In 1940, Broadcast Music Incorporated became the first licensing organization for Country music. We made sure that publishers and writers had their performance royalty rights protected. And, in doing so, BMI has helped make Country part of our nation.
However, we've helped Country artists earn more than just money. For with the aid of 38 foreign performing rights societies, they've also earned international recognition. Which is why most Country writers and publishers license their music through BMI in the first place. You see, when it comes to helping Country writers, we've got everyone beat by a Country mile.
Keeping tabs on Nashville and its spiraling music business is roughly akin to reporting on the inner workings of an explosion in progress. The situation is changing that fast.

What brought Nashville to recording prominence—its laidback and Southern soul and sound—is threatened by a pace of life that would make an executive from New York or Los Angeles feel right at home. Gone for the most part are daylong beer drinking sessions that brought songwriters elbow close to the town's top producers and artists. Gone are the leisurely gatherings of a strata of music business personalities that accidentally accomplished enough to earn international recognition. Gone, but certainly not forgotten, are those good ol' days when songs were sung, and accepted, from the back seats of cars by writers who, more often than not, lived there.

Here are the days of computer-banked surveys, jet swift trips to L.A. and New York to wrap up deals or rushing over to the plush Music Row hostelry, the Spence Manor, to finalize negotiations with the visiting show biz firemen from other cities.

Here is the new breed of Nashville music man: bright, creative, alert, knowledgeable and influential. Here lies the new Nashville—a fast-growing music center combining the creative energies of New York and L.A. with the Southern talent for expressing profound ideas in a simple way.

This, then, is Nashville '76—country music at a critical crossroad.

Country Crossroads. Sounds like a good title for a John Denver song, doesn't it? Instead, it's the ballad of Music City—1976. The last year has been the most unique, dynamic, illustrious and traumatic in Nashville's 30-year history as a record-making, record-breakingropolis.

It was the year that Hank Snow, a country traditionalist, quit as president of the Assn. of Country Entertainers, a tradition.

and Denver as well as the Snows, Acuffs and Tubbs.

Then Wesley Rose, one of Nashville's alltime great music leaders and a diehard traditionalist who once called country radio stations urging them not to play a particular Elvis Presley record (which was an Acuff-Rose song) because he didn't like the trend of country stations playing pop... well, Wes-

The Exploding,
Evolving
Nashville
Scene
By GERRY WOOD

Bill Golden of the Oak Ridge Boys signs autographs (left) at CBS' Fan Fare booth, while at right Plantation star Webb Pierce visits some handicapped children.

(CaContinued on page 65)
Hits for the Coming Season!

REX ALLEN, JR.
Ridin' High
795244
Including his current hit "Teardrops in My Heart" (now 4456) and "Can You Hear Those Pioneers?"

DONNA FARGO.
On the Move
892181
Including "Mr. Doodles" and "I've Loved You All The Way." Look for her new single soon.

EMMYLOU HARRIS.
Elite Hotel
895220
Featuring her new single "Sweet Dreams" plus the hits "One of These Days" and "Together Again."

LARRY VANCE.
King of the Rodeo
895224
Features his debut single "Stunt Man"

RICKY VAUGHAN.
King of the Rodeo
895229
Features his debut single "Stunt Man"

THE MARSHALL TUCKER BAND.
Long Hard Ride
895229
Including the title track single "77412."

MARGO SMITH.
Songbird
895251
Her first Warner Bros. album, featuring "Save Your Kisses for Me." Her new single "Take My Breath Away" (WBS 8291).

RAY STEVENS.
Just for the Record
895274
Includes the hits "You Are So Beautiful" and "Honky Tonk Waltz."

DICK COWGAIN.
Buck Em
895263
His debut Warner Bros., featuring his single "California Okie" (WBS 8-55).

MARGO SMITH.
Songbird
895251
Her first Warner Bros. album, featuring "Save Your Kisses for Me." Her new single "Take My Breath Away" (WBS 8291).

One on the way: DEBI HAWKINS "I'll Be There" (WBS 8299)

This season it's Warner Country.
The information compiled for the top records and artist’s survey is based on the weekly chart positioning and length of time records were on the respective charts from the issue dates of Sept. 6, 1975 through Aug. 28, 1976. Points were assigned to each weekly position, in reverse order for each chart in the categories represented. In addition, the number one position each week was assigned bonus points equal to the total number of positions on its respective chart. In this way all the records of a particular artist, publisher or producer were compiled, combined and placed in total point strength order. Where a record was shared by more than one artist, publisher or producer, and each was known in his or her right, the points were divided equally. Each artist, publisher or producer, however, was given credit for the record. These recaps, as well as the weekly charts, do not reflect actual sales figures. The ratings take into account the number of weeks the disk was on the chart, plus the weekly positions it held during its chart life. Each disk was given points accordingly for its respective chart, and in addition, the number one disk each week was assigned bonus points equal to the total number of positions on its respective charts. These recaps were compiled by the staff of Billboard’s Music Popularity Charts Dept. under the direction of Bill Wardlow and Bob White.

ALBUM OF THE YEAR: “Black Bear Road," C.W. McCall
OVERALL SINGLES OF THE YEAR: Ronnie Milsap
MALE SINGLES ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Ronnie Milsap
FEMALE SINGLES ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Tanya Tucker
SINGLES DUO OR GROUP OF THE YEAR: Dave & Sugar
OVERALL ALBUM ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Willie Nelson
MALE ALBUM ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Willie Nelson
FEMALE ALBUM ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Emmylou Harris
ALBUM DUO OR GROUP OF THE YEAR: Statler Brothers
PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR: Tree, BMI
SINGLES LABEL OF THE YEAR: RCA
ALBUM LABEL OF THE YEAR: RCA
NEW MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Cledus Maggard
NEW FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Joni Lee
NEW DUO OR GROUP OF THE YEAR: Dave & Sugar
NEW LABEL OF THE YEAR: Farr
MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR: Willie Nelson
FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR: Tanya Tucker
VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR: Bill Anderson & Mary Lou Turner
VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR: Statler Brothers
INSTRUMENTAL ACT OF THE YEAR: Bill Black Combo
COMIC OF THE YEAR: Jerry Clower
Jerry Jordan

The following awards represent an editorial staff consensus based in great part on a 12-month analysis of Billboard’s “Hot Country LPs” and “Hot Country Singles” charts:

BILL WILLIAMS MEMORIAL, ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Ronnie Milsap
ARTIST RESURGENCE OF THE YEAR: Red Sovine
SPECIAL BREAKTHROUGH AWARD: Charlie Daniels Band
PIONEER AWARD: CBS Records Country Division (for album pre-pack)
with Al Gallico

"It's top of the charts with country songs all year 'round."

AL GALLICO MUSIC CORPORATION
ALGEE MUSIC CORP.

AL GALLICO, President

65 West 55th St.
New York, N.Y. 10019
(212) 582-1368

6255 Sunset Blvd.
Los Angeles, Ca. 90028
(213) 462-2251

50 Music Square West
Nashville, Tenn. 37203
(615) 327-2773
### Albums

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Artists</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>BLACK BEAR ROAD</td>
<td>C. W. McCall</td>
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<td>THE SOUND IN YOUR MIND</td>
<td>Willie Nelson</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
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<td>REDHEADED STRANGER</td>
<td>Willie Nelson</td>
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<td>WINDSONG</td>
<td>John Denver</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>RHINESTONE COWBOY</td>
<td>Glen Campbell</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
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<td>ELITE HOTEL</td>
<td>Emmylou Harris</td>
<td>Reprise (Warner Brothers)</td>
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<td>ARE YOU READY FOR FREDDY</td>
<td>Freddy Fender</td>
<td>ABC/Dot</td>
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<td>SOMEBODY LOVES YOU</td>
<td>Crystal Gayle</td>
<td>United Artists</td>
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<td>FROM ELVIS PRESLEY BOULEVARD, MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE</td>
<td>Elvis Presley</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Before the Next Teardrop Falls</td>
<td>Freddy Fender</td>
<td>ABC/Dot</td>
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<td>PRISONER IN DISGUISE</td>
<td>Linda Ronstadt</td>
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<td>THE BEST OF THE STATLER BROTHERS</td>
<td>Statler Brothers</td>
<td>Mercury (Phonogram)</td>
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<td>DREAMING MY DREAMS</td>
<td>Waylon Jennings</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>HARMONY</td>
<td>Don Williams</td>
<td>ABC/Dot</td>
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<td>Bonnie Raitt</td>
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<td>IT'S ALL IN THE MOVIES</td>
<td>Merle Haggard</td>
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<td>CLEARLY LOVE</td>
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<td>THIS TIME I'VE HURT HER MORE THAN SHE LOVES ME</td>
<td>Conway Twitty</td>
<td>MCA</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>GILLEY'S GREATEST HITS, VOL. 1</td>
<td>Mickey Gilley</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>WHAT CAN YOU DO TO ME NOW</td>
<td>Willie Nelson</td>
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<td>LOVE IN THE HOT AFTERNOON</td>
<td>Gene Watson</td>
<td>Capitol</td>
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<td>BEST OF DOLLY PARTON</td>
<td>Dolly Parton</td>
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<td>SOMETIMES</td>
<td>Bill Anderson &amp; Mary Lou Turner</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>THE HAPPINESS OF HAVING YOU</td>
<td>Charlie Pride</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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### Singles

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Artists</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>CONVOY</td>
<td>C. W. McCall</td>
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<td>GOOD HEARTED WOMAN</td>
<td>Waylon &amp; Willie</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>THE DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN</td>
<td>Dave &amp; Sugar</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>I'LL GET OVER YOU</td>
<td>Crystal Gayle</td>
<td>United Artists</td>
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<td>ONE PIECE AT A TIME</td>
<td>Johnny Cash</td>
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<td>TEDDY BEAR</td>
<td>Red Sovine</td>
<td>Starday (Gusto)</td>
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<td>STRANGER</td>
<td>Johnny Duncan</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>ROCKY</td>
<td>Dickey Lee</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>EL PASO CITY</td>
<td>Marty Robbins</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
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<td>I'M SORRY</td>
<td>John Denver</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>BROKEN LADY</td>
<td>Larry Gatlin</td>
<td>Monument (Epic/Columbia)</td>
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<td>ALL THESE THINGS</td>
<td>Joe Stampley</td>
<td>ABC/Dot</td>
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<td>ARE YOU SURE HANK DONE IT THIS WAY/BOB WILLS IS STILL THE KING</td>
<td>Waylon Jennings</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>FASTER HORSES</td>
<td>(The Cowboy &amp; The Poet)</td>
<td>Mercury (Phonogram)</td>
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<td>'TIL THE RIVERS ALL RUN DRY</td>
<td>Don Williams</td>
<td>ABC/Dot</td>
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<td>IT'S ALL IN THE MOVIES</td>
<td>Merle Haggard</td>
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<td>DON'T THE GIRLS ALL GET PRETTIER AT CLOSING TIME</td>
<td>Mickey Gilley, Playboy</td>
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<td>DRINKIN' MY BABY (Off My Mind)</td>
<td>Eddie Rabbitt</td>
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<td>SECRET LOVE</td>
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<td>I LIKE BEER</td>
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<td>EASY AS PIE</td>
<td>Billy &quot;Crash&quot;</td>
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<td>LOVE PUT A SONG IN MY HEART</td>
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<td>'TIL I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN</td>
<td>Tammy Wynette</td>
<td>Epic (Columbia)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CLEDUS MAGGARD

would like to thank everyone for

Billboard:
BEST NEW MALE ARTIST, 1976

Record World:
TOP NOVELTY ARTIST, 1976

Management:
WILLIAM A. LESLIE
Greenville, North Carolina

Recording Exclusively For

A product of Phonogram, Inc.

unichappell music inc.
### Male Vocalists
#### Singles

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<td>C. W. McCall, Polydor</td>
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<td>JOEY STAPLEY, Epic (Columbia)</td>
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<td>RAY STEVENS, Warner Brothers</td>
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<td>DON WILLIAMS, ABC/Dot</td>
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#### Albums

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### Female Vocalists
#### Singles

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#### Albums

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TODAY IS CAPITOL COUNTRY.
### Artists Singles

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### Artists Albums

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### Publishers

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<td>25.</td>
<td>BLUE MOON, ASCAP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
congratulate

BILL BLACK'S COMBO featuring Bob Tucker

on their 1976 awards

Country Instrumental Group Of The Year.
BILLBOARD

Country Singles Instrumental Group Of The Year
CASH BOX

Country Singles Instrumental Group Of The Year
RECORD WORLD

“THE WORLD'S GREATEST HONKY TONK BAND”

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JERRY JAYE ...

WELCOME TO HI RECORDS

WITH YOUR NEW LP

“HONKY TONK WOMEN LOVE RED NECK MEN”
### Duos & Groups Singles

<table>
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### Labels Singles

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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>MONUMENT (Epic/Columbia)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>REPRISE (Warner Brothers)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>20th CENTURY</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>POLYDOR</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>HICKORY (MGM)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Duos & Groups Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>ARTIST, Label (Dist. Label)</th>
<th>No. of LP's on Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>STATLER BROTHERS, Mercury (Phonogram)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AMAZING RHYTHM Aces, ABC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LORETTA LYNN &amp; CONWAY TWITTY, MCA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BILL ANDERSON &amp; MARY LOU TURNER, MCA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CHARLIE DANIELS BAND, Epic (Columbia)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MGM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>COLUMBIA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ABC/Dot</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL, Capitol</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>CHET ATKINS &amp; LES PAUL, RCA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>PORTER WAGNER &amp; DOLLY PARTON, RCA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>MARSHALL TUCKER BAND, Capricorn (Warner Brothers)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ERAL SCRUGGS REVUE, Columbia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>DANNY DAVIS &amp; THE NASHVILLE BRASS, RCA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>DR. HOOK, Capitol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>BILL WILLS &amp; HIS TEXAS PLAYBOYS, Columbia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>BUCK OWENS &amp; SUSAN RAYE, Capitol</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>JACK BLANCHARD &amp; MISTY MORGAN, Epic (Columbia)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Labels Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>LABEL (Dist. Label)</th>
<th>No. of LP's on Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>RCA</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>COLUMBIA</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ABC/Dot</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CAPITOL</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>EPIC (Phonogram)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MGM</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>UNITED ARTISTS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>EPIC (Columbia)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>REPRISE (Warner Brothers)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
would like to say

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(which includes all our fans and friends)

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JESSICA JAMES

JERRY JORDAN

CONWAY TWITTY
Intry America

Mary, Progressive

Jerry Clower

New Riders

Leona Williams

Brenda Lee

Little David Wilkins

Ronnre Lenn Sessions

Buckacre

Tanya Tucker

Kenny Starr

Bill Anderson

Ronnie Reno

Joni Lee

Mel Tillis

Sherry Bryce

Joe Fly Band
Representatives of leading Nashville publishing houses report a sustained or increased interest in their country oriented material in 1976.

Tom Williams, general professional manager of Peer Southern, notes that "We’ve had a tremendous amount of success with catalog things this year, via people like Willie Nelson, with Charlie McCoy. We just got a new Billy Swan record." Williams adds that the number of Peer-Southern songs being recorded and the percentage of charted material is "at least the same and probably better" than at this time last year.

Bill Denney, president of Cedarwood Publishing Co., indicates similar interest in his firm’s country catalog. "There are constant recordings of ‘Long Black Veil,’ ‘Detroit City,’

Singer T.G. Sheppard has a reunion with ASCAP's Merlin Littlefield (center left photo) and songwriter Elroy Kahanek (right) on the set of "Pop Goes The Country." The jovial three worked together as RCA promotion men. Hal David gets some hillbilly lessons at Tree International from (left to right) Red Lane, Curley Putman and Buddy Killen, Tree president.

‘Ruby, Don’t Take Your Love to Town’....." he points out, adding "It’s very difficult to get new songs out nowadays. Your market’s highly competitive. You have to have super product, so I don’t know that there’s as many new songs being cut..... The old ones certainly hold their own." Buddy Killen, president of Tree International, likewise attributes the continuing value of the Tree catalog to "standard" writers like Hank Cochran, and to the resurgence of interest this year in veteran writers like Bobby Braddock, who wrote recent singles for George Jones-Tammy Wynette and Bill Anderson. "Hot" new writers such as Sterling Whipple have also generated interest which has spilled over into the pop field.

Still, according to Killen, "I don’t think there are as many country records crossing over into the pop field as there used to be." He speculates that the popularity of disco music this year has created further obstacles to country records which might otherwise go pop.

But, as Bill Denney points out, "superlative country material continues to have a market in other fields. A classic example this year has been the country song ‘Teddy Bear,’ which was recorded by Red Sovine out on Starday Records—a country oriented label, a country artist involved. The writers are accustomed to writing country product. and (Continued on page 66)

NEW YORK—Bob Esposito, Director 51 West 52nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019
CALIFORNIA—Marv Mattis, Vice President, Creative Affairs 6430 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, Calif. 90028
Jerry Clower

from Yazoo City, Mississippi
I

f you had to label the labels in Nashville
this year, the label would be “Optimistic.”

While record companies across the

country are having their ups and
downs, the Nashville situation is

mainly on the up side, thanks to bright
management, creative producers, new marketing
efforts, better liaison with other music cen-
ters such as New York and Los Angeles and,
most important, talented artists who are
showing country music beyond its traditional
boundaries.

There are more labels in Nashville than you
can shake a gold record at. Big ones, small
ones, old ones, new ones, successful ones

and some that are trying to keep the wolves
and IRS away from their doors. Many are
worth a look in determining some of the out-
standing record company success stories of
this record “buy-centennial” year of 1976.

RCA, a Nashville pioneer, scored as Billi-
board’s top single and LP label based on
chart points. When you have vice presidents
like Chet Atkins and Jerry Bradley and pro-
ducers like Roy Dea and Bob Ferguson, you
can see why the label has a lot to talk about.

RCA points to the town’s top singles artist,
Ronnie Milsap, and the best group—the new
and exciting trio, Dave & Sugar.

(Continued on page 62)

Country
Labels
Enjoy
Boom

ABC/Dot artist Doug Sahm of Sir Doug and the
Texas Tornados relaxes (above) at Nashville’s
Exit/In. Left to right: Don Cohen (WCAS, Cam-
bridge, Mass.); Moe Shore, kneeling (WCAS); Kenny
Greenblatt (WBEN, Boston); Doug, Huey Meaux
(Doug’s producer), Bob Pittman (WMAQ, Chicago),
and ABC/Dot vice president Larry Baunach. Billy
Sherrill, vice president CBS Records, at a cock-
tail buffet party hosted by Elektra-Asylum Records,
country division. Shown, left to right: Jerry Sherrell,
E/A vice president and A&R; Joe Smith, E/A board
chairman; Sherrill, David Malley, CBS producer,
and Steve Wax, executive vice president of E/A.

Celebrating Eddy Arnold’s return to RCA backstag-
after Arnold’s opening at the Sahara Hotel in Las
Vegas are (from left above) Jerry Bradley, division
vice president, Nashville operations. RCA; Eddy;
Mel Iberman, division vice president, commercial
operations, RCA; and Don Burkheimer, division vice
president, West Coast. RCA. Jerry Kennedy, vice
president A&R in Nashville, celebrates 15 years of
service to Phonogram, Inc./Mercury Records; Ir-
win H. Steinberg (left below), president of
PolyGram record group, presents gold watch.
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Pat Boone "Texas Woman"
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On Columbia, Columbia/Lone Star and Epic Records and Tapes.
COUNTRY ARTISTS

A

ACUFF, ROY (Vocalist / Instrumentalist w/ Vocal & Instrumental Group-6). Dick, RCA; Du: SM - Fort Worth, TX (Toby Allen)

ADAMS, RUSTY (Vocalist / Guitarist). Plantation, BA

ADAMS, VERNEL (Vocalist). Kowalee

ALAN, BUDDY (Vocalist). Capitol, BA; Omig Artist

ALBERT. URELL (Vocalist). Columbia; DB: Buddy Lee

ALICE ANN (Vocalist). Speron, BA: Bill Goodwin

ALICE, MELODY (Vocalist). Jim Anderson / LR Sharp


AMAZING RHYTHM ACES (Vocal & Instrumental Group-6). ABC: BA Variety Artists; PM: Katz-Galvin-Clear

AMPLIFIED VERSION (Group-9). Newman BA: 10 Bill Billing. PM: Happy Shahan - Alamo Village

ANDERSON, BILL (Vocalist w/ Group-8). MCA: BA Bill Bill - Redding

ANDERSON, LYNN (Vocalist). Columbia. BA: ICM; PM: Glen Sutton

ANITA ANN (Vocalist). West Wind. BA: Happy Shahan - Alamo Village

APPLETON, CLEM. see Hall Parsons

ARMSTRONG, BILLY (Vocalist / Fiddler). Hillside BA: Steve Stubbins & Sub -art - Americana Corp. - Billy Kaye

ARNOLD, REDDY (Vocalist). RCA; PM: Gerald W Purcell

ASH, GLENN (Vocalist - Instrumentalist / Comedian). United Artists


ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL (Vocal & Instrumental Group-10). PM: Darrell Redding - Country Talent

ATKINS, CHET (Guitarist). RCA; BA: Surin Artists. PM: X Casse

ATTICUS, RON (Vocalist). GRT: PM: Nelsan Laken

ATTWOOD, BOBBY (Guitarist). GRT: PM: Lavender Blake. PM: Jim Prater

AVERY, GENE (Vocalist). Republic

AVERY, JACK (Vocalist). Brite Star: BA: Smokey Warren

AXTON, HOYT (Vocalist / Guitarist). A&M; PM: Judi Elliott

B

B B (Vocalist). Guitarist. Soundbreakers, BA: Larry B


BAILES, EDDIE (Vocalist). Ck Kay. PM: Hal Freeman

BAILEY, LYNN (Vocalist). BA: Beaverwood Talent

BAILEY SINGERS (Vocal & Instrumental Group-8). BA: Country Talent

BAKER, GEORGE, SELECTION (Vocal & Instrumental Group-6). New Boys Group

BAKERSFIELD RHYTHM BOYS (Vocal & Instrumental Group-3). BA: Steve Stubbins & Sub -art - Americana Corp

BALER, ALMA (Vocalist). BA: Barbara Barber

BALIN, TRACEY (Vocalist). ABC: PM: Hety Mauk

BALLARD, LARRY (Vocalist). Capitol. PM: Trvus Truex


BARBER, GLENN (Vocalist). Capitol: BA: Bill Goodwin

BARBERID, DENNY (Vocalist / Painter). PM: Ken Carmichael

BAREFOOT DOLLY (Group). Monument

BARLOW, JACK (Vocalist). Antique. BA: Buddy Lee

BARLOW, RANDY (Vocalist). Garelee: BA: Joe Taylor. PM: Shady

BARKER, CARY (Vocalist / Guitarist). Capitol: PM: Michael Williams

BARNES, KATHY (Vocalist). Republic

BAUER, POWER (Vocalist & Instrumental Group-5). BA: Power Cos. - Country Talent

BEAVERS, CLYDE (Vocalist). BA: Beaverwood Talent

BEE, MOLLY (Vocalist). Granie. BA: Steve Stubbins & Sub-Art-Americana Corp. PM: Ck Store

BELLMARY BROTHERS (Vocal & Instrumental Group). Warner / Cbs: PM: Stan Morris - Scott Brothers

BELLOTTO, CHRIS (Vocalist). BA: Roger Talent. PM: Roger Jordan - Talent

BENTON, BARBI (Vocalist / Painter). BA: William Morris

BEVERLY ANN (Vocalist). C红楼. PM: Jim Anderson / LR Sharp

BLACKS, BILL, COMBO (Instrumental Group-5). HI: BA Top Billing. PM: Bob Tucker - Entertainment Directions

BLACK DIAMOND STRINGERS (Vocal & Instrumental Group-5). BA: Smokey Warren / PM: Denny-Country & GRT.

BLACKWOOD, R.W., & THE BLACKWOOD BAND (Vocalist w/ Vocal & Instrumental Group-1). Capitol. BA: Ron Blackwood

BLANCHARD, JACK, MISTY MORGAN (Vocal & Instrumental Group-3). Capitol

BLANTON, HARRY, & FOOTSTEPS (Vocalist & Instrumental Group-5). Starmist: BA: Buddy Lee. PM: Chuck Money

BLUEGRASS GENERATION (Vocal & Instrumental Group-3). BA: Jack Taylor

BODIE MOUNTAIN EXPRESS (Group-4). RCA: BA Brumley Artist

BOLT, AL (Vocalist). Ck Kay. PM: Igil Freeman

BOND, JOHNNY (Vocalist). Republic: BA: Steve Stubbins & Sub -art - Americana Corp

BONNIE & CLYDE (Vocal & Instrumental Duo). Hillside. PM: Ave Folk. PM: William Ear

BOONE, PAT (Vocalist). Harrisville. BA: ICM; PM: Jack Spina

BOOTH, TONY (Vocalist). United Artists. BA: Omig Artist

BOURCHER, BOBBY (Vocalist). Playback. BA: Buddy Lee

BOWEN, GARY, & THE FUGITIVES (Vocalist w/ Group-3). BA: Steve Stubbins & Sub -art - Americana Corp

BOWMAN, DE WAYNE (Vocalist). JIN: BA Sinatric Talent. PM: D. G. Styhin

BROOK, JOE (Vocalist). Ronnie


BROWN, MARTI (Vocalist). BA: Buddy Lee

BRUCE, ED (Vocalist). United Artists. BA: Patsy Brice - Bruce Ends

BRUSH ARBOR (Group-5). Monument. BA: Wayne Bradley. PM: Dan McDaniel

BRYANT, ANITA (Vocalist). Myth: BA: APA. PM: Bob Green

BRYCE, SHERRY (Vocalist). MGM

BUCKET, JIMMY (Vocalist w/ Group-4). ABC: BA Magna Artist. PM: Don Light

BURGESS, WILMA (Vocalist). Shannon: BA: Buddy Lee

BURKE, FIDDLER, FRENCHIE (Vocalist / Fiddler). Music Creek. BA: Sinatric Talent. PM: G. D. Styhin

BURNETT, DORESE (Vocalist). Merryland. BA: Buddy Lee

BUSH, JOHNNY (Vocalist). BA: Bobby Dylan - Johnny Bush Association

BUTLER, CARL & PEARL (Vocalist). RCA. BA: Buddy Lee


CALBURN, BILL (Vocalist). Lone Star: Columbia. PM: Neil C. Reiden - Media Consulting

CAMPBELL, ARCHIE (Vocalist / Comedian). Elks: BA: Joe Taylor

CAMPBELL, GLEN (Vocalist / Guitarist). Capitol. BA: Red Lobster Talent

CAMPBELL, SONNY (Vocalist). RCA: BA Smokey Warren

CAMERON, JOHN (Vocalist). CBS: BA: Balmont Ltd

CARLISLE, BILL (Vocalist w/ Group). Hickory. BA: All Star

CARR, NELSON (Vocalist). Capitol. PM: Randy Wells

CARR, MILTON (Vocalist). Lone Star: Columbia. PM: Neil C. Reiden - Media Consulting

CARSON, WAYNE (Vocalist). BA: Top Talent. PM: Shady

CARTER, MANSON (Vocalist). Eddie: BA: Buddy Lee. PM: Gene Kennedy

CARRER, JOHNNY (Vocalist). ABC: BA Top Billing

CASE, ROBERT MAXWELL (Vocalist). Gstar: RCA

CASH, JOHNNY (Vocalist / Guitarist w/ Vocal & Instrumental Group-5). Columbia. PM: Buddy Klein - APA. PM: Lou Robinson - Artist Consultants

CASH, TOMMY, & THE TOMCATS (Vocalist / Instrumental Group). St. United Artists. BA: Buddha Lee

CASSEY, LINDA (Vocalist). Ck Kay. PM: Gene Kennedy

CATES, BROTHERS (Group). Capitol
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All These Things/Joe Stampley #12
Till The Rivers All Run Dry/Don Williams #15
Secret Love/Freddy Fender #19
You'll Lose A Good Thing/Freddy Fender #22
Easy As Pie/Billy 'Crash' Craddock #23

Top Country Albums
Are You Ready For Freddy/Freddy Fender #8
Before The Next Teardrop Falls/Freddy Fender #11
Harmony/Don Williams #15

Top Country Artists (Singles)
Freddy Fender #2
Joe Stampley #5
Don Williams #8
Narvel Felts #9
Billy 'Crash' Craddock #17

Top Male Vocalists (Singles)
Freddy Fender #2
Joe Stampley #5
Don Williams #8
Narvel Felts #9
Billy 'Crash' Craddock #17

Top Country Artists (Albums)
Freddy Fender #3
Don Williams #8
Narvel Felts #16

Top Female Vocalists (Albums)
Barbara Mandrell #17

Top Duos and Groups (Albums)
Amazing Rhythm Aces #2

Top Country Singles Label
ABC/DOT #2

Top Country Album Label
ABC/DOT #4

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Johnny Rodriguez

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Bill Eldridge
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The Heckles
Waylon Jennings
Sarah Johns
Anita Kerr
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Dickey Lee
Ronnie Milsap
Dewayne Orender
Vernon Oxford
Dolly Parton
Randy Parton
Gary S. Paxton
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Charley Pride
Tennessee Pulleybone
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Dave & Sugar
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Billboard Male Singles Artist of the Year
Overall Singles Artist of the Year

CASHBOX AWARD:
Country Singles Male Vocalist of the Year

RECORD WORLD AWARD:
Top Male Vocalist — 1976 (Singles Category)

CMA NOMINATIONS:
Entertainer of the Year
Male Vocalist of the Year
Album of the Year — "Night Things"

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We hoped it would be a good year, thanks to you it was great.

Chet Atkins

RCA Records
Thanks For A Great Year

Charlie Pride
The years just keep getting better, thanks to you.

Dolly Parton

RCA Records
Latest RCA Album: Supersongs

Danny Davis and the Nashville Brass
MANY THANKS FOR GETTING BEHIND OUR RECORDS AND HELPING US REACH THE #1 SPOT ON THE CHARTS!
Country music trends have been changing at such a rapid pace that serious talent buyers planning their lineups at fairs and amusement parks are relying less on their intuitions and paying more attention to an artist's position on the record charts and the amount of airplay a recording receives.

Bill Hollingshead, Celebrity Talent Manager at Knott's Berry Farm, notes that he's heavily influenced by record sales and the Billboard charts because of obvious changes that have taken place in country over the past few years.

As an example, he points to the crossover of Charlie Rich, Tanya Tucker, Freddy Fender and several others with a contemporary sound who are being accepted by MOR audiences, and the outlaws like Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter and Willie Nelson, who have become so popular with younger audiences that they play the Hollywood Bowl and Greek Theatre with prices out of the reach of amusement park budgets.

The same holds true for the progressive country of the Rusty Weir type of talent which Lou Acosta, promotion manager for Six Flags Over Texas refers to as the Austin sound. According to Acosta, the Austin sound, as compared to Nashville country which has been crossing over into pop, was originally played on contemporary and progressive radio and has now crossed over into the hard country stations where it's being accepted by the listeners. In order to avoid a lot of confusion over the major changes in trends, he tries to

(Continued on page 71)
THERE WON'T BE NO COUNTRY MUSIC; CRISPY CRITTERS; FOUR WHEEL COWBOY

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Don Sears, Chip Davis

Written By
C. W. McCall, Bill Fries, Chip Davis

Published By
American Gramaphone Sesac

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It's been a year of paradox in country radio and television. Never before have so many country artists received so much television exposure on shows that are for the most part geared to a pop audience. At the same time, though, there has never been so much pop music being played on country radio stations.

While valuable TV time on the Dinah Shore, Merv Griffin and Lawrence Welk shows is getting easier for a country artist to obtain, he has to contend with pop records now to get on the playlists of many country stations.

The tangents away from the standard Nashville sound include MOR country, which would feature John Denver and Olivia Newton-John; country rock, which has Charlie... (Continued on page 64)

The MOR trend is also seen in the fact that, in the last year or so, a Roger Whittaker album and a Paul Delicato single have hit the country chart. And the king of easy listening, Perry Como, went country last January for the first time in a 32-year disk career. Other pop veterans to hit the country chart for the first time in '76 include Loggins &... (Continued on page 74)
To celebrate the Grand Ole Opry's 51st birthday, Nashville's galaxy of stars will be shining Wednesday night, October 13, in Nashville's Municipal Auditorium. The Shure-United Talent Show will feature Billy 'Crash' Craddock, Crystal Gayle, Mickey Gilley, Jessica James, Sonny James, Joni Lee, Ernest Ray Lynn, Loretta Lynn, Linda Plowman, Cal Smith, Kenny Starr, Conway Twitty, Michael Twitty, Gene Watson, Freddy Weller, and Karen Wheeler.

Showtime for this gala birthday party is 10:00 P.M. Tickets for the Shure-United Talent Show are included in the WSM Grand Ole Opry 51st Annual Birthday Celebration Ticket Book.

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Country's Silver Circuit

By HANFORD SEARL

Live country acts, a spectrum ranging from popular TV, movie and recording artists to talented lounge bookings, are a bona fide substantial entertainment force in Las Vegas, Reno and Tahoe casino nightclubs.

At one time tolerated and looked upon as second-rate music, the country scene, tempered and upgraded by trends, public taste and marketing, has become sophisticated big business in Nevada's resort industry.

As could be expected the acts most in demand and filling the main showrooms and gambling tables, are the crossover, MOR superstars, such as John Denver, Roy Clark, Wayne Newton, Glen Campbell, Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard.

According to a majority of hotel entertainment directors, talent buyers and agencies along the glittering Las Vegas Strip, the ability to attract sold-out rooms and top gambling profits rests totally on the media popularity and crossover factor of the country act.

The bookings list a variety of talent among the rival, high-rise resort hotels with Mac Davis at the MGM Grand, Olivia Newton-John at the Riviera, the Sahara offering Merle Haggard, Kay Starr, Marty Robbins and Eddy Arnold with Campbell, Cash, Charley Pride and Charlie Rich in the Las Vegas Hilton stable of country stars.

But the heavyweight buyer of country remains Howard Hughes' Summa Corp. which operates a two-year running "Country Music U.S.A." series at the Landmark Hotel with the Jim Halsey Agency of Tulsa, Okla.

The only main showroom to consistently bill country artists, the 550-capacity Jubilee Room has showcased The Oak Ridge Boys, Barbara Fairchild, The Back Porch Majority and Johnny Tillotson to name a few.

Pleased with the faith and support of Summa, Halsey points to the family-entertainment factor as the strength of the series, which has only produced a few weak draws out of 24 acts booked.

"Of course Nashville, rodeos, fairs and other one-night dates bring bigger money, but playing Vegas is important in media exposure and to other buyers as well," reports Halsey. "The superstars will earn big salaries."

Halsey's biggest star, Roy Clark, typifies the crossover talent ability, amply proven recently by his appearance on The Bell Telephone Hour, Boston Pops and Hee Haw TV series.

(Continued on page 73)
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Coast Country’s Home Away From Home

By PAUL GREIN

This city remains country’s “home away from home” with KLAC and the Palomino Club leading the list of top radio stations and clubs located here. L.A. is also the base of the Academy Of Country Music, of many of the television shows that are bringing more and more country artists to the mass audience, and of a number of top booking agents, personal managers, producers, artists and labels involved in country.

It comes as no great surprise that all of the top country stations here deviate in some way

(Continued on page 63)

Palomino trio is Freddy Fender (left), Charley Pride and Pat McCoy (right), ABC national pop promotion director.

Country music may have its roots in the Southern section of this country, but its sounds have stretched north into the cosmopolitan jungle of New York where its acceptance is getting stronger and stronger.

Although the presentation of live concert dates by Nashville superstars has been extremely slow, the club scene has been generous to country’s “new breed.”

Veteran country music promoter Al Aro nowitz finally gave up several months back when even his superstar shows failed to draw

(Continued on page 74)

Freddie Hart, Capitol artist (foreground), guests on DJ at WHN with (from left) Ed Salamon, program director; staff DJs Lee Arnold and Del Demontreux.

New York Embraces Country’s New Breed

By JIM FISHEL

SWEET COUNTRY MUSIC

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Country music was introduced to Japan after World War II by the occupation forces who brought several new western cultures to the defeated Japanese. WVTR, a radio station which was established for the occupation forces stationed in Japan, broadcast several music programs to entertain the GIs. Among these programs, there were naturally those on country music. The programs of country music included "Grand Ole Opry," "Chuck Wagon Time," and "Jubilee Time."

The programs broadcast by WVTR were heard by the Japanese at their homes and it was the unique melodies of country music that caught the ears of the culturally hungry (Continued on page 66)

Yuki Miyamae, queen of contemporary country music in Japan.

Country Taking Hold In Europe

By TONY BYWORTH

Country music is in a state of constant growth in Britain and is beginning to make an increasing impact in continental Europe.

In Britain, where country music has enjoyed its biggest ever success in 1976, there are two distinct facets. On the one hand there is the importation of American sounds by way of record releases and concert tours, and on the other hand there are the domestic country acts, an ever-growing element.

But country music's real success has to be judged in pop chart terms and, here, during recent months there's been more activity than at any other time. (Continued on page 61)

Checking over a brochure on last winter's Roy Clark Show tour of Russia and enthused by plans for a larger tour in 1977 are, left to right, Ivan I. Yeliseyev, deputy director of Gosconcert, Indian artist Minisa Crumbo, Natasha Ivanova of Gosconcert and Jim Halsey, president of the Halsey Co. They met during Halsey's ranch party near Tulsa.

It's been another exciting country music year, and now I have "YOU AND ME" to top it off.

Sincere thanks,

Tammy Wynette

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Country Labels

Continued from page 22

"The Outlaws" LP went gold 72 days after its release and it further propelled the careers of Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, Willie Nelson and Tompall Glaser. It's headed for platinum status—and that's a rarity for a Nashville album. A Purple Heart award goes to whomever managed to wear the red tape and conquer the legal and contract hassles necessary to get these four artists together on one LP.

Eddy Arnold's return to the label was marked by the tremendous success of "Cowboy" and the blast-off of the new pairing—Jim Ed Brown with Helen Cornelius—resulted in a No. 1 single. Chet Atkins had a lot of fun experimenting with his Nashville String Band, a brilliant duo LP with Les Paul and a vocal effort on "Frog Kissing." Dolly Parton continues her surge as one of the country's top stars and is increasing her syndicated and network TV exposure. Also hitting No. 1 have been Dickey Lee, Charley Pride, John Denver, and Elvis Presley. Gary Stewart and Bobby Bare prospered.

"The future looks great," says Bradley, pointing to such recently signed artists as Guy Clark, Tennessee Pulleybone, Steve Young, Dottsy, Rob Galbraith and Ronnie Prophet.

CBS Records has some pretty impressive statistics. Columbia reports 81% of its singles reached the upper realm of the charts, boosting sales to all-time high.

Willie Nelson's first Columbia single, "Blue Eyes Cryin' In The Rain," jumped from a No. 1 country hit to a Top 40 smash. Willie's first Columbia LP, "Red Headed Stranger," went gold, his second for the label is approaching gold status, and the king of the Outlaws has sold more than 2.5 million Columbia singles and albums. John Cash and Marty Robbins both returned to the coveted No. 1 position after a six-year absence from the top spot. And Johnny Duncan joined them on the top of the chart with his first No. 1 record, "Stranger." Then, along came Moe Bandy with "Hank Williams. You Wrote My Life" and a hot new career. Mary Kay Place, who plays Loretta on "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman," inked with Columbia and the label has high hopes for her.

Sonny James doubled his album sales with a significant effort, "200 Years Of Country Music." The CMA thought enough of it to nominate it for album of the year honors. David Allan Coe conned his way into three big hits and his on-stage performance improved dramatically. Lynn Anderson enjoyed popular acceptance both by record buyers and network TV audiences. Connie Smith also achieved new heights.

Eric's Tammy Wynette scored three nominations for the CMA awards, performed before the President and Mrs. Ford at the White House and has fought health and marital problems to forge ahead as one of the nation's best vocalists in any music field. Charlie Rich rebounded from an inauspicious start last year's CMA show, rebounded with satellite to God (a gospel album) and country ("America The Beautiful, 1976") and enjoyed a fine year. George Jones continued his monumental sales and opened up broad new avenues in his career with his smashing, unexpected success at the Willie Nelson July 4th Picnic before 80,000 college age fans. Joe Stampley remained atop the charts and John Austin Paycheck and John Fogerty took a progressive country turn with his bluesy "11 Months And 29 Days." Michael Murphey went gold with one album and approaches it with another.

CBS vice presidents Billy Sherrill and Ron Blesedoe have directed the creative management effort and Tony Martell added some major marketing ideas while commuting between New York and Nashville. The CBS prepack LP program was Nashville's top corporate idea. With the recent addition of Rick Blackburn as a veep, CBS is looking for an even brighter 1976.

"A good year for us in terms of an increase in chart positions, upward directions of artists' careers and good acquisitions," reports Jim Folegson, president of ABC/Dot. "We're extremely optimistic about the future since our parent company has made some tremendous moves in distribution and personnel."

Billy "Crash" Craddock, Narvel Felts, Roy Clark, Don Williams and Freddy Fender are all hotter than a firecracker on July 4, 1976. Clark enjoyed a break-through tour through Russia, drawing 17 SRO crowds in 17 appearances and an invitation to come back. Joe Stampley hit No. 1 on a song from his ABC/Dot catalog. Williams went No. 1 several times in the states and is becoming a top international artist. He's treading up the English charts.

Barbara Mandrell joined the roster and has never sounded better. New signee coming on strong include Randy Conner, Red Steagall, Roy Head and Sir Doug Sahm and the Texas Tornadoes. Vice presidents B.J. McElwee and Ron Chancey move marketing and production forward in giant steps—and the addition of Bob Kirsch as product manager has strengthened the ties between the Nashville and L.A. headquarters. No wonder Folegson is happy. A recently signed distribution agreement with Hickory Records brings Wesley Rose to the label, along with such artists as Don Gibson and Mickey Newbury. Hickory's thrust will be boosting the ABC cause, as well as its own, in this mutually beneficial pact.

Meanwhile at MCA, they're touting "The Blind Man In The Bleachers" by Kenny Starr as one of the year's top songs. It's up for a CMA award as single of the year. Album of the year, the label also boasts Mel Tillis' "Rockin' From Texas," and would love to name him for the CMA entertainer of the year award. Tanya Tucker gets better, and stronger, with each hit.

Chic Doherty, MCA vice president, was all smiles over the success of the Bill Anderson-Mary Lou Turner pairing that soared to No. 1 on the singles chart. That gives the label two of country music's top teams since Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn continue to dominate the charts with each release. And here comes Mel Tillis and Sherry Bryce Olivia Newton-John came to Nashville to record for the first time. She loved the musicians and studios and remarked, "I plan to continue recording here."

Capitol has one of the year's top instrumental groups, Asleep At The Wheel. And Jessi Colter, queen of the Outlaws. Glen Campbell was one of the label's top artists. Gene Watson continued his rise toward the top, Ray Griff scored with frequent chart records, Merle Haggard continued his amazing chart success, Freddie Hart enjoyed another banner year, and new artists like LaCosta, Colleen Peterson and Linda Hargrove have Capitol's Frank Jones and Bill Williams singing a happy song.

Jerry Kennedy, vice president of Mercury, notes, "We're moving towards more and more album product." He terms the Phonogram/Mercury operation as "a family" and cites the success of singles and LPs by Tom T. Hall, Jerry Lee Lewis, the Statler Brothers, Cledus Maggard (who went No. 1 with "The White Knight") and Johnny Rodriguez. For the first time, Phonogram/Mercury and Polydor combined forces with their distribution arm, Phonomisc, for a country music marketing program. Initial results look impressive.

"We're Number One," chants MGM, riding the crest with the year's top single, "Convo" by C.W. McCall, and top album "Black Bear Road" by McCall. Recent structural changes at MGM/Nashville should enhance the label's chart action in the future.

Larry Butler has taken United Artists into the major label status on the country scene. Crystal Gayle has emerged as one of the top new talents of recent years, and people are now referring to her as "Crystal" and not "Loretta's sister." Kenny Rogers has turned his career country with great results. Jean Shepard enjoyed a successful year and Billie Jo Spears has become a household word in the States and overseas. Her "Blanket On The Ground" topped the British singles chart. Ed Bruce staked a claim as one of the best new talents in Nashville, and Del Reeves returned to record some duets with Billie Jo as well as pursue a singles career. Country and pop chart songs kept Bobby Goldsboro in the limelight.

Warner Bros. has restructured its Nashville office and Stan Byrd, national director of sales and promotion, states, "In the last five months, we've brought every single we've released onto the charts except one." That's 15 out of 16. "Elite Hotel" by Emmylou Harris is the Warner/Reprise success story of the year. The LP is approaching 500,000 in sales, and the single, "Red Headed Stranger," by Buddy Holly, is now in the top ten. Bud Allen, Ray Stevens, Margo Smith, Buck Owens and Donna Fargo spearhead the label's thrust.

Eddie Rabbitt, the Eagles and Linda Ronstadt have propelled Elektra/Asylum to new heights. Rabbitt hit with three top

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The West Coast

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from the traditional Nashville sound. As Bill Boyd, president of the Academy of Country Music points out, "big cosmopolitan stations like KLAC or KFOX in Long Beach have to strive for a broad appeal. Even KCKC in San Bernardino will do it, because that is really a fringe of L.A. You have to get as far away as Fresno, Modesto or Tucson to find a station that doesn't have that pop approach to country."

The programming theory of KLAC is, according to Don Langford, the station's operations and programming director, based on the fact all the adult contemporary stations in L.A. program off of AM powerhouse KHJ, which leaves a void in the good music MOR field. KLAC has filled that void without resorting to any MOR artists and instead uses MOR oriented country artists.

"We'll play a lot of Barbara Mandrell, Charlie Rich, Tanya Tucker, Tammy Wynette, Wynn Stewart, Rex Allen Jr., Tom Bresh, Marty Robbins, Mack White, Billie Jo Spears and Del Reeves. We re-act and a good listening sound."

KFOX in Long Beach covers the country spectrum, says Jim Christoferson, the station's program director. "We play everything from Hank Williams Sr. to Olivia Newton John. The only country we don't play is the twangy, nasal kind. We may not play Roy Acuff or Ernest Tubbs, but we will add in mass appeal acts like the Eagles, Jim Croce and Neil Diamond."

Bob Mitchell, the general manager of KCKC in San Bernardino, notes that "we've progressed as country has progressed, though some stations are still adhering to a 1966 format. It used to be that there were no pop sounds palatable to the country audience, but now there are. For this reason we've played the obvious crossovers, though there are some we haven't played."

KLAC and KFOX differ in one key area. KLAC's Don Langford emphasizes that his station is attempting to compete with area FMs like KGBS, which can offer its listeners the advantage of stereo sound, by having a personality approach to attract listeners.

"Our ARBs show us that when a listener leaves KLAC to go to another station it's not another music station, it's a two-way talk or all-news station like KFWB, KNX or KABC. So country audiences want that communication."

Christoferson observes, though, that his station places the "emphasis on music rather than personality. We keep what the jock says short and relevant, so we can establish the radio station as the personality and not any one jock. You'll never hear a jock talking about his haircut on our station."

Typical of many increasingly sophisticated country stations, KFOX has an almost-Top 40 approach, with pre-selected and color-coded music, independent market research, and a scientific, percentage system to hourly programming and playlist cycling.

There are clubs in Long Beach, according to Christoferson, but none of them can compete with L.A. clubs like the Palomino. KLAC's Langford notes that his station has done live remotes from the Palomino in nearby North Hollywood, while it also regularly goes live to cover auto and boat shows, store openings, auto races and events at Disneyland and the L.A. County Fair.

"We go out among 'em about once a month, which is good for promotional purposes as well as from a sales standpoint, at events like store openings."

San Bernardino has a number of clubs, according to Bob Mitchell, including the Branding Iron, Fontana Inn and Dodge City West. KCKC has done live remotes from the clubs for the past two years featuring such acts as Ronnie Milsap, Hoyt Axton, Emmylou Harris and Don Williams.

L.A. is also the home of the Academy Of Country Music, the trade organization that was formed in 1965 and now has about 1,200 members. The Academy gets its greatest exposure, according to Bill Boyd, its president, at its annual awards presentations, which have been televised on ABC for the last three years.

Boyd points with pride to the fact that all three shows have received repeat summer airings, an oddity for an awards show. "I guess the network felt the show's entertainment value outweighed the fact that they were no longer timely."

(Continued on page 67)
Radio Paradox

• Continued from page 54

Daniels and the Marshall Tucker Band; country pop, which might play the Eagles or the Bellamy Bros. and the pure progressive or outlaw sound of Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson.

Bill Boyd, president of the Academy of Country Music, cautions that this increasing play of pop records is probably more of a factor at "big, cosmopolitan stations than in nitty gritty country communities. KLAC has to compete with KGBS and 70 other stations in the L.A. market. You really can't fault them for striving to have a broad appeal."

No matter what the format, country stations this year report that the growth of FM rock outlets has caused them concern about losing their 34.49 demographics, that retailers still aren't cooperating in stocking country product, that sensitivity to possible lyric controversy is still a programming factor, and that playlists are still shrinking, though they remain, for the most part, two to three times as long as a typical pop playlist.

Country stations have run into a lot of competition for the 25-49 age group that they need. AM rock outlets, though primarily teen oriented, still have very good numbers in the 18-34 range. That puts a lot of importance for country stations on the 34.49 group, but here the minimum-talk FM rock stations are making inroads.

Because FMs may be taking away some older fans, many stations are trying to compensate for going after younger listeners. One way to get them, according to Bob Barwick, the music director of WWVA in Wheeling, W. Va., is to play more pop oriented country hits.

Most country stations don't go further in the pop direction than a Dr. Hook or a Michael Murphey. WBEE in Detroit, though, adds a few pop hits like "You're So Vain" or "Love Will Keep Us Together" once they become established monsters, to counter the strong ratings of WMC, an FM MOR station in Detroit owned by Metromedia. And KFOX in Long Beach covers the country spectrum, but goes so far as to include the Eagles, Jim Croce and Neil Diamond.

Another way to cope with FM inroads, according to Don Langford, operations and program director of country giant KLAC in L.A., is to adopt a personality approach. "Automation, with the exception of KNX-FM, has never gone over big in this market."

Everyone has high hopes for FM country, when that becomes a widespread phenomenon. As Jim Christoferson, program director of KFOX in Long Beach, Calif., puts it, "Whether it's traditional or modern country, an FM country station would do well. Stereo is definitely the thing of the future, and more and more cars are getting FM dials."

Bob Mitchell, general manager of KCKC in San Bernardino, Calif., has strong opinions about the issue of retailer and even manufacturer lack of support for country product. "It's still a battle to make sure the records are in stock, so we can be sure our research reflects sales figures."

Retail outlets don't stock country product like they should, according to Dave Williams, music director of WBEE in Detroit. Because "country product starts slow and it can take two months to get a pulse on whether a song is going to be a hit or not. They don't get the instant results they're used to in dealing with rock."

Like many others, Langford points out the concern for lyric suggestiveness is still prevalent in country. This may be because in soul and pop, the lyric isn't as important as it is in country music. There are no throwaway lines in country lyrics, though, and the music is such that you listen to the words.

The programming response of WBEE's Williams is typical. He won't break a record he considers "gutter level," but he will play if the public so demands. "If it wants to hear it, it'll listen to it. "If it's that questionable, we'll wait and see. If it turns out that there is legitimate demand and it's not a hype, we'll put it on."

There is a definite swing on the part of country radio to shorter playlists, as many stations, like KFOX in Long Beach, adopt the tight, pre-selected, carefully programmed approach of a Top 40 outlet.

The fact remains, though, that country playlists are still two to three times as long as pop lists. KFOX's Christoferson explains the necessity for this in that country audiences are mostly adults and they are less apt to be constant dial switchers than the young teens who will back a Top 40 station.

The slower rate of turnover at country stations--which necessitates the longer lists--is also accounted for by Dugg Collins, the program and music director of KDJW in Amarillo, Tex. He feels that listeners in relatively small towns like his will stay tuned longer than those in big metropolitan areas.

While country radio may be adding a lot of other elements to the standard sound, mass audience tv shows are booking more country acts than ever before. The person cited most frequently for bringing country performers before pop audiences is Dinah Shore, who won this year's Jim Reeves Memorial Award from the Academy of Country Music for her efforts.

"Country artists are honest, and don't mind revealing themselves. Many of them have had difficult lives, and since they've had more of a struggle, they have more to draw on. They travel and tour a lot which keeps them in contact with the world outside. And since country performers have greater longevity than just about anybody, they have a wealth of stories to tell. Country audiences aren't fickle and a country star can accumulate a lot of experiences in a career that can easily run for 20 years."

European Scene

• Continued from page 61

Both Dolly Parton and Don Williams made their chart debuts after their Wembly appearances--with "Joene" and "I Recall A Gypsy Woman" respectively--while another Wembly act, Tammy Wynette, made her third chart appearance with a 1967 recording, "I Don't Wanna Play House." Other singles chart records during the June/July period were Johnny Cash's "One Piece At A Time" and "What I've Got In Mind" from Billie Jo Spears.

In addition, other country acts were picking up regular airplay in particular by London's Capital Radio which is currently adopting a policy of slotting country in their 24-hour pop format. Waylon Jennings, Crystal Gayle, Connie Smith, Narvel Felts, Jean Shepard, Hank Williams Jr. and Tanya Tucker are among the acts currently receiving extensive airplay in addition to the already established acts.

On the album front, regular releasing of product continues, with pop album chart appearances frequently following on the heels of singles successes.

RCA maintained its firm commitment to the music with releases every month and, in addition to the familiar names of Charley Pride, Waylon Jennings, George Hamilton IV and Dolly Parton, the company has added newer talent like Stewart and Dottys into its schedules. In August RCA extended its country involvement further with the release of seven 25-track tape compilations.

MCA Records has recently released the debut album of Mel Tillis and Nat Stuckey, in addition to product from established names like Conway Twitty, Bill Anderson and Patsy Cline. Anchor Records, having achieved success with Don Williams, is now seeking to break other artists, including Roy Clark, Freddy Fender, Barbara Mandrell and Tommy Overstreet. CBS Records continues its successful run with Johnny Cash, Tammy Wynette, George Jones, Marty Robbins and Charlie Rich. United Artists, most successful with Slim Whitman's "Very Best Of Slim Whitman" album (a chart topping release), is extending its country repertoire with product by Crystal Gayle, Jean Shepard and Billie Jo Spears. And Ember Records, long involved with country, is currently releasing "western" product from Tex Ritter and Gene Autry.

The latest company to enter the country field is DJM Records with a generous batch of releases scheduled for the fall months from the Hickory catalog.

The monthly country album charts, prepared by the Country Music Assn. (Great Britain) and published in several maga-

zines as well as recognized in exposure in Brit- ain's only networked country radio pro- gram ("Country Club" presented by David Allan), has helped to sell country product to retailers who might otherwise have stocked such repertoire.

The eighth International Festival (Continued on page 68)
Nashville Scene

(Continued from page 6)

play. The Starland Vocal Band with its ode to afternooners, "Afternoon Delight," was giving Johnny Carver's cover version fits on the playlists of country stations.

Nashville is moving toward a greater blend of modern music and the best of the past. Strings and hormonics influenced by Hank Williams and Jimmie Rodgers. The potent combination, born out of a merging of talents, is creating a major and significant new musical style for America.

It wasn't really a bad year for traditionalists. In fact, it was a good year. Bob Wills, now residing in the Hillbilly Heaven of our hearts, is bigger now than he ever was in his lifetime. Willie Nelson may be hot, sings Waylon, but Bob Wills is still the king. Hank Williams had another great year. The tremendous success of the one-man show "Hank" by Jim Owen, depicting in story and song the final days of country music's greatest haunted genius, indicates that national acceptance is here for undiluted country. George Jones, playing his first youth-oriented outdoor concert, got one of the few standing ovations on a bill that included many progressive country stars. Nobody sounds countier than Gary Stewart, but his records are bought and played by fans of the Rolling Stones as well as the same people who buy Bill Anderson and Porter Wagoner.

CMA, which once had to fight to get national publicity for country music and its stars, now can barely keep up with the onslaught of national journalists and photographers coming to Nashville.

Bob Altman's classic and controversial move "Nashville" fueled the world's imagination about Nashville and its inhabitants. Several more movies have been shot in and around Nashville as the filmmakers discover a well-spring of talent. A record number of network and syndicated tv shows carry the sounds of country, pop and gospel music from Nashville to the nation.

College kids are turning onto country music—and country's cousin, bluegrass—in record numbers. Country is happening on the campus.

Internationally, country has never had it so good. Slim Whitman's last UA LP came on a British album chart in the No. 1 position. Don Williams scored with several hits in England where Billie Jo Spears saw her "Blanket On The Ground" envelope the airwaves and sales reports until it reached the top position. The Wembley Festival is more popular than ever. Roy Clark wowed the Ruskies and won a return trip for his troupe to Russia. Tammy Wynette, Ronnie Milsap and Mickey Gilley all performed in a CMA/Musexpo show for an international audience—and all received standing ovations. "That's the first time I've ever seen audience reaction like that at an international show," commented Musexpo's president, Roddy Shashoua. Another CMA country show is planned for next year's MIDEM.

Record labels and studios enjoyed a banner year, and the Nashville Songwriters Assn. added an "International" to its name, connoting its progress, and made a trip to Washington to argue, and sing, for copyright law revision. Country gospel moved forward in great strides as everyone keeps an eye on the Oak Ridge Boys for their future trends. Publishers are pocketing more royalties than ever, and note a great upswing in international collections. TV shows from Hollywood and New York feature increasing numbers of country singers. The Academy of Country Music continues to boost the country cause on the West Coast, and the Eastern States Country Music Inc. and the Colorado Country Music Foundation do likewise in their areas. In Nashville, the Country Music Foundation receives more and more inquiries of those cataloging country music's past. And the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum had to be doubled in size to accommodate all those who want to visit it.

The "Grand Ole Opry" is still sold out for months in advance and probably always will be as long as there's someone around to sing a country song. Fan Fair drew a record-shattering 12,000 country music fans and the WSM birthday and deep-sky celebration this year is the biggest and best in history.

Country sounds flourish not only at Opryland, but at fairs and amusement and theme parks all over the country. Most airlines now program country on their in-

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Japanese Style
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Japanese. This is how the Japanese at first were acquainted with country music.
Movies are one of the new forms of entertainment the Japanese had after the war and it was cowboy movies which were very much, if not the best, liked by the Japanese. The music they heard in these movies was country. Thus the general public started to associate country music with cowboys and cowboy movies.

It was not only the sound of country music that attracted the Japanese, but also the fashion of country artists. In fact, many Japanese musicians and vocalists at that time went into country simply for the sake of fashion.

Several country groups and artists such as Wagon Masters, Chuck Wagon Boys, Mountain Boys, Kazuya Kosaka, Jimmy Tokita and Biichi Kuroda were active on the Japanese country scene at that time and they were at the forefront at the camps of occupation forces and at coffee shops or what nowadays would be called "live spots."

As television started to replace movies and as rock 'n' roll was introduced to the country, the Japanese started to turn more and more to rock 'n' roll and away from country music. A large number of cutdowns in size or close-down of military camps and a great number of GIs returning to their home country was another factor which worked negatively for the Japanese country market. The Japanese artists, accommodating themselves to the changing trend, started to be involved increasingly more with rock 'n' roll and less with country music.

The Japanese record companies, originally domestically oriented, did not have personnel with enough knowledge to handle country product. They did not have any reference on music they were selling and did not know how to promote country product. Thus, they simply abstained from handling country. Such were the conditions of the country music market in Japan until recently.

However, recently the Japanese people, especially among youth, revived interest in country music. The youth here found country music in their "return to nature" movement. "Jeans fashion" is another facet of the current culture where the Japanese youth associate country music with themselves.

Another reason why country music started to be spotlighted in Japan is the change in country music itself. A lot of country music that is penetrating into Japan is in a form of a mixture with pop. In other words, Crossover is functioning as a catalyst in spreading country music in Japan. A lot of American pop songs where a country arrangement is utilized are heard in Japan and a lot of pop country artists are enjoying popularity here.

Japanese promoters are also playing an important role in spreading country music in this country. The promoters who used to bring in the same pop or rock artists again and again are looking for new foreign talent and they have turned their eyes to country artists. John Denver, Glen Campbell and Buck Owens have all visited Japan successfully. This year alone the Japanese audience heard or will hear Doc Watson (April), Charley Pride (July), Don Reno & Bill Harrell & The Tennessee Cut-ups (September) and Grandpa Jones (October) performing country music. Tanya Tucker and Olivia Newton-John also visited Japan in 1976.

A lot of Japanese arrangers are including country flavor in their arrangements. This also holds true for many of the Japanese singer/songwriters. There are several Japanese singers who perform country flavored songs.

Yuki Miyamae is called the queen of contemporary country music in Japan. Born in 1950, she started to sing country at age 16. She mainly worked in the military circuit touring camps in Japan, Southeast Asia and Guam. She appeared as a supporting act for Glen Campbell when he was in Japan in 1974. In 1975, she successfully appeared at the "Grand Ole Opry." She is scheduled to perform at the "Grand Ole Opry" again in October this year.

The Japanese record companies nowadays have talented personnel to promote country music and have enough reference materials on country product they handle. A lot of companies are releasing country product of their American licensors. Also, a number of Japanese record companies are coming up with country records by Japanese country artists. Polydor K.K. is releasing records by Miyamae, including a recently released "Yuki On West Coast" which was recorded in Los Angeles.

Victor Musical Industries recently released an album, "The C.W.Singers Of Japan," which includes well-known Japanese country artists such as Kosaka, Tokita, Kuroda and Keichi Teramoto among the others.

For Life Records is also coming up with a country album, "Old Boy" featuring Kosaka and Tokita.

"I think the future of country music in Japan is bright." says Atsutaka Torio, who is the only non-North American member of the board of directors of CMA and has Tennessee honorary state citizenship. "Among the non-English speaking countries, I feel country music is most popular in Japan. The basis of country music is sentimentalism and I think the most sentimental people in the world are the Japanese and Americans. The Japanese in the past did not listen to the lyrics of country music. They only listened to melodies. However, the young Japanese have a better knowledge of English now and better understand what is being sung. They now understand country music is sentimental and human and that there is a lot more in it than simply beautiful melodies," continues Torio. Torio himself had a country group, Tokyo Wagon Masters, when he was still a student. Torio concludes, "Peace brought country music to Japan and it has been a primary factor for its expansion in our country."

Catalogs Bulging
Continued from page 20
it was recorded as a country song, in that style. It gained national recognition immediately as a hit, and went on to stay No. 1 in the Billboard charts, and during that period, crossed over into the pop field, and following that, a record called 'Teddy Bear's Last Ride,' which was a followup single was released. This record now has fallen along in the footsteps of 'Teddy Bear,' perhaps even faster in gaining national play and chart recognition.

Publishers also continue to look to foreign markets. Carla Scarborough, international representative for Owepar Publishing Co., owned by Porter Wagoner-Dolly Parton, says, "The money that has come into Owepar this past year has been above the $100,000 mark—from foreign publishing alone.

There is an increasing popularity of sheet music, song books and folios overseas in fact," explains Scarborough, "their market is bigger than it is in the U.S., because it seems that they buy more sheet music there. We've got folios, sheet music and all these things in from Australia and South Africa. I got one from Holland just the other day.

They say that 49% of the record sales for the world come out of the U.S., and 51% outside the U.S. So, that if people don't get into international publishing, well, they're missing like 51% of all the money they can make.

Of special interest to music publishers and songwriters (many of whom, as in the case of Dolly Parton, are one and the same), is revised copyright legislation now pending before Congress. Maggie Cavender, president of the Nashville Songwriters Assn. International (NSAI), led a delegation of songwriters to Washington, where the group joined with other songwriters to lobby for a vote on renewal of the copyright this year.

Pleased by the reaction of members of the House Rules Committee with whom the delegation met, Cavender recalls, "the climax of the evening was that Peter Rodino, who is the chairman of the Full Judiciary Committee, spoke with us for about 40 minutes, and told us that he would see to it that the bill got out of subcommittee and to the full committee in order that it could get on the calendar for a vote this year.

In addition to the renewal of the copyright, songwriters and publishers will be interested in a provision of the pending legislation which allows for an $8 jukebox license fee. According to Nashville attorney Bob Thompson, who teaches a course in copyright law and administration at Belmont College, the revenue from juice boxes is to be collected by the Register of Copyrights and is to be distributed among the performing rights societies. BMI, ASCAP and SESAC, in turn, would allocate funds to music publishers and songwriters.

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Country Labels

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10 singles, Ronstadt with two and the Eagles with one. The addition of Stella Parton, Vern Gosdin and Wayne Carson improves the outlook for next year, according to Mike Suttle, marketing director. E/A is another operation that’s going through some executive turntablating to streamline and strengthen.

GRT, with Dick Heard and Tom McEntee at the helm, moves upward with such artists as Mel Street and Bobby G. Rice and its Casino deal that resulted in “I.O.U.” by Jimmy Dean—a giant record on both country and pop charts. Casino is a strong new entry on the label scene.

Playboy scored with 14 out of 17 singles on the charts, including hits by Mickey Gilley, Wynn Stewart, Chuck Price and Bobby Borchers. Eddie Kilroy, general manager and producer, and Nick Hunter, national promotion director, have formed one of the top teams in town for Playboy.

Hitsville has a new name. It used to be Melodyland (Motown). And Motown-turned-Hitsville has one of the country’s hottest new acts, T.G. Sheppard.

Monument has left the CBS fold to handle its own distribution, added vice presidents Paul Lovelace and Tom Roden and plans a major thrust into all areas of music. Billy Swan and Kris Kristofferson remain under the CBS pact, and these Monument artists are joined by such chartbusting artists as Larry Gatlin in Monument’s new direction.

Capricorn has been boosting Billy Joe Shaver and the Marshall Tucker Band, and Phil Walden’s Macon-based label reports that Kitty Wells is soon to return to the studio. Shelby Singleton has been wheeling and dealing as usual at Plantation. Webb Pierce, Hank Locklin, Carol Channing and Jimmy C. Newman are providing the impetus for another Singleton renaissance. While the situation is cloudy at 20th Century, several new or revitalized labels emerged—and some produced big hits.

“Farr out!” is how John Denver might describe the birth of Farr Records, based in L.A. The label signed Tom Bresh who immediately saw his “Homemade Love” climb toward the top of the chart. Gusto and Starway are now one—and the combination provides the best of the old and new. Mike Lunsford broke through with his biggest hit yet, “Honey Hungry,” and Red Sovine re-emerged with the smash “Teddy Bear.” Con Brio watched Sheila Tilton climb the chart with “Half As Much.” Cin Kay hit with some chart songs by such artists as Rick Smith and Linda Cassady. Caprice scored with the Gates Sisters, Record Productions of America with Bobby Lewis, and Soundwaves with Maury Finney. Zodiac is heading for some new and rising directions and so is Scorpio. Both are labels to watch. Denim Records debuted with Faith Allen and veteran Tex Williams. Republic is a major success story with hits by Kathy Barnes, David Rogers and Gene Autry and a major “Great American Cowboy” LP. Autry’s label, headed by Dave Burgess, is back in the saddle again—and riding high.

New companies, old ones, and some that haven’t been formed yet will be the firms of the future for Nashville. The label scene is highly volatile, supercharged and ready to ignite a world that more people feel needs to sit back, relax and listen to a country song.

GERRY WOOD

The West Coast

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L.A., of course, is also the home base of most of the TV shows that are introducing country artists to the mass pop audience. These include shows hosted by Dinah Shore, Merv Griffin and Lawrence Welk as well as by Johnny Carson and Tony Orlando & Dawn. And Donny & Marie Osmond, who tape their hit ABC series here, are country stars in their own right.

Perhaps most important, by breaking such acts as Linda Ronstadt, Gram Parsons and the Flying Burrito Bros., Los Angeles, along with other cities like Macon and Muscle Shoals, Austin and San Francisco, has helped open up country music to new sounds.

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GREAT YEAR!

European Scene

Continued from page 64

Country Music, promoted by Mervyn Conn, this year stretched over three days, the third day being devoted to the contemporary side of the music.

Conn also staged extensive tours by Slim Whitman and George Hamilton IV—the latter also returning in March and April for cabaret, radio, tv and European work—as well as shorter rounds of engagements for Emmylou Harris (the current sensation of the country-rock movement), George Jones, Marty Robbins and the Ozark Mountain Daredevils.

Jeffrey S. Kruger, chairman of the Ember Concert Division which promoted the debut tour of Charlie Rich last November, brings Pride back for another concert tour this fall.

Lou Rodgers promoted appearances by Marvin Rainwater, Billy Armstrong, Johnny Bond and Tex Williams. Gus Thomas, Dick Damron, Mac Wiseman and Patsy Montana all appeared for the Mike & Margaret Storey Entertainment Agency.

Other U.S. artists making British appearances included Johnny Cash, Hank Locklin, Red Sovine, Commander Cody & the Lost Planet Airmen, Willie Nelson, Billy Swan, Freddy Fender and Buck Owens.

On the domestic front activities are increasing and some acts are being signed by the major recording companies.

J.J. Barrie—by British definition 'a pop entertainer'—went straight to the top of the singles charts with his recording of Harlan Howard's "No Charge," and Andy Fairweather Low took on the contemporary image with "Wide Eyed and Legless." Ethna Campbell from Northern Ireland was in the lower regions of the charts for many weeks with "Old Rugged Cross" and Scottish comedian Billy Connolly came up with highly successful parodies of "D-I-V-O-R-C-E" and "No Charge (No Chance)." Another Scottish artist, Sydney Devine, very much molded in country music, was signed by Phonogram and—aided by heavy tv promotion—took his album "Doubly Devine" into a Top 20 position.

While other hardcore country acts have had releases on the major labels—and these include Tex Withers on RCA, the Frank Jennings Syndicate on EMI, Pete Stanley & Roger Knowles and Mae McKenna on Transatlantic—and former Texas oilrigger, Wayne Nutt on CBS—a great many local acts are now finding a home with local labels possessing a limited budget to their productions. Montgomery-based Westwood Recordings head the movement with more than 100 albums and other companies include Look Records in Yorkshire, Sweet Folk & Country in Kent, Tank in Stratford-upon-Avon and Folk Heritage in Wales.

Some local acts are stretching their realms of acceptance and finding work in the European countries where country music has already gathered a following.

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I t has been a longstanding paradox within the country music community that while more than 100 bluegrass festivals crowd the summer months, attended by hundreds of thousands, supporting a large cluster of full-time bands and a half-dozen successful small labels, the major labels are less and less able to sell bluegrass product.

The severity of the problem is strikingly demonstrated by the nearly total lack of bluegrass on major labels. MCA's Bill Monroe, the man who started the style back in 1945, is the only currently affiliated bluegrass artist.

It is a problem that puzzles industry executives, most of whom express affection for the music and the musicians. Their inability to sell it frankly puzzles them. Frank Jones, head of Capitol's country division, muses "It could be that it's more marketable on the scene, at the festivals, and not through established outlets..."

His bewilderment is echoed by MCA's Chic Doherty, who says "I love bluegrass and wish it did sell better. Now Monroe is doing very well, in good selling volume. But we had to give up on Jimmy Martin and the Osborne Brothers. Sales just weren't there. If we knew the reason we might be able to correct it."

On the whole, however, two problems—distribution and airplay—are cited over and over. Doherty, gives a good example: "We had a good chart album with our 'Bean Blossom,' an experiment we tried where we recorded Monroe's famous festival live. It sold well, but even it didn't get the airplay, and you're just limited in what you can sell without airplay."

Jesse McReynolds of the popular bluegrass team Jim and Jesse (who have recorded for Capitol, Columbia and Epic), echoes Doherty, thought: "We get some airplay on smaller stations but the big ones are out of the question. I don't think the station managers and the major labels realize the audience for bluegrass. I just wish they could get out to a festival and see these crowds. I believe it would change their minds..."

Others, like producer/songwriter Glenn Sutton, see the problem with the increasingly mass-sales approach of the majors: "They'd rather have a guy sell a million records one time than an act that will sell steadily and make money for them for 20 years." Brad McCuen, head of Nashville's SESAC office and a former RCA producer, agrees: "They feel it's a cult music. We've seen this in jazz and it's happening in easy listening: majors are only interested in numbers. Big numbers."

Martin Haerle, head of a new outfit called CMH Records, feels the problem is in the record stores, citing the case of two former RCA artists who now record for his label: "When an RCA salesman came into a store with 25 artists to try to sell, by the time he got down to Lester Flatt and Mac Wiseman he just didn't spend a lot of time talking. Now I can sell him not only an artist, but a music, a full line of music in which I have enthusiasm. Lester Flatt is my Elton John."

Delineating the problem is easy. Coming up with solutions is far more difficult, a problem so difficult as to have eluded every major label in the business.

At least three varying approaches have been suggested, and two actualized, although the verdict is still out as to how well they'll work. Both Sutton and McCuen feel the majors should keep bluegrass as a part of their line, and accept small sales in the interests of serving a public. Says Sutton: "I think the majors are crazy not to have it. All labels put out classical music—"

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Fairs And Parks

Continued from page 51

artists at Six Flags who have gone on to pick up record sales and airplay, like Charlie Rich, whom we brought in when he was playing clubs in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. We're able to do this because whenever we book an act we call the record companies which in turn contact the radio stations who give us automatic airplay. The radio folks test the new act to see how much entertainment, all the radio stations in Dallas, including WBAP, KBOX and KSCS, work with us."

Wayne McCary, executive assistant manager of the Eastern Exposition in West Springfield, Mass., would enjoy this type of exposure for his bookings, but since there are no country stations in his market area at the present time, he's not bringing in as much country this year as he has in the past. "We had country stations here before," he laments, "but they had weak formats and had to close. We're a little too far from the New York signal to catch WHN and even though there's a fairly strong signal out of Waterford, Conn., it's an FM station and isn't reliable."

Without a direct radio link, McCary has difficulty getting his country acts accepted, although he continues to work on it because he had an attendance of 1,000,000 persons in 12 days of operation, among which were many country fans. In hopes that the lack of country stations is a temporary situation, he's still booking acts which he knows aren't getting enough exposure to the people in his area. His method for choosing who he wants involves determining how the artist stands on the charts in relationship to record sales, and seeing the act in person to make certain the format meets the requirements of his audiences.

"Country music is so compatible with fairs," he says, "that I know with the right backup there could be more excitement generated for country shows. Over the years we've played Loretta Lynn and Lynn Anderson successfully without an outlet, and they were very well received. This year we're playing Barbara Mandrell and Freddy Fender, choosing Fender because he's a little more recognizable to people beyond country, which we hope will jump our airplay problem. But plugging big country acts like these brings up another concern. There's been a tremendous rise in the costs of country talent, and fairs are finding themselves in a bind because the artists aren't drawing big enough crowds to warrant the prices they're getting. This trend is being discussed in detail by a lot of fair managers and has to be resolved because it's getting out of hand."

Fairs are not alone in this problem. After putting country on the shelf for a couple of years, Knott's Berry Farm managerial personnel decided to revive it with enthusiasm in order to bring back its country market. Tommy Walker, director of entertainment at the Southern California amusement park, appointed Bill Hollingshead to be the spokesman and creator of the Country Music program. Hollingshead soon discovered that in the short time country was curtailed at the funspot, prices had doubled and even tripled for the same artists with basically the same shows. "I found that with the higher prices being asked, we were being offered little in return because the popularity of the artists hadn't increased proportionally. I hope this won't be a trend throughout the country."

Appearances at Knott's has in many instances helped the sales of recordings for talents like Rick Nelson, who has had noticeable increases in sales everytime he's appeared in the park's Good Time Theatre according to Hollingshead, who seldom plays anyone that isn't known because it won't draw, and rarely plays a group that doesn't have a record out, although sometimes he gambles that an artist may be a future hit like Emmylou Harris, a modern contemporary country singer he brought in based on predictions when she had a record on the charts.

Besides the trades, local airplay has a significant impact on his buying decisions and he listens to KLAC to keep an ear open for acts that are getting play in the Los Angeles market.

The Allentown Fair and Iowa State Fair managers both prefer to buy only what their audiences want, with little regard to what the record stores or radio stations are saying. According to Martin Ritter, general manager of Allentown, "we don't pay that much attention to airplay. We brought in Olivia Newton-John eight months before she was getting any significant play and she did very well. In fact, we seem to build a lot of artists up here because we start promoting early and give our acts good billing." Ritter has discovered that fewer artists are going out on the circuits because they can make five times as much money in a half-hour of appearance as on the stage of a fair. "Many of them would rather play arenas anyway, because with outdoor dates they have to contend with the weather, like this year we had rain six out of our 11 days. Roy Clark did well despite the weather, but our attendance was still down even though we sold in advance, which was a kind of rain insurance for us."

Jerry Coughlon, general manager of the Iowa State Fair, said although he's played acts that haven't been on the charts, his audiences are demanding top talents like Roy Clark and Freddy Fender. "Basically, we follow the lead of our local stations like KIOA and KSO, although we played Charley Pride before he had any exposure to speak of. Once in a while we go with the sales at record stores, but for the most part our information comes from the stations because stores may sell records of artists who may not appeal to our audiences."

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market for country music can be found in Sweden, and it was in Gothenberg that Conn launched the first Scandinavian Country Music Festival following the London event earlier this year.

Country-rock has found a strong response in Holland, which in the past two years has played host to Country Gazette, the Flying Burrito Brothers and Emmylou Harris. Holland is also the home of the Tumbleweeds, a group whose reputation has spread to many other European countries.

Although West Germany boasts the American Forces Broadcasting network—and a regular amount of airplay for country—the scene is still comparatively small and is mainly centered in Northern Germany, reports Jurgen Kramer at CBS Records.

Traditional and old-timey music survives strongly in Switzerland which, besides having local bands like Country Ramblers, Bluegrass Blossom and the Old Timey Wrappers, warmly welcomes American artists of the genre including Bill Clifton, Tom Paley and Mike Seeger.

But it is in Ireland where the music has gained its greatest popularity, with country recordings accounting for 65% of record sales. Here, however, it is primarily the local acts that are receiving the chart action.

The World Of Country Music • Billboard
365 Birthdays

From present day country music personalities to some of the oldtimers, here are 365 birthdays that have mattered in more music than a world can hold it.

JANUARY
1 Roger Miller
2 Hank Garland
3 Loretta Lynn
4 Dave "Tomato" Horton
5 Claude King
6 Donna Stone
7 Billy May
8 George Jones
9 Johnny Cash
10 Kitty Wells
JUNE
30 Johnny Paycheck
30 John Stone
30 Skeeter Davis
30 Harry Connick Jr.
30 Charley Pride
29_Storey Hefner
29_Bob Welker
29 minimise
29-Merle Haggard
29-James Brown
28_Skeeter Davis
28_Don Gibson
28_Untold
28-Johnny Cash
28-Merle Haggard
28_Skeeter Davis
27_Hank Snow
27_Johnny Cash
27_Skeeter Davis
27_Ranny Seiler
27_Tommy Cash
27_Randy Travis
27_Tommy Cash
27_Randy Travis
26_Gene Autry
26_Merle Haggard
26_Skeeter Davis
26_Skeeter Davis
26_Gene Autry
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26_Skeeter Davis
25_Hank Snow
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6_Merle Haggard
6_Skeeter Davis
6_Gene Autry
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6_Skeeter Davis
5_Hank Snow
5_Johnny Cash
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1_Skeeter Davis
Silver Circuit

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The new $10-million Performing Arts Theatre, with a 7,500-capacity at the Aladdin, showcased country-rock star Linda Ronstadt Sept. 19 in an effort to measure the public demand and buying power for MOR acts.

"This concert will be a barometer for future crossover country at the Aladdin, for our hotel executives are receptive to country shows if they work naturally," said Lenny Martin, entertainment consultant, prior to the show.

Efforts are under way to book the Colter-Jennings, Nelson Outlaws package at the plush concert facility. The outcome of the Ronstadt performance is a determining factor in the decision to include country as a part of the diversified booking plan at the hotel.

Las Vegas Hilton entertainment head Dick Lane sees Campbell as the only country star able to fill the huge main showroom facility, once a platform for Johnny Cash, Charlie Rich and Charley Pride.

"Cash was last here in '75. Show attendance dropped off for no specific reason and at this time, we don't foresee other country acts coming in here," says Lane.

Another key to successful country pairings, aside from top-drawing names, involves adequate publicity, a missing item which sank the first Colter-Jennings, Nelson, Tompall bill at Caesars Palace last September.

The concert was booked separately from the main showroom entertainment acts by an outside interest and received little, if any publicity locally, or in other states.

Other country strongholds in Southern Nevada's entertainment scene include the Sahara, where large crowds are registered to see Merle Haggard, Marty Robbins, Kay Starr, Eddy Arnold and Johnny Rivers.

The downtown Golden Nugget, where country music has been an integral part for more than 30 years, currently houses a 60-minute, Fredrick Apacor country show, "Col. Zachannah's World Renowned Genuine Wild West Extravaganza."

"Since we're completing a new 20-story addition, our trade will have broadened and we'll go to a more MOR cross-over country scene," reveals Nugget director Steve Wynn. "Many things have to be taken into consideration."

Past country artists have included Judy Lynn, Johnny Paycheck, Barbara Mandrell and Joe Stampley as well as Jennings and Nelson. Country singer Kenny Vernon alternates with the 14-week schedule review in the Gold Strike Lounge.

Meanwhile, Northern Nevada's show business palaces, Sahara-Tahoe, Harrah's Reno and Tahoe and The Nugget at Sparks, report similar country trends, buying power and successful pairings.

Although reputed to be a predominantly country area, Harrah's chief Doug Bushousen says the MOR ability is important in bringing in good profits and attendance.

"Some people think we're country oriented, but we haven't had great success with it. Contemporary, MOR still draws the best here," says Bushousen. "What counts is the general, overall business generated."

Harrah's Tahoe recently caused great excitement with the second pairing of Frank Sinatra-John Denver in the South Shore Room, at 750-dinner and 1,100-midnight capacities.

Along with Tahoe, Harrah's Reno Headliner Room has featured Wayne Newton, Dolly Parton, Mac Davis and other artists booked into Vegas night spots.

The High Sierra Theatre Room, which seats 1,500 for dinner and 1,800 midnight, has offered such country artists as Roy Clark, Barbara Fairchild, Mel Tillis and Doug Kershaw.

"I don't see any trends in country," says Pat France, Sahara-Tahoe boss. "It's not the type of music but rather the popularity that determines booking's success," he concludes. France plans to bring back Cash in 1977 as well as Roger Miller.
The East Coast

Continued from page 60

the much-needed numbers. After several years with his “Country In New York” (where he went to extremes to bring fans into New York even via special “country music” railroad trains from Long Island), he grew unnerved by the inability of Nashville agents to understand the importance of the New York market.

“Many of these agents ignored my requests and just didn’t see the importance of live country music in this major city,” he says. “So, I finally decided to cease operation, after bringing into New York City stars like Roy Clark, Merle Haggard, Charley Pride and Buck Owens, among others.”

Part of the blame for the scarcity of fans who attended these shows at Madison Square Garden’s Felt Forum was attributed to the great cost factor of getting into New York and attending an evening concert.

“By the time you get done buying the ticket, paying the baby sitter, eating dinner, parking the car and having a few drinks, the evening can cost you a great deal of money,” says one longtime New York “hillbilly.” “I’d rather stay at my home in New Jersey and travel to a nearby town to see the same show at half the cost.”

Most of the live country music being brought into New York and the surrounding areas is through clubs—the Bottom Line, My Father’s Place and the Other End. During the past few months, a wide variety of acts has played in these venues including Jerry Jeff Walker, Faron Young, Johnny Paycheck, Country Gazette, Asleep At The Wheel, Doug Kershaw, the Flying Burrito Brothers, Byron Berline and Sundance and others.

Even with the scarcity of live nationally known country talent in the Big Apple, there is still plenty of good country music to be heard. Clubs like O’Lunney’s in midtown Manhattan have stuck with country music for many years and this music has found a special home. In fact, this nifty, under the helm of the “Irish Cowboy” Hugh O’Lunney, has brought out a great many “closet country fans” in the New York area.

Many well-known national celebrities have happened onto O’Lunney’s and their excitement over the music and atmosphere has turned them into die-in-the-wool country fans.

Besides presenting local talent bluegrass and country (Troy Ferguson and Sue Smith, with the Country Gentlemen, Michael Simmons and Slewfoot, Mike Baldwin and Smokehouse, Whiskey Hill, etc.) nationally-known talent like Chip Taylor and an occasional country music discotheque evening, O’Lunney recently even presented a bicentennial country music boat cruise around Manhattan.

Based on the pioneering success of O’Lunney, New York’s posh Rainbow Room, atop the RCA Building, also decided to give local country artists a chance. Many of the above-mentioned groups performed at this typically-MOR home base in the experiment that began in early September.

Quite possibly the most important motivating factor in the birth of New York country music was and still is WHN country radio. In the past year, under the guidance of Neil Rockoff, this 50,000-watt has been converting all kinds of people to country music.

In fact, country music in New York can no longer be pushed aside as only belonging to Southerners and “hillbillies,” since it is now the “everyone’s music.”

According to Dale Pon, WHN director of creative services, the station’s popularity is totally diverse.

“We appeal to a broad cross-section of New Yorkers, as well as people from Connecticut, New Jersey and Long Island,” he says.

About six months ago, the station, based on Pon’s advice, decided to wage an all-out promotional campaign termed: “There’s a Lot of Country In The City.”

Through this massive campaign and similar ones waged at various ethnic groups (Spanish advertisements in Puerto Rican neighborhoods featuring Freddy Fender), WHN won a winner with some high ratings New York has to give. According to Ed Salamon, station program director, the young audience has finally turned on to country music and proven their interest by attendance at the various club dates by country artists around town.

And, recordings on country product are finally beginning to respond after years of inactivity, he says.

“The major problem with record sales was in inability of shops to stock product on country artists,” he says. “But this has all changed and we find a lot of support from both record companies and artists.”

According to Salamon, many artists had lost their support to WHN and the New York country music cause via live appearances on the WHN airwaves. These include Bobby Bare, Johnny Cash, Doug Parton, Doug Sahm, the Flying Burrito Brothers, C.W. McCall and many others.

Although Salamon and Pon are reticent to discuss WHN’s financial status they do cite a recent New York Times financial section article that told of the station’s major gains in the past year, making it more than $1 million in the red with an anticipated profit of more than $500,000.

The drawing power connected with WHN and country music’s growth in New York was best demonstrated at an August concert by Freddy Hart and Merle Travis that drew huge throngs of people to Lincoln Center’s Damrosch Park.

Pon says this huge attendance and the development of country music on a regular basis at Great Adventures Amusement Park (Loretta Lynn, Tanya Tucker, Conway Twitty, etc.) in nearby Jackson, N.J. are encouraging signs.

“People like promoter AI Aronowitz and club owner Hugh O’Lunney were both pioneers in bringing country music to the forefront in New York City and the surrounding areas,” he asserts. “Traditional Nashville country may still take some time to catch on in this city, but everything is definitely on the upswing.”

“If the right promoter comes into Manhattan and attempts to carry on, there is a good chance that things might pop and country music will become a dominant musical factor in this city, at long last,” says another country music enthusiast.

With the way things are going at WHN, one never knows—country concert promotion could be in its future.

Pop Country

Continued from page 54


Of course, this receptivity to pop sounds is largely a continuation of patterns set in the past few years. Pat Boone first made the country chart in 1975 after fully 20 years of success in the pop field. B.J. Thomas’ “Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song,” No. 1 country and pop, and the Eagles’ “Lynx Eyes,” top 10 country and pop, marked the country chart debuts of those long-running pop acts.

The changes in country radio are perhaps best demonstrated in the fact John Denver couldn’t push above number 50 on the country chart five years ago with his classic pop smash, “Take Me Home Country Roads.” His next big pop hit, “Rocky Mountain High,” didn’t even make the country chart, while his third Top 40 pop smash, “Sunshine On My Shoulder,” peaked on the country chart at number 42. It took until the summer of 1974 and “Annie’s Song” to give Denver a Top 40 country record. That was, in fact, the start of a string of five consecutive top 10 country hits for Denver.

It was around that time in ’74 that Gordon Lightfoot and Linda Ronstadt, longtime pop favorites, first made the country chart. Both had top 20 country hits: Lightfoot with “Sundown” and Ronstadt with “Silver Threads and Golden Needles.”

In 1974 Ray Stevens got his first top 10 record on the country chart in a disk career going back to 1961 with “The Streak,” while the year before Brenda Lee went top 10 country for the first time in 16 years of recording, when her label switch to MCA started a string of six straight top 10 country disks.

Other pop acts to go country in ’74 were Paul McCartney & Wings (“Sally G”), the Pointer Sisters (“Fairytale”), Jim Croce (“I’ll Have To Say I Love You In A Song”) and Byron MacGregor (“Americans”). Johnny Rivers also made his country chart debut that year, while in the year or two before that such diverse, but primarily pop entertainers as Eydie Gorme, Wayne Newton and Vicki Lawrence all went country.

Paul Grein

The World Of Country Music • Billboard
Bluegrass Success

- Continued from page 70

which loses a bundle—because they want to maintain the image as a full-line label, don’t they? Well they should do that for bluegrass as well, it’s a very important part of country music.” McCuen says, more starkly, “We’ve gotten to be mass market consumers and I think it’s dreadful. Every form of music should be represented, but in the face of this increasing mass-market orientation catalog and marginal stuff like bluegrass suffers.”

Jim and Jesse McReynolds took another alternative. About four years ago they set up their own label, Old Dominion, and they sell their music directly to the customer at appearances and festivals, and by mail order. Jesse claims, with wry humor. “It’s the only way I’ve ever made any money out of records. With a major you’d just get a statement of how much you owed them.” But he is quite aware that “We’re not getting to the majorly of the public. There are thousands of potential buyers out there we never see.”

A third and most recent alternative has been the setting up of CMH Records, which has specialized in bluegrass recording but approached it with major label muscle (ads and reviews in the trades, leading to good distribution, “because we have a professional approach.”)

The man behind CMH is Martin Haerle, formerly associated with Starday and United Artists in Nashville and on the West Coast, and he has signed an impressive lineup of bluegrass talent, representing nearly every major act: Flatt, Wiseman, the Osborne Brothers, Reno & Harrell, Grandpa Jones, the Country Gentlemen and many others.

His theory is specialization. “I can go out and merchandise a half dozen at a time, not just an occasional one-shot release as a major has to do. It has to be merchandised differently, for example, not with standard country stations but with college stations and some under-ground. It’s a specialized audience, and my label is like one specializing in spoken word.”

Haerle’s massive experiment is only about a year old, too early to see whether his approach—a combination of small-label involvement with big-label promotion and distribution—will succeed, especially in the awesome face of increasingly tight playlisters and the difficulty of obtaining airplay.

Still, it may well be that a semi-large label devoted solely to bluegrass can succeed where the limitations of the majors and the small label’s cannot. Time alone will answer that question, but whether it can fully unravel this puzzling paradox remains to be seen.

Bill Denney observes, “The business has caused publishers to become better businessmen. There are more and more publishers going into business every day, unfortunately. The competition gets keener every time—but that’s all right. That’s what makes for more and more good product coming out.”

Catalogs Bulging

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At first glance, the effect of instituting the $8 fee appears negligible. “This, of course, is the general belief,” Thompson acknowledges, “but until such time as the Register of Copyrights has some time to deal with the matter, the administrative overhead—which the law provides—shall be recouped prior to distribution—is anyone’s guess.”

“Technically, in looking at the amount of the fee, you would say that there will not be a significant amount of money left for distribution to writers and publishers. However, the accented industry estimates that there are approximately 500,000 jukeboxes in America does not by any means indicate that the number of operators will be nearly as large. For instance, in large metropolitan cities there are a relatively small number of operators who own a large number of machines, and in that they’re paying a flat fee per machine, the administration required to receive those funds will be very little.”

Thompson speculates “where the problem will occur is in working out the distribution to the individual publishers and songwriters of the music involved. That’s a tedious process that has been developed by the performing rights societies over the past 45 years.”

The publishers surveyed were reluctant to predict trends in the industry but, as

Nashville Scene

- Continued from page 65

flight stereo channels. Country radio stations report their best years ever with WHN gaining major shares of the huge New York marketplace where country product is being stocked in stores that previously shunned it. While country gains in Reno, Vegas and Tahoe, it also climbs halfway across the world in Japan.

It’s not just coming from Nashville. There’s some good country music being cut in Muscle Shoals, Atlanta, Memphis, New York, Miami, Houston, L.A. and Austin. The latter city is one of the strongholds and birthplaces of progressive country music, and everyone knows that Texans like their music country and their beer Lone Star.

So the pace quickens, the sound changes and green grow the dollars. The hodge-podge city called Nashville takes its nitty-gritty music to a heller skelter world.

And that’s the latest report on the explosion called country music. Tune in again for further details.

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BILLY MARTIN, Director of International Publishing and Production
The Outlaws

Willie Nelson and Charley Pride get it on vocally during a CMA trip to Austin (above left). Mercury artist Johnny Rodrigues (with mike right) duets with Waylon Jennings during taping of PBS' "Soundstage." At left (below) Columbia artist Nelson signs autographs at North Texas State Univ. where proceeds from his sold-out concert went to the school. Below (right) the gold ward party. Shown here are, back row (from left) Tompall Glaser, outlaw; Kenneth Glancy, president, RCA Records; Jerry Bradley, division vice president, Nashville operations, RCA; and Chet Atkins, division vice president, country music, RCA, and (front row) Jennings, leader of the outlaws; Jessi Colter, outlaw, and Nelson, outlaw.

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