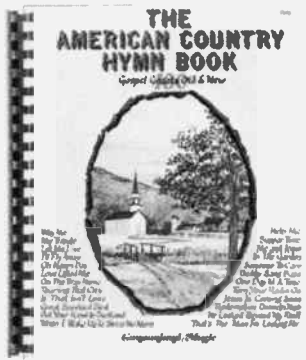
Country music's steadily rising star is at its zenith, and Roy Acuff is its undisputed king. The journey of Acuff from his humble origins as the son of a Baptist preacher to the pinnacle of a fabulous career is traced in this warm-hearted biography by an author who has spent over 20 years as a dedicated Acuff fan and collector. Drawing upon personal interviews with Acuff's friends, family, associates and with the star himself, she creates a living portrait of the "dean" of the Grand Ole Opry. The book is illustrated with 16 pages of rare photos, and includes a 15 page discography of Acuff hits.

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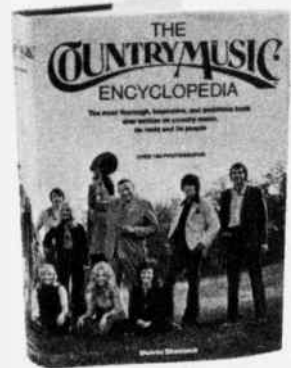


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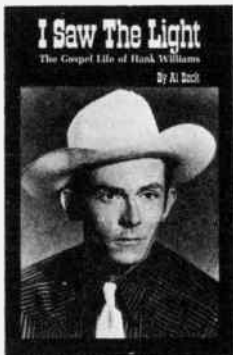
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Here is the revealing picture-filled story of today's 5 super ladies of country music. All from poor backgrounds, now millionaires, all firmly planted in their careers as well as home lives, you will see them here as never before. It's Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, June Carter Cash, Dolly and Tanya, all in one book.



"Singers & Sweethearts" is a candid portrait told on 150 exciting pages with 136 photos. It's the real women behind the images—what excites them and frightens them; what they feel about each other and themselves. It is must reading for every fan.

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OLE OPRY STARS

Here is Country Music Magazine's own photobook of the stars of the Opry—compiled by official WSM photographer Les Leverett. His photo collection is almost as famous as the stars he has photographed, and now he shares the best of his historic collection with us in this eye-popping picture cavalcade of country music stardom. There's Gene Autry, Roy Acuff and Tex Ritter caught together at a rare moment backstage. There's the unlikely duet of Louie Armstrong and Johnny Cash jamming on stage. You'll find a beaming Loretta Lynn relaxing with Mooney and the twins, Porter and Dolly bringing down the house, and much more. So don't wait to order your copy.

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LIMITED EDITION



Printed for the "kings" last concert tour, this rare ELVIS CONCERT PHOTO ALBUM will not be reprinted when the supply runs out. It includes 62 color photos, an elegant gold gift box, and an official Certificate of Authenticity signed by Elvis' father. It's a must for fans and collectors alike.

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It's the complete Elvis book. More than a biography, it covers the "king's" career in depth from the first record to the SRO national tours. You'll find the Elvis story—from hillbilly cat to concert performer, a look at the man behind the scenes. There's a complete listing and breakdown of every concert. There's a breakdown of every trip to the recording studio. There's a complete list of Elvis films and when they were released. There's a complete illustrated discography, including every single, album, special product recording, even 78's—with a photograph of each. With almost 700 black and white photos and 16 pages of color, it is truly the definitive book on Elvis.

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Here is deck number two in the Elvis Playing Card Series. Each card carries a different full color picture of the "king" in action—54 in all. They're a must.

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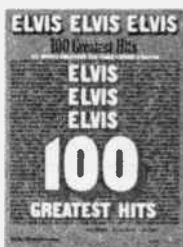


Here is a great new book for those of you who love THOSE BOLD & BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY GIRLS. It's 124 exciting pages with over 100 black and white photos. Those included are Minnie Pearl, Barbara Mandrell, Linda Ronstadt, Anne Murray, Dolly, Tammy, Emmylou, Tanya, Crystal, Loretta and more. There is also a chapter on how the woman and their songs have changed. Finally, there is an oversized pull-out color poster of Dolly Parton.

Item No. B8J ONLY \$6.95

ELVIS SONGBOOK

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



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NEW ELVIS STATIONERY



Here is another memorabilia item we just came across. You get 16 envelopes and 16 sheets of note paper, all with a different Elvis photo.

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ELVIS SECRET CODE

Designed by the "king" himself, the "Taking Care Of Business" pendant was given to only Elvis' family and most trusted friends. Now, you can own this unique pendant mounted on a silver chain. Order now and save.

Item No. B1I Regularly \$29.95 NOW \$24.95



ELVIS BUCKLE



The only belt buckle officially approved by Colonel Parker and the Presley family, it comes handsomely packed in a display case, complete with a certificate of authenticity.

Item No. G8H NOW ONLY \$6.95

ILLUSTRATED ELVIS

Here is the years best-selling Elvis book. From "Heartbreak Hotel" to his triumphant comeback, here is a pictorial guide to the life, times, music, and films of the one and only Elvis. It contains more than 400 photos, many contributed by fans and seen here for the first time. But more than a scrapbook, it's an eye-popping photobiography that traces Elvis' entire life. Don't miss it!



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8 TK No. T6U
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GOLDEN GREASE — 20 Original Hits On One Album: Freddy Cannon: Way Down Yonder In New Orleans/Coasters: Charlie Brown/Duane Eddy: Rebel Rouser/4 Preps: Big Man/Lloyd Price: Stagger Lee/B. Knox: Party Doll/H. Ballard: Let's Go, Let's Go, Let's Go/J. Clanton: Just A Dream/The Diamonds: Little Darlin'/Bobby Day: Rockin' Robin.
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MARTY ROBBINS GOLD — 20 Original Hits On One Album: El Paso/Singling The Blues/My Woman, My Woman, My Wife/Big Iron/It's A Sin/Hanging Tree/Just Married/Ballad Of The Alamo/Devil Woman/Tonight Carmen/Don't Worry Saddle Tramp/You Gave Me A Mountain/Story Of My Life/She Was Only Seventeen (He Was One Year More), and more!
LP No. R6X
8 TK No. T6Y
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GOLDEN DREAM OF HANK WILLIAMS—2-Record Set: Cold, Cold Heart/Settin' The Woods On Fire/Take These Chains From My Heart/Half As Much/Wedding Bells/Hey, Good Lookin'/My Buckets Got A Hole In It/You Win Again/I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry/I Saw The Light/Lovesick Blues/I Can't Help It/Mansion Of The Hill/There'll Be No Teardrops Tonight/Your Cheating Heart/Jambalaya. 22 in all!
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LP No. R1R
8 TK No. T1S
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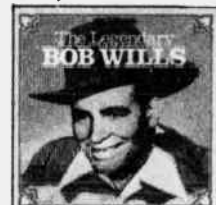
ELVIS PRESLEY DOUBLE DYNAMITE — 2-Record Set: Burning Love/I'll Be There/Fools Fall In Love/Old Shep/Yellow Rose Of Texas/Follow That Dream/You'll Never Walk Alone/Flaming Star/Mama/Rubberneckin'/U.S. Male/Frankie And Johnny/Easy Come, Easy Go/If You Think I Need You/Separate Ways/Peace In The Valley/Big Boss Man/It's A Matter Of Time, and more!
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GEORGE & TAMMY — 20 Classics On One Album: George Jones: Once You've Had The Best; Grand Tour; Her Name Is; I'm All She's Got; What My Woman Can't Do; The Door/Tammy Wynette: Bedtime Story; Reach Out Your Hand; D-I-V-O-R-C-E; Stand By Your Man; Woman To Woman/George & Tammy: We Loved It Away; The Ceremony; We're Not The Jet Set; Golden Ring, and much more!
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8 TK No. T1Y
LP-\$6.98/8 TK-\$8.98



ERNEST TUBB: THE LEGEND AND THE LEGACY — 2-Record Set: Ernest performing with Willie, Waylon, Loretta, Merle and the other top country names ... Featuring: Waltz Across Texas/Answer The Phone/Journey's End/Walkin' The Floor Over You/Set Up Two Glasses/Philippino Baby/It's Been So Long, Darling/Jimmy Rodgers Last Blue Yodel/Blue Eyed Elaine/You Nearly Lose Your Mind, 20 in all!
LP No. R7B
8 TK No. T7C
LP-\$9.98/8 TK-\$11.98



BEST OF BOB WILLS 2-Record Set: Spanish Two Step/White Heat/Mexicali Rose/Corrina, Corrina/My Confession/Steel Guitar Rag/Stay A Little Longer/That's What I Like About The South/Texas Playboy Rag/Let's Ride With Bob/Faded Love/Time Changes Everything/Big Beaver/Take Me To Tulsa/New San Antonio Rose/I Knew The Moment I Lost You/Silver Bells/Roly Polv. and much more!
LP No. R7D
8 TK No. T7E
LP-\$6.98/8 TK \$7.98



CHARLY PRIDE FAVORITES — 2-Record Set: Kiss An Angel Good Morning/A Shoulder To Cry On/Let The Chips Fall/Crystal Chandeliers/Tennessee Girl/The Easy Part's Over/I'd Rather Love You/I'm So Afraid Of Losing You Again/Just Between You And Me/She's Too Good To Be True/Lovesick Blues/Green, Green Grass Of Home/The Snakes Crawl At Night, much more!
LP No. R7F
8 TK No. T7G
LP-\$7.98/8 TK-\$8.98



RONNIE MILSAP—2-Record Set: Never Had It So Good/Denver/Mr. Mailman/I Can't Tell A Lie/Need To Belong/If You Go Away/Maybe/1000 Miles From Nowhere/I Just Don't Maybe/Kentucky Woman/What's Your Game/Traces/Love Will Never Pass Us By/House Of The Rising Sun, plus many more hits!
LP No. R7H
8 TK No. T7I
LP-\$6.98/8 TK-\$8.98



VELVET MEMORIES OF JIM REEVES—2-Record Set: He'll Have To Go/Angels Don't Lie/I Missed Me/I'm Gonna Change Everything/Am I Losing You/Welcome To My World/Blue Boy/Four Walls/This Is It/Losing You/Is This Me/Distant Drums/Billy Bayou, more!
LP No. R7J
8 TK No. T7K
LP-\$7.98/8 TK-\$8.98



GENE AUTRY'S 50th ANNIVERSARY — 2-Record Set: Be Honest With Me/Last Round-up/Don't Fence Me In/From The Rim Of The Canyon/Harbor Lights/Cool Water/We'll Rest At The End Of The Trail/The Blue Canadian Rockies/Riders In The Sky/Home On The Range/Back In The Saddle Again, many more!
LP No. R7L
8 TK No. T7M
LP-\$7.98/8 TK-\$8.98



GENE AUTRY—2-Record Set: A Gay Ranchero/Back In The Saddle Again/Down In The Valley/El Rancho Grande/Mexicali Rose/Vaya Con Dios/Missouri Waltz/In A Little Spanish Town/Don't Bite The Hand That Feeds You/When Day Is Done/It Happened In Old Monterey/A Boy From Texas, A Girl From Tennessee, more!
LP No. R7N
8 TK No. T7O
LP-\$7.98/8 TK-\$8.98



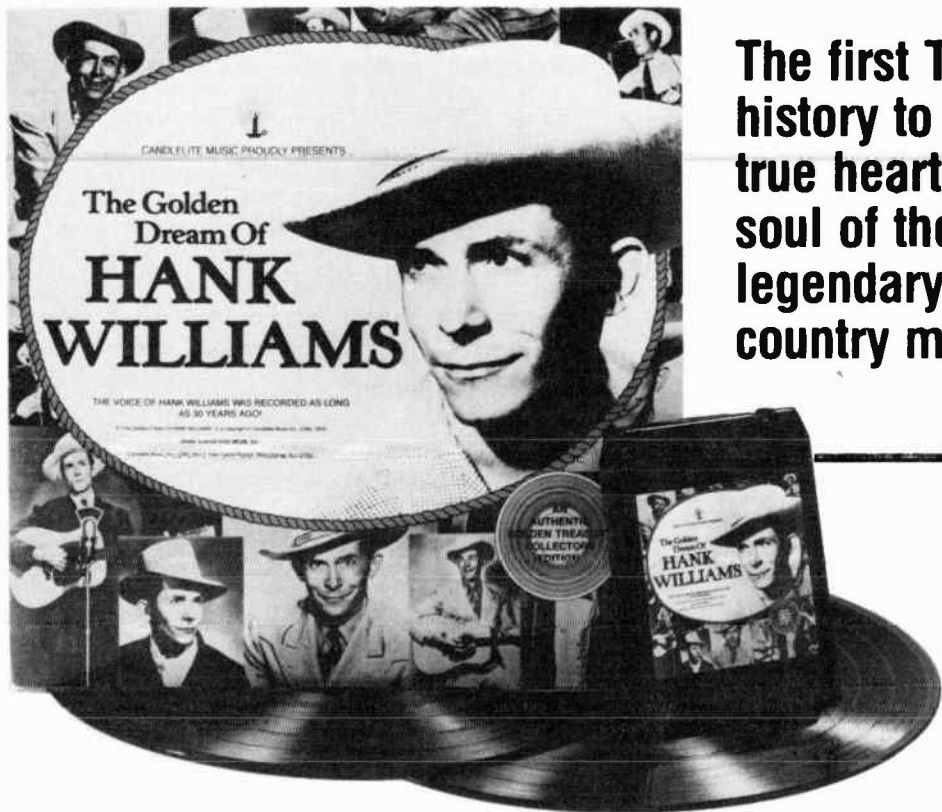
LORETTA AND CONWAY SING GREAT COUNTRY HITS: Conway...Today I Started Loving You Again/Back Street Affair/Green, Green Grass Of Home/She Needs Someone To Hold Her; Loretta...Rated X/Don't Come Home A Drunkin'/Delta Dawn/Woman Of The World; Both...After The Fire Is Gone, more!
LP No. R7P
8 TK No. T7Q
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THE PATSY CLINE STORY — 2-Record Set: South Of The Border/Walking After Midnight/I Fall To Pieces/Heartaches/San Antonio Rose/Heartaches/A Poor Man's Rose/Your Cheatin' Heart/Crazy/I Love You So Much It Hurts/The Wayward Wind, and more!
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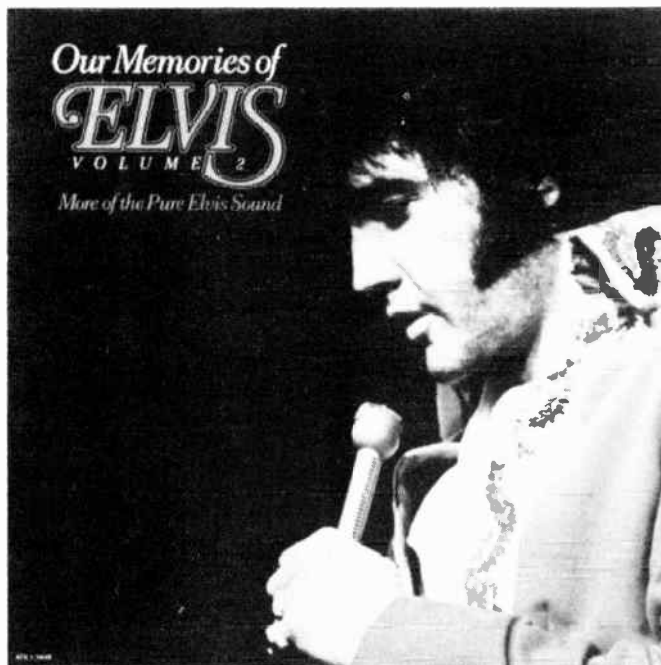
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Record Reviews



Elvis Presley Our Memories of Elvis, Volume 2

RCA AQL1-3448

Elvis Presley had one of the greatest voices anyone has ever been blessed with. Two things were often wrong with his records, though. He was given a lot of mediocre songs to sing, which he accepted. And the arrangements, in the recent years, were almost always "sweetened" so that you could hardly hear Elvis through the corn syrup glaze.

This is the second volume in the series, *Our Memories of Elvis*, and is subtitled "More of the Pure Elvis Sound." You may wonder what the pure Elvis sound is. Just Elvis and his own acoustic guitar? Elvis a capella in the shower? The back of the record explains, "just Elvis singing as he did in the recording studio—the pure Elvis without the additional accompaniment." Every cut but one has a whole band backing him up, and one cut has backup singers—probably the Sweet

Inspirations—but there is not an unnecessary part on the whole record. Elvis needs sweetening like a perfect steak needs Hamburger Helper.

The only previously unreleased cut here is described as a "complete studio jam session" of Dylan's "Don't think twice, it's all right." There's not even bass and drums here, just a couple guitars and Elvis. The song starts in the middle, goes on for eight a half minutes, and is faded. It is very obviously not complete. You could tell Elvis was doing it purely for fun and relaxation. It goes on and on because he's having too much fun to stop. It's one of the finest, loosest, happiest things I've ever heard in my life. How many times has Elvis done stuff like that in a studio? Must be at least a couple albums worth somewhere. . . .

Also here is a version of "I Can Help" that's maybe better than Billy Swan's, and a powerful stripped down version of "Green green grass of home." It's amazing how the intensity of Elvis' singing increases when

all those extra layers are peeled off. I sure wish all his albums had been produced like this. What a fine tribute it would be if more material like this was released.

There's another nice twist to this story. One cut on this record, *There's a Honky Tonk*

Angel, is hit single at the time I'm writing. Now, a few years ago, that song was a big hit for Conway Twitty, a man who often tried to sound like Elvis, and did it well. Now, here's Elvis doing a good job of being Conway Twitty.

PETER STAMPFEL

Bob Dylan "Slow Train Coming"

CBS FC 36120

Bob Dylan has been flirting with Country Music since the beginning of his career, even before his first big "folk" audience caught up with him. He sang with Johnny Cash both on TV and on records, got into his own brand of Tex-Mex, and went down the gunfighter trail in pursuit of John Wesley Harding. Yet, after nineteen years, his progress is very slow into the realm of total "country acceptance." The reason that the progress is slow is that: he drags his feet all the way down the road.

Slow Train Coming is Dylan's first in-studio lp in over a year and a half, and once he

again he winks and smiles at "Country Music." If this lp were recorded, exactly as is, with anyone else doing the vocals, then it would be a country lp. The instrumentation is basic piano-bass-drums, the female chorus is borrowed from Elvis, and the tone is either very righteous or quasi-religious. Ah, but it's not that simple, for instead of Dylan doing his "Country Bob" voice, he delivers the twang and sassy attitude of his rock recordings. The results are "old" Dylan mixed with the unlikely image of Christian good will. (If this were 1966, Dylan would have a big problem among his followers with this release).

This is a curious album, not a bad album, that must be approached, not jumped into.



BURIED TREASURES

by Rich Kienzle

One spinoff of traditional bluegrass takes the standard instrumentation (fiddle, guitar, banjo, mandolin) into jazz, swing, gypsy and classical music all at once. Mandolinist David Grisman has been responsible for this trend, and even many traditional bluegrass fans have been attracted to it. One Grisman contemporary is guitarist/vocalist Jon Sholle, whose LP, **Catfish For Supper** (Rounder 3026), mixes Bob Willis tunes (*Mississippi Gal*, *You're There* and *Sweet Kind of Love*) with Latin (*Bully Samba*) early jazz guitar (*Oahu Blues*), Hawaiian swing (*Peach Tree Shuffle*, a tune from 1940), hardcore bluegrass (*I Don't Love Nobody*) and the unique music of Grisman (*EBA*, *Triangle*). Sholle, though a shaky vocalist, is a facile flatpicker who can conjure up everyone from Doc Watson to Django Reinhardt, and his fellow musicians, including Grisman, David Bromberg, Darol Anger, and Tony Rice, work beautifully with him.

Another fine mandolinist/fiddler who's straddling the fence between bluegrass and country-rock is Ricky Skaggs, who gives Emmylou Harris's music more authenticity as a member of her Hot Band. His most recent solo LP, **Sweet Temptation** (Sugar Hill SH 3076) runs the gamut from the traditional, such as *Little Cabin Home On The Hill*, a Bill Monroe standard, to Merle Travis's oldie *Sweet Temptation* and A.P. Carter's *I Know What It Means To Be Lonesome* as well as several tunes by his old mentor, Carter Stanley of the Stanley Brothers. The backing ranges from bluegrass, to western to twin-fiddle Honkytonk, with Emmylou assisting on vocals along with Buddy Emmons and Hot Band stalwarts Emory Gordy and Albert Lee. Skaggs, a peerless country singer, has one of the finest small-label recordings.

RCA's **Legendary Performer** Series recently reissued some of the earliest recordings by **The Original Carter Family** (CPM1 2763). These are the

earliest of the scores of records the Carters made, beginning in 1927, when they did their first session for Victor producer Ralph Peer in Bristol, Tennessee. Such country standards as *Wildwood Flower* and *Engine One Forty-Three* are here in their original forms, and the Carter story is told in an authoritative photo book penned by Mother Maybelle's son-in-law: Johnny Cash.

Going back to the roots of what's known today as "country-rock" can be rough. But an important reissue documenting one of the earliest bands of this type is **Nashville West** (Sierra SRS 8701). Formed in Los Angeles in 1966, the band included the late bluegrass-rock guitar pioneer Clarence White, drummer Gene Parsons, fiddler Bib Gilbeau and bassist Wayne Moore. The record, cut as a tape in the Nashville West club near L.A. in 1967, features rocking versions of *I Washed My Hands In Muddy Water*, *Nashville West*, *Love of The Common People* and 11 more.

Grandpa Jones has more musicians in his family than wife Ramona, as **The Grandpa Jones Family Album** (CMH 9015) proves. His son Mark and daughters Alisa, Marsha and Eloise work together and separately on 25 traditional tunes which recall a period of country music that's long gone.

Waylon collectors look high and low for his first LP on Bat and his early A & M singles. But now 12 A & M sides are available on **Rave On** (Bear Family 15029-\$8.98). Cut in the early 60s, they show a far different Waylon, occasionally with a less gutty voice.

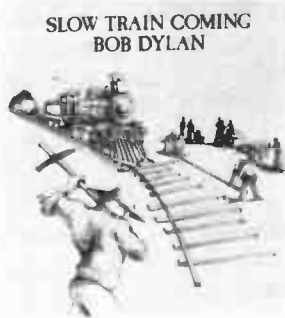
A rare demo by Johnny Cash from the Sun era pairs his early composition *Rock & Roll Ruby* (sung alone with guitar) and *You're My Baby*. Neither are widely available elsewhere; here they're on a 45 (Cash 1955-S 4.00). Both the Waylon and Cash records are available from Down Home Music, 10345 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530 for the prices listed plus \$2.00 postage. The rest are available in most larger record stores.

The nine songs in this album represent Dylan's view of Christianity, so without references directly to God, this sure ain't *How Great Thou Art*. In *Do Unto Others*, Dylan shines while not over selling the point, and this song would be a very tasty recording for Waylon Jennings to get into. In *When You Gonna Wake Up* Dylan seems caught in 1968 society, and still seems unable to recognize any wars that are going on. *Precious Angel* and *I Believe In You* sound like Country hits, particularly if they were modified slightly. The surprise highlight, for me, is the grammar school sounding *Man Gave Names To All The Animals*, which is likable despite its un-Dylan rhymes. ("... it wasn't too small and it wasn't too big... think I'll call it a pig..."). Other cuts, less satisfying, use bits and pieces of disco, Stones, Elvis, Wilson Pickett, and Memphis-soul.

If your personal idea of Bob Dylan is from his best known country material, *Lay, Lady, Lay*, *I'll Be Your Baby*

Tonight, or even *Girl From The North Country*, then **Slow Train Coming** has not yet arrived at your station. It is country, but sung in Dylan's '60s-rock voice. If you like "Folk-Rock Bob," and also like moderate religious expressions, you'll grow to be very fond of this record. Bob Dylan used to preach at the world with *our* voice, now he preaches *at us* with *his* voice. The result is an enjoyable album that leaves me with a strong yearning for his next one, for Dylan seems to be on a roll again, and the next one may be tremendous.

ROBERT WELLS, JR.



of the songs in here are laced with islands and ocean.

In the case of what may be the best song on the album—the one that put the biggest lump in my throat—the ocean is the Pacific. The song is *Sending the Old Man Home*, and a World War II hero is being sent home in his "civies." James Taylor puts a perfect harmony on this instant classic.

James and his two brothers, Alex and Hugh, also help out on background vocals under the name of "Embarrassing Stains" on *Treat Her Like a Lady*. The Her in this case is the sea.

Jimmy wrote six of the songs himself, and collaborated on the other four with seven other songwriters. Makes him a pretty avid collaborator.

Fins and *Boat Drinks* are obvious singles, and there are other less obvious ones. Even the closest thing to filler here, *Chanson Pour Les Petits Enfants*, a kid's song, helps to balance the very grown up nature of the rest of the songs.

Here's a classic. We need it.

PETER STAMPFEL



Jimmy Buffett

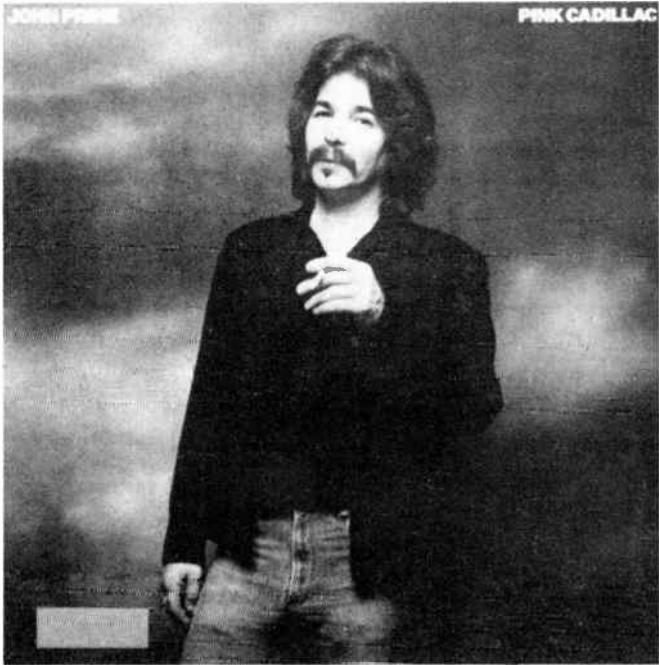
Volcano

MCA-5102

It's too bad most country records except "Best Of's" contain so much filler—songs you've heard before done better, or second rate copies of second rate songs—but there are exceptions. Here's one.

Jimmy Buffett is exceptional in a lot of ways. He seems to have more fun than many country artists. At least he seems to party on boats in the Caribbean more. He even recorded this album in Montserrat, British West Indies, and there's a calypso style song on it. Most

Record Reviews



John Prine Pink Cadillac

Asylum 6E-222

Nearly three years ago in these pages I predicted a rockabilly revival, and it has finally arrived. American record stores are selling British anthologies of the stuff, some of it 20-25 years old, to kids barely out of high school. *Rolling Stone* recently featured British adolescents who've forsaken punkrock tatters for string ties and pink sport coats. It was inevitable, after Carl Perkins' successful comeback, that a more contemporary performer would get the bopcat bug, but *John Prine???*

I had my doubts, too. But Prine makes it work. He didn't grease his hair ala Robert Gordon, nor did he dress in gold lame or wiggle his hips. Instead, he fused his own music with modern rockabilly, not unlike Joe Ely and Billy Swan did. And he enlisted Knox and Jerry Phillips, offspring of the legendary Sam Phillips, to produce the record in Memphis. He got a tight four-piece group, picked strong material and spent 500

hours recording, and inspired Sam Phillips to do his first record producing work in twenty years in the process.

His originals retain their individualistic outlook, from the drunken ambience of *Chinatown*, *Automobile*, a paean to owning one sung to a *Mystery Train* beat, to the gospel-tinged tragedy of *Down By The Side of The Road*, the stomping, surrealistic *Saigon* and *How Lucky* (the latter two produced by Sam Phillips). He also tackles a churning version of Billy Lee Riley's *No Name Girl*, assisted by Riley on harp and vocals, a beautifully simple version of *This Cold War With You*, Floyd Tillman's Forties classic, *Baby, Let's Play House*, from Elvis's Sun days (but not the only version recorded since then), and remakes *Ubangi Stomp*, Warren Smith's 1956 Sun rockabilly hit.

It's still a bit incongruous, a Prine album you can dance to. But *Pink Cadillac* is just that, right down to the slapback echo. Take the advice on the inner sleeve: play it *loud!*

RICH KIENZLE

Faron Young Chapter Two

MCA-3092

This album has three strengths: The excellent voice of Faron Young, which sounds as good today as it did in the early 1950's when I first heard it; first-rate material—not a clinker on the whole disc; and a fine production job by Eddie Kilroy.

Faron, with his years of experience, knows how to get the best from his already fine voice. He paces the lyrics smoothly, adding an accent here, an inflection there, while remaining very much in touch with the sentiment being expressed by the lyrics. Nowhere does he break the song's continuity with an inappropriate pause or gimmick.

Speaking of gimmicks, they are notable on this disc for their absence—almost a rare situation these days in the post-Parton race for the pop charts. Somehow, Eddie Kilroy's production sounds pop without losing the country essence which a lot of people still like, despite Nashville's seeming determination to stamp it out. The pop touch is used only to the extent that it is musically valid—no crescendos, no agonized reaching for the high

notes to sound like Barry Manilow, no hyped-up super-sophisticated instrumentation, no heavy orchestration, and no overdone background vocals. In short, a helluva good job showing fine taste.

Which brings us to the material. There may not be a super-selling gorilla on this disc, but I liked every cut. Especially welcome was a re-do of one of Faron's oldies, *I Miss You Already*. It's about the agony felt by a cheater who is about to lose the one he cheated on. Also particularly good is *Second Hand Emotion*, a sort-of "thank you" to his lover for being convincingly affectionate despite the fact that she has a preferred lover somewhere else. This song, plus *Single Again* and *Maybe I'll Be Sorry In The Morning* contain the heaviest pop content on the disc, with the possible exception of *The Great Chicago Fire*, which has a rather percussive background.

In short, I'd call this an exceptionally good disc with appeal for fans of country-pop as well as for fans of traditional country. It could hold it's own on any of three charts—country, pop and easy listening. Faron, 'tis a grand thing you've done.

ART MAHER



Record Reviews



Barbara Mandrell
Just for the Record
MCA-3165

Barbara Mandrell typifies the come from behind superstar who finally made it because she tried just a little harder than the rest. Like she said recently in a radio interview, "If there are two shows in town, and the fans can only afford to come to one, I want 'em to come to mine." Realizing that this new album would be sitting next to somebody else's on the shelf, she and Tom Collins tried to make it just a little better than some of the others coming out of Nashville.

Good use has been made of the *Sleeping Single* songwriting team of Kye Fleming and Dennis Morgan, along with Geof Morgan, composer of the hit, *Love is Thin Ice*. These folks have given Barbara freedom of musical direction, while keep-

ing the lyrics country. (MCA spelled out their names in full, a credit that songwriters deserve.)

This album highlights all of the nuances of Barbara's current style. *Years* is perhaps her warmest effort to date on a sensitive ballad. It stands out also for its perfect arrangement—the quiet acoustic guitar intro, the softness of the vocals, the sadness in the steel guitar and harmonica, and the delicate finale.

My Love Can Do No Wrong and *It Can Wait* follow Barbara's pattern of R&B structured material, right down to the tones of the celesta, a Detroit flavored keyboard instrument. Even more effective are the low down blues guitar licks on *Selfish*, a number which could be classified as torchy blues—something new for Barbara.

The only bland song on the album, *Love Takes a Long Time to Die*, is far overshadowed by Barbara's excellent treatment of *Darlin'*, a sure winner should it become a single. And *Is it Love Yet* proves that there is another route to an upbeat pleaser besides nauseous disco. Barbara often pokes fun at herself for being pint-sized. But, musically speaking, it is clear that she is still growing.

BILLOAKEY

Hank Williams, Jr. Family Tradition

Elektra TC-5194

The spectre of Hank Williams' genius has surely tormented Hank Williams, Jr. on many a long, dark, lonely night. The best of Hank Jr.'s songs have dealt head-on with his frustrations and obsessions concerning his Daddy's legacy (*Living Proof*, for one). Private crosses are hard enough to bear, but Hank Jr.'s ghosts howl in full public view. However, in his new song, *Family Tradition*, Hank Jr. finally comes to terms with his heritage and purges old guilts. Instead of "why must I be living proof," he growls "if I'm down in a honky tonk and some old slick tries to give me friction, I say leave me alone I'm just carrying on an old family tradition."

Family Tradition is a great country song, a commodity almost extinct in Nashville these days. It is honest, assertive, emotional and worth the price of the album. And this album is a good, solid work. Only a lack of continuity in the song selection stops *Family Tradition* short of being a great album. It doesn't quite have a consistent flow from beginning to end. For instance, a philosophical song like *We Can*

Work It All Out seems out of place lodged between the thick, smokey *Always Loving You* and the pounding *I Fought The Law*. But this small flaw is probably because three different producers were used on the album.

The strength of *Family Tradition* lies squarely in the power and depth of Hank Jr.'s voice. If Hank has inherited anything from his father's talented genes, it is that extraordinary mournful vocal cry—almost a primitive force. Hank Jr. sings from the heart, and his heart beats in time with the molasses and honey culture of the deep south. Unlike his Daddy, Hank Jr. never moved to Nashville. He lives in Alabama, and his voice reflects all the love, pain, mystery and thinly veiled violence inherent in that region. In *I Got Rights*, Hank sings a tale of personal vengeance—the law failed to do its job, but Hank is duty bound to extract his own brand of justice. A dark song, but a damn good one in its directness and spirit. Next to *Family Tradition*, the best song on this album is *Always Loving You*, written by Steve Young. Like Hank Jr., Young is a son of the South and his songs are powerful, descriptive statements that capture the spirit of the South as well as any written work ever published. In *Always Loving You*, Hank Jr. crawls inside the lyrics and moans his way out. You know Hank means it when he says "I still love to walk down by the old Union Station in the rain."

Hank Jr. has endured more than his share of problems in his life, and over the past few years he has searched every corner for musical identity. But *Family Tradition* indicates Hank is beginning to find some peace for himself. Hank Williams, Jr. is one of our finest talents. If he continues in the direction of *Family Tradition*, expect his next album to be great, not merely excellent.

BOB CAMPBELL

Rosanne Cash Right Or Wrong

Columbia AL 36155

Rosanne Cash has, with little fanfare, made a thoroughly charming debut album produced with taste and discretion by Rodney Crowell.

Ms. Cash possesses a pleasant, occasionally lovely, but not particularly distinctive voice which is well suited for this set of soft rockers and country-pop tunes. Only once does she fail to sound convincing: ironically on Johnny Cash's *Big River*, a rockabilly classic demanding a certain gruff conviction.

Co-star of *Right Or Wrong* (neither, by the way, the song made popular by Bob Wills nor the other of the same title by Wanda Jackson) is Rodney Crowell's production, which is clean and crisp—reminiscent of Emmylou Harris—with the emphasis on the singer and the songs, as it should be. It is not particularly innovative, but it is effective and extremely appealing.

Young Ms. Cash's voice is warm but a bit bland; clearly the talent is there, and she should become increasingly effective as she matures. With luck and with production as sympathetic and graceful as on



this, her debut album, she very likely will have a fine career lying ahead of her.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN

Record Reviews



Charley Pride You're My Jamaica

RCA AHLI-3441

There's nothing as memorable on this disc as some of Charley's biggies like *Kiss An Angel Good Morning*, *Kaw Liga* or *She's Just An Old Love Turned Memory*. But it's all good, solid Charley Pride material sung with his usual polish and expressiveness.

The title cut, done in a slow reggae beat, likens a lover to the island of Jamaica—she's where he wants to be ... an island in a stormy sea ... a heavenly haven ... a paradise. But what the hell. If Ronnie Milsap can have a hit likening someone to Santa Barbara, why can't Pride do likewise with Jamaica?

The titles of most of the remaining cuts are self explanatory: *What Are We Doing Doing This Again*, *Heartbreak Mountain*, *No Relief In Sight*, *Missin' You*, *To Have And To Hold*, *Let Me Have A Chance To Love You (One More Time)*, *I Want You*, and *When The Good Times Outweighed The Bad*. One cut—*Playin' Around* is the kind of multiple cheatin' song that Nashville is going for with increasing frequency. A guy's lover is cheating and seems unlikely to stop. So he threatens to counter-cheat.

This is a well-done middle-of-the-road country album with Charley's top-drawer voice backed up by equally top-drawer production and an A-team of pickers. Manna for Charley's legion of fans.

ART MAHER

Dave & Sugar Stay With Me/ Golden Tears

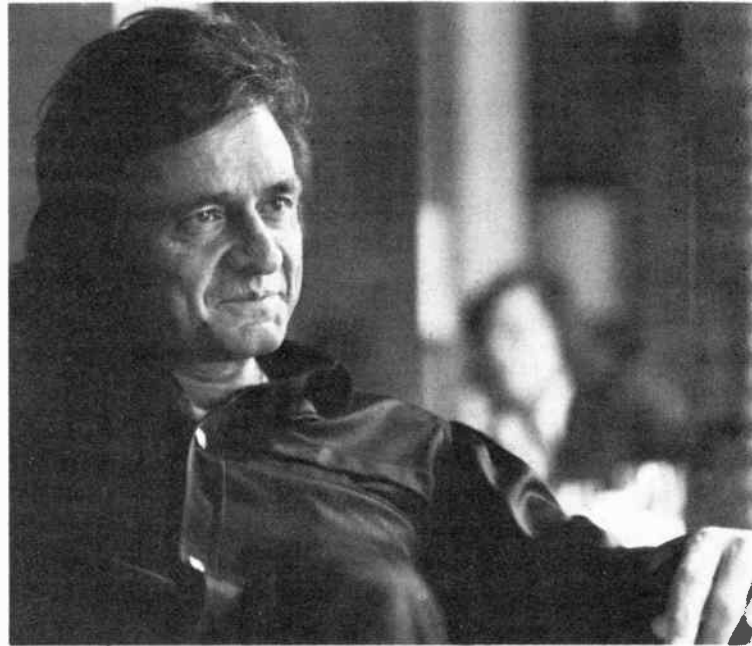
RCA AHLI-3360

By far the strongest cut on this LP is *Golden Tears*. That song is rendered in gospel fashion with a lively, poignant sound. The theme is familiar—poor girl renounces love, marries for wealth, ends up crying golden tears. But the song is a winner and beautifully sung.

The other cuts do not come off as well. None comes off badly, to be sure, and fans of Dave & Sugar may like the whole disc. But in most of the cuts there is a light, but definite, touch of overproduction—not the kind of overproduction you normally get in Nashville these days, but rather the type you find on Broadway or in TV specials. Everything seems to have been slicked up just a little too much, and just a little too much attention was paid to making the album sound commercial. Result: a neat, professional job by the singers, producers and pickers—but a forgettable outcome. You enjoy this kind of music well enough while you hear it, but you don't walk away with the tunes running through your mind.

Weakest cut is the last one on side B, *Remember Me*. Not to be confused with the excellent song of the same name that was a hit in the 40's by T. Texas Tyler and in the 70's by Willie Nelson, this number has little to recommend it, despite a valiant try on the vocals.

ART MAHER



Johnny Cash Silver

CBS JC 36086

The pendulum's swung full circle in both Johnny Cash's personal life and his music. With the latter, he's gone from the spare rough-hewn slapback of the Sun and early Columbia days to the dull, smothering orchestrations of the mid-seventies, and wound up back with the sound that got him started.

In fact, *Silver* projects such a strong sense of *deja vu* that I had to keep reminding myself while listening to it that it wasn't a Sun reissue. The chemistry between Cash, the songs and music hearken back to the days when Sam Phillips and later Don Law, produced him. Brian Ahern, who produced this album, has done a job worthy of either man, proving his uncanny ability to balance the traditional with the contemporary (which makes him the best country producer in America) can revitalize, just as it sustains his star artist (and wife) Emmylou Harris.

The backup is formed around the Tennessee Three, aug-

mented by Jack Clement, Rodney Crowell and Ricky Skaggs. The material compliments Cash's basic sound, taking it beyond boom-chuck while keeping it solidly rooted there. *The L & N Don't Stop Here Anymore* is pure Kentucky Country Blues. Crowell's *Bull Rider* and Billy Joe Shaver's *Lately I Been Leanin' Toward The Blues* both get gut-bucket arrangements with plenty of tongue in cheek humor. *Cocaine Blues*, a longtime Cash favorite, is transformed into acoustic rockabilly. *Muddy Waters*, however, is a bitter, compelling blues about flood destruction with a sense of urgency that matches *Five Feet High And Rising*. *Lonesome To The Bone*, a Cash original, is rooted in the Fifties. *I'll Say It's True*, another original is more autobiography (though George Jones's vocal assistance is toospotty to be called a duet).

Ernest Tubbs learned a long time ago that one can do a lot with a basic sound, and that it needn't be restricting. With Ahern's help, Cash has learned that lesson; *Silver* conveys it beautifully.

RICH KIENZLE

Record Reviews



Marty Robbins All Around Cowboy

Columbia AL 36085

Of all the musical styles in which he has been remarkably conversant, Marty Robbins still seems most at home and most convincing with western music. He has become one of the finest writers and singers in the field, and is currently its foremost exponent, for he has a feel for the romance and the history and the glamor of the old west which makes his interpretation of it compelling and believable.

All Around Cowboy certainly serves as a showcase for both his singing and his writing; eight of the ten songs are Robbins originals, most new (the

superb *San Angelo* dates back to his Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs days), and most quite fine. Only *The Dreamer* betrays ennui; others present his unique, heroic, and often violent vision of the west.

He has included a pleasantly rearranged version of Bob Nolan's classic *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*, and it is interesting to compare Nolan's vision with Robbins'. Robbins, surely the most gifted of recent western composers, has since the days of his *El Paso*, *Running Gun*, and *Big Iron*, plotted his songs like film scripts: they are visual, violent, and dramatic. This is his unique approach, and it works well.

Whether writing or singing about lost loves or gunfights, Marty Robbins is a supreme singer and storyteller. *All American Cowboy* may drag it a spot or two, but on the whole it adds further impressive laurels to Marty Robbins' well deserved reputation as the outstanding cowboy balladeer of our day, and to his long-earned reputation as one of the most versatile performers in country music's history.

DOUGLAS B. GREEN



Kris Kristofferson Shake Hands With The Devil

CBS JZ-36135

On the cover photo, Kris Kristofferson looks rugged, intelligent, handsome and deeply intense. Unfortunately, none of these qualities apply to the music inside the cover. It is disappointing because Kristofferson is blessed with excess talent and he fails to use it here. With the exception of two songs, all the material is pulled from past years: three were written by Kris back in 1970. Nobody can blame Kristofferson for leaving Nashville and heading to Hollywood—acting is as creative as songwriting—but one wonders why Kristofferson

would record some of these.

Shake Hands With The Devil is simply an inferior outtake of songs like *The Taker* and *The Silver Tongued Devil and Me*. *Prove It To You One More Time*, evidently his newest song, is all right but it lacks the spark of originality. Again, it is not that the songs are bad, but the imagery of the lyrics and the music is boring most of the time. And Kristofferson is not helped by producer David Anderle. On most of the cuts, the production is cluttered like some madhatter's kitchen. An exception is *Killer Barracuda* and *Fallen Angel*.

Production is excellent on *Killer Barracuda* because each instrument serves a purpose, and the music completely supports the gliding, dreamy danger of the lyrics.

Kristofferson rarely records other writer's songs, but he includes two here. His choice of *Whisky, Whisky*, a fine song by Tom Ghent, is interesting since Kristofferson has allegedly been off booze for a couple of years. The other tune is *Michoacan*, a soundtrack song from the movie, *Cisco Pike*. Kristofferson also recorded *Come Sundown*, which he wrote in 1970, and *Once More With Feeling*.

It's painful to criticize Kristofferson because when he was devoting all his energies to songwriting back in Nashville in the late 60's and early 70's, he turned out a collection of brilliant country songs—far ahead of their time in originality. But a price has to be paid for everything, and Kristofferson's wealth, superstardom and insulation in Hollywood has cost him, at least temporarily, his ability to write great songs. *It's sad to see we may never be the way we were before.*

*We don't believe in the magic of the music anymore
And everything's older now
and colder and grey.*

*Oh darlin' I believe there's
got to be a better way*

Fallen Angel
BOB CAMPBELL

LOUISE MANDRELL & R.C. BANNON/INSEPARABLE



Louise Mandrell & R.C. Bannon Inseparable

Epic JE 36151

A man who wears himself out traveling from one end of the country to the other could do much worse than R.C. Bannon. He's pictured on the back of this album, stretched out with a smug look on his

face, as his beautiful new bride, Louise Mandrell soothes his brow.

The blissful pair glides through ten songs, spelling "love" backwards and forwards without a discouraging note. Not even one. On the only cheatin' number, which R.C. co-wrote, he says, "We don't need to hurry. Ain't nobody waitin' up for you and me."

Then on *Here We Are*, in the finest tradition of country duets, R.C. begins, "Soft light from the window creeps across the room to lay against your face aglow." And Louise responds, "Even in the dark, I know that both hearts would tell our lips right where to go." On another track R.C. affirms, "Louise, you keep me thirsty for another glass of wine." Shucks, he's got it rough! Give him ten glasses, Louise, one

right after another. And then I'll be right over!

Seriously, there is an interesting point to be made about the title song, *Inseparable*. The message is buried in pop imagery—trees and flowers, instead of arms and lips. It is like the difference between looking at a piece of velvet, and actually touching it. *Here We Are* really has something to say, and it stands out as an honest country ballad.

Buddy Killen should be commended for not overproducing the album. I like the way the beat to *That's All That Matters to Me* has been updated without injury to the melody. In time Louise and R.C. may throw us a sad song. But for now, the combination of their positive spirits conveys a welcome, pleasant feeling.

BILL OAKLEY

voice kept it safely in the country field. The edge on her voice gave even straight pop tunes like *True Love*, a country lilt."

Patsy strived for greater and greater things in her music. "She was one of the greatest interpretive voices in America, pop or country," Owen Bradley adds. She had a country blues sound, born in the country and seasoned by life to sing the blues. Believe me, if she was around today, she would have been the greatest."

In 1962 Patsy Cline was named Star Performer of the Year by the WSM Country Music Festival. "MCA had loads of

grown around her legend. Stories about Patsy still circulate in country music circles, proving that her legend is still very much alive indeed.

It has been said that she was too generous, too vulnerable and afraid she would never live to see thirty. Others say that money was her biggest objective. But it seems that she was a victim of compassion for the needs of everyone but herself. If she wanted a Cadillac, it was for her mother, if she wanted money, it was for some kid down the street.

A good example of her selflessness is the

remembers Patsy: "She taught me a lot of things about show business, like how to get onto a stage, how to get off stage, and how to dress. She even bought me lots of clothes, and if she bought herself an outfit, she'd git me one like it."

The most famous Loretta-Patsy story concerns Patsy's true protective nature of her friends. In Loretta's autobiographical book, *Coal Miner's Daughter* (on which the forthcoming motion picture by the same name is based), she devotes chapter 17 to the story. "It seems there were a lot of girl singers who were trying to get to the top at the same time. When I came along they got jealous and started complaining at the Opry because I got invited back so much. Then they started telephoning and saying go back to the West Coast."

"That's when I met Patsy . . . she was around 27 and she'd known plenty of hard times trying to make it. . . I guess the other girls didn't know about me and Patsy being friends. They called a party at one of their homes to discuss how to stop me from being on the Opry, and they invited Patsy! . . . anyway, inviting Patsy was their mistake. She called me up and told me what the deal was, and said we should both go to that meeting. . . We went in there and they didn't say a word. That ended their plan."

Many singers have covered (re-recorded) songs that Patsy made famous. Patti Page cut a *Poor Man's Roses* in 1961. Connie Smith sang *Back In Baby's Arms* (1968). Charlie Rich did *She Called Me Baby* (1969). *Sweet Dreams*, written by Don Gibson, has been recorded by Troy Seals in 1976, and more recently done by Emmylou Harris. *I Fall To Pieces*, Patsy's masterpiece, was sung by Diana Trask in 1969, and Linda Ronstadt did versions of both *I Fall To Pieces* and *Crazy* in 1977.

But Dick says about Emmylou and Ronstadt. "If you listen to Patsy's records, you know damn well where Linda learned to sing it. And the background is not all that different. People still talk to me all the time about Patsy, and her records, after all these years still have mass appeal. You know, she still draws fan mail."

In fact, Chic Dougherty, head of record sales for MCA says, "Patsy still sells a lot. She's a great item because she sells steady." Her albums have been reprinted many times and these are still available: *Patsy Cline's Showcase*, *Sentimentally Yours*, *A Portrait of Patsy Cline*, *Patsy Cline's Greatest Hits*, *The Patsy Cline Story* (a double album), *Here's Patsy Cline*, and *Country Great*. All albums are on the MCA label.

Perhaps Jimmy Buffett paid the best tribute to Patsy on his *Changes in Attitude*, *Changes in Latitude* LP, on the song, *I Miss You So Badly*—

"I've got a head full of feelin' higher
And an ear full of Patsy Cline
There is no one who can touch her
Hell, I hang on every line" ■



This photo is from a scrapbook Patsy gave to Dottie West shortly before she died. When Dottie's house burned down some years ago, the scrapbook was one of the few items to survive the blaze.

gals who tried to imitate her, I won't mention names, but they were standin' in the wings," says her former husband, "but none of them could touch Patsy."

On Friday, March 3, Patsy Cline, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Cowboy Copas and Randy Hughes (a talent scout long associated with country music) went up to Kansas City to do a benefit to help the widow of long-time friend and disc jockey Jack McCall.

Patsy paid her own traveling expenses and appeared without charge, saying she felt more than adequately paid in the satisfaction she received from contributing her performance to raise money for the family of an old friend.

On the return trip home, March 5, 1963, the plane carrying the Opry stars crashed into the Fatty Bottom Area, near Mule Barn, Tennessee. The wreckage was found three days later, at dawn, after an all-night-long search. At the crash site, Patsy's cigarette lighter, hair brush, and mascara wand were found. Patsy was the youngest aboard, her name the most well known. She was a superstar, and now she was dead at the age of 31.

* * *

She was mourned befitting a queen, and over the years since her death, a cult has

story that she was first asked to be on *The Arthur Godfrey Talent Scout Show* one year before her actual appearance. The first time she auditioned, she was accepted but her band was rejected. Patsy never went to that gig.

Other circulating rumors try to make her sound a lot harder than she was, she drank, she cussed. . . Charlie Dick laughs off these stories. "Back then, the Grand Ole Opry was in the Ryman Auditorium. We'd go on Saturday nights and have a beer or two at Tootsies, but that was the extent of it—Patsy was never a big drinker, an' if she cussed you, well, maybe you needed it, but *hell* and *damn* were the extent of it."

Loretta Lynn and Patsy Cline had a bond that seems to have forged between two of country music's strongest-willed and most down-to-earth women. It began in a naive incident in 1961, soon after Patsy's auto accident. Loretta, then unknown, sang *I Fall To Pieces*, on a midnight Saturday show from Ernest Tubbs' record shop. She dedicated it to Patsy, whom she had never seen. Patsy sent Charlie out to find the girl and after that they became fast friends.

In her book, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, (co-written with George Veese) Loretta

Broadway Opry

(Continued from page 44)

or because box office receipts don't allow for it? "Could be some or all of it, I guess." The promoter has a lot to do with it. He has to pay more money to rent a better place than he would for some barn. Maybe people think country music *should* be played in a barn—I don't know." He smiled. "Maybe this" (gesturing to the stage), "will help change it."

With a budget exceeding a half-million dollars, *Broadway Opry* opened to a small but enthusiastic crowd. More than one reviewer called the series "ambitious", and critic Robert Palmer of the *New York Times* wrote, "There's a world of difference between Tanya Tucker's country rock, Don Gibson's weathered honky tonk, Mickey Newbury's sensitive ballads and Floyd Cramer's glossy piano playing, and one suspects this variety may turn out to be the point of the whole series."

Yet despite satisfied fans and rave notices, tickets were not moving. Frank Scardino, general manager of the St. James, talking like a page in *Variety*, called advance sales "mild" and "soft." Something was wrong.

Because the production had been put together so quickly, many people thought there hadn't been enough publicity and time for word of mouth. Others felt there weren't enough big names involved. M.C. Lee Arnold, one of the most respected voices of country music in the U.S. and a D.J. on WHN, which simulcast the show twice a week, felt that "though the concept was great, the line-ups needed to be stronger. And it's almost too much of a good thing," he said. "Eight performances a week is hard to carry—it would have been better to do *two* shows, Friday and Saturday nights, and pack them in."

But could they pack them in at \$19.00 for an orchestra seat on the weekend? "Country Music at City Slicker Prices" blared a headline in the *New York Post*, and customers were balking at the high tariff. Arnold downplayed the ticket price aspect, believing that "country fans will pay any price to see a superstar, but will pass up even a \$3.00 ticket if they think the bill is weak."

He was right. With Waylon Jennings headlining, it was S.R.O. and scalpers were getting up to \$60.00 a ticket. Worried about the rest of the 7½ weeks, however, having booked artists not as well known to New York audiences, the producers called an emergency meeting and slashed ticket costs, hoping to build attendance and save "Opry '79" and their dream of the series becoming an annual event. Backstage Tanya Tucker was optimistic. "It's really

becoming an 'in' thing to do—listening to country music," she said. "I think it's great that people are opening their ears."

The problem in New York, though, was getting them to open their wallets. Word of the price change didn't get out fast enough. "Opry '79" closed after six performances.


* * * * *

As the old song goes, "There's a broken heart for every light on Broadway"—yet even as workmen were tearing down the set, offers were coming in to produce the show in other areas of the country, and plans were still being confirmed with the American Cancer Society for a special country music benefit in memory of John Wayne. "We're also going to be back again next year," vowed producer Fitzpatrick. Although "Opry '79" was an expensive lesson (at a loss of over \$300,000), Family Affairs says they know now what went wrong and what to do about it. Creative director Jonas McCord promises that "Broadway Opry '80" will have more advertising and promotion, a different price structure and more major headliners on the marquee. "The reviews and the response of the audiences proved that there is a market for country music in New York," he said.

So, if all goes according to plan, next season when folks around Broadway start talking about *Hello, Dolly*, they just might mean Ms. Parton from Nashville. ■

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